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RESEARCH PAPERS

1

Nature, Woman and Patriarchy: An Ecofeminist Study of Joseph Conrad's *An Outcast of the Islands* and *Heart of Darkness*

DR. SAMBIT PANIGRAHI

The way in which women and nature have been conceptualized historically in the Western intellectual tradition has resulted in devaluing whatever is associated with women, emotion, animals, nature, and the body, while simultaneously elevating in value those things associated with men, reason, human, culture, and the mind. One task of eco feminists has been to expose these dualisms and the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing or animalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women, animals, and the earth.

Joseph Conrad's colonial fiction has been subject to vehement feminist criticism for his derogatory treatment of women in his novels¹. Though there have been several feminist critical reactions outpouring over the years, against the gross denigration of women in his works, the recent upsurge of eco feminist criticism seems to add yet another

dimension to such abundantly available feminist readings of Conrad. An eco feminist reading of his works would significantly reveal that the denigration of women therein is carried out with a concurrent denigration of Nature in a way that both are treated as symbolic equals and hence, joint adversaries of man and his culture. Observably, their derogation as adversative “others” in the predominantly patriarchal fictional world of Conrad is maneuvered by foregrounding the shared commonality between them—a deep and probing study of which is precisely what constitutes the vantage point of eco feminism. This commonality, one must know however, is not single, but many, i.e., woman and Nature share more than one common features: they are seen as sites of unfathomable, baffling mystery for men; they are considered to be treacherous and unpredictably lethal; they are thought to be savage and unruly and hence, subject to forcible male domination. These set of common features, it must be acknowledged nevertheless, are patriarchy-designed constructions maneuvered in a way that patriarchy could authenticate and legitimize its endeavour to tame, subdue and dominate Nature and women together. Carolyn Merchant very rightly observes that the idea of Nature as something “wild and uncontrollable” female has been patriarchy’s self-styled justification of “the domination and mastery of nature” (2) just like the same of woman by man.

Seen in the above light, pictures of women’s unflinching association with Nature and vice versa are explicit in Conrad’s early Malayan novels *An Outcast of the Islands* and African novel *Heart of Darkness* which, of course, is quite acceptably his magnum opus. One could see that in *An Outcast of the Islands*, the Malayan sea is represented through a fickle, unruly and mysterious woman figure whereas in

Heart of Darkness, the African land is conceptualized as a female body either to be penetrated or looted and contrariwise, Kurtz's African mistress is described as a symbolic manifestation of the tenebrous savagery of the African forest. In these two novels, therefore, there are evident connections—though these are mere patriarchal construals— between woman and Nature in some form or the other and, as has been claimed at the beginning, this “womanizing of nature and naturizing of woman” (Bullis 125) forms the basis of their conjoint ‘otherization,’ domination and exploitation. Verena Andermatt Conley very rightly comments: “Woman is always on the side of nature, outside of culture, and thus relegated to passivity” (148). Such “historically contingent” “analogy between “woman” and “nature” (Buell 20) has been the root cause of the dehumanization of both.

This paper thus, through an eco feminist reading of these two novels of Conrad, undertakes the task of attempting a thorough and deeper understanding of the nature and mechanism of what Victoria Davion would call the “twin dominations of women and nature” (34) through their symbolic alignments with each other.

An Outcast of the Islands

Given that Conrad, in his early Malayan tale *An Outcast of the Islands*, makes explicit use of the woman-Nature connection, the text then offers itself for prompt eco feminist critical intervention. To start with, one can observe that the protagonist Willems' first encounter with the native Malayan lady Aissa is demonstrated through a clear analogy between her and Nature:

Who was she? Where did she come from? . . . but now, as he looked at that life again, his eyes seemed able to pierce the

fantastic veil of creepers and leaves, to look past the solid trunks, to see through the forbidding gloom—and the mystery was disclosed—enchancing, subduing, beautiful. . . . He looked at the woman. . . . The very spirit of that land of mysterious forests, standing before him like an apparition behind a transparent veil—a veil woven of sunbeams and shadows. (Conrad, *Outcast* 61)

As delineated in the above passage, the native Malayan woman Aissa, an embodiment of Nature, and thereby reflecting its enigmatic spirit appears through its mysterious darkness like “an apparition behind a transparent veil” (70). What is strikingly observable here is that the forest manifests itself through its substitutive woman-presence (Aissa) or, in other words, the image of the forest is evoked through a female body—a site imbued with unknown secrets of the mysterious Nature. Aissa’s body, as per Rebecca Stott’s very pertinent observation, is “the site of the secrets of prehistoric (untamed) nature, . . . , secrets withheld from the white man” (Stott 196).

But the fact that woman and Nature are seen as joint adversaries to man is further testified through Willems’ agonizing bewilderment at the sight of Aissa who, of course, symbolically represents the Malayan forest. For the narrator informs us that “Willems, looking at this strange, muffled figure [of Aissa], felt exasperated, [and] amazed” (Conrad, *Outcast* 96)—a statement that is indicative of Aissa, like Malayan Nature, being a mysterious and enchanting but disturbing ‘other’ for the amazed but exasperated Willems. But this “other” i.e, Aissa, as per Australian eco feminist Val Plumwood’s concept of “hyperseparation²,” is “not merely different but inferior” (49). Confirming her ‘otherness’ and its concomitant ‘inferiority’ before Willems’ presupposed superior “self,” the narrator remarks:

She [Aissa] would never change! This manifestation of her sense of proprieties was another sign of their hopeless diversity; something like another step downwards for him. She was too different from him. He was too civilized! It struck him suddenly that they had nothing in common—not a thought, not a feeling; he could not make clear to her the simplest motive of any act of his . . . (Conrad, *Outcast* 97)

As a consequence, the native lady Aissa representing the dark, mysterious Nature becomes an embodiment of Nature and woman's difference and inferiority from the quintessential pre-eminence of Willems' so called civilized and European persona. In addition, we—as another evidence of Willems' unabashed male hubris—learn that he has always remained “contemptuously indifferent to all feminine influence;” has perpetually been “full of scorn for men that would submit to it;” and has always felt himself being “superior [to Nature and woman] even in his errors” (Conrad, *Outcast* 65). Further, in what appears to be an insolent declaration of his unquestionable male superiority, he boasts of “the unstained purity of his life” (Conrad, *Outcast* 68) possibly in sharp contrast to the wild savagery of the Malayan Nature and woman. One has to admit that the protagonist Willems' frequent vainglorious protestations of his self-styled male ascendancy is merely a part of the chronic and historical male revulsion towards woman and Nature together.

It is interesting to note that not only the Malayan forest manifests itself through a mysterious woman figure, but also the Malayan sea, in this novel, is represented as a fickle and unruly woman demanding prompt patriarchal subjugation. The description of the sea in *An Outcast of the Islands* through diabolic feminine images amply substantiates the above notion. The narrator describes:

Like a beautiful and unscrupulous woman, the sea of the past was glorious in its smiles, irresistible in its anger, capricious, enticing, illogical, irresponsible; a thing to love, a thing to fear. It cast a spell, it gave joy, it lulled gently into boundless faith; then with quick and causeless anger it killed. But its cruelty was redeemed by the charm of its inscrutable mystery, by the immensity of its promise, by the supreme witchery of its possible favour. Strong men with childlike hearts were faithful to it, were content to live by its grace—to die by its will. (Conrad, *Outcast* 24-25)

The attribution of ambiguous and treacherous qualities to the sea, as described in the above passage, makes her a perfidious woman. The unpredictable and treacherous demeanour of the sea, as delineated in the above passage, is presented through a set of dual epithets attribute to her—epithets that comprise the juxtaposition of one good and another bad, character. She is beautiful but unscrupulous, glorious but capricious, seductive but vituperative, joyous but cruelly fatal and promising but mysterious. The ambiguity that is sustained in this narration indicates that, despite her outward semblance of enthralling sensuous beauty, the sea inwardly harbours a sustained underlying threat for the colonial man. A “beautiful and unscrupulous woman” (Conrad, *Outcast* 24), as it is called by the narrator, the sea exudes “supreme witchery” (Conrad, *Outcast* 25)—a manifestation of notoriously bad feminine sexuality. Thus Nature and woman rolled into one, now become, in the patriarchal schema, the antithesis of man.

Now that the sea is established as a transgressive virago, it is, in the colonial scheme of things, to be tamed and controlled through the application of a subduing masculine force—a force that is amply realized through the metaphor of ‘rape.’ The evocation of the image of ‘rape’ of the sea is the most fitting evidence:

. . . countless steamboats . . . [were] spread over the restless mirror of the Infinite [sea]. The hand of the engineer tore down the veil of the terrible beauty. . . The mystery was destroyed. . . The hearts changed; the men changed. The once loving and devoted servants went out armed with fire and iron, and . . . became a calculating crowd of cold and exacting masters. The sea of the past was an incomparably beautiful mistress, with inscrutable face, with cruel and promising eyes. The sea of to-day is a used-up drudge, wrinkled and defaced by the churned-up wakes of brutal propellers, robbed of the enslaving charm of its vastness, stripped of its beauty, of its mystery and of its promise. (Conrad, *Outcast* 25)

The passage perhaps bears the ultimate expression of Conrad's explicit use of woman-Nature connection where Nature (the sea, in this case), like a woman, becomes a targeted object of patriarchal sexual violence. In this aggressive act of violence—as described above—the sea, once a beautiful mistress, is now defaced, wrinkled, unveiled, stripped and raped by the colonizers who finally conquer it becoming its “cool and exacting masters.” Clearly, the explicit use of such gendered images and epithets to describe the ravishment of Nature exemplify how womanly fantasies are employed, by modern science, for devaluing and manipulating Nature through its feminine sexualisation. Further, the narrator's opinion, at a later part of the text though, that the white rulers hold the “land and the sea under the edge of sharp swords” (Conrad, *Outcast* 85), hints at the colonial man's masculine military fantasies against the feminine Nature where weapons like sharp swords could be emblematical of what Carol Cohn would call “the phallic imagery and promise of sexual domination” (134). It must not be forgotten that such Nature-dominating principles are part of the Enlightenment pioneer Francis Bacon's advocacy of man's march into the domain of feminine Nature and its subsequent forced subdual before him. Bacon, the ideological

father of Science, in a notorious remark of his, advises man to “bind her [Nature] to . . . [his] service and make her . . . [his] slave” (qtd. in Leiss 55). The reason behind the Baconian urge to tame and subdue Nature lies in his conceptualization of the same, as Katherine Park rightly points out, as “an indifferent, destructive, and uncontrollable woman” (490). Corroborating to this view, Onno Oerlemans writes: “Nature is feminized as femininity is made to be a part of nature, and both are made mere objects for manipulation by enlightenment and masculine reason” (7).

There are other notable instances in the text that could be cited to further exemplify Conrad’s extensive use of the Woman-Nature connection in the novel. The narrator’s description of Tom Lingard’s relation with the sea must be cited here. The narrator describes:

Tom Lingard was a master, a lover, a servant of the sea. . . . Having made him what he was, womanlike, the sea served him humbly and let him bask unharmed in the sunshine of its terribly uncertain favour. . . . He loved it with the ardent affection of a lover, he made light of it with the assurance of perfect mastery, he feared it with the wise fear of a brave man, and he took liberties with it as a spoiled child might do with a parental and good-natured ogre. (Conrad, *Outcast* 25)

The passage, in absolute conformation with what had been claimed at the beginning (i.e., the Woman-Nature connection is not single but many), shows how the sea is described at once as a nurturing mother-figure, a beloved, a servant and a feminine figure with which man could take many liberties. But at the same time, of course, she is to be feared—as captain Lingard confesses—possibly due to her treacherous and unpredictably lethal demeanour. The point is that the sea is endowed with a plethora of womanish attributes in a scenario where woman becomes a metaphor to

articulate various human perceptions of Nature. Kate Soper, while reflecting on the various ways through which the image of woman can be manipulated to represent Nature through multiple feminine figures, rightly says: "Conceived as a feminine principle, nature is equally lover, mother and virago: a source of sensuous delight, a nurturing bosom, a site of treacherous and vindictive forces bent on retribution for her human violation" (71).

Finally, we come across a situation at the concluding part of the text where both woman and Nature are conjointly found to be mere instruments or means of man's desire for sensual gratification. A passage describing how Aissa decorates herself to delight the eyes of Willems would perhaps be a fitting evidence for explaining it:

... , and Aissa appeared in sight, walking slowly, her hands full of flowers. She had turned the corner of the house, coming out in the full sunshine, and the light seemed to leap upon her in a stream brilliant, tender, and caressing, as if attracted by the radiant happiness of her face. The rays of the morning sun were caught by the oval clasp of the embroidered belt that held the silk sarong round her waist. The dazzling white stuff of her body jacket was crossed by a bar of yellow and silver of her scarf, and in the black hair twisted high on her small head shone the round balls of gold pins amongst crimson blossoms and white star-shaped flowers, with which she had crowned herself to charm his eyes ... (Conrad, *Outcast* 235)

What can be observed from the quoted passage is that Aissa decorated with the elements of Nature including the sun rays and the flowers presents herself as a subdued sensual object to please the eyes of Willems, or in other words, both woman and Nature are conjointly used as mere sexual instruments meant for fulfilling man's need for sexual gratification. An anguished Linda Vance very rightly

observes: “. . . both woman and nature have been controlled and manipulated to satisfy masculinist desires” (60).

From the above discussions, it is now evident that the colonial patriarchy’s “otherization” and exploitation of either woman or Nature or both together is done on the basis of a forced analogy between them. Eva Feder Kittay, in her influential article, “Woman as Metaphor,” arguably demonstrates how man uses woman as a “metaphoric vehicle” (Kittay 63) for Nature to articulate his forceful control of Nature just like the violent possession of a woman. Kittay very fittingly comments: “Man identifies that which he wants and desires, or has acquired . . . as Woman These examples direct us to consider the importance of woman’s metaphorization in the conceptual organization of man’s experience” (64).

Heart of Darkness

The Woman-Nature connection continues in Conrad’s magnum opus *Heart of Darkness* and shows again, brazenly, through the feminization of Nature. Firstly, Marlowe’s march into African Nature is conceptualized as a “penetration” into the “virgin forest” (Conrad 34) forcing her to yield up her secrets in a process which Greta Gaard would call the “colonialist voyages of discovery” (28). “We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness” (Conrad, *Heart* 41), says Marlowe in a scenario—as he had already informed us beforehand—where Nature, like an adversative woman-presence, tries to “ward off the intruders” (Conrad, *Heart* 14-15). Finally, he recounts: “The reaches opened before us . . .” (Conrad, *Heart* 41)—a statement that is obliquely suggestive of another feminine image of Nature which, like a woman, progressively unfolds her mysteries and secrets before the penetrating venture of the colonial man. Noticeably, the

combative encounter of the colonial man with Nature is mostly gestated in terms of an encounter between the coercive male and assailable female sexualities. An embittered Annette Kolodny, on such a gendered perception of the world, very aptly comments: "Perhaps, after all, the world is really gendered, in some subtle way we have not yet quite understood" (9). Penetration, infiltration, intrusion and unraveling, in the end, epitomize the essence of the mission as renowned Conrad critic H. M. Daleski construes: "In such a progress it is an ability to penetrate, rather than a capacity to steer, that is of primary importance" (51). Evidently, the femininity of Nature becomes a "metaphoric vehicle"—as Eva Feder Kittay has called it—for the articulation of the male experience of "penetration" into the virgin territory of Nature.

It has been mentioned at the beginning that Nature has no single but many feminine manifestations. *Heart of Darkness* is perhaps the most fitting evidence of such flitting feminine metaphoric representations of Nature. Thus, now that Marlow has already delineated the colonial journey as a penetrating venture into a virgin territory, we can mark a visible shift of the image of Nature to that of a womb full of treasure to be looted. Marlowe's journey therefore is now seen as a venture to unearth Nature's abounding mystery that "lay deep under the surface" (Conrad, *Heart* 45). In addition, he readily recognizes that the only desire of the colonisers is to "tear treasure out of the bowels of the land" (Conrad, *Heart* 35) where the very expression "tear" seems to be loaded with characteristic masculine force and vigour required to extract treasure out of the womb of the feminine land. The point is, as Marlow sees it, that the feminine Nature has to be raided with the spirit of sexual invasion and conquest.

The land is either a virgin to be penetrated or a mother's womb to be looted of its wealth. Gretchen Legler in her influential article "Toward a Postmodern Pastoral: The Erotic Landscape in the Work of Gretel Ehrlich," while embarking on the ideas of Annette Kolodny, explains how the "westward expansion and exploration in the nineteenth century [America], has been to project upon the land an image of land-as-woman, either virgin or mother, agentless female object; a move which has encouraged a way of dealing with the land (in literature and in life) through regression or willful violation" (22-23). The dealing with the African land by the colonial explorers undoubtedly elicits a quite similar attitude on the part of the colonial explorers.

Now again in this rollercoaster of shifting feminine images of Nature, it is the wilderness of Africa that is seen as a witch. For instance, one could see that the experience of the wilderness of African Nature in *Heart of Darkness* is variously expressed through an entire range of witchery images including eroticism, embrace and treacherous assault. Marlow describes Kurtz's captivity by the wilderness of Africa in the following terms:

The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball—an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and—lo!—he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite. (Conrad, *Heart* 57)

Revealingly, the assault of the powers of the wilderness on Kurtz is presented in terms of witchery pranks. Nature's wilderness acts a witch, hypnotises Kurtz and finally kills him. Noticeably, an immanent malignancy is injected into Nature—through what Simon C. Estok would call "eco fobia"

(4)—by evoking its allegorical feminine sexualisation where Nature becomes an indeterminably fickle, violent, and elusive woman—just like a witch. Such bizarrely connotative appellation of Nature suggests to the dominance of male monotheism in our language, cultural and symbolic system where man could conceive of Nature as a witch or virago or as something that would depict her as a fickle, unruly and bewitching woman. Eco feminist Ernest Schachtel very aptly remarks: “. . . [man] will perceive nature according to . . . the relations and perspectives he chooses” (202). After various associations between woman and Nature, finally we mark a symbolic inter-transference of savagery between them, exemplified by the comparison between the jungle and Kurtz’s native African mistress. It starts with the description of the lady as a blunt manifestation of the tenebrous savagery of Nature. Introduced as “a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman” emanating from the “gloomy border of the forest” (Conrad, *Heart* 73) and being decorated with “barbarous ornaments” and “bizarre things” (Conrad, *Heart* 73), she becomes the symbolic representative of the wild, savage and barbarous world of Nature. Describing her egression from Nature, Marlow recounts:

She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. (Conrad, *Heart* 74)

The description is a glaring manifestation of how the patriarchal coloniser devises a common ground of savagery between Nature and woman to marginalise both from his cultural terrain. Additionally, Marlow describes: “She stood looking at us without a stir, and like the wilderness itself,

with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose" (Conrad, *Heart* 74). The fact that the "immense wilderness" finds "its own tenebrous and passionate soul" (Conrad, *Heart* 74) in Kurtz's African mistress and on the reverse, that she stands "like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose" (Conrad, *Heart* 74) creates a scenario where Nature becomes woman and woman becomes Nature. In a brazen assertion of the patriarchy-imposed woman-Nature connection, the narrator further observes: "Suddenly she [Kurtz's mistress] opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky . . ." (Conrad, *Heart* 74). The irrepressible desire of the woman to touch the sky seemingly gives an impression of her innate affinity with Nature.

The above discussion shows that as symbolic equals, both Nature and woman become subjects of man's scorn and domination. On the one hand, Nature is seen either as a fickle and treacherous woman playing deceptive pranks with man or as a transgressive virago constantly eluding the limiting dimensions of the male territory or as a prohibited sexualized landscape meant for forcible male penetration or as a feminine womb full of treasure meant to be looted. Woman, on the other hand, is equated with Nature for her innate kinship with the latter and for being a symbolic manifestation of the latter's innate savagery. Thus, through a series of common qualities thrust upon woman and Nature by patriarchy, they are conjointly distanced from the male world for their combined feminine and savage gesticulations and are therefore made subjects of forced patriarchal subjugation. An eco feminist study of Conrad's colonial novels, hence, not only reveals the opprobrious undertones of such patriarchy-imposed symbolic reciprocity between Nature and woman but also vehemently censures such a practice.

Notes:

- 1(i) In 1960, Graham Hough showed Conrad's inaccessibility into the women's world and his being fully engrossed in a "male world." (214). See Hough, Graham. *Image and Experience: Studies in a Literary Evolution*. London: Duckworth, 1960. Print.
- (ii) Frederick Karl describes that Conrad's stereotypical descriptions of women characters in his novels are "disastrous" (902). See Karl, Frederick R. *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives*. London: Faber, 1979. Print.
- (iii) Neville Newhouse opines that "Conrad invest[s] femininity with an aura of sacred distance. His women, just because they are women, are set apart" (74). See Newhouse, Neville H. *Joseph Conrad*. London: Evan Brothers, 1966. Print.
- (iv) Joyce Carol Oates is convinced that "Conrad's quite serious idea of a heroine is always someone who effaces herself completely, who is eager to sacrifice herself in an ecstasy of love for her man" (84). See Oates, Joyce Carol. *Contraries: Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981. Print.
2. 'Hyperseparation' is a term used by Australian Ecofeminist Val Plumwood to make the readers feel the unbridgeable gap that persists between the colonizer and the colonized so that no contiguity between them can be found. Thus, they will continue to remain hyper-separated from each other for ever.

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2

Teaching the Discourse of Transgression

AZZEDDINE BOUHASSOUN

Jenks (2003) defines transgression as “to go beyond the bounds or limits set by a commandment or law or convention; it is to violate or infringe” (Jenks 02). Transgression is also the experience of modern and postmodern eras. The whole culture, therefore, has “the desire to transcend limits—limits that are physical, racial, aesthetic, sexual, national, legal and moral” (Jenks 08). Transgression, in the Western culture, seems to point at boundaries, tries to understand them, and denounces them if not valid according to its own morality and taste. Transgression turns out to be more of an intellectual behavior rather than a transient denunciation of some thoughts. It stands on the other side of faith, and as such, it dichotomizes with belief. Transgression is seen more like a rational behavior that goes beyond our world of appearance and transcends it to reach an acceptable answer for the culture questioning. Transgression can be political when individuals intrude into the arena of the sanctified field of politicians. It can be historical when history coincides with conflicts that roll down until modern times. It can also be religious through blasphemy or use of sexual material, but according to the Western mind, it is an intellectual initiative to understand and discover.

However, do we really need to teach the discourse of transgression if the latter chases religious beliefs, trespasses political and economic issues, hits the walls of sexuality and morality? How do we teach the discourse of transgression in our universities? What has transgression to do with education in general and teaching in particular? It would be difficult to imagine a biology teacher avoiding a human anatomy class.

Transgression, education and politics are closely knitted. There certainly should be some tacit guidelines to teach and learn taboos. Teachers are engaged to carry out a project of openness and tolerance within the boundaries of the society, cultural and aesthetic tastes. Jenks (2003) sets transgression in the middle of the struggle between the master and the serf, the 'oppressor and the oppressed' to use Paulo Freire's terminology (1993) when he cites education as a process to gain liberation and freedom. For him, education is just like childbirth. "The solution of this contradiction is born in the labor which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor no longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom" (Freire 49).

We think that literature can be a field to speak openly and freely, to check currents and learn. From a tiny classroom, transformation of minds can occur. Virginia Woolf argues that "literature is no one's private ground: literature is common ground; let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves" (qtd. in Ayers 51). Jenks, Freire and Woolf agree on achieving freedom through, respectively, transgression, education and literature.

Suggested Method for Transgression Teaching

Two points need to be considered in teaching literature in Algeria. First, literature is taught independently from the teaching competencies, goals and objectives. It is not framed

with TESL competencies either. Second, I think that teaching transgression should be inserted within the theory of literature for a better understanding of the foreign reception of the literary work.

Our modest personal teaching experience has shown that literature teachers in our universities teach literature without questioning the method, whether the form or the content. However, the curriculum is content based rather, which is in my humble opinion a good choice. English language should be a vehicle to arts and humanities the way it vehicles science and technology. Let us think a while of Leonardo da Vinci and his flying machine or Jules Verne and his voyage to the moon. Technology does not emerge from nothingness but rather from a thought and imagination, a philosophy and culture, aggressive and transgressive intellectual endeavour. The classroom should be a place to spread such thought. It all starts with a literary text.

In the interaction between students and literature, Werner Delanoy (2005) suggests that 'readers are invited to become involved in secondary worlds and to ask themselves what a literary text means to them as a whole'. This implies integration of functional objectives: analysis of a (literary) text, an immersion in a fictional world to develop aesthetic tastes, improving the expressive competence, developing cultural competence, but above all the encounter with the different cultural Other. All of the above points converge towards the construction of an identity, sharpening of a critical and free mind, and a development of one's own cultural awareness.

However, teaching foreign literature may pose some cultural challenges with regards to transgression. In fact, literature has always been a battlefield of transgression. There

should be some strategies to teach transgression as it can be a very controversial, passionate and intellectually stimulating among students. Debates will prevail charged with emotions and most probably religious and ideological fervor. But we need to raise a question: until when should we stick our heads in the sand? When can we speak freely to our students? When can we speak about transgression as the culturally different other's way of life and a cultural attitude towards life and society, culture and politics? Darwinism, Nietzscheanism, and Freudism have influenced much of modernist and post modernism world literature, and sexuality studies are invading the literary text. One can even go earlier in time to Shakespeare to discover his sexual terminology or Milton's blasphemy. Is a teacher of literature to avoid all the enculturation chain?

However, as put forth by Alison Phipps and Manuela Guilherme (2004), languages are never neutral; therefore, critical pedagogy and language teaching should always be suspicious. "Those of us in the field of language and intercultural communication are constantly in situations where we are negotiating power, watching it shift and play between all our encounters as we use words from different languages, as we *language* in our own tongue and we attempt, in often broken, yet always profoundly hopeful ways, to reach out to others, and to communicate" (Phipps and Guilherme 02).

We suggest so as to have control on the show, and that the debate does not trespass the boundaries, the top-down approach strategy¹ (Pendergast & McWilliam) as the starting departure point. The status of the teacher is a very

1 This is already considered as a transgression by feminist scholarship, which sees in it a god/serf relation.

controversing one in this case. He can be the oppressor who violates the oppressed through what Freire calls 'the banking' deposit education (Freire 72), but he can also be the political institution to operate the changes advocated by the oppressed. However, the top-down approach remains the perfect strategy for listeners to "decode the incoming text" (Macaro 38). The teacher does not teach transgression for the sake of transgression. It should be as suggested by Ayers (2014) inserted within a pedagogy of curiosity, a pedagogy of the unknown and that of skepticism. He needs to show clear goals, methods but above all clear results for his course. The teacher needs to know the transgression he wants to teach, the reason and how to relate it to the author's culture. The teacher introduces the text and lets the students debate the context of situation and the cultural origins of such thoughts. Once in their hands, the text and subject matter can be discussed upon freely. The teacher needs not to be authoritarian, sarcastic or suffocating the students' freedom to express freely their ideas. He needs to develop their curiosity. Paulo Freire argues that "education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relation with the world" (Freire 81).

I think that teaching literature can take advantage of the *skopos* theory developed by the functionalist approach for translation. We have to consider the source text (ST) culture and the students's understanding and cultural awareness. In fact, the functionalist approach considers the register (field, tenor and mode) as an important step in Discourse Analysis

(DA) and communication. Register is a linguistic variety and its description “covers three major components: the situational context, the linguistic features, and the functional relationships between the first two components” (Biber 06). The contextual situation generates the “pervasive linguistic features” (06).

The analysis bears extra-textual and intra-textual features that remain mostly functional:

- Who transmits on what subject matter
- To whom does s/he say
- What for what
- By which medium (what not)
- Where in what order
- When using which non-verbal elements
- Why in which words
- A text in what kind of sentences
- With what function? in which tone?
- To what effect (Nord 41)

According to Nord, *Who transmits* is the author, *what for* represents the author's intentions, *To whom* is the audience, *By which medium/channel* stands for the text, *Where* for the place, and *When* for time of text production and reception. *Why* stands for the reasons and motives for communication. The intra textual features start with the subject matter. *What* stands for the information carried in the text. *What not* is the ‘knowledge presuppositions’ of the author. *In what order* refers to the order within the construction of the text. The *non verbal elements* stands for the non linguistic or paralinguistic elements that go hand in hand with the text. They might even be the intertextual elements that provide the connotation or

further information. *In which words* stand for the lexical choices and characteristics the author uses. *In what kind of sentences* refers to the syntactic structure that the author uses. *In which tone* stands for the intonation and prosody used. The last question *to what effect?* refers 'to a global or holistic concept, which comprises the interdependence or the interplay of extratextual and intra-textual factors.' (Nord 42). I think a teacher would not apply all the intra-textual features as the DA method is oriented towards translation. It would be perhaps more appropriate in a literary class to focus on the literary and stylistic features rather than the syntactic elements of the text.

Any text is in a dialogical position and questions the cultural and philosophical legacy. However, respecting the functional approach in Discourse Analysis (DA) is salient to keep both the class and the debate within the frames of the scientific talk and method. Students will discover text analysis, speaking and writing skill, and above all intercultural competence. In fact, as learners of a language, culture is also the target to understand the mechanisms of the fiction writing /creative writing.

Skills Students will Develop

Our students will develop a variety of skills stretching from personal development to significant transformation and civic responsibility.

1. The ability to analyze a text using DA tools, stylistics and literary criticism. The student is confronted to analysis and learns the power of language in its use. World literature offers valuable experiences that are not necessarily shared by us. Ontological concerns are different and aesthetic tastes are certainly as well. The receptive skills of the student and his response to

the transgression will not only increase his reasoning powers, it will stimulate his imagination as well. Freedom is another component of education in addition to analysis and aesthetic development.

2. DA is a means for communication and we need to develop communication in our classroom cultural traditions. It is the beginning of democratic reasoning in its foetal stage. Suppressions and repressions sit at the origins of conflicts. To recognize a problem and discuss it is the resolution of the problem rather than keep silent. Developing communication is the only way to respect each other, mutual acceptance, and it is a path to real democracy.

Teaching and speaking about transgression is in no way an invitation to debauchery and blasphemy. It is not an immoral initiative either. The teacher is not expected to describe the body parts or the sexual relation. It is however important for emancipation and critical mind, self-discovery and 'mak[ing] conflicts visible' (Ayers 39) either inside our hearts or in our society. Literature with its innovations, new 'shocking' themes is but a reflection of society. If inert, education can be harmful. Education is the training of reason and reasoning and, learning about sexualities, taboos and transgression do not come through intuitive understanding. It might be uncomfortable for both teacher and students to raise such topics. It is also to be noted that our education in general is in conflict with certain sexual behaviors noticed in our society. All of us have seen gays, have heard of 'unnatural' sexual relations, illicit sexual relations and all other relations rejected by both the law and religious norms. Newspapers lavishly report

and sometimes describe taboos, and international organisations watch the rights of marginal sexualities in Algeria². Nevertheless, marginal sexualities tend to develop chthonically³ in our country and this is a fact not to be repressed or hidden but fixed and straightened either by domestic politics or traditions or any other appropriate manner society agrees upon. Therefore, students need to talk and voice their own opinion . What was taboo yesterday is not necessarily taboo today. Even man-woman marriage relations are changing through the family code. Living in rapid political and economic changes, differences in visions in domestic family relations are being silently operated in the background. The family code has changed several times. All of us remember how the previous family code was revised in 2005 removing the male guardianship from

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- 2 In their report based on a joint Sweden-Switzerland fact-finding mission conducted in June 2011, the Swedish Migration Board cited the National Consultative Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme—CNCPPDH), a national Algerian organization for the promotion and protection of human rights (CNCPPDH n.d.), as stating that in Algeria, “[...] LGBTQ issues is a subject considered [t]aboo. However, in practice, it is not tightly restrained by the State, unless minors are involved. There are not many homosexuals that are condemned, and the minority is not sought after by the authorities. (Sweden and Switzerland 20 Jan. 2012, 20). http://www.ecoi.net/local_link /256858/368812_en.html
- 3 Gays and lesbians have their own places and websites <http://lexofanzine.jimdo.com/>. check http://www.ecoi.net/local_link /256858/368812_en.html

women or even wife clause⁴. Only politics can transgress the religious belief. Students need to know who really want to control them and for what reason. Changes will certainly carry on to even the Algerian laws with those adopted in the western world. It is not only a national but supra national political requirement. It might take years between an amendment and another so as not to shock the general consciousness. Democracy does not only mean multiparty system, but acknowledgment of a civil society with all its differences, equality between man and woman and sexes far from any ideology.

3. Transgression can be the tip of an iceberg in terms of culture. Thus, it provides students with the ability to enquire, discover and have critical and free minds. The extreme reactions that transgression can raise will certainly unearth deep treasures with regards to culture. We do not learn languages for pure academic reasons. Understanding such concepts as culture, multiculturalism and interculturalism are salient for language students. This will also generate a calm confrontation with new ideas and ideals, aspirations, conditions of how other live, behave and believe in their own societies.
4. We need to understand that teaching language is not confined to grammar and mechanical language responses. We do not teach loose words and soaring ideas, but there is a whole relation between culture, communication and education. Part of it, teaching

4 Abrogated article 38: L'épouse est tenue d'obéir à son mari et de lui accorder des égards en sa qualité de chef de famille'. Code de la famille

language has also the duty to prepare an individual for the future. Two points need to be mentioned here: Personal development and intercultural capabilities. Education of the oppressor creates a generation of dominated filled with credulity individuals (Freire 78) unable to compete or adapt to an economically and political aggressive environment. The psychological submission to domination breeds an adaptation to a world of oppression. The individual will look for another oppressor and dominator. Language teaching needs to foster an individual with intercultural capabilities and instincts to interact easily with the cultural different other. Communication is the ability to negotiate between personal and transnational culture and it is the sole means to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts but especially wars. Multiculturalism is the fatality of this world, and our society needs to prepare the future citizen open and tolerant to all ways of thoughts through an open and tolerant dialogue and education. "'intercultural competence' is also understood here as principally and closely linked with a psychological readiness and preparation to be empathetic and to control one's emotions, that is, to be patient and tolerant with the other without, in our understanding, necessarily being prepared to work in ethnically heterogeneous groups and, therefore, to create a different work dynamics based on a new professional culture negotiated on equal terms within the multicultural group/team" (Guilherme 194). There is no doubt that Algeria is going through huge and insidious political, economic and sociocultural transformations

that are paving the ways to new forms of political, economic and spiritual international integration. This means in no way a submission to incoming cultural floods, but rather help students develop keen negotiating principles of the general and the private cultural features. Avoiding preparation means future submission.

5. The ability to relativise one's own culture. Discovery of cultural self and identity in the flood of world culture will help students relativise their thoughts and beliefs. Communication with the cultural different other will become easier. However, this will strengthen their own cultural identity and awareness of the civilizational legacy. It is urgent our students develop their own literary faculties on the ground of their own culture. Literature is the transformation of the world into world views and experiences and embody them into words. From understanding and interpreting a culture that is put into words, students can create their own worlds through their own words. From a tiny classroom to the huge world with different cultures, the student will learn to know who he is while searching deep into his consciousness not only the act of belonging but also the act of freedom. Paulo Freire clearly argues the role of education when he states 'education is the practice of freedom' (qtd. in Ayers 38). In fact, all forms of education drive man, the learner out of the oppression of darkness and illiteracy.

In conclusion, we think it is right to teach transgression in an appropriate manner when it is deeply related to cultural pheonema. It is diagonally opposed to the western challenge to religious and political power (Ayers 136), but it is also very

interesting to see how Ayers sees the relation of transgression to the never ending process of learning and an unfinished history. A teacher should question why he is not able to teach a transgression, and a plausible answer will always arise. If the educational duty requires him to; therefore, he has the moral and civic duty to do it. The Noble Quran does not suppress words to plainly express man's religious duties and sexual relations when teaching muslims. Thus, it describes these sexual relations before fasting as in Al Baqara (2:187)⁵, or Al Baqara (2:223)⁶. In many other places, licit sexual relations or illicit ones (*fahcha*) are cited in the Noble Quran with different words bringing different stances of imagination. Essoyuti reveals in his *Asbeb Ennouzoul* (44 السيوطي) for aya 223 what we do not seem to be able to teach. The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) was of an unusual openness to teach and the first Muslims used to turn to him for everything even in sexual matters. It is perhaps an ideal education type if we know how to frame it with our cultural legacy.

5 Al baqara (Sura: 2, Aya : 187): It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.

6 Al Baqara (Sura: 2, Aya: 223) : Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers.

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3

Concepts of Dialogism: A Study of Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* in the Light of Mikhail Bakhtin's Philosophy

DEEPSHIKHA ROUTRAY & DR. SHRUTI DAS

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) was one of the influential theorists of discourse in twentieth century. It is his concepts on dialogism that made him a noted literary theorist of the twentieth century. This paper will focus on bringing out the elements of dialogism in Hermann Hesse's popular novel, *Siddhartha*. Dialogics is the key term used to describe the narrative theory of Bakhtin and is specifically identified with his approach to questions of language in the novel. Dialogics refers to the inherent "addressivity" of all language; that is, all language is addressed to someone, never uttered without consciousness of a relationship between the speaker and the addressee (Guerin, Labor, and et al 362). In this humanistic emphasis, Bakhtin departed from the linguistically based theories of literature and from other Russian formalists. "At a very basic level, then, dialogism is the name not just for a dualism, but for a necessary *multiplicity* in human perception. This multiplicity manifests itself as a series of distinctions between categories appropriate to the perceiver on the one hand and categories appropriate to whatever is being perceived on the other" (Holquist 22).

Polyphony and Heteroglossia in *Siddhartha*

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin formulated the concepts which characterized dialogism. The concept of 'polyphony' is the principal element of it. Polyphony literally means *multiple voices*.

"Bakhtin reads Dostoevsky's work as containing many different voices, unmerged into a single perspective, and not subordinated to the voice of the author. Each of these voices has its own perspective, its own validity, and its own narrative weight within the novel. The author does not place his own narrative voice between the character and the reader, but rather, allows characters to shock and subvert. It seems as if the books were written by multiple characters, not a single author's standpoint." (Robinson)

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* contains many different voices. Different characters in this novel have their own perspective of self-realization. Whether it is Vasudeva, Gotama or Siddhartha himself, each one's path to self-realization speaks volumes. For the Samanas, the journey towards inexpressible bliss is through unpitying self-denial. For Gotama, the path was through salvation from suffering and eightfold path. Govinda chose to follow the teaching of Gotama while Siddhartha leaves all doctrines and all teachers to reach his goal all alone. Hence, "*instead of a single objective world, held together by the author's voice, there is plurality of consciousness, each with its own world. The reader does not see a single reality presented by the author, but rather, how reality appears to each character. The text appears as an interaction of distinct perspectives or ideologies, borne by the different characters*" (Robinson).

In Discourse in the Novel

Bakhtin introduced the term *heteroglossia* which substitutes *polyphony* and denotes heterogeneity of styles, dialogism and ambivalence in the dialogic discourse of the novel as opposed to the monologic discourse to which traditional linguistics subscribes. Heteroglossia denotes the inclusion of different social strata in the artistic discourse, such as the language of the court, journalistic language, everyday speech, etc. Discourse seems to belong to a single speaker while, in fact, it contains the language and attitudes of more people. Speech in novelistic discourse is not a two-way process of one speaker addressing a second speaker. When it is uttered, it enters into dialogic relationships with multiple heterogeneous words, its meaning fuses with theirs or clatters with them in a *tension-filled environment*. (Petkova)

In this respect, teachings of Buddha profoundly affect both Siddhartha and Govinda's course of action. Siddhartha becomes confident of attaining Nirvana independently, for Buddha attained enlightenment without being taught the way while, Govinda, who was a "shadow" of Siddhartha chooses to follow Buddha (Hesse36). Govinda listened and accepted the teachings of Buddha while, the tension-filled environment of Siddhartha is clattered after conversing with the Buddha. Siddhartha "looked around him as if seeing the world for the first time. The world was beautiful, strange and mysterious" for him (39).

Carnival Elements in *Siddhartha*

According to Bakhtin:

Carnival is the context in which distinct individual voices are heard, flourish and interact together. The carnival creates the "threshold" situations where regular conventions are broken or reversed and genuine dialogue becomes possible. The

notion of a carnival was Bakhtin's way of describing Dostoevsky's polyphonic style: each individual character is strongly defined, and at the same time the reader witnesses the critical influence of each character upon the other. The voices of others are heard by each individual, and each inescapably shapes the character of the other. ("Mikhail Bakhtin")

We can witness a variety of characters, a characteristic of carnival behavior, in the subsection *OM* in the second part of the novel. The varieties of characters reflect the transformation Siddhartha has undergone. Prior to his ability to hear the sound of the river, "Siddhartha took many travellers across the river who had a son or daughter with them, and he could not see any of them without envying them, . . . When he now took the usual kind of travellers across, businessmen, soldiers and women, they no longer seemed alien to him as they once had" (Hesse129). "He did not understand or share their thoughts and views, but he shared with them life's urges and desires. . . Their vanities, desires and trivialities no longer seemed absurd to him; they had become understandable, lovable and even worthy of respect" (Hesse130).

At the beginning of the novel, we find number of characters opinion of Siddhartha. "There was happiness in his father's heart because of his son who was intelligent and thirsty for knowledge; he saw him growing up to be a great learned man, a priest, a prince among Brahmins" (Hesse 4). He was his mother's pride and Siddhartha greeted her with complete grace. "Love stirred in the hearts of the young Brahmins' daughters when Siddhartha walked through the streets of the town." "Govinda, his friend, the brahmin's son, loved him more than anybody else" (4). Siddhartha "delighted and made everyone happy." He was "a joy to all, there was yet no joy in his own heart" (5). Bakhtin's concept

of carnival is evident in these excerpts from the novel where numbers of characters voices are heard at the onset of the novel.

Language and Self

In *Bakhtin and his World*, Holquist helps us to comprehend Bakhtin's concept of *language and self*:

There is an intimate connection between the project of language and the project of selfhood: they both exist in order to mean. . . The situatedness of the self is a multiple phenomenon. It has been given the task of not being merely given. It must stand out in existence because it is dominated by a "drive to meaning", where meaning is understood as something still in the process of creation, something still bending toward the future as opposed to that which is already completed.(23)

When Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* opens, Siddhartha is considered as a "prince among Brahmins" (4). He is admired for his knowledge about scriptures at such a young age. Yet he has "no joy in his own heart" (5). His thoughts about himself are opposed to what people consider him. His *self* drives him to a journey to attain transcendental bliss and find the meaning of his existence. "The breach between what he has been taught and what he believes he needs to experience lies at the root of his discontent" (McCrory24). Hence, dominated by a *drive to meaning*, Siddhartha feels compelled to forsake home and family to attain transcendental bliss which, according to the holy texts, is the sole point of human existence.

As stated by Robinson, for Bakhtin, a mature subject should learn to reject the authoritative discourse and adopt only those parts of others' perspectives which fit with her or his values and experiences. Such a subject would have an

active, independent and responsible discourse, respecting the alien word in its autonomy. Siddhartha is indeed a mature subject who rejects authoritative discourse and adopts others' perspectives that fits with his values and experience. Three years with the ascetics are sufficient for Siddhartha to realize that the very knowledge acquired from austerities is a major barrier to self realization. He leaves the Samanas yet he knows that on the spiritual path, no effort is ever wasted. From Gotama's teachings he learns that "nobody finds salvation through teachings" (Hesse34). When Siddhartha leaves Buddha, Govinda decides to be a follower of the later. Though Siddhartha parts with his friend, he gets something of greater value. Therefore, he says about Gotama, "He has robbed me of my friend, who believed in me and who now believes in him; he was my shadow and is now Gotama's shadow. But he has given to me Siddhartha, myself" (36).

Self and Other

"Bakhtin's metaphor for the unity of the two elements constituting the relation of self and other is *dialogue*, the simultaneous unity of differences in the event of utterance" (Holquist 36). It is the unity of difference that conveys the meaning in totality and thereby helps us in having a better understanding of a personality. Citing one of the simple illustrations of Mikhail Bakhtin from *Bakhtin and His World* will indeed give us a crystal-clear idea about the complex formulation of *unity of differences*.

Let us envisage you and me confronting each other. There are certain things we both perceive, such as the table between us. But there are other things in the same encounter we both do not perceive. The simplest way to state the difference between us is to say that you see things about me (such as, at the elementary level, my forehead) and the world

(such as the wall behind my back) which are out of my sight. The fact that I cannot see such things does not mean they do not exist; we are so arranged that I simply cannot see them. But it is equally the case that I see things you are unable to see, such as your forehead, and the wall behind your back. In addition to the things we see jointly, there are aspects of our situation each of us can see only on our own, i.e. only from the unique place each of us occupies in the situation. (Holquist 36-37)

In the context of the example cited above, the words of Vasudeva to Siddhartha about thousands of people crossing the river echoes the unity of difference in the event of utterance.

I have taken thousands of people across and to all of them my river has been nothing but a hindrance on their journey. They have travelled for money and business, to weddings and on pilgrimages; the river has been their way and the ferryman was there to take them quickly across the obstacle. However, amongst the thousands there have been a few, four or five, to whom the river was not an obstacle. They have heard its voice and listened to it, and the river has become holy to them, as it has to me. (Hesse106)

Being receptive to his own *self* and in its relation to things around him that acts as *other*, complements Siddhartha's understanding of self.

Surplus of Seeing

In addition to Bakhtin's concept of understanding self in relation to other, *surplus of seeing* adds new dimension to a character's understanding of self. Bakhtin articulates this concept through discourse.

The aspect of the situation that you see, but I do not, is what Bakhtin calls your "surplus of seeing"; those things I see

but you cannot constitute my “surplus of seeing.” You know I have a surplus, and I know you have one as well. By adding the surplus that has been “given” to you to the surplus that has been “given” to me, I can build up an image that includes the whole of me. In other words, I am able to “conceive” or construct a whole out of the different situations we are in together. (Holquist36-37)

There is surplus of seeing by the characters in conversation on many occasions in the novel. Many people came to the courtesan Kamala but neither she nor anyone sees in her what Siddhartha does. “You are Kamala and no one else, and within you there is a stillness and sanctuary to which you can retreat at any time and be yourself, just as I can. Few people have that capacity and yet everyone could have it” (Hesse71-72). Considering Siddhartha’s observation, Kamala made an observation about him that he had not realized. Kamala said, “You are the best lover that I have had...And yet my dear, you have remained a Samana. You do not really love me—you love nobody. Is that not true?” (Hesse73). This involves surplus of seeing by both the characters about each other.

The self-theory of Bakhtin as stated by Michael Holquist posits that our consciousness *I* has neither any beginning nor any end. One can get to know about his birth solely through the account of others. Like birth, one can’t know about his death and it is again solely restricted to the knowledge of others.

Uniqueness of Experience

As Holquist interprets Bakhtin:

The activity of the world comes to each of us as a series of events that uniquely occur in the site *I*, and only *I*, occupy in the world. If I slash my finger with a knife, an “other” may be

intellectually aware that I am in pain, and may even deeply empathize with me. But the pain itself happens to me; it is addressed to where "I" am, not to the other. One way in which the uniqueness of my place in life may be judged is by the uniqueness of the death that will be mine. However, this uniqueness—in what only appears to be a paradox—is *shared*. We shall all die, but you cannot die in my place, any more than you can live from that site. And of course the reverse is also true; I cannot be in the unique place you occupy in the event of existence. (24)

This concept of uniqueness of experience finds expression in the novel when Siddhartha refuses to follow any system of beliefs and doctrines imposed by others. He says to Buddha:

You have done so by your own seeking, in your own way, through thought, through mediation, through knowledge, through enlightenment. You have learned nothing through teachings, and so I think, O Illustrious One, that nobody finds salvation through teachings. To nobody O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment. (Hesse33-34)

Besides Siddhartha, Govinda will also have to tread his path without the companionship of Siddhartha. After twenty years of togetherness they decide on separate paths. Another incident that exemplifies the unique place one occupies in the event of existence is the advice of Vasudeva to Siddhartha when the latter is worried about his son's venture. The usually reticent Vasudeva soothingly explains that everyone born into this world has their own path to tread, a path mapped out in one's karma. Vasudeva wisely says, "If you were to die ten times for him, you would not alter his destiny in the slightest" (121).

A study of Bakhtin's concept of dialogism in Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* can be summed up in the words of Bakhtin

from *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction" (qtd. In Morson and Emerson 60). Siddhartha and Govinda's search of self-realization exemplifies it. The novel opens with Siddhartha and Govinda leaving their home to join the Samanas for attaining transcendental bliss. Both of them part ways when Govinda decides to be with Gotama. Years later, when both of them meet, Siddhartha has attained inner peace by surrendering to the unity and his discourse on the stone overwhelms Govinda.

According to Bakhtin, the single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human existence is the open-ended dialogue. Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to argue and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. (qtd. in Morson and Emerson 59-60)

Hermann Hesse's novel exemplifies the view of Bakhtin that every individual possesses their unique world view which must be taken into consideration through dialogic interaction. Siddhartha participates in the dialogue of life by questioning the difference between the world as experienced in actions and the world as represented in discourse. His conversation with Gotama and Vasudeva makes him realise the uniqueness of experience in life. Besides conversing with people, he responds to the stimuli of environment, listens to what the river says, loves a stone and thereby, he is in dialogue with everything in the world.

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4

Post-traumatic Slave/Slavery Syndrome/Disorder

DR. JACQUES COULARDEAU

This paper examines two books dealing with what is called today the Post Traumatic Slave or Slavery Syndrome or Disorder (PTSS or PTSD) in sociology or psychology in the USA concerning the descendants of African slaves.

First, Post traumatic Slavery Disorder by Sekou Mims (M.Ed., MCW), Larry Higginbottom (MSW, LCSW), and Omar Reid (Psy.D), published by Pyramid Builders, Inc., Dorchester, Massachusetts, no date available, probably beginning of the 21st century, available at http://www.pyramidbuilders.org/pdfs/PTSD_Manuscript.pdf, accessed August 11, 2014.

Second, Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, America's legacy of enduring injury and healing by Dr Joy Degruy, published by Joy Degruy Publications Inc., Portland, Oregon, 2005.

I. Post Traumatic Slavery Disorder

This book conveys a track-blazing barrier-breaking inspirational philosophy directly implemented in the real world. The book is the production of three authors, all greatly qualified in their fields, who are endowing the Nation of Islam with a policy, a program and an objective: to liberate African Americans, the descendants of the slaves of the past,

from the trauma of this slave experience planted in their minds over more than 383 years (that duration dates the book to the year 2002):

- 246 years of slavery from 1619 (first slaves in Virginia) to 1865 (full abolition of slavery);
- 100 years of Jim Crowism and segregation, and then Civil Rights Movement from 1865 to 1965 (Civil Rights Act, 1964, Voting Rights Act 1965);

Since then inclusion in democracy.

The book is explicit about how the African deportees (80 millions of them died in the deportation and slavery that followed their capture) were transformed into slaves following the teaching of Willie Lynch in 1712. The book is clear about the necessity to face history and the reality of this savage period of slavery at an early age. In fact trying to forget, to avoid speaking of it is a symptom of the PT Slavery they are speaking of. Here are the words of Willie Lynch:

“Take the meanest and most restless nigger, strip him of his clothes in front of the remaining male niggers, the female, the nigger infant, tar and feather him, tie each leg to a different horse in opposite directions, set him fire and beat both horse to pull him apart in front of the remaining niggers. The next step is to take a bullwhip and beat the remaining nigger male to the point of death in front of the female and the infant. Don’t kill him, but put the fear of God in him, for he can be useful for future breeding. . . We reversed nature by burning and pulling one civilized nigger apart and bull whipping the other to the point of death—all in her presence.”¹

1 The Willie Lynch Letter and The Making of a Slave, Kashif Malik Hassan-EL, February 1999, at http://www.lojsociety.org/Lets_Make_A_Slave_The_Making_Of_A_Slave.pdf, accessed August 11, 2014

And to echo this bleak description that is the starting point of the making of a slave according to Willie Lynch, we could keep in mind the song *Another Man Done Gone*, as the same treatment under Jim Crowism and segregation that vastly developed the practice of lynching.

“Another man done gone, He had a long chain on, They hung him in a tree, They let his children see, When he was hangin' dead, The captain turn his head, He's from the county farm, I didn't know his name, Another man done gone.”²

The book starts with a parallel between the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder that has been identified in survivors of great accidents, catastrophes or wars for both fighting sides and for civilians bystanders or collateral victims. It is quite obvious that even the worst war (WWII and the final solution known as the Holocaust or the Shoah) or the worst civil wars (there are plenty of examples) cannot compare in length with the African Holocaust³. 246 years of slavery represent at least ten generations of people born and

2 <http://www.metrolyrics.com/another-man-done-gone-lyrics-johnny-cash.html>, accessed August 11, 2014

3 <http://www.africanholocaust.net/>, accessed September 4, 2014: “The word “Maafa” (also known as the African Holocaust) is derived from a Kiswahili word meaning disaster, terrible occurrence or great tragedy. The term today collectively refers to the Pan-African study of the 500 hundred years of ongoing suffering of people of African heritage through Slavery, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, oppression, invasions and exploitation.” Note this does not consider the slave trade imposed onto black Africa in Antiquity and Islam. The latter over fourteen centuries (and still going on in marginal situations) has concerned the same number of people as the trans-Atlantic slave trade that lasted five centuries. Check too John Henrik Clarke, *Christopher Columbus and the Afrikan Holocaust, Slavery and the Rise of European Capitalism*, Eworld Inc., Buffalo, New York, 1993.

raised in slavery, once the first generation or the new arrivals had been broken into the condition.

The book is clear as for the transmission from one generation to the next (which cannot be considered hereditary since it is not genetic), the parents educating their children to be ready to suffer the least hence to rebel the least. That implied avoiding learning the language of the whites, English, both spoken (keeping some gibberish form of it) and especially written. A black slave found trying to read got his/her eyes enucleated and his/her tongue cut out, which meant sure death in a short time, be it only due to infections or just starvation, or even self-starvation to shorten the time during which they were burdens to their communities. The second attitude transmitted from parents to children was a necessary distance and aloofness of the parents towards the children and of the children towards the parents to be ready when they were going to be sold. The third consequence is about the relations between men and women. Men were breeding animals and could not attach themselves too much to the females they were impregnating and the women were breeding animals too who had to be ready to be impregnated at any time by any male on the plantation, and the children were slaves, a property to be exploited or sold as an extra income.

The book came ten years before the recent film *Django Unchained*⁴ that gives some examples of how some black males were turned into to-the-death fighters (called gladiators in another era) for the entertainment of the

4 Quentin Tarantino, director, 2012, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1853728/combined>, accessed August 11, 2014. We could also think of the film, *12 Years a Slave*, 2013, though the book it is based on was published in 1853 by Solomon Northup.

masters. Such fighters were condemned to be killed young, either by their opponents if the latter won, or by the master when his fighter was no longer able to win and hence earn his survival. And refusing to fight meant instant death or being sold away to some mine or other punishing institution in order for the rebel to die fast and in great suffering.

The interesting point is that the self-protective attitudes of the slaves became the self-inflicted handicaps in the next period: to work as much as possible to be accepted as a good nigger; to refuse any education not to be seen as uppity and dangerous for the whites' superiority; to refuse (as for males) any marital commitment and yet to breed around multiple children with multiple partners and in absolute lack of any stability; to be ready (as for women) to enter relationships with any man available at any time to avoid being ostracized because unwomanly; to look for easy money (as for children) without any work or education behind leading to prostitution, pimping, gangs, crime, and so on.

The book is going to surprise you. It defends the idea that during the segregation and Jim Crow period the blacks were educated in all black schools and thus could excel, even if it were in practical and vocational subjects and with limited objectives. At least, everyone got some education and accepted to get it and not only the Talented Tenth of W.E.B. Dubois. In contrast to this accepted education within segregation, when integration arrived, the Black minority was confronted to the white majority in integrated schools and that led to the reactivation of the negative attitudes of the time of Slavery since they were once again face to face with the whites. This book defends and advocates the idea that this PT Slavery Disorder can only be solved by the Blacks with the Blacks and for the Blacks. No escape from this principle.

I would like to insist on another idea that is essential still today and that the authors call the “dumbing down process.” It is extremely revealing about the PT Slavery Disorder. In integrated education the Blacks are looked down upon by the Whites , which makes them feel inferior, hence become rebellious, hence be classified a-social or even worse. They have been rendered dumb by the situation and by the whites. But they reactivate an old reflex of the time of slavery when mothers always declared their children, especially boys, as being dumb, ignorant, clumsy, lazy or whatever to avoid their being sold away, at least as long as possible. In the new integrated schools the Blacks, particularly boys, push themselves down into some dumbbed down attitude to avoid being picked out and hence victimized in a way or another. And the school system is very quick at classifying these students as emotionally disturbed and/or socially maladjusted, and/or consequently learning disabled, which leads the vast majority of Black boys and a fair proportion of Black girls into special education instead of the standard stream of mental and knowledge development.

This leads to a phenomenal concept of “mentalcide” (a cross of mental with homicide and suicide, showing the two directions of the concept, down against the blacks and up in front of the whites, coming respectively from the whites out of racism and from the blacks out of fear). This mentalcide is probably the most difficult symptom and phenomenon to repair, to heal in order to salvage the minds of these young people, and eventually their adult parents and relatives. But the authors also insist on mentalcide on the side of the whites. The whites during the Jim Crow segregation period could be violent with the blacks, lynch them, humiliate them, kill them out of pure pleasure or as simple game hunting, treat them as cattle in their sharecropper positions because the whites had

also spread over their mind, their conscience, their ethical sense, their religious beliefs, over whatever makes them human, a veil of mentalcide that enabled them to see the blacks as not human. During slavery they were just plain real estate or chattel possessions. But after the abolition of slavery they were seen as not human, not deserving any human treatment not because these whites were necessarily criminals in their minds, but because their minds had been killed by the situation (homicide) or by the shame they might have felt in front of what they were doing (suicide): they killed their own minds when confronted with the blacks.

Then the book proposes an important fourth chapter that explains how the blacks can come out of this absurd situation, hence can be healed from PT Slavery Disorder. The main idea from my point of view is that the solution has to be both individual and collective. Each individual has to make a personal effort to grasp the seriousness of their situation and the urgency of a treatment, but at the same time, meditation is not enough if it is not collectively prepared and experienced. That means the healing process has to be carried out in small groups with a qualified person to manage the group. This means that this qualified person will have to get each individual and the group to the consciousness of the past, of the causes, of the symptoms, of the urgency and of the possible solutions. Then each individual has to get down into their heritage, past and family genogram on both sides of their families, their two parents and beyond as far as possible. Then each individual will have to meditate on the lot, fate, curse, luck or whatever, positive and negative of these ancestors. It is essential to understand that sharing is central: sharing with the qualified person who is managing the operation, and sharing with the group in full open-mindedness and critical sense.

Think in that line of Booker T. Washington's insistence on having no ancestry apart from his mother since he was born a slave from a mother who was a slave and a white man who just took advantage of her along the way, which is called rape in any sexual dictionary. Here the authors insist on rebuilding that ancestry as far as possible into the slavery period and what's more to get to some kind of balance of this ancestry with the main emphasis on the positive achievements of these ancestors, the first one being survival, but how did they survive, by doing what, learning what, all things the present descendant could be proud of.

To conclude with this book I would like to make two critical remarks.

The first one is that the past situation is often, too often, seen as mainly negative and though it is asserted here and there, now and then, that there were some blacks who managed to get out of the disorder and pave the way to some healing procedure, some exit from the exploitative situation; though it is said from time to time that the slaves evolved some resisting and adaptive procedures that could manage for them to avoid the worst punishments and violence, it is not emphasized enough that human beings, and the blacks are human beings, are flexible, adaptive and always dialectical. In the worst situations human beings, individually or collectively, look for solutions that protect them and that liberate them. All along the slavery and segregation periods the Blacks dreamed of their liberation and some fought individually (escape, the Underground Railroad) or collectively (slow down work in spite of the whipping and the barking of both whites and dogs). In a man there is always that dialectic and that's why this PT Slavery Disorder can be healed because, no matter how thick the veil of mentalcide might be, there is deep under it the desire to get

free, to get to the Promised Land, to be liberated, a real Mosaic dream borrowed directly from the Whites' New or Old Testament.

The second remark is that we have to understand that any human society has to be hierarchical because the human brain cannot think and could not work in any other way, but hierarchy must not mean superior and inferior but rather that everyone, no matter how qualified one is, still has some knowledge to learn, some skill to acquire, some improvement to achieve, for oneself for sure, but also for everyone else, because Homo Sapiens from his very start in Africa could not have survived and spread all over the planet without a fair dose of collective action and thinking. This then means the way human society is managed has to be the management of the people, by the people, for the people. Then in any society that forgets these principles, even the supposedly most advanced democratic societies, there is a dose of economic starvation used by some in power positions in order to eliminate those who represent a danger for their power. And too often there is no appeal procedure against the decisions of these powerful or averagely powerful people, or if there is an appeal procedure it takes so much time that when it succeeds the plaintiff, who is the victim in this case, has died of starvation or has become completely depressive and suicidal, or has already committed suicide giving the abusive people in these power positions a victory they do not deserve.

More than capitalism, what is at stake is the selfishness of those who climb up in the hierarchy of society and transform their positions into authoritarian if not totalitarian fortresses that bombard those under the walls of this fortress who do not want to get on their knees and worship the master, the prophet, the leader, the dictator, or whoever this person believes he/she is, maybe God himself. I would have

the tendency to consider that Stalinism, for example, is one such drift and is typical of an unhealed Post Traumatic Proletarian Disorder/Syndrome since for them industrial work is slavery. The struggle is thus far from just being that of the Blacks in America. All Post Traumatic Social Disorder/Syndrome victims should and can unite. We are coming to a widening of the concept which will lead us to our conclusion after discussing the second book.

II. Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

This book is fascinating but if the previous one was from a Black Muslim point of view and was published in 2002, this one is from a Christian point of view and was published in 2005. We could wonder about the author's Christian reference page 122 where she quotes the first half of *Proverbs*, 23:7 ("... for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.") Note her presentation implies the first part of the verse is cut off whereas in reality it is the second part that is cut off and the previous verse is omitted. But let's widen the quotation:

"Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: ⁷For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."⁵

This quotation is a denunciation of a hypocrite who shows one attitude but contains the opposite attitude deep in his heart, who is living with other people and yet hates them. But her text drags that meaning to something completely different:

"Beliefs can so color our minds that we become paralyzed, unable to move beyond our fears and doubts, thus limiting our choices. Blind to our potential, we wander aimlessly, searching

5 Proverbs 23:6-7, King James Bible

for enlightenment, yet remain barred from the infinite possibilities that are all around us. The essence of belief's influence was captured in this passage from Proverbs, "*. . . for as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" Proverbs 23:7" (122)

She is dealing with something completely different: mental alienation, PTSS actually when what we think dictates our behaviors or blocks our possible behaviors. She speaks of something negative in one individual, whereas the Bible speaks of one type of hypocritical people: the bad thought does not prevent him from doing the right thing: he just does it because of the circumstances that force him to, yet he does not agree with, approve of what he is doing, but he is saying nothing. Her reference to the Bible is a ritual nod that does not mean any deep reflection on the original meaning of the quoted verse which might not even have been checked. It is typically taken out of its context here.

The difference in religious references between the two books we are examining is fundamental particularly in the general feeling we get in Dr Degruy's book that the whites have to come out and express remorse and contrition for what their ancestors have done, and the benefits of which they are still enjoying, and beg for pardon and forgiveness. This side of the book makes it at times very bothering if not just plain un-effective.

Let me be clear about the crime against humanity performed by the Europeans when instating, developing and intensively practicing slave trade across the Atlantic and then slavery in the plantations in the Americas in general. It is unpardonable, unforgivable. And yet we should differentiate the Anglo-Saxon later American Protestant practice from the French and Spanish/Portuguese Catholic practice. But we'd better think the crime itself over. The crime was performed and is now by far too far away to look for some kind of justice

against the criminals. We can always get Willie Lynch out of his tomb, hang him, draw him and quarter him. That would not help at all in solving the problem. And we can go after his descendants but that will not solve the problem either.

The book is well inspired in recalling the past and the horrifying terrifying acts of the slave owners, though Joy DeGruy only considers the English side of this slavery. Slave trade though was not invented by the English and the first slaves in Virginia were brought in 1619 by the Dutch who still controlled New Amsterdam, due to become New York. It would have been a nice thing if she had added the Willie Lynch case in her approach. He is the one who invented and advocated the extreme slave system in the English colonies, though he was not from there and was only invited to help in 1712.

To define the Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome, she refers to Jack Hitt's⁶ general listing of the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome:

- "Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.
- Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues.
- Marked diminished interest or participation in significant activities.

6 Jack Hitt is an American author. He is a contributing editor to The New York Times Magazine, Harper's, and This American Life and has also written for the now-defunct magazine Lingua Franca. He frequently appears in places like Rolling Stone, Wired, and Outside Magazine. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Hitt, accessed August 14, 2014

- Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.
- Restricted range of affect.
- Sense of foreshortened future (in other words, does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or normal life span.)
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- Irritability or outburst of anger.
- Difficulty concentrating.”⁷

As we can see these symptoms are personal and require to be processed individually, but what is important here is the reference to reparations: the processing has to be based on the repentance and reparations of the whites seen as the American society and government. But now reparations have been decided by American courts and paid by the Federal Government, the Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is still there and has to be dealt with.

We should also start thinking beyond 2005. A Black president was elected in 2008 and reelected in 2012. I heard former communist Angela Davis saying in Paris in March 2013 that everyone before the election was convinced he was not going to be reelected, and he was. Unluckily for Angela Davis, she was badly informed or just biased. I followed the 2012 campaign and read the few whistle blowing articles on the opinion polls about the elections that revealed the Latinos (absorbed in the “white category” by the biased opinion poll

7 “Making the case for racial reparations: does America owe a debt to the descendants of its slaves?” published in Harper’s Magazine in November 2000, and republished by Raymond Winbush, PhD, ed., in *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations*, New York, NY, Harper Collins, 2003.

designers and analyzers) and the Blacks were going to vote in a landslide for Obama. And that's what happened, which gave Obama a very comfortable victory.

Joy DeGruy is on that same line as Angela Davis: she systematically ignores the fact that the future of the Blacks can only come from them themselves, as the Black Muslims say, and from the allies they might get in the direction of improving the situation by making our reading of the constitution better, more progressive, and then fighting together to get these improvements implemented. It cannot come from any kind of repentance from the whites because such repentance is unfeasible. It is too late for that. It will have to come from daily struggle and democratic development.

She defends Affirmative Action, which is her right, but she is misled by her a priori opinion. In North Carolina, Charlotte was rocked in 1969-70 by the Blacks against the bussing system that forced Black children to get up at five to be bussed to predominantly white schools and with no return movement from the whites because the white families decided to put their children in private schools, menacing the concerned public schools with losing classes. The Blacks themselves went against this inhuman—for them—project of affirmative action.

In 1973 in Davis, California, Affirmative Action was asserted by the Chancellor of the University, and then the famous Bakke case was partially won in the US Supreme Court that ruled a student who has the grades to be selected into any school cannot be sidetracked for any reason, particularly his racial origin.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (No. 7811), Argued: October 12, 1977, Decided: June 28, 1978

"The *Bakke* case aroused intense controversy. . . On June 27, 1978, the Court divided sharply in its decision, presenting six separate opinions. Four justices chose to address only the statutory issue of Title VI and found for Bakke, including his admission to the medical school, because the quota in the university's admission plan had clearly excluded Bakke on the basis of his race. Four justices addressed the larger constitutional issue of the Equal Protection Clause and found for the medical school because its intent was not to exclude Bakke but only to include individuals of other races for compelling government reasons. The deciding swing vote was cast by Justice LEWIS F. POWELL JR., who found for both. Powell's contention was that the Title VI plurality was correct in that the university had violated the "plain meaning" of the CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, which proscribed discrimination based on race, and ordered Bakke be admitted to the medical school. But Powell also found that the university could use "race-conscious" factors in selecting its applicants in order to achieve the benefits of a "diverse student body."

This divided decision settled the *Bakke* case, but it left the legal issue muddled: what actions, if any, could the state take to protect minorities in the marketplace? Subsequent court decisions struggled repeatedly over this primary civil rights question."⁸

When Affirmative Action deals with compulsory quotas it is unacceptable. Only the students who have the proper grades are supposed to be selected. If Affirmative Action is the organization of special reinforcing classes or actions for ALL students who need them (meaning not registered on any discriminating parameter, even positive) it is acceptable. To help the weaker, not the darker, is ethical. To give the weaker

8 West's *Encyclopedia of American Law*, edition 2. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. All rights reserved, <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Bakke+case>, accessed August 14, 2014

a privilege is unethical, and in this case to give the darker a privilege is unethical twice as much (and racist since it assumes from the start the darker are necessarily weaker), and in both cases anyway unfair to the others. Unfair to the their future public: would one trust a doctor who got his degree thanks to a 20% premium in his exam results on the basis of ANY consideration whatsoever? The question is not the color of the doctor, or his national origin, or his sex or gender, but the very principle that he/she will be 20% under the acceptable level.

And yet, this book is essential. It reveals one fundamental crime that is added to the selective functioning of western society. A human society can only be hierarchical because the brain, as I have already said, can only work hierarchically, and nature furthermore is hierarchically structured. The point is what we do with this hierarchy. Do we transform it into a hunt or a chase against some categories of people, blacks, Indians, Japanese, Christians, Muslims, Jews, or whoever, we have put at the bottom of the hierarchy? Or do we use this hierarchy to enable some excellence to come up to the top with a strong social upward movement of the whole society and of any individual in that society based on merit and only merit? Asking the two questions tells on which side one stands, and the answers are obvious. Then one asks, demands, requires justice which means the obligation NOT to add anything else, positive like wealth or negative like color, to the merit and motivation of all individuals and then one can look for all procedures to help the weaker become more motivated and better. But quotas and all reverse racism, reverse segregation, reverse exclusion is unacceptable for ethical, moral and human reasons. What's more it would kill the dynamic of a country in no time.

We should always wonder if we only consider merit and value when we assess a person. We should wonder whether any dress code, behavior code, religious or secular code, political or neutral code have negative or positive effects and if they have one single negative effect they should be banned, because they become a segregation.

This book is essential to show the extreme extension slavery reached, and after slavery segregation and Jim Crow laws. The book is weak on what we can do, all of us, but first of all Blacks, since they alone are considered in this book. They have to take their own future in their own hands and first of all get as many people suffering from this Post Traumatic Slave/Slavery Syndrome/Disorder, along with members of their communities who have already negotiated the obstacle, in order to step beyond, clear their minds, free themselves and start looking at their past and present in a balanced way, both positive and negative.

When, for example, she says that music is part of the alienation of Blacks because it broadcasts stereotypes, she is biased. The gangsta rap she is thinking of is produced by some Black artists who are down-casting their own community for one. And for two the Blacks have brought polyrhythmic music to the whole world and their contribution to modern music is enormous. The blacks Blacks have to recapture their contribution to the world and start being proud of it. That's the only way to step over their Post Traumatic Slavery/Slave Syndrome/Disorder.

Barack Obama has done more by himself in six years now than anyone else could have thought. If that is not an achievement of the Blacks, what is?

But the main criticism about the book is that it proposes no clear procedure to heal this PTSS the way the Black

Muslim inspired approach does. It sets vast general objectives but no concrete down to earth method, and that's what the Blacks in America, African Americans need most of all: a simple collective procedure for every single individual and the first step is to reconstruct one's genealogical past and then, with the help of family, friends and community members, rebuild their ancestors' balance sheets and their own balance sheets with what they, as members of their community and as individuals, have actually done in their life, both positive and negative, and then maybe collectively all these individuals might be able to start rebuilding their future.

If you waited for the whites to come begging on their knees for your forgiveness you would be waiting in vain. If you astonished them with your achievements, they would come to you and eventually congratulate you, even if some would be envious, jealous, disruptive and even destructive. Quite a few white people did cast their votes, twice mind you, for a black president. The aggressive and hostile minority will always be hostile and aggressive. Build your community within the American society and excel there and you will have the majority of the people on your side and the minority will be controllable. Barack and Michelle Obama did it. So why not every single Black man and woman, every single Black boy and girl? And then the descendants of Black slaves and the descendants of slave owners will be able to sit at the same table and eat together.

Joy DeGruy concludes: "I tremble with eager anticipation of change, and with a profound certainty of victory." And I am afraid she does not realize the word "victory" implies a war and I dare say it is not a war, at best a struggle but in which no one will be victorious or defeated. The next stage will be better but it will be better for everyone,

Blacks, Latinos, Indians, Asians and Whites alike. It has to be everyone or the struggle would go on forever.

Conclusion

These two books are dealing with a very particular problem that exists in the USA, but must not be reduced to the Blacks or to the USA.

The Catholic Church of the United States has proposed a policy to address Native Americans in their plight that is summarized by three words: remember, reconcile, recommit, and this triad can be implemented here too.

It is indispensable to remember and Black Muslims make it a duty for everyone who has an ancestry problem to start here: recapture your ancestry as far as you can. Then, to remember is not only to put names on the right people and in the proper order, but also to balance their pros and their cons, their achievements and their failures, both from their points of view and from a wider modern point of view. Booker T. Washington recalls how when he was a child and his mother was still a slave she came one night with a chicken she cooked to feed her children. He explains that this chicken had to have been borrowed of sorts from the planter's poultry yard in the most illegal way. But Booker T. Washington refuses to consider she had stolen it and that it was a theft for her, though he admits in his modern mind he would consider it as a theft now, but not then. He could have gone one step further and the balance sheet of his mother was that she was able to put her own life on the table to feed her children whose survival was more important for her than her own life, because thieving was not exactly welcome for a slave on a plantation in Virginia in the 1850s.

Then we have to reconcile.

We must reconcile ourselves with ourselves, each one of us with the deeper self we have in us. This is the most difficult part. That's where the first book was fascinating because of the procedure it proposed. We have to go down in our own selves and then bring up all we can find and think of and discuss it with others in a formal group of people engaged in the same procedure. This is true for every single person in life, but those who have been the victims of some kind of segregation or trauma are locked up in themselves and have lost the conscience of what caused the trauma that causes now the handicap.

We must get reconciled with one another within our group, be it the family, the neighborhood or the ethnic, social or cultural group(s) we belong to. And this means we have to share our exploration of our ancestry and ourselves. That's the second most difficult part: we have to reveal to others things we consider very secret but a trauma can be solved only if we make it public, if we face it in public, knowing that some people will be supportive and some will be very hostile. By making it public I do not mean advertising it in the press or on TV, but sharing it with a group of people who are anonymous witnesses of our process of liberation because they are going through the same process of liberation as us within the same group.

Finally, we have to reconcile ourselves as a social being with society as a whole. For some that means to forgive and be forgiven. But when we are dealing with an evil that officially stopped 150 years ago, five generations ago, forgiving does not mean much for the people of today. We have to accept to let bygones be bygones. But we must not forget the past nor must we not put the past on the back burner for later use or revival. We must put it away in the glass case of past events, past crimes, past achievements or

whatever. There Blacks meet Whites because on both sides they must let bygones be bygones and that means getting over the idea that color has any force in determining the value of anyone and one's attitude to anyone. This is the most difficult and the longest process of them all. It may take a couple of generations to get through, and even so.

Finally, we have to recommit ourselves to the basic principles and objectives of Homo Sapiens himself: to create and support a society based on merit, founded on development, constructed on freedom, equality and empathetic love, entirely centered on knowledge, finding and accessing knowledge, acquiring and assimilating knowledge, sharing and intertwining knowledge. This is the knowledge society and the knowledge economy of today and tomorrow. And that has been the fundamental human mental orientation all along.

From sensation to perception and to identification (first conceptualization of language); then, observation, experimentation and speculation (second conceptualization of religion, science, philosophy and the arts). If Homo Sapiens were able to integrate some Homo Neanderthalensis when they met; if Homo Sapiens were able to move from Africa to Latin America, following the stars via Siberia, generation after generation, because of their language(s), their understanding of the world and the universe; if Homo Sapiens were able to dedicate some of their survival time to painting animals in caves, carving animals on stones or assembling stones to represent animals or some cosmic wheels on hills and mountains, there is no reason why modern human beings should not be able to recommit themselves to these vast objectives in the full respect of human nature and Mother Nature.

And the Black descendants in the United States of African slaves in America are blazing the trail and showing the way. And we can easily think of a Post Traumatic Colonial Syndrome/Disorder, or a Post Traumatic Feudal Syndrome/Disorder, or a Post Traumatic Proletarian Syndrome/Disorder, or any other Post Traumatic Syndrome/Disorder after any traumatic even in the history of the world, a country or a collective human entity.

**Khuswant Singh's *Delhi A Novel*:
A Keledoscopic Vision of
Culturalism and Ethnicity**

DR. BRAJENDRA KUMAR DAS

Massive migration in the globalised and glocalised world has given rise to vast cultural mosaics and ethnic multiplicity at the spaces of migrants' settlement. This phenomenology bears its roots in the demise of empiricism at the concomitant history of decolonization in the global market. Waves of migrants from formerly colonized areas move to the metropolitan centres of the white west for the thirst of knowledge, craze for power and riches. Multifarious cultural and ethnic groups either from the homeland or in the host land are forced to meet each other. That leads them to reciprocate or reappropriate their native culture. This interchange of various cultures gives rise to conflict and class creating violence, bloodshed and communal riots. Especially, in the cultural market this migration in the large scale forges new literate dynamics that foreground multiculturalism and ethnicity. Cultural conflict and ethnic violence are born out of multiple identities in the migrant world. Culture and ethnicity are closely related to the nation-state. According to Gellner, the establishment of the nation-state has resulted in the acceptance of a high culture in society. This culture has been coded to the need of bureaucratic and technological communication doctrines at schools. It replaces the common

local cultures adopted by the majority prior to the establishment of the nation-state and provides for the bonding of society where atomized individuals live. There will be resistance from local cultures against this dominant culture and, if the local culture is successful in this, it does not replace the alien high culture by the old local low culture, rather it creates a new high culture of its own.

The novel is a story that spans both the grandeur and squalor of the city that it seeks to uncover through a perverse romance. A city that has witnessed at least seven rounds of complete destruction and reconstruction, Delhi, the capital of India, is a city of culture and calamity, of conceit and capability, of poets and pests, of politicians and saints. To capture the manifest and obscure faces of Delhi, requires a canvas that delights and nauseates in equal measure. Perhaps Khushwant Singh knew of this aspect of his beloved city, when he created a bawdy, old, reprobate protagonist, in love with a *hijra* (eunuch) whore, as the person seeking to describe his love-hate relationship with that whore and this city. While the principal narrator busies himself with unusual sexual acts with his half-man, half-woman partner Bhagmati, he also allows himself pleasures with foreign and native beauties, all leading him into another fold, another fleshy nook, to his conquests. This romance fades to the backdrop as the narrator discovers the legends that lurk in various streets, forts, abandoned palaces, embankments, towers, temples, mosques, gurudwaras, memorials, burial grounds and coffee houses of the city.

The greatest delight in the novel, lies in reading about Timur, Mir Taqi, Nadir Shah, Hazrat Kaki, Nizamuddin, Bahadur Shah Zafar & Moghuls, Tuglaks, Lodhis, First War of Indian Independence (or The Sepoy Mutiny), emperors, temptresses, poets, saints, Sikhs who helped British win in

1857, bodies burning on banks of Yamuna, Englishmen, builders of New Delhi, Aurangzeb, neo-converts to Islam or Sikhism, Khusrau, assassins of Indira and mobs who rioted after partition and after Indira's assassination and Mahatma Gandhi. The most captivating details of this novel is about the innumerable people who lend their blood, their faith, their best and worst aspirations and actions to provide that special character, mystery, mystique to Delhi. The novel is an ode by a son of Delhi to his fascination with undying and relentless, razed and raging, crazed and craving, old and ageless, brutal and brave, buried and slaved, free and frayed, remorseless and mourning, Hindu, Islamic, Sikh and in equal measure Sufi and atheist soul.

The narrative is at its best when it gives an account of Aurangzeb, Nadir Shah, the Sikh fighters of 1857 war, Zafar, a refugee who wants to avenge the death of his family members, or Mir Taqi: for writing these pieces alone, Khushwant Singh deserves a permanent place in the literary tradition of India and the World. These characters, chosen from several generations of possibilities, speak with an honest characteristic of Khushwant Singh's writing: the wanton is as omnipresent as is the sacrosanct. There are many verses from major poets (including Mir and Zafar) that appear in translation. It was Mir who once said that Delhi alone is a city of love; all those that have passed through have looted it. While Ghalib is not mentioned outright as a narrator, his times are described quite well as he was a contemporary of Zafar, and befittingly, the novel starts with an epigram from Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib: I asked my soul: What is Delhi?

For anyone who has lived in India between 1970 and now, the name Khushwant Singh brings memories of his Santa-Banta jokes and his weekly column that appears in

most newspapers, with a caricature of him sitting in a light bulb. In those columns as well as here, Khushwant always succeeds in telling us a good story, occasionally writing lines that are exquisite, occasionally saying things that are offensive to many or just seem like an injustice to the caliber that this grand old man of letters definitely has. To love and discover Delhi, one must learn to ignore its smell of piss and shit (New York these days has plenty of that), ignore its hostile, acerbic reception to guests and visitors, ignore its age, bitterness, immensity and obscenity. To read Khushwant Singh, one must learn to ignore the trivia and trivial, that comes packaged with the historical and memorable writing. The notoriety of the writer, in this case, must not stop us from savoring fantastic details about Mehrauli, Hauz Khas, Nizamuddin and Red Fort, among others. For example, do you know the name of five villages that the Pandavas asked for after their exile? Do you know who built Hauz Khas? Do you know who saved the British army from total annihilation in Delhi and why? After reading *Train to Pakistan* and *Delhi*, I have become increasingly convinced that Mr. Singh is our man for the future: he will be seen as the painter whose canvas is populated with the by lanes and backdoors that whisper realistic details about people and times that most of his contemporary authors fail to touch or write about. He writes without bothering to explain things to non-Indians, so foreigners will need to work harder to read him, but since he writes about people, politics and religion, issues that are and will remain important to every inhabitant of Delhi, Punjab and India, his writings will redeem him in eyes of one and all. This man in the light bulb, who was born in 1915, has translated many great poets from Punjabi and Urdu into English, has written about history of Sikhism and Ranjit Singh, and yes, he has also written about Sex and Scotch with

unfailing enthusiasm. He has known every major Indian writer of twentieth century, and outlived most of them, to tell these tales, and when he speaks, we grandchildren can only wonder.

If India is a land of unresolved contradictions and organized chaos at work, Delhi is befitting as its capital. The soil of Delhi boasts of sweat and blood of at least twenty six centuries, starting with Indraprasta, as mentioned in Mahabharata, (though earliest archeological remains are, I believe, from the sixth century BC), to the current city that has well over twenty million inhabitants. Khushwant Singh's novel is laced with details about history and monuments of Delhi that take the reader through the familiar names and lanes, providing meaning and mannerism to rocks, stones, bricks, and ghosts from a bygone era. The dead and alive live in harmony in this city, the palaces turn to wilderness and wilderness to townships in manner of few centuries. The dominant Gods change, the language and the tongues change, the spices and kitchens invent new flavors and aromas, and all that appears or disappears, stays as a memory or as song, in dust or in verse, through arts and crafts that traveled out of that time and place. The temples were destroyed to create mosques, mosques razed to create ruins, ruins restored into housing colonies, housing colonies for refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tibet, Pandits from Kashmir. Roads raised over remains of slums, slums planted over public gardens, parks overgrown over unclaimed or reclaimed lands. In such a city, Khushwant Singh's characters receive their share of history by breathing the air that stinks of history and rage, that seduces with mango flavors and rum punches. In this history, they seek their own woes and pleasures.

A city revealed, is a personality understood: it is the relationship with Delhi that defines the character of a Delhiwallah, the protagonist of the novel, the writer as well as the reader who wanders through a fifteen hundred square kilometers landmass with a population density of ten thousand per square kilometer. The Delhi air is packed with centuries of whispers; Khushwant packs many interesting ones into this novel. Read it for Mir, read it for Zafar, Nadir Shah, Timur, Khawaja, Mahatma, and for knowing about crazy Budh Singh, who dies an irrational death at the hands of mob in 1980s. Read the novel to gaze and grapple with the treacherous, bloody, voluptuous, insatiable, inexhaustible, adventurous, amorous, pompous, powerful, poetic, prosaic, potent & impotent, passive and purgative, lurid and lucrative avatars of Delhi, and of Delhiwallahs.

Let me end this review by lines written by quoting a few poets. First Ghalib and Zauq: Asad/ we've agreed that we would remain in Delhi—what will we eat? Zauq: Who would quit the lanes of Delhi and suffer exile? But again, let us end with Mir, both heart and Delhi may have been worn out/ But some little pleasures still remain in this ruined house.

Singh's concept of culture is broad and boundless that cannot be pinned down into a special category. So far his ethnicity is concerned he is more secular, democratic, and highly catholic in his approach. It is fabulously marked that his approach to culture and ethnicity is more humanist than one-sidedness. His purpose behind his writings, fictional or non-fictional and journalistic pieces is to shape a world culture that brings all people into an integrated whole. The feeling of any difference in culture and ethnicity is not at a humane rather a devastating social disorder. Even his jokes in the form of light and grave humour are ever entertaining and exploring aphorism.

Delhi a novel is autobiographical, which is a picture-gallery of cross-culturalism and ethnicity. His journey is physically within the margin of Delhi but the centre of his search for holistic culture is deconstructive.

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6

An Inquiry into Literary Postmodernism

DR. DHARANIDHAR SAHU

The Modern Age, grossly the first four decades of the twentieth century, was a period of turmoil and change. It was also a period of experimentation in the fields of science, technology and arts. So far as Literature was concerned, it was remarkable for avant-gardism. The quintessential tendency of that age was a lament for fragmentation and decadence accompanied by a desire to totalize experience, to recuperate the lost unity and to make something new. As some historians believe, that tendency was carried to its extreme limit by totalitarian regimes in Germany and elsewhere. Post-modernism, many literary historians believe, began with the aftershocks of the Second World War (1939-1945). That war and the Holocaust had shaken the thinking process of the western society to such an extent that a revaluation of values was considered inevitable. Postmodernism, though it defined itself in the terms of its radical disagreement with Modernism, retains some of the tacitly stated assumptions of Modernism.

It is certain that Postmodernism will convey an ambiguous sense if we use “modern” as a synonym for “contemporary” or for “avant-garde”. Many historical periods had styled themselves as modern, and sometimes the conservatives stigmatized the bold experimenters of a particular period as modern. Such was the case with Euripides (484-406 B.C.) in ancient Greece. Departing entirely

from the conventional treatment of gods and tragic heroes by his two illustrious predecessors, Aeschylus and Sophocles, he humanized his gods, dispensed with the loftiness of his tragic protagonists, treated women with utter contempt and introduced psychological realism. In his plays, the flawed character and the passionate nature of his protagonists, not the caprices of gods and fate, which contributed to the tragic catastrophe. He enjoyed great popularity but the conservatives of ancient Greece dubbed him 'a modern', meaning an upstart.

In a general sense, modern is used to designate a contemporary period in order to distinguish it from an older era. The adjective 'modern' used to designate the first half of the twentieth century is time specific. Hence the word postmodern means that age which comes after that period, that is to say, the second half of the twentieth century. The fact that postmodern retains the name of the period that preceded it proves that the new age can only be defined in terms of its radical disagreement with, and its continuation of, the older age and what it stood for. Another plausible reason for the postmodern to borrow the term from its previous era is that the Modern Age, i.e., the first half of the twentieth century has arrogated to itself the general meaning of modern as avant-garde.

Postmodernism is both an attitude and a movement, and it is often used by the promoters of globalization, by literary critics, politicians and political scientists, fashion designers and interior decorators, economists, technocrats, the CEOs of Information Technology, etc. to qualify their respective professions and trades. It is not difficult to notice that most of them use the term postmodern as a synonym for ultramodern, i.e., hyper-modern, excessively advanced or outrageously cranky. An attempt has been made in this essay

to recuperate the ideological implications of a movement, which deliberately distanced itself from Modernism, just as Modernism had distanced itself from Victorianism associated with sexual prudery, narrow-mindedness, complacency and an exaggerated sense of respectability. While talking about the rejection of certain beliefs, values and attitudes of one chronological period by another, it has to be borne in mind that such rejection of or disagreement with the prevailing beliefs, values and attitudes is caused more by a desire for a change, that is to make it new than by a desire to make it better in a qualitative way.

Again, while discussing literary postmodernism, it is essential to know whether anything that is produced in the literary marketplace should be called 'postmodern' just because they are produced in a period which is called postmodern, or a selected group of texts and writers are postmodern in spirit and technique whereas other texts and writers, though belonging to the same period, choose to carry forward the unfinished agenda and narrative techniques of Modernism. As there is no new term to describe the latter category of texts and writers, they pass off as postmodern simply because they happen to be there in the same period. But in reality, there are only a few writers who have departed entirely from traditional narrative and experimented with new narrative styles. Notwithstanding their mutual differences, the following well-known writers can be called postmodernist: JL Borges (*Fictions, El Aleph, Dreamtigers, Other Inquisitions*), Italo Calvino (*The Castle of Crossed Destinies* and *If in a Winter Evening, a Traveller...*), Garcia Marquez (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*), Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children, The Satanic Verses, Shame*, etc.), John Barth (*Lost in the Fun House*) and Donald Barthelme (*Snow White*).

Each period in the history of literature defines itself in terms its landmark literary oeuvres. That is why theoretical systematization and naming of a particular age derive from the literary articulations of that age already made. The Modernist age defined itself in the light of the novels of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and William Faulkner, the poetry of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and G.M. Hopkins, and the dramas of Ibsen, Strindberg, Pinter, Brecht, O'Neill and Tennessee Williams. Likewise, a study of some literary texts written during the second half of the 20th century will help us define what we generally understand by the term Postmodernism. One such landmark text of literary postmodernism is Jorge Luis Borges's *Labyrinths*, a collection of stories, essays and parables (selected from his earlier books such as *Ficciones*, *El Aleph* and *El Hacedor*) translated from Spanish into English in 1964. Both in its treatment of the subject matter and style of presentation, *Labyrinths* departed radically from the Modernist fiction. A detailed discussion of the prose techniques employed in that text will bring out some of the salient features of literary postmodernism.

In the following paragraphs there is a discussion of the salient features of Postmodernism as it appears in the writings of certain writers as well as in the other fields of public consumption. In the first part of the essay, the views of the critics and practitioners are stated with some details and with objectivity. The purpose is to arrive at an understanding of the meaning of Postmodernism and its claims for distinctness. The second part of the essay will be a critical comment on the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of this movement.

1

Modernism, like Enlightenment of 17th and 18th centuries, subscribed to the notion that reason, in its immaculate form, was capable of guiding human mind out of the darkness of superstition and unexamined tradition, and of leading the society to a stable state of progress and prosperity. The major writers and thinkers of Enlightenment such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632-1704), Voltaire (1694-1778), Leibnitz (1646-1716) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), all belonging to Western Europe, celebrated Reason both, as a panacea and a beacon. This absolute faith in reason, which the modernist temper shared with the high priests of Enlightenment, began to falter when the totalitarian regime of Hitler carried on the systematic persecution and massacre of the Jews, prostitutes, homosexuals and gypsies in the name of reason. Their purpose was to maintain the purity of the German Race or the Aryan Race. That ideological misuse of reason unleashed a spirit of skepticism. Reason had failed. With it collapsed the superstructure of faith that supported the general belief in God's care and benevolence. That failure of reason caused widespread disillusion and created a need to devise an ideologically different worldview to enable the European intellectuals to cope with that failure. That worldview ushered in an era characterized by the distrust of the dogmatic, the absolute and the certain. It is convenient to presume that Postmodernism replaced Modernism at that juncture. Philosophical utterances of the 19th century philosopher Nietzsche and the subversive writings of Franz Kafka supplied fodder to two French intellectuals, Sartre and Albert Camus, who modified Kierkegaardian existentialism to suit their ends. The question was how to live in a world without a caring God. The traditional idea of a caring and

benevolent God had already been enfeebled by the “Bible-believing” Europeans’ experience of the Holocaust. Professor Gordon W. Allport describes the human condition in the grip of terror in his preface to Viktor E. Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1959): “In the concentration camp every circumstance conspires to make the prisoner lose his hold. [All the familiar goals in life are snatched away]. What alone remains is ‘the last of human freedoms’—the [ability to choose one’s attitude] in a given set of circumstances” (xiii). Man was asked to choose his own attitude to cope with a world governed by unreasonable and irrational forces. The political agenda of a ruling junta replaced Providence and God. Albert Camus has convincingly presented the idea of the Absurd. Dramatists like Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco presented the idea of the Absurd in their plays.

2

In the Postmodernist context, emphasis was shifted from the high seriousness of abstract thought to the aesthetic presentation of the body. John Barth, one of the early commentators on Postmodernism, considers Postmodernism “epigonic” (concerning the inferior imitation of some noble art forms, akin to parody) and “something anticlimactic” (Waugh 01). According to him, Modernist literature has exhausted itself, and it has to be abandoned in favour of “the essentially parodic literature of replenishment” (1). Parody is one of the literary modes of subverting serious literature. Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and His World* (1965) stresses the replenishing power of parody. Some great writers of European Renaissance, such as Rabelais, Cervantes and Shakespeare, have used parody, one of the literary tools of carnivalisation, effectively. Bakhtin considers the ability to parody and carnivalise as a mark of the greatest genius, for it

revitalizes the effete and existing genres of literature. The postmodernist tendency to parody got a boost from Bakhtin's forceful projection of carnivalisation as an antidote to solemnity and hierarchy extolled (and perpetuated, too) in the grand narratives of the Modern era. Even if the name of Bakhtin has not been mentioned in the treatises on Postmodernism, his concept of the Carnival is arguably postmodernist in spirit.

3

Postmodernism is characterized by a shift from the conceptual absolutes of philosophy to the contingencies and ironies of literature in order to avoid the violent totalization of abstract thought. From the very beginning, Postmodernism has been associated with the art of telling stories. The art of telling stories, in the Postmodernist context, is not confined to writing fiction only. It has acquired wider application in all forms of narrative, sociological, scientific, and philosophical. Even history has been subsumed under the category of fiction. The meaning of literature is never rigid and fixed. It is tentative, contingent, and plural. Literature that is not explicitly didactic as does not impose its message or meaning on the reader. It allows multiplicity of interpretation. On the other hand, the nature of philosophy is inflexible and it insists to be understood in one way by all. When the aesthetic is mingled with serious thought, philosophy is relativized.

This contingent nature of writing is superbly demonstrated in the "Protean prose" of Jorge Luis Borges who did an Euripides to Postmodernist literature when he published his *Ficciones* (1956), *El Aleph* (1957), *Discussion* (1957), *Otras Inquisiciones* and *El Hacedor* (1960). As stated above, the selected fictions, essays and parables from the above-stated works were translated from Spanish into

English and published under the title *Labyrinths* in the USA in 1964. Borges departed entirely from the conventional procedures of storytelling and essay writing. He invented a 'private metaphysics' to accommodate his ideas, his fantasies and experiences. This book was as important for literary (sometimes referred to as semantic) Postmodernism as *The Wasteland* and *Ulysses*, both published in 1922, were for literary Modernism. In the words of James E. Irby, who wrote a perceptive introduction for *Labyrinths*:

In Borges's narratives the usual distinction between form and content virtually disappears, as does that between the world of literature and the world of the reader. We are transported into a realm where fact and fiction, the real and the unreal, the whole and the part, the highest and the lowest, are complementary aspects of the same continuous being; a realm where 'any man is all men', where 'all men who repeat a line of Shakespeare are William Shakespeare'. The world is a book and the book is a world, and both are labyrinthine and enclose enigmas designed to be understood and participated in by man...Borges's fictions, like the enormous fiction of Don Quixote, grow out of the deep confrontation of literature and life which is not only the central problem of all literature but also that of all human experience: the problem of illusion and reality. We are all at once writers, readers and protagonists of some eternal story. (18-21)

The most noticeable feature of Borges's writing is its complete lack of responsibility traditionally associated with fiction. There is no social message, no psychological realism, no romantic nostalgia for an absent paradise, no fascination with the world of nature, no resemblance to the life human beings lead on the earth, no lamentation over the decay of values and no covert or overt philosophizing of the life's evils and blessings. The labyrinth and the ubiquitous mirrors become the overarching symbols and the ultimate referent of all things. It is as if the author is solely responsible to his own

creative imagination, to his dreams, and is happy to dispense with all other forms of responsibility, social or otherwise. Borges's Tlon, Uqbar and Orbis Tertius have little or no resemblance to the sunken Atlantis, to Sidney's Arcadia, to Thomas Moore's Utopia, to Plato's Republic, and to the four strange countries Jonathan Swift's Gulliver visited. The fiction theory of the imaginary character Ts'ui Pen in Borges's story titled *The Garden of Forking Paths* can be the quintessence of his implied theoretical position. "In all fictional works", Borges writes,

(E)ach time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the fiction of Ts'ui Pen, he chooses—simultaneously—all of them. He creates, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork. Here, then, is the explanation of the novel's contradictions. Fang, let us say, has a secret; a stranger calls at his door; Fang resolves to kill him. Naturally, there are several possible outcomes: Fang can kill the intruder, the intruder can kill Fang, they both can escape, they both can die, and so forth. In the work of Ts'ui Pen, all possible outcomes occur; each one is the point of departure for other forkings. Sometimes, the paths of this labyrinth converge: for example, you arrive at this house, but in one of the possible pasts you are my enemy, in another, my friend. (*Labyrinths* 57)

Not only in this passage, but also in all his writings, Borges does not simply try to be playful by giving full freedom to his imagination; he, on the other hand, offers a radically revised opinion on history, on philosophy, on imaginative literature and on politics. His agenda is made to appear serious, presented, as it is, in a format of critical inquiry. In one of his stories, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote", he informs us that the eponymous twentieth century author, apart from rewriting *Don Quixote* (originally written by Miguel de Cervantes in early seventeenth century), has situated Christ on a boulevard, Hamlet on La Cannebiere,

and Don Quixote on Wall Street. All literatures, both Pierre Menard and Borges maintain, are palimpsests. One meaning of the *palimpsest* is a literary device of removing the original text from an ancient book and replacing it with a new text; the second meaning, a literary text that has different layers of meaning. The first meaning of palimpsest is used by the commentators of postmodernism to denote the protean nature of all texts, both literary and philosophical. It is permissible, writes Borges, "to see in this 'final' *Quixote* a kind of palimpsest' (*Labyrinths* 70). Pierre Menard's Don Quixote is a contemporary of Bertrand Russell, and his novel is a "contingent book" (67), not a finished product. Borges quotes a letter that Pierre Menard wrote. That letter contains a sentence: "Every man should be capable of all ideas and I understand that in the future this will be the case (*Labyrinths* 70). This idea is germane to his line of thinking as well as to his style of presentation. In his short essay "Partial Magic in the *Quixote*," Borges stretches his theory about the timelessness of fiction. It is not the inter-textuality, but the fictional labyrinths, which fascinates him. Referring to *The Thousand and One Nights*, he finds that on the six hundredth and second night, Scheherazade tells the king his (their) own story, beginning from the first night, thereby making the narrative infinite and circular in the process. "Why does it disturb us," he writes perceptively,

Don Quixote be a reader of the *Quixote* and Hamlet a spectator of *Hamlet*? I believe I have found the reason: these inversions suggest that if the characters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious. In 1833, Carlyle observed that the history of the universe is an infinite sacred book that all men write and read and try to understand, and in which they are also written" (231).

Here Borges states briefly the postmodernist approach to Literature, History and Philosophy. Half playfully and half

seriously, he approaches the limits of fictional possibility. Each reader not only writes the book he reads, but also becomes a character in it whether he likes it or not. The author, the character and the reader merge into each other.

4

Alan Wilde in his book *Modernism and the Aesthetics of Crisis* (1987) makes a perceptible comparison between Modernism and Postmodernism by using two attitudes, such as, Disjunctive irony and Suspensive irony that guided the intellectual worldviews of these two periods respectively.

Modernist irony, absolute and equivocal, expresses a resolute consciousness of different and equal possibilities so ranged as to defy solution. Postmodern irony, by contrast, is suspensive: indecision about the meaning or relations of things is matched by a willingness to live with uncertainty, to tolerate and, in some cases, to welcome a world seen as random and multiple, even, at times, absurd. (Waugh 16).

Wilde uses the term irony both as a literary method of storytelling and as an attitude. As a literary method, it means a humorous expression in which the intended meaning of words is the direct opposite of their usual sense. As an aesthetic attitude, it is a cool, detached manner in which the artist's mind recognizes the incongruities and complexities of experience, and tries to present them in his writing. Modernist writers had felt acutely the chaotic nature of life and the fragmentary nature of human experience, and they had tried to present their world as they experienced it. But they were impelled by a desire for order, for an ultimate resolution. Their disillusion and disgust for their actual world did not prevent them from anticipating a better future, from hoping for transcendence, certitude and coherence. T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, a representative modernist text, is a long

lament on the decadence and fragmentation of the contemporary world. But the poet does not stop with that. A nostalgic longing for a lost, but recoverable utopia accompanies his lament. He hears the sound of water beneath the rock. He ends the poem with a religious invocation. The Expressionist plays of August Strindberg showcase the sordidness of life, but they end with an assurance of regeneration. In his *A Dream Play*, he visualizes the sprouting of an immaculate lotus from the dirty bottom of the cesspool. Lord Buddha holding the lotus symbolizes the advent of the Messiah. Wilde also calls it absolute irony.

The modernist writer believes in the perfectibility of the imperfect world he inhabits. His attitude strikingly resembles that of the writers of Enlightenment who envisaged a future world where Reason would rule and cure all evils besetting mankind. Wilde calls this modernist attitude disjunctive irony because of its insistence on an alternative reality or a better proposition.

Postmodernist Irony, on the other hand, is suspensive in that it suspends anticipation and strives to cope with the imperfections inundating the present world. Albert Camus sees the world and the way it is run as absurd, just as his protagonist Sisyphus sees the futility of his labour in the Underworld. Neither a fervent hope for a better world, nor a wretched mood of despair over the interminable nature of human ordeal informs his writing and his vision; nor does he recommend any escape route through suicide. The only way open to man participating in the absurd and interminable mega show is to slog it out without hoping for a bright future or any reward for his labour. Man on this earth is an epigone of Sisyphus in so far as he inherits that ancient Greek's wisdom: that man must live his life as a self-imposed duty even after knowing that all his actions would end in vain.

This cool, detached attitude of man is akin to Wilde's suspensive irony, though he desists from acknowledging such a kinship. This spirit is postmodernist, for it suspends the impulse towards transcendence, meaning, certitude and coherence. Postmodernist man is wise or wily enough to know his fate and the futility of seriousness in an absurd dispensation. So in the postmodernist discourse, the depth/surface binary is retained, but the modernist preference of depth is replaced by a preference for the surface. The surface is suggestive of the body, the humdrum of existence, the small and the superficial. The postmodernist man has come to realize that the return to the body has been long overdue.

5

This change in attitude brings in its wake a host of other preferences. The modernist preference for high seriousness is replaced by the postmodernist preference for playfulness. Such a change of vision is possible when the issues traditionally considered serious are either ignored or undermined or are treated lightly. Instead of complaining about the loss of paradise, the postmodernist temper takes the loss easy. The nostalgia over the origin is considered useless atavistic baggage and is abandoned. Inability to resolve the dilemmas of life and make sense of the intricacies of existence leads to an acceptance of the fact that these dilemmas and intricacies are either beyond human comprehension or are not worth the bother. The postmodernist protagonist says: When you feel the life to be too ambiguous to be known clearly, learn to live in that ambiguous world without fretting too much over the absence of clarity; when you cannot feel certain about things, learn to remain in the uncertainties; if you think you are submerged

by a flood of incoherence, you feel light and stay afloat or, if you like, be a swimmer and splash around. Postmodernist mind refuses to be intimidated by Unreason, because it distrusts the modernist reason that has not only failed, but has been used as cannon fodder by the totalitarian regimes.

6

This leads us to the question of meaning, or, more correctly, to the questioning of meaning. The search for Meaning has an ancient origin and the longest continuity. It obtains in theological exegeses and all metaphysical discourses; in didactic literatures and canonical texts. It is the hallmark of Enlightenment and of Modernism. Its validity has never been contested. In the postmodernist scenario, however, meaning is no longer sacrosanct. It has been questioned. It began with the linguistic findings of Ferdinand de Saussure. He discovered that the very process of signification, which joins the signified with the signifier thereby producing the meaning, is itself arbitrary; that there is no logical connection between what is described and what describes it. That's why the meaning we get is, by nature, relational. This relational meaning is further complicated by the fact that it is conceptualized through differences, both syntagmatic and paradigmatic. Binarisms play, according to Saussure, an important determinant of meaning. These binaries such as, nature/ culture, earth/ heaven, good/ evil, white/ black, true/ false, etc. are further problematized by our preferences of one over the other. These preferential attitudes are culture-specific and they form the linguistic grid, i.e., the langue of each culture, society and language-speaking community. People who use that language cannot escape the contamination of partiality. In fine, language cannot be a reliable compass. Meaning will not be achieved by the means of any language.

The French philosopher Jacques Derrida further validates the impossibility of achieving meaning when he offered a philosophical model in support of it. Deconstruction, a philosophical and intellectual inquiry into the nature of Truth and Meaning, hogged the academic center-stage for nearly two decades, 1980s and 1990s. It questioned the very foundation of the western metaphysics. It carried the linguistic un-ascertainability of meaning à la Ferdinand de Saussure to a more profound level of metaphysical inquiry. Derrida's mission was to question the philosophical certitudes arrived at through logical reasoning. The western culture, he asserts, has always been a logocentric culture, a theistic culture, hence a lopsided and prejudiced culture. That is why all the thinkers and philosophers from the Pre-Socratics must have encountered unmanageable contradictions and subversive paradoxes on their quest for the Holy Grail of Truth or a convincing explanation. As those roadblocks to logical progress were impossible to overcome, the thinkers and philosophers might have legitimized their 'imponderables' through subterfuges and syllogisms. They concealed what they could not handle effectively. The meaning and Truth they achieved by conniving at the disturbing contradictions were made to appear absolute and irrefutable. But such concealments have left their traces, which a rigorous and skilful reading will unravel. Deconstructive reading is a quasi-philosophical game, which the skilled critic plays with a philosophical text by dismantling it with a view to prying into its hidden dissonance, and then rearranging it. It will be better understood if we consider it a game, an intellectual playfulness, because the aim of this enterprise is not a quest for an alternative truth and meaning but to discredit the claims of the wise men of yore who made us believe they had

found answers to humanity's most nagging questions. After telling us that as the means adopted were questionable the end product was bound to be unreliable, the deconstructionist critics do not carry forward the quest. Nor do they offer an alternative. That is so because they do not want to be trapped by their own devices.

Inspired by the ideas of Jacques Derrida, some literary critics applied the methodology of Deconstruction to literary texts. Literary texts, as a rule, have no logical framework and the meanings they seem to offer depends on who reads them and on which frames of reference the text is subjected to. As a result, they were sitting ducks for the trigger-happy deconstructionist critics. They dismantled some selected texts, and came out with big news that they have discovered many difficulties and moments of uncertainty caused by the indeterminacy of meaning and elusiveness of the ever-receding centre for which no resolution would seem possible. *Aporia*, a term frequently used by Deconstructionists to designate the moments of concealment in a philosophical text, means 'doubt' in Latin, and 'perplexity' in Greek. Literary Deconstructionists pore over a text with doubt, discover what they want to discover and end their quest with perplexity.

Literary application of Derridean Deconstruction was piecemeal and it did not discredit any canonical text by laying bare its inherent contradictions. That apart, its agenda was just that, and nothing more. That ludic engagement was in perfect accord with the postmodernist temper. It supplied a theoretical framework to postmodernist rejection of depth and preference for the surface. Like Bakhtin's concepts of Carnival and Dialogic Structure, Derridean Deconstruction released big doses of adrenalin in the postmodernist blood stream: grand claims of Truth were subjected to a skeptical

scrutiny; meaning was contested; centrality of the text that has been considered essential for the production of meaning was displaced; traditional pieties were profaned; grand narratives were parodied; hierarchies were pulled down; values were relativized. It is not surprising that many intellectuals strongly disapprove of this tendency. F.F. Centore takes both Postmodernism and Deconstruction to task for making a fetish of their aimlessness. He writes in the Epilogue of his book *Being and Becoming*:

Indeed, I am dubious about whether or not the post-moderns can take seriously anything of an objective nature, including their own doctrine. Under Deconstructionism, instead of all history being philosophy, as with Hegel, all philosophy is now a form of playful history, as with Derrida. The serious philosopher is no more; now, all is play and parody. Unlike Plato's play of ideas in his Dialogues, and the Scholastic logic-play of the medieval university undergraduate Arts faculty, both of which were constructive, truth-seeking instruments of learning, now we have the glorification of moral relativism, and play for the sake of play. (213)

The tone and substance of such allegations betray a nostalgic longing for a glorious past, which Postmodernism refrains from entertaining. But nothing is done with an agenda or with messianic seriousness, for that would have looked like what they want to subvert. Solutions and alternatives are considered dispensable.

Bakhtin drew his ideas of carnival from some representative Renaissance texts such as Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and the dramas of Shakespeare. His theories are not prescriptive, but suggestive. According to Bakhtin, the very purpose of carnivalesque desecration, profanation and subversion to make available an alternative possibility on a dramatic plane rather than bringing about a permanent transformation of reality. In other

words, his ideas are meant to operate on a symbolic level, parodic level, but not on an actual level.

The fact that Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction and Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of Dialogism and Carnival gained currency and were quickly assimilated into the mainstream intellectual life of the postmodernist times, cannot be written off as mere coincidence or unrelated occurrences. As it had happened in most historical periods, dominant trends of a particular period are as much determined by as determine the theoretical practices of individual thinkers and writers. For want of something better, it may be assumed that the dominant trends of an age facilitate the assimilation, and ensure the popularity, of the ideas of similar nature while conceding that these ideas influence and to some extent stabilize the trends of the period. The writings of Derrida, Bakhtin and of many other thinkers supplied theoretical bases for postmodernist attitudes.

7

"Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name" (82), declares Jean-Francois Lyotard in his seminal book *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979). By declaring this manifesto, Lyotard shows his preference for postmodernist art and literature. His ideas can be summed up as follows: Postmodernism is a part of modernism, but it suspects all that it receives from the preceding movement. Modern aesthetic is an aesthetic of the sublime. It is nostalgic and it continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure. Postmodern, on the other hand, puts forward the unrepresentable in the representable form. It honours differences. It does not offer solace. The postmodernist writer is a philosopher and the

text, according to Lyotard, is not governed by pre-established rules. The dialectics of Spirit and the hermeneutics of meaning are the goals towards which the modernist metadiscourse is geared. That metadiscourse is also guided by the rule of consensus that the message sent by the sender is acceptable to the addressee. Modernism legitimates itself with reference to that metadiscourse. As a result, "justice is consigned to the grand narrative in the same way as truth." Then he adds:

Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences; but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its grand voyages, its great goal. (xxiv)

Lyotard asks whether postmodernism can obtain its legitimation through discussion and consensus, and answers in the negative. According to him, consensus, in general, does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. Dissent is necessary for experimentation and invention. Postmodernist knowledge "refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable"(xxv). Lyotard goes to the extent saying that the principle of postmodernism is "paralogy" or false reasoning. By adopting it, postmodernism counters the modernist's preference for Reason, Progress, Universal Peace and Universal Happiness. The modernist temper has inherited all these from the Western European thinkers of Enlightenment, such as, Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Diderot and Immanuel Kant. Paralogy is necessary to introduce the contrary to "metadiscourse" and "performative principle" associated with Modernism. "It is necessary," writes Lyotard,

“to posit the existence of a power that destabilizes the capacity for explanation, manifested in the promulgation of new norms for understanding or, if one prefers, in a proposal to establish new rules circumscribing a new field of research for the language of science” (61).

Lyotard's treatise seems to be occasioned by his sharp reaction to a book written by Jurgen Habermas (*Knowledge and Human Interests* 1971). Habermas opines that the so-called postmodernists are actually the neo-conservatives whose sole aim is to sabotage the unfinished project of Modernism. Postmodernist spirit has allowed the totality of life to be splintered into independent specialties. These specialties have given rise to de-structured forms and narrow competence of experts. Habermas advocates for the unity of experience. This unity will be provided by arts, because it has the power to bridge the gap between cognitive, ethical and political discourses. Habermas subscribes to the ideals of Enlightenment and admires modernism for furthering those ideals. Postmodernism, he avers, instead of completing the unfinished agenda of Modernism, has certainly undermined that grand continuity by rejecting the grand narratives of reason and progress in favour of the contingent and the provisional.

Lyotard refutes his claim. Modernism, he says, has fallen under its own weight and that is all the better for us. One point, however, emerges from this debate between these two thinkers: Habermas upholds modernist tradition; Lyotard discredits this tradition because it has become a diabolical power in the hands of totalitarian regimes and they have misused it in the name of reason, progress and stability.

8

The supreme formal feature of all postmodernisms, writes Frederic Jameson, is a new kind of superficiality, flatness or depthlessness (*Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1984). Just as Lyotard's tirade against Modernism is a reaction to Habermas's advocacy of it, the champions of Postmodernism seem to have a reactionary agenda. To be superficial or flat as a principle is different from being superficial or flat as a matter of fact. Doctrinaire superficiality of Postmodernism is a posturing, an aesthetic broadside against the ideologically inspired depth model of Modernism. Here, superficiality that is used as a front of protest and as a mode of offence should not be confused with superficiality as such. Jameson rightly calls it 'a new form of superficiality'. To be superficial is to privilege the surface over what is supposed to reside within or beneath the surface of a text. How a work of art tells or represents has become more significant than what it implies and what lies beneath its surface. Jameson considers all contemporary theory to be postmodernist in that they show their preference for the surface. Value judgment, evaluation of the literary merit of a text and the levels of achievement of a writer in expressing the human situation effectively are simply discarded as a metaphysical baggage, a modernist baggage.

Both, postmodernism and post-structuralism, observes Jameson, repudiate five depth models, which supported modernism and structuralism. They are: (a) the hermeneutic model of inside and outside; (b) the dialectical model of essence and appearance; (c) the Freudian model of latent and manifest and of repression and sublimation; (d) the existential model of authenticity and inauthenticity; and (e) the semiotic model of the opposition between signifier and signified.

According to Jameson, the great thematics of modernism were alienation, anomie, solitude, social fragmentation and anxiety. These problems are neither appropriate nor fashionable in the world of the postmodern. That is to say, the man in the postmodern world refuses to be bothered by those ailments that tormented the modern man. Robert Musil's *Man Without Qualities* no longer cares for his not having any quality. He manages without it. As Herbert Marcuse writes in *One Dimensional Man*, technology has divested the individual of his spiritual and cultural dimensions leaving him just one. In the postmodern world such complaints have become passé. The contemporary man no longer defines himself in terms of his dimensionality. He does not mind for being called three-dimensional or one-dimensional. Wylie Sypher laments *The Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Arts*. But such laments were always associated with diagnostics of the sickness and an implicit faith in the recoverability of the lost Self. But in *The Postmodern Condition* the terms like quality, dimension and Self are no longer fashionable, no longer a necessity. Writers such as Robert Musil, Wylie Sypher and Herbert Marcuse tried to expose the condition of the man in a technological society and regretted the absence of quality, selfhood and multidimensionality in him. Such concerns arise when man feels that his subjective potential is denied full expression due to certain objective reasons; that his individual self is different from the collective self, which the society tries to graft in him; that individual distinctness is preferable to the collective uniformity. That problem is now solved; because the general tendency of the progressive, highly advanced technological society has conditioned man's mind to such an extent that he is proud of being a useful part of that society. In the words of Jean Baudrillard, "the

simulacrum has started giving itself value and it no longer represents the real" (360).

Thinkers like Walter Kaufmann considered modern man's reluctance to conform to the impersonal social forces and, consequently, his feeling alienated from the society to be a sign of growth and an inevitable stage of individuation. According to Kaufmann, only the educated, sensitive and intelligent individuals are capable of feeling alienated when the society smothers their personal needs and aspirations, and tries to commodify them for its own profit.

But in the postmodernist context, the attitude has changed radically. The sensitive individual has acquired the ability to conform completely to the society. According to Professor Marcuse, the technologically advanced western society, through shrewd use of the mass media and public opinion, had effectively removed all possible causes for man to feel special or neglected. He does not whine; he does not freak out; he simply and happily accepts his condition. The grouch sheds his inhibition, his sulkiness and becomes the performer. The prototype postmodern man has found an easy cure for the ills, which had beset the sensitive modern man. His motto is: If the merry party is going on in the other room and the noise is getting on your nerves, you do one thing. Just join the party; dance and sing like the rest. Then you will feel all right. The noise will no longer bother you. The postmodernist man has done precisely that.

Patricia Waugh, in her introduction to *Postmodernism: A Reader* (1992) refers to an observation made by Sigmund Freud: "Maturity is the ability to live with hesitation, ambiguity and contradiction" (Waugh 9). Freud, it should be noted, has said this in the universal human context. Professor Waugh quotes him to validate the postmodernist attitude, as

if the modern man was passing through the teenage syndrome, which he has ultimately overcome.

Now the question arises, should the postmodern man be considered truly mature for having acquired the ability to naturalize his manifold contradictions, to assimilate all uncertainties and ambiguities? It is the question that many writers have tried to answer in their influential essays and full-length studies, though the critical opinion is sharply divided about the goodness of such assimilation.

9

Linda Hutcheon, an eminent theorist of Postmodernism, attempts a comparative study of Modernism and Postmodernism by using parody as a focal frame of reference. Parody is used as stylistic mode by writers who imitate the prominent characteristics of an earlier and influential work in a satirical or humorous manner, and most often apply it to an inappropriate subject. Postmodernist parody, unlike its modernist counterpart, stresses the ironic discontinuity that is revealed in the heart of continuity, difference at the heart of similarity. According to Linda Hutcheon, parody is the perfect postmodern form, because it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies. She considers Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* as perfect examples of postmodernist parody.

As stated above, the Latin American/ Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges whose influence on postmodern literature is universally acknowledged as the first innovator of the postmodernist prose technique, which was later developed by novelists like Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, etc. into Magical Realism. His books have broadened the boundary of contemporary fiction. His stories, which read like historical

research articles, blur the boundaries of fact and fiction. Taking the cue from Linda Hutcheon, it is possible to suggest that Magical Realism is indubitably postmodern as the fictional works belonging to this category both incorporate and challenge the history, cultural climate and the worldview of their respective countries in transition. Marquez's Macondo is Columbia, and Rushdie situates his novels in the Indian subcontinent. They are marked by discontinuity, casual distortion of historical events and recognizable socio-cultural scenario without any symbolic intentions and, above all, a radical departure from what we understand by regular fiction and Grand Narrative of Modernist era.

10

The debate on the primogeniture will continue, like the chicken-egg paradox, whether literary trends of an age are willingly or spontaneously influenced by the dominant philosophical postulates of their times or the worldview of an age is understood in terms of the literary and philosophical oeuvres of that age. Be that as it may, both literature and philosophy are intellectual expressions of the spirit of the age in which they flourish. In its drive to counter the totalitarian worldview and disallow the supremacy of Reason of the modernist era, postmodernism has introduced relativism and contingencies as viable alternatives. The idea that one can be more right than her neighbour is discarded as old junk, for it militates against the spirit of liberal democracy whose slogan is that every person has the freedom to decide what is right for him and the privilege to state his views on reality. The question of being adjudged right or wrong does not arise. The dominant view is that each man is right in so far as his attitude to life and his personal decision are concerned. To claim one man's attitude or opinion to be ethically superior to

that of another is unacceptable on the ground that such a judgmental, preferential statement would sound absolutist, a throwback to the earlier era. In such a scenario, philosophy has voluntarily distanced itself from its traditional and self-imposed responsibility as an inquiry into truth, and allowed each man to find truth for himself, that is to say, to interpret truth as it suits him or appears to him. That is so because truth has been divested of its transcendental quality and metaphysical aura, and has become a populist, consensual or personal construct. Postmodernism seems to support an anything-goes attitude.

Conclusion

In the Positivist sense, a statement is deemed true or meaningful if it is either considered to be so by a vast majority of people that is, self-evident or verifiable through our senses or based on our actual experiences. This position is different from the philosophical system of Enlightenment, particularly of Immanuel Kant, where both phenomenon and noumenon serve as necessary grounds for understanding reality *per se*. Phenomenon is apparent to the senses and can be scientifically appraised; hence it is the thing as it appears in our perception. Noumenon, on the other hand, is the thing as it is in itself, and it cannot be comprehended by our sense of perception, though it serves as an intelligible ground of phenomenon, i.e., any event, circumstance, verifiable experience. According to the Enlightenment, Kantian and Modernist worldview, our senses are not the only tools using which we can make sense of the life and the world. It accommodates noumenon even though it exists independent of our sensory perceptions and scientific verification. Postmodernism has abandoned this worldview, and replaced it with Logical Positivism, which postulates that statements

become meaningful only when they are self-evident and scientifically verifiable. It does not subscribe to any abstract, hypothetical, or speculative philosophy, and considers all statements concerning God, the soul, the supernatural, the spiritual, etc. right or wrong depending on who makes them. The totalitarian regimes in Europe in general and Germany in particular before and during the Second World War considered prostitutes and professed same-sex lovers as deviant, fringe groups and scummy pollutants of the society that should be consigned to the gas chamber. In the second half of the twentieth century, they were not only tolerated, but legalized as well. Let alone in Europe and America, in an orthodox country like India, as has been reported in the media, a minister in the central cabinet, who happens to be a Muslim woman, is trying her best to legalize prostitution. Mainstream political parties and intellectuals over the world are ready to protect the rights of gays and lesbians. Many western governments have passed bills regularizing the marriage of gay and lesbian couples. Such changes in attitude are in keeping with the spirit of postmodernism. As Douwe W. Fokkema puts it simply:

At the center of the Postmodernist semantic universe we find... inclusiveness and assimilation... Instead of discussing the various options open to him in a detached and intellectual way, as the Modernist did, the Postmodernist assimilates and absorbs the world that he perceives, without knowing or wanting to know how to structure that world so that it might make sense. (49)

Any attempt to define postmodernism with clarity and certainty is surely a difficult task considering its protean contours and its theoretical resistance to any shipshape definition. In his essay: "Introduction: Postmodernism? Representing Postmodernism" Leah Wain comments referring to Lyotard's essay that one possible answer to the

question, What is postmodernism? (362). This mode of answering a question with a question is playful. Parody, a postmodernist mode of literary expression, is a form of playfulness, footloose and fancy-free.

The modernist age saw the emergence of an industrial and technological society. It also saw the exponential growth of human population. For the first time, the mass became visible and powerful, and tried to dominate the individual. The individual thus dominated felt uneasy and alienated from himself. Jose Ortega y Gasset in his 1930 book *The Revolt of the Masses* offers an incisive diagnosis of the condition of the modern man in a mass-dominated society. He writes:

The mass is all that which sets no value on itself—good or ill-based on specific grounds, but which feels itself just like everybody, and nevertheless it is not concerned about it; it is in fact quite happy to feel itself as one with everybody else... and those who demand nothing special of themselves, but for whom to live is to be every moment what they already are, without imposing on themselves any effort towards perfection; mere buoys that float on the waves. (Gasset 10)

Herbert Marcuse wrote his *One Dimensional Man* thirty-four years after *The Revolt of the Masses*. By that time the technological civilization had already indoctrinated the individual, and the power of the masses had already assimilated the individual. By that time the identification of the individual with the dehumanizing mass culture had become almost total. That was, according to Marcuse, a “more progressive stage of alienation... the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension” (Marcuse 11).

Both these writers offered an apocalyptic picture of the society and the individual caught up in a transition. Now that transitional phase is over. The terms like alienation, inner rift,

spiritual discontent, dehumanization, anomie and goal-oriented struggle have ceased to make any sense. The masses no longer try to woo the individual and the elite; on the contrary, the individual and the elite try to woo the masses. This is both the symptom and the sign of postmodernism. There is only one culture: the mass culture. The makers of literature and art do their bit to ingratiate themselves to the masses. In this sense, postmodernism has become an adjunct of free-market economy and globalization. The private space and the public sphere merge in one. "There are no longer protagonists; there is only the chorus" (Gasset 8).

Robert B. Ray concludes his essay by arranging the salient features of Postmodernism in an alphabetical order, some of which I quote below in order to give a general idea about Postmodernism to the reader.

Allegory, appropriation, aberrant decoding, banality, *bricolage*, Benjamin, Barthes, Baudrillard, Borges, collage, computer, compact disc, Calvino, displacement, dandyism, deconstruction, Dictionary of Received Ideas, Derrida, everyday life, entropy, feminism, fetish, *Finnegans Wake*, graffiti, heterogeneity, heteroglossia, intertextuality, Lacan, mechanical reproduction, media, montage, mass culture, mime, margins, pop art, pun, parody, pastiche, plagiarism, readymade, repetition, spectacle, speed, television, textuality,, urinal, uniformity, vernacular, voyeuristic, word-processor, Warhol, Xerox, yuppies, S/Z, etc. (144-45)

Such an agglomeration of disparate names and terms may confuse a person who is keen to know what Postmodernism is all about, but again, such confusion need not weigh too heavy on him as the very spirit of postmodernism requires of him maturity and ability not to be bothered by confusion. "Perhaps to grow up," writes Patricia

Waugh, "is to live suspended between the modern and the postmodern, resisting the temptation for resolution in one direction or the other" (9).

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Expedient Fascism vs. Liberal Intellectualism: A Study of Select Fiction of II World War

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World War II novels emerged as documents of war to investigate the cause and effect of war. The literary works offered analysis of the conflict of war; war as a collective progression and war as observable phenomenon of human behavior. Fictionalizing the experience of war, major War novels provided different perspectives of the socioeconomic-moral-political meanings of the military service embedded in the changing behavior of the combatants, the expanding military organization, military policy, military bureaucracy and the memoirs of the war veterans.

The horror and memory of war is still haunting the minds of men because we are still not totally free from the fear of war and bloodshed. The two dominant ideologies fascism and liberalism clashed with each other on the arena of the world creating two polarizations. Their impact has been very decisive and far-reaching. Fascism as a concept of centralization of power in the hands of few sparked off a worldwide resentment and reaction. The result is the birth of liberalism i.e. the appreciation of human values and tolerance towards dissent and disagreement and expression of freedom of speech. In a way, it is a decentralization of power and

authority thereby paving a way for the emergence of liberalist humanism.

America never experienced a war invasion or even the proximity of enemy force but there is always a growing interest among American war writers to depict the life of a man in the military establishment in the backdrop of war. To an American writer, war is not just an extracted experience drawn from the real stories of American Army that conveys a magical realism, but a challenge to recreate and to capture that sense of real life and reach bigger and bigger audience.

All major wars broke out due to failure of military operations. While the military primarily functions as the peace keeping force of a nation, it is the top military personnel who decide to declare war on its enemy. War is characterized by extreme violence, economic destruction, social disruption and human suffering. Not only is war highly unethical, barbarous and irrational, it also stifles individual freedom leading to a conflict between individual and the institution. This is a recurrent theme of a majority of war writers. Further, the hierarchical structure, bureaucracy, the violence and institutional oppression results in an ideological conflict between writers who defend liberal anti-militarism and writers who support fascist militarism characteristically patterned as pro-war and anti-war novelists. On a parallel stream, my study examines the nature of fear; how the top military leadership instills fear in the individuals to obey or create extremist individuals or liberal intellectuals who rebel to nip any signs or symptoms of military fascism.

American novelists such as Norman Mailer, James Jones, Irwin Shaw, James Gould Cozzens, Herman Wouk, Joseph Heller and Kurt Vonnegut all those who had seen War and its brutality, irrationality and inhumanity from close

quarters depict a real and pictorial description of the military adventures of soldiers, sailors and fighter pilots. Joseph Remenyi, in his article titled, *Psychology of War*, says "War is life in the grip of death". The writers use war narratives to expose the tangle of contradictions in contemporary American Army.

James Jones, John Hersey, Kurt Vonnegut and Irwin Shaw and some of the most prominent writers like Ernest Hemingway, who are fascinated by war, feel that they have to speak the whole truth about the war and to purge themselves of unhealthy emotions. They depict war as pitiless carnage which brings incalculable physical and moral suffering to mankind and transforms a man into a fanatic, a sadist, a beast. To show the evils of war they strive to astound the readers with pictures of its horrors. At the same time, they affirm though not always consistently or clearly that World War II was necessary in order to strike down an evil greater than war itself i.e. Fascism.

Further, the reactionary ideology perpetrated by the American Generals like Philip Queeg and Sam Slater in the novels of Mailer and Jones shocked the reading audience. It is important to understand that the contradictions inherent in the American army led to the creation of the war novel. Accordingly, the content and structure of the war novel is based on the reactionary forces within the American army and the external forces working upon America. In this context, War literature is a testimony of the total man. We agree with the American war critic, Remenyi when he says, "Unless it is the testimony of the total man, war literature is merely a documentary expression of felling and intelligence and mental inferiority, related to social, political, economic problems" (Remenyi).

Also, Chester E Eisinger shows the damage done by the high flown rhetoric of World War-I writers whose abstract words like 'duty' 'patriotism' 'glory' 'honour' 'virtue' sacrifice (frequently used by statesmen) misled people to affirm war. World War-I left us disillusioned. The disillusionment is best illustrated by Hemingway in *A Farewell to Arms*: "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice ... the glorious had no glory [for] abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hollow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of regiments and the dates" (22).

War novel is fiction beyond time, space and self. The war writer brings confessions, memoirs of war and it becomes a crucial feature in war literature. The writings of World War I and II had two rhetorical patterns: Patterns of Despair and Pattern of Affirmation. I would like to put it as pattern of despair for expulsion of war and pattern of positive affirmation of peace. Hence, war was not a product of the triumph of the enemy but dehumanization of the Army in particular and mankind in general.

Examining various sources and well researched material of pro-war and anti-war writers, we find that many major war writers consistently saw an ideological conflict within the Army, a conflict between liberal anti-militarism and fascist militarism which led to war. The novelists in particular, chosen for this study are writers who support liberal anti-militarism, or crypto fascist militarism and both. Norman Mailer in *The Naked and Dead*, Fear Ladder and James Jones in *From Here to Eternity*: Military Injustice is liberal anti-militarists; Herman Wouk in *The Caine Mutiny*—Crypto Fascism, and James Gould Cozzens' *Guard of Honor* support expedient fascism or crypto fascism. These writers, in spite of the internal hierarchal dominance in military organization

glorify and valorize military virtues as indispensable to win war. Mailer and Jones glorified the noble cause of war against fascism which endangered Europe, "the first face of villainy" (Waldmeir 76) they opposed military fascism at the expense of individual liberty and personal identity of the lower rung of the American army.

So Herman Wouk and James Gould Cozzens' novels are optimistic and positive. They had written with the conviction that fighting the fascist enemy outside the Army was a worthwhile objective. Indeed, many of their contemporary writers had been fighting it for a decade before the war began. None of them felt that war was good; all of them felt that this particular war was necessary to eliminate the fascist enemy. And they tried to convey this as an amalgamation of ideas through their novels by using the physical struggle metaphorically, as sign and symbol of the ideological conflict.

On the other hand, Norman Mailer and James Jones are the powerful spokesmen who opposed the "fascist behavior of the army hierarchy towards combat soldiers too captured the imagination of the people. They also espoused war against the first face of villainy the Italian, the German, but their main focus was on the "second face of villainy" (102) fascism that entered into the American Army. Norman Mailer, James Jones condemned the armed services and were bitterly critical of the superior officers in the military establishment.

My paper attempts to explore the conflicting ideological stands of selected writers: Norman Mailer, James Jones, Herman Wouk and James Gould Cozzens who were deeply impacted by war and its colossal human loss and waste. While War and the Army are two sides of the same coin, they are indistinguishable from one another. When there is no obvious enemy, war originates from military conflicts and

failure of military operations. The conflict is mainly between the individual and the institution. The conflict develops into hatred in the individual and result in a systematic oppression of the institution.

According to William H. Whyte, Jr. in the name of the organization the army officers restrict the organization man's life, action, freedom and even his moral choices. In *The Organization Man*, he discusses "the struggles within the military hierarchy itself, the relationships between officers and enlisted men, between superior officers and their inferiors, between regular officers and ex-civilians, between the power moralists and the passionate individualists" (Part iv of the novel). The organization uses the military as an instrument to fight Fascism and injustice in whatever guise it appears.

General Slater in *From Here to Eternity* and General Cummings in *The Naked and Dead* oppressed their subordinates. Oddly and ironically, Mr. Prewitt loved the army as a home combating oppression "inside" and its "outside". The intoxicating power of command by the army officers makes the army corrupt, brutal and crudely fearful.

This paper examines liberal and fascist trends of War in the military establishment in War II fiction. Analyzing critically the fascist military ideologies in *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), *Guard of Honor* (1949), the Pro-war writers Herman Wouk and James Gould Cozzens justify the brutality of war and subversion of individual will against the collective will of Nation. They follow the mass hysteria soaked in the speeches of the leaders that it is man's duty to sacrifice his honor, dignity, relinquish his conscience and fight for the greatest good of humanity. The anti-war novels *The Naked and the Dead*, (1948); *From Here to Eternity*, (1951) exposed and

attacked the anti-individual fascist tendencies prevalent in American Armed services upholding liberal anti-military ideology. Also, John Hersey's *The War Lover*, Mitchell Goodman's *The End of it*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five or the Children's Crusade* other realistic war novels condemned dangerous tendencies of fascism which threatened to spread from the army into American society as a whole and as an "unjustified mass murder" of American Liberalism.

With the American Military organization, having become significant and powerful during the past century and a quarter, segregation, accidental death, complexity of human actions and relationships, racism, love, hatred, jealousy, competitive spirit crept into it. The C.O, General Beal in Cozzens' novel *Guard of Honor* is disturbed when he is directed from Washington to play off local prejudice on color lines on the men on the Florida Base. He attempts to be human and at the same time he can't help being brutal as a martinet which leads to an internal conflict in the base. The major issues in the story are the segregation of the Negro officers in the officers' club. Cozzens is aware that women in the American Army are gifted and noble. Cozzens attacks the racial discrimination as cruel and inhuman, especially when the President Woodrow Wilson had vetoed powers of Blacks officers from service pilots to combat pilots in the Army and Black officers enjoy equal status with whites and not to be barred from officers' clubs and quarters. Later it becomes an engaging theme of a majority of American Writers to fight this "monstrous evil" racial segregation of the military until President Franklin Roosevelt in 1948 issued the executive order to end military segregation.

Cozzens' Colonel Ross, a judge in his civilian life respects institutions and traditions. Like Cozzens Ross realizes that the gigantic power of the American army is a

threat to individual freedom. While the main plot centers on General Beal and his treatment towards blacks Cozzens' settled conviction and that of other character esp. Lt. Edsell. Col. Ross, Captain Hicks who voice Cozzens' judgments, illustrate that change or reform of an institution does not lead to progress.

Col. Ross is the central character who emphatically declares that segregation "won't change to-day, tomorrow, this week. A man cannot choose to see what he cannot see" (440). Ross and major general show utter disregard for the traditional values or moral decency. They are "concerned purely with the practical, expedient aspects of the situation" (Waldmeir 132).

Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny* focuses on Captain Queeg's ridiculous punishments on the crew for failing in menial offenses, like ordering water, famines, denial of liberties, and deprivation of sleep and using dirty tricks and playing on predictable Navy mentalities. The crisis centers on Lt. Commander Queeg, who is seemingly incapable of handling duties properly. The central theme revolves around a conflict between Lieutenant Queeg and his executive officer Lieutenant Steve Maryk who instigated by Keefer the chief civilian wardroom officer is tried for his inefficiency. The novel's message is a choice between the two values, the civilian and military systems. The military virtue of Queeg is:

I am the bookman... when in doubt; remember we do things on this ship by the book ... Aboard my ship, excellent performance I'm a book is standard. Standard performance is substandard. Substandard performance is not permitted to exist." — *The Caine Mutiny*. (131-132)

As for the individual, Queeg honors the men who are bred and trained for war to be able to lead the nation in

fighting it. While almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the novel Wouk makes us admire Mary and Keith, these characters bring about the real trouble of damaging the reputation of C O Queeg. If Wouk is to be true to his premises, these men should be destroyed. But in fact they escape real punishment.

In a dramatic twist to the conclusion, while we think that Queeg would be punished for misguiding the crew and landing the ship in trouble, Lieutenant Greenwald narrates the horrors of war and the providential presence of Captains like Queeg, and his devoted officers who were responsible to stop it before it broke out. Our enemy destroys our confidence in the country's military leadership, but if we accept Captain Queeg's premise, the right way, the wrong way, the Navy way, then Navy Law is good. It is an ennobling instrument in the achievement of these aims. *The Caine Mutiny* is a justification of the navy way, an attempt to find the justice of life within the frame work of naval law and practice.

Greenwald defines that the European war has been a struggle to save grandmothers from being "melted down by Hitler's Nazi regime." He admires Captains like Queeg, regardless of their brutality or stupidity, who have played a gallant role by contributing their skill to win the war on all fronts. Greenwald accuses, men like Keefers, who sabotage Queeg like defenders of freedom with mocking cynicism and obsession under the cover of liberalism, integrity and selfhood. Greenwald like his author has deep admiration for Queeg.

Wouk and Cozzens support the anti-intellectual, authoritarian views opposed by the majority of the anti-war novelists like Norman Mailer and James Jones. The anti-intellectual stance of Wouk qualifies him to be acclaimed as

the “ideological neo fascist” of war literature. His writings illustrate the move to continue keeping the tradition of conservatism in American fiction which he popularized through his major novels.

James Jones' *From Here to Eternity* centers on the theme of suffering in military life and the effects of post-military civilian life and how these changes affect characters. By the end of “*From Here to Eternity*,” Jones paints a picture of a world where characters either surrender to the dictates of the Army subculture or die in resisting it.

Prewitt, an honest, courageous and patriotic career soldier in his fight against top dog suffers a cruel fate, first when he is demoted from a top bugler to the status of mere recruit at Schofield Barracks; then at the hands of “Dynamite” Holmes who harasses him for refusing to box for the company tournament; and finally dies at the hands of a sentry in trying to return to his camp to inform about the unannounced military action on Pearl harbor (called Hawaii Operation AI[1] [2] by the Japanese and join the American army to fight the big war, but, alas dies. It was against the conventions of the war for any country to attack without any formal warning. Prewitt's life is a history of scars.

Private Robert E. Lee “Prew” Prewitt is the epitome of tragic heroism, a great man who allows him to be torn down bit by bit all the while to stop the growing corruption in the army. The harsh environment created for him by Warden and Slater vividly illustrates their irrational fascist practices in the army. War is hell, and so, Jones reminds us, or the conditions that set the stage for it. Amidst all the ugliness, Prew reflects a noble spirit of persistence. In the face of adversity against the ultimate culture of conformity, Prew's resilience to alert his American soldiers of the attack on Pearl Harbor which

inevitably leads to a stormy climax. Jones makes Prew's death not only heroic but as a triumph of a good soldier over Crypto fascism.

From Here to Eternity deals with life of a soldier on a deeper level than the common perception that soldiers live life only to fight. These are real good soldiers who go through the same struggles as every other in any military establishment, whose ocean of sufferings are unknown and whose honor, courage and patriotism remain silent hundred years after they are dead.

Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, begins with General Cummings' trying to drive out the Japanese. It depicts the on-going action in a reconnaissance platoon and focuses on a particular character's personality and his past life. The novel contains combat scenes, Army protocol, trials and agonies of the army men, dangers of the campaign, conflicts between officers and regulars, internal conflicts, fears, aggression between squads etc. The single main action focuses on the ire of Croft, the ruthless Sergeant in command, who withholds information from Lieutenant Hearn, leading to Hearn's death in combat. Croft's military law is:

To make an Army work you have to have every man in it fitted into a fear ladder... The Army functions best when you're frightened of the man above you and contemptuous of your subordinates.... *The Naked and the Dead* (6:1)

Mailer and Jones in their first novels looked at the army as the Organization—a possible harbinger of post-war Fascism. Mailer was most interested in power than in justice. What Mailer was looking for was grand heroic life which could not be found in revolutionary socialism, than in Liberalism? Revolutionary socialism, according to Mailer was bankrupt in vigor, visualization and imagination had to be

practiced as frozen reality. Also Marxism inherited in nineteenth century had failed as an expression of scientific narcissism. Mailer's liberalism had a curious relation to intellectual fashion of the Hip which was an unconstructed liberalism and was circulating energetically through the intellectual climate of 1948. Mailer believed in the Hipster, the American existentialist, who was an effective mode of rebellion.

The gratification of this desire is seen in Goldstein and Ridges, the essentially courageous soldiers. Unlike the majority of his literary contemporaries who feared over the deleterious effects of commitment to the ideology of liberalism, Mailer was able to experience the passion and the rigidity of Liberalism on his own pulses and best exemplified it in *The Naked and the Dead*.

Mailer's other heroes, Lt Hearn and Pvt. Valsen hold on to their integrity to triumph through the fear of authoritarian fascist leaders, Cummings and Sgt. Croft. Mailer's ruthless indictment of the reactionary forces in *The Naked and the Dead*, establishes him as an anti-fascist, neoliberal making a powerful plea for individual freedom. The philosophy of Norman Mailer in *The Naked and The Dead* is that every rung in the hierarchal ladder is to fear authority and at the same time fight within fear ladder against crypto fascists like Sergeant Croft and General Cummings who are dangerous to Liberal American society. A good soldier will not be afraid of Fascist Generals or Sergeants at the top and does not detest the subordinates but realizes such traits are misplaced and inhibiting.

As political ideologists they made deep impact and imprint on men at that point of time during the war. The writers with their creative imagination transformed and

translated them into works of art. Fascism is a power discourse; it is anti-human, barbarous, unnatural and violent while liberalism is a vibrant cultural progression and ever-evolving humanism. It is a sacred concept safeguarding human dignity and freedom of speech. Fascism is a war within war, more destructive, a psychological assault and moral aberration. Liberalism has matured into modernity and democratic spirit.

Fascism historically has faded out and has been rejected by the relentless march of history. Liberalism stands for cultural modernism and is getting enshrined in almost all evolving constitutions of the world. So the liberalist movement never stops until the dream of human equality is realized fully on this planet of earth.

There is a scope for better human relations even in the military system of life. The efforts of peace building or preservation of peace should start in our home ground. The rigid rules and hierarchy of administration can be relaxed and transformed into a system of family where love and mutual respect prevails, where the structure can be retained with better human values i.e. the process of modernization of military establishment. When democracy is making inroads into every walk of life, why not into the army?

Finally, the paper sums up the views expressed in the preceding paragraphs. It upholds sustaining military values, military standards, military reforms and to subvert old ideas and established facts and to promote military ideals, to encourage military and civil relations. Because, better military means better society with peace loving and lasting military values.

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The Feminine Mystique in Indian Women Writing in English — The Beginnings

DR. PRAJNA PARAMITA PANIGRAHI

The concept of femininity in Indian literature is shaped through a harmonious blend of metaphysics, social values, individual ideals and oral tradition. From the early Indian scriptures to the present-day literatures, the idea of womanhood appears to be ambivalent. Epitomizing devotion, self-sacrifice and submissiveness, she also exudes moral courage and supreme inner strength to combat life. If she is the fertile, benevolent—the bestower on one hand, she is also the aggressive, malevolent destroyer on the other. The two perceptions of the female is the representation of two different energies undermining the same persona. Meenakshi Thapan describes:

This is the ambivalent persona of the Indian woman, located in myth and popular culture as ... both goddess and dangerous power (*shakti*), as virtuous wife and dangerous evil, both pure and impure in her embodiment, to be revered and worshipped but also to be controlled through a direct regulation of her sexuality. (4)

Our scriptures also indicate that man and woman are separate entities, having well-defined familial/social activities to perform. The two-fold image of *Purusha-Prakriti* (Samkhya philosophy) representing the male/ female, static/ dynamic,

passive/ active forces of the universe, does not imply any kind of overbearance on either force. Rather one complements the other. Nature (*prakriti*) is the active female counterpart of the cosmic person *purusha*, the inactive male aspect. The synthesis of the radically opposite forces (*prakriti/purusha*) leads to the creation of Life. Hence, the Indian tradition categorizes the female force as “mothers, as creators and as sustainers of life on earth” (*Cultural Heritage* 602). Thus, the worship of the Mother Goddess in Harappan culture, as the bestower of happiness and abundance of wealth holds well in the Aryan culture too.

Both Sanskrit and *Bhasha* mythology are replete with examples of female behaviour and its consequences, thereby setting up explicit role models for the Hindu woman. Folklores and *Bhasha* literature developed along the same lines, reinforcing the popular belief for popular conduct.

Since literature chronicles and mirrors the social changes, the image of woman has been in a continual flux. From the advent of the Aryans, journeying through the series of invasions of Turks, Muslims, Huns, Shakas and the British; Indian society has become a coalition of varied cultures and races. Under the influence of cross-cultural conflicts the Indian woman seems to have maintained the continuum of the essence of cultural and spiritual principles down the ages.

During the early Vedic period, learned and educated women seers called *Brahmavadinis* like Gargi, Maitreyi and Leelavati composed hymns to be collected in the Rig-Veda. There have been instances of *Sadyovadhis*, dedicating herself for the welfare of her family, taking pride in discharging her domestic duties. Each had her own space and identity. Domesticity was in no way a hindrance to the intellectual pursuits undertaken by women. Thus, education, equal status

in the familial/ social hierarchy, right to property, financial stability, freedom in the choice of a partner, etc. were the natural acumen of at least the upper-class woman. Widow-remarriage was not unacceptable. In Vedic rituals the woman's presence was mandatory:

Women were in ancient days considered to be the equals of men in the sense that whatever the husband did for the acquisition of merit or spiritual evolution was to be fully shared by the wife, who was usually to sit by his side during the ceremonies. (*Cultural Heritage* 43)

Thus, apart from the Vedic age, where the wife was the husband's companion, in happiness and in sorrow, the mistress of the household, the partner in all activities—temporal or spiritual, Indian woman's life was curbed in the days that followed.

The epics present femininity in numerous shades; glorifying and emphasizing the ideals of womanhood in characters like Sita, Ahalya, Draupadi, Tara, Mandodari, et al., "Each one of them was, from the moral standards of purity of motives, regarded as a woman of ideal character" (Upadhyay and Pandey 12). While the Ramayana presents a galaxy of soft, delicate and gentle women, combined with great moral strength and an austere sense of duty; the Mahabharata, creates true to life characters—blending the positive and the negative aspects of the female self. It "is resplendent with a galaxy of great women fulfilling their destinies, pursuing their ideals, and attaining their ends in different spheres of life in a manner at once simple and superb" (Choudhury 605).

The position of Indian woman seems to have gradually deteriorated in the post-Vedic times. Buddhism and Jainism did little to elevate her place. Both the religions looked down upon the female class as the path to evil and destruction. As

the ideals of equality and unity began to waver and fade away, the *Smriti* age codified social laws. Bracketed with the lowest class in social strata, women were denied the study of the Vedas, the right to perform rites and chant *mantras*. Consequently, withdrawal to domesticity marred the growth of free spirit of the woman self. The growing pressure of Islamic and other foreign cultures resulted in a growing sense of insecurity in women. It is generally believed that subsequent collapse of the Hindu hegemony to the Muslim subjugation forced women to remain in purdah. Right to inheritance and *Sati* came into vogue. During the Medieval Age, girls of well-to-do families could only receive education. Elderly *Brahmin* pundits were employed to teach them. But great sanctity was attached to traditional ideals (*kula dharma*) and Hindu families continued to retain more or less the same characteristics and spiritual ideals down the ages. Though the status of woman was much demanded, much of their freedom and privileges was curtailed; still the Indian woman occupied a respectable and revered position. She still remained queen of her household; but her domain did not cross beyond the threshold. A.S. Altekar informs:

Denied the benefits of education, brought up in the authoritarian atmosphere, having no opportunities to develop their natural capacities, women became helpless, illiterate, narrow-minded and peevish ... the theory of perpetual tutelage of women became more and more deep rooted in society. (43-44)

Doranne Jacobson adds that due to the vast differences in economic, geographic, religions and caste systems, the Indian woman is not any single persona; she has no stereotype. Each Indian woman is distinctly different from the other, enhancing one's own individuality; the dominating idea of female self-hood is not exactly the search for identity.

Rather, the feminine self merges her identity with that of the familial to provide stability and meaning to life:

Ornamented with finery, revered as a mother and goddess, concealed behind a veil or despised as a widow.... The Indian woman has been depicted as graceful, loving, a gentle creature in need of guidance, yet hard-working and strong enough to withstand the cruel blows dealt her by fate. (Jacobson 19)

The economic and cultural collapse of the Indian society led to a negation of self-expression. The introduction of English education in 1835 and the invasion of the Western culture marked a changing phase for the women's position in society. Educational institutions opened by the British infused a new understanding and better appreciation of life. Illiteracy and seclusion of women were condemned by the social reformers. The natural outcome of such a development was the urge to bring changes in social life and in matters related to the treatment of women. In the process, female education gathered impetus. Justifying the need for women emancipation, certain significant legal reforms were enforced; viz. the abolition of *sati* in 1827, the suppression of infanticide in 1725 and 1804, the removal of the restriction of widow remarriage in 1856 (Joshi and Liddle 26). In the words of O'Malley,

... profound has been the penetration of the West into men's ideas of religion, caste and natural status, it has nowhere penetrated more deeply than its revaluation of women; it brought to women a total new concept of themselves as persons 'individually important and nationally needed'. (qtd. in Upadhyay and Pandey 26)

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), the founder of Brahmo Samaj and an advocate of religious liberalism, appealed for the introduction of Western education and the modes of imparting scientific learning in India. He

considered women to be virtuous, trustworthy and resolute, in contrast to the public opinion describing women as weak in intellect, volatile and deficient in resolution. His campaign against Sati, child-marriage and polygamy rose from his 'Western' idea of individual freedom. He also encouraged widow-remarriage, with a view to enhancing the existing lifestyle of women.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar took up the campaign started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, advocating widow remarriage which culminated in the promulgation of the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856. Drinkwater Bethuen established the Bethuen School in 1849 in Calcutta for the spread of female education. Developed along the same lines, the Arya Samaj, another Hindu society, founded by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) worked towards the upliftment of women while incorporating Hindu tradition and culture to the social mainstream.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) also wanted women to be free from all restraints—social and economic—through education. Huzur Maharaj Rai Salig Ram (1829) of Uttar Pradesh, V. Pantulu and Sir R. Venkata Ratnam Naidu in South India, took up the women's cause. They devoted themselves to women's advancement through education and social reforms.

It is necessary to mention here that it was the male section of society which had started championing the women's cause. Social reformers, all men, crossing the barriers of state and religion, pledged to work for women's upliftment. Alongside, many women came out of their *zenanas* to herald their cause, struggling against heavy odds.

Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) fought for women's rights. Bringing out women from the narrow and secluded confines

of their homes, Ramabai tried to promote education and unity among the female sex and prepared them to be self-independent through Sharada Sadan founded by her. Anandibai Joshi (1865), the first Indian woman to become a medical doctor, emphasized on the general health and proper medical care for women, which they generally lacked. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, these social reformers (both male and female), “tried to cut a pathway for the coming women to tread upon, cut in through dark and solitary forest gloom with bleeding feet and bleeding hands, women who wrote the first gold letters, on the new page of history that India has entered upon” (qtd. in Upadhyay 30).

Education was still accessible only to the socially elite class and formal school education was available only in a few *madrassas* and *pathshalas*. Lady tutors and governesses taught the women of economically privileged class and “husbands would educate their wives, brothers teach their sisters, or fathers and uncles instruct their daughters and nieces” (Jasbir Jain 52).

Christianity opened up new avenues for women, even though it interfered with the inherent Hindu way of life. Christian missions like the Baptist Zenana Mission recruited women teachers to educate the female students. There was a growing awareness of the need for female education, reforms related to women’s status and the refusal to accept an inferior footage. Women started demonstrating the will to take charge of their own affairs, and cultivated people from all over the country supported the cause.

The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 almost coincided with a growing nationalist consciousness among the middle class. The nationalist discourse sought to foreground the role of women as pivotal

to the family. They were first expected to become the perfect Indian woman before they could actually join the active political activities. The journey from the secure homes to the warfront was stimulating, though hazardous. It infused, in the female race, a new strength and vision to locate their stand in society. The pioneers in the woman's emancipation, thus, entered public life through Mahila Samitis, Women's Clubs, Ladies Societies, etc. during 1910 and 1920. They attacked religious orthodoxy, injustice, and discrimination. Collaborating with them, were those British women who were better trained in the practical wisdom of the West. Margaret Noble (later known as Sister Nivedita), Annie Besant, and Margaret Cousins pleaded for women emancipation and equal rights. Geraldine Forbes points out, "Indian women wrote and spoke about women's condition, formed organizations to secure desired changes, and eventually had an impact on the institutions of their society" (qtd. in Joshi and Liddle 21).

They also realized that freedom for women was an integral part of the freedom of the nation. In 1917, the question for Indian Women's franchise was raised and in 1929, women were provided the right to vote. Women's organizations sought to address women's issues like subordination. The Women Indian Association, founded in 1917 by Margaret Cousins, Dorothy Jinarjadasa and Annie Besant linked itself with the British Movement for women suffrage. The National Council of Women in India, founded by Lady Tata and Lady Aberdeen in 1925 continued to remain the Indian Branch of the International Council of Women. The All India Women's Conference became the most influential of the organizations incorporating the Women's Indian Association in the 1930s.

Strongly linked with the nationalist movement, the Women's Movement reflected predominantly the concerns of the middle and upper class; thus, neglecting the intervention of caste, class and gender dominance on women's position. It radicalized women's thoughts, helping them to articulate their grievances, and influenced the nationalist movement to support their cause. The alliance between the two movements lost its significance after the goal of political independence was attained. Both the organizations wanted freedom from the British rule but women also needed freedom from male dominance which was still a far cry. All that women gained from the alliance was the articulation and the logical representation of their grievances. Male supremacy still held good.

Women's Liberation Movement in India did not stem from British Liberalism alone. The Indian Woman's desire for freedom is inherent in her own cultural heritage, which views women as radically perfect and morally sound. Western thoughts and ideals infused the spirit of individual rights and dignity in the women movements in India. As a result, the Indian woman committed herself to exploit the opportunities and contradictions in the social structure, forcing the institutions of male domination to change.

Feminism of the West emphasizes the dignity of an individual and the quest for personal independence, dismissing all socially defined roles. It projects woman as the victim of social oppression, both patriarchal and sexist. It is "committed to the struggle for equality for women, an effort to make women become *like* men. But the struggle for equal rights historically and politically emphasizes the *value* of women *as they are* Women are of equal human value in their own way" (Singh 23).

Coinciding with the beginning of the French Revolution and in the midst of England's own industrial revolution, Mary Wollstonecraft's pioneering work, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), was the first clarion call for the forthcoming battle of the sexes. Wollstonecraft writes: "I, therefore, will venture to assert that till women are more rationally educated, the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks" (V, 45). Justifying the importance of education, the perfectibility of human nature, the equality of individuals, she clarified the natural right of each being to determine his/her destiny. She linked Feminism with the general struggle of social and political reform, arguing that the abstract rights of a woman were inextricably linked with the abstract rights of man and that the tyranny and privilege of man must give way to *Reason* and *Rationality* which belongs to both the sexes.

J.S. Mill, in his famous treatise *On the Subjection of Women* (1869) pursued the concern for equality of the sexes, highlighting that 'gender justice' could be achieved through equality of opportunity in education, economic and civil liberties. He also maintained that liberties to women shall not hamper their domestic duties; motherhood and marriage would remain their primary concern.

Virginia Woolf (b.1938) analyzed that women's subjection to male violence in the 'private' world of the family was inseparably linked to the public world of emergent Fascism after Second World War. Complete destruction and anarchy, forced women to take up employment. With an urge to rebuild the devastated nation, British woman combined domestic duties and outside 'the home' jobs. But women's work outside their home was just an extension of their private duties. Thus, post-war climate utilized domestic labour but

there are certain areas which are reserved exclusively for men. Virginia Woolf, while defending women in *Three Guineas* says:

... both the Army and Navy are closed to our sex. We are not allowed to fight. Nor again are we allowed to be members of the Stock Exchange. Thus we can use neither the pressure of force nor the pressure of money... We cannot preach sermons or negotiate treaties. Then again although it is true that we can write articles or send letters to the Press, the control of the Press—the decision what to print, what not to print—is entirely in the hands of your sex. (qtd. in Jasbir Jain 110)

In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan explored and challenged the effects of limitations placed on women by patriarchal ideologies, gender-stereotyping and assumptions about 'femininity'. She maintained that combining a career and a family would enable women to achieve true fulfillment and equality. Under the impact of sound education, women would no longer require "the regard of boys or men to feel alive" (331).

Friedan recognized and articulated women's experiences in a patriarchal oppressive society triggered by consumerism and advanced capitalism. The move towards equality of opportunity was also a commitment to access and participate in the general struggle for gender imbalance.

Thus, Western Feminism strives to achieve equality and freedom from oppression. It embraces the concept of equal rights for women and equal participation in all aspects of society. It also enforces that widespread social changes are necessary to herald the upliftment of women. Far from being an unanimous derivation of Western Thought, feminist thinking in India is an authentic and rational perception of the mingling the best of both cultures. Indian thought is moulded in metaphysics, and tradition; and hence, the

ideology regarding women is definitely cast in the same lines. Uma Chakravathy reflects:

MEN and WOMEN in India, whether or not they have formally learnt history, carry with them a sense of the past which they have internalized through the transmission of popular beliefs, mythology, tales of heroism, and folklore... It is just such a medley of ideas that forms the basis of our understanding of the status of women in ancient times; and is also part of our deeply embedded perceptions of the past in a more general sense. (qtd. in Sangari and Vaid 27)

The institution of marriage in India is not just a social convention; it is wholly cultural and innately spiritual. It does not look upon the subordination of the female to the male, but the bondage of two personalities in the common pursuit of elevating *dharma*. Thus, it is a sacrament based on equality and faith. Upadhyay maintains:

The four types of feminine ideals in India may be discerned: *as harmony of male and female, as mother, as religious figure, and as wife.* (47)

As feminist movements gained momentum in different parts of the globe, a definite feminist literary theory has evolved. But women's writing has developed at a much slower rate. Though literature became a powerful medium to perpetuate the ideas of universality, objectivity and neutrality, lack of women education, submergence of their contributions, the dismissal of their work in view of domestic and limited experience, much of women's writing went unnoticed. Elaine Showalter observes:

In its earliest years, feminist criticism concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassments of women in classic and popular male literature and the exclusion of women from literary history. (qtd. in Jain *Women Writing* 13)

Sex of the literary artist often becomes the determinant for recognition. Rosalind Miles declares: "Whatever a woman produces as a writer, she is still judged as a woman" (qtd. in Spender 5). Male authors do get a "Fairer hearing" and "better reception". Since domesticity and child-rearing was so time-consuming, women writers were considered to be lacking in real-life experiences.

Intellectual satisfaction was attained in proxy. Female writers opted for male pseudonyms so that their work may be recognized. Women questioned social, and patriarchal constructs; dwelled on moral and ethical principles; which had hitherto crumbled and shrunk the female self. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's study *The Mad Woman in the Attic* (1979), Ellen Moers' *Literary Women* (1976), and Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) tries to identify a distinct literary tradition. They affirm that women writing is sufficiently different from their male counterparts but creativity is inextricably linked with male sexuality. Gilbert and Gubar wonder, "If the pen is a metaphorical penis, with what organ can the female generate texts? . . . If creativity is an extension of male sexuality, then clearly women do not possess the power to write" (qtd. in Spaul and Millard 123).

Women in patriarchal societies have been forced to remain passive. They "exist only to be acted on by men" (Gilbert and Gubar 8). The duality in woman's self is foreground on the idea that woman is both an Angel, sweet, submissive, passive self-less and comforting to man; and a Monster, capable of death and destruction. Gilbert and Gubar trace that these contradictory images may represent man's ambivalent attitude to female sexuality:

... the two images may exist within one character: the monster may not only be concealed *behind* the angel, she may actually turn out to reside *within* (or in the lower half of) the angel. (29)

Simone de Beauvoir also echoes similar thoughts:

... woman has been made to represent all of man's ambivalent feelings about his incapability to control his own physical existence, his own birth and death. As the other, woman comes to represent the contingency of life that is made to be destroyed. (34)

Though a passive angel or an active monster, the woman writer feels the pressures of the society and culture that cripple her. Sexual differences lead to the difference in experiences, approach to life and writing. Though these differences do not imply sexual inequality, it is maintained that certain experiences of life such as procreation, child-rearing, etc. are decidedly feminine. Though in a patriarchal social setup women images as "passive, docile, dependent, helpless victims at the mercy of men" (Kaur xiii), the inner experiences of women were considered to be trivial and unworthy. Quoting Lerner, "... what wisdom can there be in menses? What source of knowledge in the milk-filled breasts? What food for abstraction in the daily routine of feeding and cleaning?" (Kaur xiii).

While the male writer, in order to carve out a place for himself, had to subvert the theory of his literary fathers, and exercise his authority; a female writer has to deconstruct the images created of her by man. Spaul and Millard, examining the theory of Gubar and Gilbert, in the context of sexual difference and its influence on writing, trace that:

A woman writer's reaction to literary history not as an 'anxiety of influence' but as an 'anxiety of authorship'. Because she has been 'enclosed' by male definitions of herself and her own potential, the woman writer doubts not only *what* she writes, but her ability to write at all ... before any woman can write, she must first come to terms with these male images of herself. Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass

towards literary autonomy ... she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass. (127)

Thus, by constructing new images of herself (thereby deleting the existing patriarchal models), women writers justify their need for self-identity and speak forth their silences. They have, thus, succeeded in liberating themselves from reacting to patriarchal values and male hegemony and have turned inward seeking their autonomous female identity. So, the woman writer has to go through their major phases, as Showalter predicts in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977):

First, there is a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and the *internalization* of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards and values, and *advocacy* of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of *self-discovery*, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, *feminine*, *feminist* and *female*. (13)

Under the impact of English education, there was a growth in female readership and journalism directed at women and engaged in by them. S. Das explains: "They (women writers) are trying to move beyond silence to speech. They are beginning to explore, to become aware of themselves autonomously, to be on their own firm feet and to write their own history" (44).

A Hindi journal titled *Bala-Bodhini* (1874) was written in view to increase female readership. Journals like *Stree-Darpan*, *Kumari-Darpan* were brought out by Rameshwari Nehru and Roop Kumari Nehru respectively. *Arya Mahila* and *Mahila Sarvasv*, were other leading journals which included poems, plays, essays and autobiographies by women. Swarna

Kumari Devi edited the magazine *Bharati* in 1884, while Kamala Saththianadhan brought out *The Indian Magazine*, a journal from Madras. *Stree-Bodh* (1901) was published from Bombay and the Women's Indian Association edited *Stree-Dharam*.

Essays written by women focused on *Stree-Dharma* and questioned the high-handedness of male dominance. Tarabai Shinde's *Stree-Purush Tulana* (1882) was followed by an anonymously published text *Simantini Upadesh* (1882). Both the texts discuss related questions of gender and socio-economic equality. Like Shinde, *Simantini Upadesh* criticizes marriage, family, morality and religion, which has rendered women subordinate. It aims to motivate women to discard their chains and walk towards freedom. Both the texts aim at a rapid and complete social change. Pandita Ramabai's *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1888) describes the demeaning social inequalities that surround the Indian woman; in relation to her Western counterparts. It exposes the codes laid down by Manu, the law-giver and like Mary Wollstonecraft; Ramabai perceives education to be the means for women emancipation. While social treatises, essays and journals worked for women's consciousness of their condition and their upliftment through education and social changes, the novel gave the female sex the opportunity to widen their horizons, and develop their creative abilities. Through the medium, women writers reached millions and propagated their voice for freedom from tyranny and oppression.

Toru Dutt (1856-1877), was the first Indian woman novelist to write both in English and in French. *Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden* is a romance, published in January-April 1878, as a serial in the *Bengal Magazine* edited by the Rev. Lal Behari Day. Complete or incomplete, Bianca conveys the inner struggles which accompanied Toru's apparently

calm outer acceptances. It is the first novel in Indian English in various shades, the passionate and delicate psyche of a woman.

Krupabai Saththianadhan (1862-1894), the youngest daughter of Rev. Hari Pant Khisty of American Board Missionary Society, wrote two full-length novels, viz. *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (1888-90) and *Kamala: A Story of Hindu Life* (1892-94). Dealing with two different cultural contexts, both novels present the feminine identity facing life in their own terms and finding truth in their own faiths. Autobiographical in theme, *Saguna* reflects on the difficulty of religious conversions and the realization that the values which have been drilled into the minds for generations cannot be washed away with one conversion. Here, the New Woman speaks for freedom for women, gender equality and that while education provides a mental awakening; religious and cultural structures shape human sensibility. In *Kamala*, traditional values and religion help women to be assertive and live a life of her own choice to find her path to truth and personal freedom. The emergence of the New Woman is more pronounced and life-like than in other women writings.

These writers made the novel an instrument of social reform and regeneration, without failing to dwell on the inner workings of the female mind. Emphasizing on subjectivity and private experiences, these novels mark a transition from the objective social life to an individualistic and private modes of existence. Women writers, “pass through a process of transformation which signifies for them a change from bondage to freedom, from indecision to self-assertion, and from weakness to strength” (A. Singh 146). During the three decades, after India gained independence, women writers were more concerned with the exploration of a feminine identity, her development of self-awareness, the persisting

tensions arising out of socio-political changes, and their impact on a woman's life at the personal and home-front. Reality creeps in as novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and others highlight woman as an assertive, self-willed individual, discovering her own self and purpose in life. Namita Gokhale comments:

... they are all writing about the same preoccupations. There is a commonality in the matrix of their perceptions and reactions. They are all engaged in a search for identity. And they are not alone in their search; their readers, too, are engaged in the same pursuit; they, too, are seeking a mirror in which to examine and understand and revalidate themselves. (qtd. in Roy 72)

In recent decades, the image of the female self has moved from the object position to the subject. No longer timid or submissive, women are conditioned to speak forth their feelings, needs and aspirations. They command a place of their own and demand of society to listen. Simone de Beauvoir justly remarks: "Once a woman ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe, there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator" (689).

The Indian woman, nonetheless, deviates from her Western counterpart, seeks to strike a balance between tradition and the newly acquired values of the West; her capacity for nurturance and selfless devotion and her quest for self-identity.

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Contemporary Issues and the Relevance of Miller's Plays

DR. RADHASHYAM DEY

A society is an aggregate of people who form an ordered community, where every individual should think and act for his betterment but not at the cost of others. This is the civil conduct, or rather politically speaking, the democratic conduct as opposed to the selfish conduct called parochialism, marked by selfishness, cunningness and jealousy.

Miller was often in public eye, most famously for refusing to give evidence before the house un-American Activities Committee. His concern for the common man can be seen in all his plays. Chris Keller says to his mother in *All My Sons*, "Once and for all you must know that there is a universe of people outside, and you are responsible to it" (23). Miller's work is infused with his sense of responsibility to humanity and to his audience. He says, "The Playwright is nothing without his audience" (*The Theatre in Our Times* 51). *All My Sons*, a realistic play illustrates the theme that a man must recognize his ethical responsibility to the world outside his home as well as in his own home. Joe Keller's sin of selling defective cylinders heads for sheer personal benefits causes the death of twenty-one American pilots and the alienation of his family. Keller's journey from self to non-self marks the end of his quest, "My only accomplishment is my sons," he says in the beginning (Miller 53). But before committing

suicide, he says, "But I think, to me, they were all my sons. And I guess they were" (Miller 90). *The Crucible* is yet another important play that presents the mass-hysterical picture of the American society during the early 1960s. The then witch-hunt in Salem is having its queer parallelism with the contemporary McCarthyism (1952). Much like the witch-hunt, McCarthyism displays its obnoxious purpose by summary trials and dismissal of government employees who were suspected of having any communist connections. The theme of *The Crucible* lies in the conflict between conscience and institutional dogma. John Proctor, the protagonist of the play, accused of adultery and witchcraft is condemned to death. In a sense, Proctor is committed to strengthen the social responsibility of the individual at the cost of his own life. Proctor's fate reminds us of Shaw's Joan (*Saint Joan*) who is convicted of the direct communion with god not through the established church and therefore, burnt alive on the stake. Socrates was made to drink hemlock for his teaching and preaching of truth to a warlike society.

Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was a great success. Miller in his interview with Matthew Roudane said, "the suppression of individual by placing him below the imperious needs of society or technology seems to have manufactured more Willys in the world" (18). Willy's tragedy, his predicament is the plight of everyman in modern mechanized society. Death is the wage of his sin. He failed in his role obligation—as a father and as a husband and consequently as a man. He nurtured false values and inculcated it in his children. He is also an unfaithful husband. He thus, failed in his social responsibility.

Miller understands it very well that depression is the worst enemy of world economy. In fact in 1930s America's economy collapsed and Miller described it very vividly. It

caused so many people suffering from unemployment and hardship and it had a lasting effect on Miller's thinking. Neil Carson calls it the most formative crisis in Miller's life. Miller writes:

I happened to have withdrawn my twelve dollars to buy a racing bike a friend of mine was bored with, and the next day the bank of the United States closed. I rode by and saw the crowds of people standing at the brass gates. Their money was inside! And they could not get it. And they would never get it. As for me I felt I had the thing licked. But a week later I went into the house to get a glass of milk and when I came out, my bike was gone stolen. It must have taught me a lesson. Nobody could escape that disaster. (Carson 67).

Today the economy of Greece is gasping. Govt. deficit has grown up by 15.77, while unemployment rate has touched nearly 30%. Complete deflation has set in. Several bailout packages by European central bank and IMF have failed to pull out Greece. Severe austerity measures has cost many of its citizens their job, Greece currency has become devalued. This has led to unwelcome consequences—there is migration of intellectuals, suicide in frustration, price rise and people shy away of investments. What happened in America in 1930-40s and what is happening in Greece shows the world community that Miller's plays on depression-theme still hold ground.

The Americans are dreamers and they worship Horatio Alger ideal, the rags to riches romance. The myth of success is a very dominating theme in the American history and literature. Miller satirises it and points out that there is no shortcut for success. The whole life of the Loman family is dominated by Willy's idea of *success*. Willy wants only the very best for his two sons who are the centre of his life, but driven by the image of success, he spoils them, overlooks

their dishonesty and tortures them with his ambition for them. Willy's plight is the result of his unshaken belief in the success myth, a tissue of false values, outdated values that lead only to frustration. In *All My Sons* probably Joe Keller has no malice at heart akin to a villain but a money-making desire peculiar to the businessman. Probably after a long time, he wakes up from his dream of success and finds himself surrounded by utter failure. The realization and disillusionment is too harsh to allow him to survive any longer. In doing away with his life also he puts an end to his delusion. Joe and Loman's death are not their punishment, they are the product of his society. Suicide under stress and frustration are today's common phenomenon. Joe Keller is a self-made man, an image of American success who is destroyed when he is forced to see that image in another context—through the eyes of his idealist son.

Father-Son relationship is a burning issue. The father is presented as an embodiment of the past and of an authority which must be challenged: the sons are an expression of a necessary revolt which nonetheless is tainted with guilt. One of the perspectives of looking at *All My Sons* in the universal terms of human brotherhood: the father in effect destroys, one of his sons, and that son, in turn, gives the sentence of death on him, while at the same time, to the other son in rejecting it destroys his father, in pain and love. Similarly in *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman like Joe Keller has lived for his sons, will die for the sons who are to extend his life, yet the sons, in their different ways reject him, in one case for good reasons and in effect destroy him. Yet the failure in both sides is rooted in love and dependence: the death and love are deeply related aspects of the same relationship. To Rose Styron's question "Were you very close to your father?" (89) Miller replied:

I was I still am, but I think, actually, that my plays don't reflect directly my relationship to him. It's a very primitive thing in my plays. That is, the father was really a figure who incorporated both power and some kind of moral law which he had either broken himself or he had fallen to it. He figures as an immense shadow... I didn't expect that of my own father, literally but of his position, apparently I did. The reason that I was able to write about the relationship, I think now, was because it had a mythical quality to me. If I had ever thought that I was writing about my father, I suppose I never could have done it. (*Conversations with Arthur Miller* 89)

Keller has betrayed his responsibility as a parent and the climax of the play is the discovery that his elder son, thought to have been lost in action in the war, committed suicide at the news of his father's crime. Miller stresses betrayal again in *Death of a Salesman* when Biff discovers his father with a prostitute and Willy Loman's suffering is greatly increased by his son's lack of charity. Miller makes Keller say before his suicide, "I'm his father and he's my son, and if there is something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head" (120). Again when Charlie tells Willy to forget about Biff, he replies, "Then what have I got to remember?" (47). The heart of Miller's radicalism is conservative; it seeks the maintenance of individual dignity with the context of the family which broadens the concept of society as a whole. The son becomes the father. He desires to take over the authority. Biff and Happy are flawed extensions of Willy and Linda, the genetic lineage carried on with devastating efficiency and symmetry. The shock which shatters Miller's dramatic cosmos always begins with the father's inability to exact the role of moral authority the son assigns to him.

Miller saw his efforts in the theater as a force to correct society. Miller's marriage to Monroe had a profound effect on his attitudes. Yet, if sexuality is submerged in the plays of the

first period, it is not dormant, in its repressed state, sex plays an important role in the action. In fact, it is always the cause of catastrophe. Willy's affair in Boston is the cause of his separation from Biff; Proctor's act of adultery with Abby is the source of his downfall; and Carbone's incestuous and unacknowledged passion for Catherine is the cause of his death. Monroe is considered to be a great sex symbol. *After the Fall* is considered to be the portrayal of Marilyn Monroe. Bigsby says, "denial indeed, lies at the heart of Miller's work" (*The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller* 80). Eddie Carbone, the protagonist in *A View from the Bridge* precipitates his own death as a means of denying a truth he cannot face, his feelings of sexual attraction to his own niece Catherine. Proctor has sinned with Abigail, to use the language of the play, and it is simply an acknowledgement of sin of flesh, punished by his wife's coldness, but not a violation of his inner self. Elizabeth observes: "I don't judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John—only somewhat bewildered" (*The Crucible* Act ii). Willy has not only betrayed Linda and Biff, he has betrayed himself. Hap Loman can with cheerful irresponsibility, seduce the fiancées of executives. Sex is in itself an evil, a false value in Miller's plays. The stability of the family—the value Miller always affirms—is inevitably shattered when sex rears its ugly and sinful head.

Today's society is very complex and here man suffers from 'to be or not to be' like Shakespeare's Hamlet. Here, life is not a problem but living pains and drains one's blood. Miller's *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible* all vindicate this. The basic premise of all three is that society is an image making machine, a purveyor of myths and prejudices which provides the false faces and false values which modern man wears. The implication is that the

individual has little choice that can conform and be destroyed as Joe Keller and Willy Loman are, or that he can refuse to conform and be destroyed, as John Proctor and Eddie Carbone are. Miller argues that though industrialization is a modern necessity, it also has a dehumanizing facet. Willy is at ease and comfort when he is in his backyard garden or driving through rural areas. Miller argues that crave for modernity means rat race and cut throat competition and in the process man becomes depressed, defeated, criminal and anti-social. Howard represents what industrialists want and do. He fires Willy when he is incapable of achieving the target. These days many software engineers and labourers lose jobs every moment. The play seems to indict a system that promises and indeed demands that commitment to success without any regards to human values, a system that, as Willy says to Howard, "will eat the orange and throw the peel away" (*Death of a Salesman* 52). Miller in this sense does attack the society that says, "business is business" (60).

Miller's women characters are loving, docile and submissive. In the plays of the first period, the woman is always in the background. There is a marked streak of Puritanism, "our opposites are always clothed in sexual sin", or it's a cold wife that prompts lechery" (*The Crucible* 17). Maggie's death and suicide-attempts in the play paralleled Marylin's in real life. In his handling of women characters in the later plays Miller falls prey, however unwittingly, to some of the very same patriarchal attitudes he appears to be criticizing. Wendy Schissel, for example, argues not only that Tituba, Parris's black slave from Barbados, has been made a scapegoat, but that Miller has objectified Abigail and Elizabeth by casting them as "extremes of female sexuality—sultriness and frigidity respectively—which test a man's body, endanger his spirit" (Bigsby 99) and threaten his national

dominance or needs. The establishment itself criminalizes sexual desire, reading the women's bodies as the source of sin and shame; feminine power is interpreted as dangerous in the eyes of a "Puritanism that transforms risky sexuality into witchcraft. As Ann Scarborro remarks, apart from the too easy one dimensionality of Tituba's characterization complete with Pidgin English, Miller does grant "her subtle power by making her critic of the Puritans devil" (Bigsby 99). In *All My Sons* the idealistic and innocent Chris does not know that his neighbour Sue hates him. She is polite to Chris, but her words to Ann indicate that she actually loathes him. Chris and Sue's relationship is the beginning of Joe Keller's undoing in *All My Sons*. Martin Gottfried writes in his 2003 biography "Miller's plays are essentially stories of men" (11). Miller's presentation of women in the play did not necessarily comply with the new ideas of gender equality and female empowerment. It is the betrayal of his loyalty which ruins Willy's life, rather than commercial failure. Linda is the most sympathetic character. Her famous "attention, attention must be paid" (Bigsby 82) speech is terribly moving in theater. Linda fails both as a mother and wife. As witness to the children's wrong upbringing, she is the grater sinner, because her pampering of her husband ruins Willy himself and thereby the sons too. Female characters draw our attention in *All My Sons*. Abigail Williams is the ringleader of a sizeable group of adolescent girls. But her absolute lack of moral scruples is repellent. She is portrayed as a sex object. The other character is Elizabeth, Proctor's wife. The very self effacement Puritanism required of women robs Elizabeth of the ability to voice her own desire. Elizabeth is a submissive woman fully conscious of her husband's adultery, but too protective and weak to point out her protest. Miller refers Kate as mother. Kate is intelligent, but she is by no means totally objective or rational.

Miller's *Price* is not an exception to the fact that his women are sufferers. Though a strain of discontentment runs through Esther's life, she is not strong enough to convince her husband or break away. Beatrice in *A View from the Bridge* is another example of a suffering woman. She cannot demand love out of her husband rather she pleads:

Beatrice: What's the matter, Eddie, you don't like me, heh?

Eddie: What do you mean, I don't like you? I said I don't feel good, that's all.

(*Arthur Miller's Collected Plays* 399)

Conclusion

Miller's plays are more relevant today than before as today's society is torn by threats of war, dreams of overnight success, ill effects of wild industrialization, global economic depression, illicit sexual relationship, tension between father and son over authority, rights of women and above all individual's negligence to his own social responsibility. We find many Willys committing suicide daily having realized their failures in discharging social responsibility and because of false day-dreaming. Ignorantly, they push themselves in the race of success myth. So also many Kellers who want to be rich overnight in business are ready to compromise their values. The message of Miller is no more bigotry, no longer treasons, no more day dreams are the immediate responses expected of the audience. In fact Miller's works, to a great extent contribute to the means and ways of how to live and let others live. To take of Miller's women, they love their male partners and believe in matrimonial harmony. Linda, Kate, Elizabeth, Beatrice and Esther do not love to be called feminists. So far as 'Sex' is concerned Miller's protagonists warn us that illicit relationship brings personal and family disaster. Issue of authority between father and son is an age-

old issue and will be there. Therefore, Joe Keller says, "I am his father and he's my son. Nothing bigger than that" (Miller *All My Sons* 63). Thus, the climax of Miller's plays seek for a kind of moral value through their tragic ends, the purpose obviously being didactic—that war-profiteering is a self betrayal as much an act of treason, that daydreams of success are met with utter failures, that law of a state must not be influenced by other factors such as religion, personal vengeance, false evidence and authoritative interference.

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The Voice of the Voiceless: An Analytical Study of Easterine Kire's MARI

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Easterine Kire is an eminent writer from Nagaland who has written several books including three collections of poetry and short stories. In her novel *MARI*, Kire gives an account of a forgotten battle that took place in Nagaland which changed the geography and lifestyle of the people of this region. People are usually aware of the history of Nagaland through disturbances and battles. This region is occupied by people who belong to different communities and tribes. Though the state is known to people because of the chaos within, but one has totally overlooked the decisive battle of the early 1940s that sealed the fate of an entire generation. Kire, through this novel attempted to give a voice to the unheard community of Nagaland who despite of their selfless service were not given any acknowledgement or appreciation in the mainstream society.

During the last part of the 20th century, there was an inclination to see the marginalized as a part of the bigger nation and to include them in the mainstream society. As more and more voices came from the lower levels in search and assertion of their existence and identity, different views came into focus. In her pioneering essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak uses the term "subaltern" and

expounds that this particular term comes out from the empire itself, as because it is a British title for a military post.

MARI retells the story of a beautiful landscape devastated by bloodshed and violence. As it can be seen in the novel, Kire depicts the helpless condition of the Naga people who became outsiders in their own region. The Battle of Kohima started on the 4th of April and ended on 22nd of June 1944. Kire retold the recorded events of the bloody war from her Aunt's diary. Kire's aunt Mari underwent both mental and physical trauma that wiped out all the good memories that she held dear to herself. Her separation from her family, her fiancé Vic and his death gave her a massive shock. Carrying a child, she had to run from one place to another in search of food and shelter.

On a wider perspective, the novel exhibits the people living under constant fear of death. Despite this, the Naga people helped the British by supplying their own share of food. At times, they also acted as informers to provide information regarding the movements of the Japanese forces. MARI projects the interruption of the normal lifestyle of the people of Nagaland by the alien forces. With the intention of occupying the entire region, the British force started to introduce new norms supplanting the established ones. They slowly infused the Naga society with their own values and cultures. Kire highlighted the fact that the people of Nagaland were doubly marginalized and subordinated. This can be perceived from the fact that in the year 1832, the British forces made their first appearance on the Nagaland soil. They immediately made the Nagas their subjects and started to rule over them. Secondly, in the year 1944, the Japanese arrived to dismantle the Naga society and to destroy the whole region which was paradise to the Naga people. The Naga people worshipped their landscape and their Mother

Nature. But the moment the war raged between the British and Japanese forces, the peace-loving people of Nagaland started to lose their land and innocent lives to the opposing forces. They suffered incessantly and had no food to survive on. The central character Mari is seen running here and there collecting whatever she can procure to satiate her hunger and that of her sisters. This historic war made the people of Nagaland realize their marginalized situation.

The Nagas were not exposed to religion, education before the arrival of the American Missionaries. Religion gets very deeply permeated in the Naga society. In times of political disturbances, they took refuge in religion. This can be seen in the novel MARI that even before reconstructing their own house after the war, the Naga people started to rebuild the Church which was ravaged by the war. According to them, God's house should be made first as he is the One who protects all of them.

MARI is a book about the time that completely jolted the lives of the people of Nagaland. The World War II is a significant event for the Naga people that made them realize their intermediate situation. This is due to their participation in the Battle of Kohima. It was fought from April 4th to June 22nd 1944. This battle is known as the "Stalingrad of the East". This battle became wide known due to the selfless service by the Naga people. In MARI, the central character unfolds the closed pages of the diary that records the momentous war. She was one of those who experienced such a blood-curdling situation from the closest quarters. The advent of the fierce war started to make its impression felt in the year 1942.

The picture before the war displays the free-flowing, peaceful life of the Nagas. Though they were separated from the rest of the world, still they enjoyed complete self-reliance

without any intervention from foreign powers. Aviu (christened as Mari in later sections of the novel), the central character of the novel is not even slightly aware of the dangerous situation that will befall her and her family. She led a carefree life before the war and enjoyed her life in the lap of Nature. The boundaries within which the women of the Naga community kept themselves were not completely their own. The stereotypical customs also had a large role to play in it. In the Naga culture, women are seen as the cradle of life. Women were expected to stay back at home, manage their household and to look after their children. This issue can be seen in the text where Aviu's aunt talks about her getting married when she was of Aviu's age. However, Aviu's mother strictly refutes this idea. She reflects a contemporary woman's attitude by vouching for her girl's education. This instance might be taken as the sign of change in the mindset of the Nagas which is undeniably matriarchal in nature. Women were considered to do free labour while the men laboured with full wage. However, women's position has changed drastically during the 21st century. Aviu, fulfills her dream of completing the nursing course and gets a reputed job in the Digboi Oil Refinery. This was a dream for many women who repressed their desires and followed the tradition of the Naga society. They became the scapegoats to the customs of the society.

While talking about the possibilities of the Japanese entering Kohima, Aunt Anyie's unnerved statement indicates that she has total faith in the British forces. To corroborate her statement, she culls the instance of the conquest of the Nagas by the British. She says that when they faced the British, they were unable to defeat them. Even the strongest of their clansmen did not stand a chance in front of the British. Thus, the Japanese forces too would be easily conquered by the

British. Here we find the voice of a native who unknowingly makes her own marginalized condition apparent. She sets the British in the image of the protector. Thus, the British plays the role of both the rescuer and the Master of the Nagas. The act of rescuing itself becomes the strangling of the voices of those rescued. As the rescued would be 'defined' or 'translated' in the way the imperialism can make sense of.

Life moved on amidst these apprehensions and anticipations of an upcoming war. They were thrilled at the sight of a plane. Aviu's sister, Zhabu and Aneiu, waved their hands excitedly whenever they heard of any approaching plane. Little were they aware of the fact that within few days their childhood would get swept away by the onslaught of the war. The laughter, the innocence, the life full of joyousness would be supplanted with tears, silence and fear. Finally, in the middle of 1942, huge numbers of British forces began to enter Kohima. The British were only concerned about expanding their administration and infuse Christianity into the hearts of the Nagas. They did not bother about the pathetic conditions in which the Nagas lived. It was only during the wartime that the roads were built for the convenience of the British army. This can be referred back to the text when after the war is over, some elderly people joke and say, "Thank God for the war; If it hadn't come to us, we would never have got this road" (Mari107).

With the advent of a war in 1942, the Naga people were taught to dig trenches in the backyards of their houses for taking shelter if exposed to bombing. Immediately after the sounding of the first gunfires, the school children were taught how to take cover by hiding in the trenches. The children were excited to learn all this as it was fun for them, and they lived in innocence, joy and laughter. However, the deep hidden fear within the hearts of the elders about war reached

Kohima soon after. Mass atrocities faced by the marginalized tribal sections and eviction of number of refugees from their land by the Japanese forces made them realize the effect of war. They were driven away like animals. Their feet were soaked in blood as they had to run away barefooted in order to save their lives. This cruel act of the Japanese jolted the Naga people. They feared to go through the same treatment if captured by the alien forces. They became outsiders in their own homeland.

The Nagas were left completely powerless by the British. They came to be represented as voiceless by the allied forces. In the novel we find that the people have no other option but to continue their lives under the turbulence. The devastating sight of the Burmese refugees showed what war could do to humanity. The Nagas understood it very clearly that they are compelled to take sides. As they were provided with all the necessities by the British, so they chose to stand by their side and help them in the war. The colonial power was deeply imprinted in their minds. The unemployed men got a chance to earn some pennies by working as menials to the British army carrying their arms and ammunitions and replenishments. Women selflessly joined the nursing service. Unfortunately, the school was shut down for safety reasons. Thus the war snatched away the minimal chance for the Naga children to become educated. Perhaps education would have helped them to fight for their existence in a marginalized world and to make their strangled and unheard voices audible.

It is a generalized conception that that the subaltern cannot speak and if they made any effort to speak, they were silenced by a discourse that distorts their very language and refutes to accept the subaltern's lone position. In representing the subaltern, the subject essentializes its own presence and

overlooks the position of the subaltern. The subaltern is precisely silenced in the Third World. After the school was closed down, the young boys decided to go to Tiddim and work as labourers. They were unknowingly worked as agents to spread the dreadfulness of the war. One of the boys, Jimmy was very close to Aviu and her family. So when Aviu came to know about Jimmy's plan, she was very disappointed. Aviu's parents were protective of their children and they were not allowed to do whatever they liked. Thus here we find another level of subjugation and that is of the limited space given to the women of the Third World.

The British faced much difficulty due to the road condition. So they started to employ civilian contractors in order to build new roads as soon as possible. The job needed lot of workers and so Angami men and women helped the engineers where in lieu of their service they could earn some money. Securing permission from her parents, Aviu also merrily joined the job of supervising the workers. During this time, Aviu met one of the Royal Engineers, Staff Sergeant Victor who fell in love with Aviu the moment he met her. For Aviu, it was some sort of a dream that a man like Vic, well-established in his life would love an ordinary girl like her. She feared that once the war gets over, Vic would flinch his steps from her. Gradually Vic became a part of Aviu's family. He was very easily accepted by Aviu's father and they started to discuss about Aviu's marriage.

The fate had stored something else for them. When Christmas arrived, the people forgot about a disaster hovering over them. They immersed themselves in the celebration of the festival. In the meanwhile, Jimmy who went to Tiddim to help in the construction of the roads came back to inform about the rushing preparations for the war. Aviu also noticed the sudden changes in her homeland. The once

peaceful and calm surrounding was filled with noise, there was continuous movement on the roads and she could feel that their freedom was gradually suppressed. Whenever Aviu went to the Church to pray, the fear of death and separation from Vic wrecked her from within. In the presence of God, the uncertainty of their lives rang louder into her ears.

The zeal of the festivities slowly died down with the camping of soldiers throughout the village. Soon there was news that the Japanese are on the verge of entering Kohima. Aviu's father was called to report to his Treasury office headquarters in Shillong. Vic immediately moved into live with Aviu's family so that he could take proper care of them. Vic was well aware of the fact that the war would be a major factor in changing their lives. This is the reason why he repeatedly asked Aviu (christened as Mari) to wait for him during the war. He would come back to her as soon as the war gets over.

By the end of March 1944, Kohima looked like a deserted town. The Kohima that was once full of life, merriment was a complete barren land. Only the movement of the army jeeps and stray dogs could be seen. Amidst all these, Vic shifted Aviu's sisters to Chieswema which was seven miles away from Kohima and regarded to be a safe place. For Aneiu and Zhabu, it was a sort of short trip to their uncle's house. Little were they aware that they would not be able to return back to their home for a long time. The rifle that Vic carried and kept near him while sleeping did not let Aviu sleep peacefully. The signs of the war had a deep impact on her delicate mind. With her sister's away from her, Aviu was left to herself. In the evenings, she strolled outside the house and contemplated that the land which once was a haven to them was at devastation's way.

Strangely enough, the sun did not change its daily routine of rising and setting on the same time. The eclipse that was to occur was brought by the power structures in order to gain some more power. Aviu seemed to have grown matured with the change of time. All the happy memories were silhouetted with the threat of the war. The innocence that resided within the hearts of the tribals had been supplanted with the coarseness of an upcoming storm. They were intimidated with the thought of losing their identity. They could not speculate about how the war would dishevel their lives.

On 3rd April, 1944, the much anticipated war ensued. The continual sound of the sirens made them realize that the fearful monster had laid its foot. The serenity and silence within which the Angami people had learn to live was shattered. All of them ran to the trenches at the backyard of their house. The explosions, the rattling of the guns were unbearable to the ears. All of them started to pray to God because at that time God seemed to be the soul Protector. Thus the lives of the alienated and unknown population in a faraway land got entangled in the war. Aviu's house became exposed to shelling from both sides. Surprisingly, while they were compelled to leave their home, Aviu's mother firmly refused to accompany them. She was not ready to leave her aged parents behind. Thus, she entrusted the responsibility of Zhabu and Aneiu to Aviu.

These unsaid stories of the Nagas helplessly leaving their home in search of a safer place would never get a place in the historical interpretations. Despite of all such tragic tales, the Nagas helped the British to conquer the Japanese. However, their contribution were never given the sort of importance that they deserved. Thus the subalternists try to dig out the sealed facts and alter the ways the historians

manipulate the history. In this novel, Easterine Kire attempts to bring the marginalized to the centre and endow them with the fair amount of respect from which they were debarred.

By bringing them to the focus, Kire rewrites the history of the subaltern into the postcolonial historiography. The war was the reason of the dismantling of their lives. They were evicted from the land of which they were the rightful children. The barbers were busy changing the appearance of the educated Naga men as they were the primary targets of the Japanese force. The Japanese captured the young educated Naga men to work as spies or informers either in lieu of money or by compulsion. Even Aviu and her sisters had to smear their skin with coal to hide their fair complexion. During those days, several news regarding the molestation of the Naga girls reached the Angami people. This news instilled a sense of great unrest among them and in order to avert such situations they were ready to take any step if needed. The Japanese firstly, lured the Nagas to work for them by promising to pay them but soon they started to torture them, even flogged them to work as menials. When the Japanese entered the village, they were pointing their bayonets towards the Naga people. They immediately entered the Naga houses and started to ransack the food items and clothing. The Japanese even killed the rest of the cattle leaving the Nagas to strive for their survival.

The subaltern Nagas could not defy the Japanese forces as they were fully armed. The Nagas were treated as secondary citizens in their own land. Along with the other Naga tribals, Aviu and her family members too set out for the forest. On the other hand, to trap the Japanese army, the British conducted air-rids. Naga houses that contained paddy were set ablaze by the British so that the Japanese were short of food. According to the British, the Nagas consented to this

act of setting fire to the paddy fields. But the Angamis who were driven away by the Japanese suffered the most. Neither could they reach the British camps in fear of being captured by the Japanese nor they could survive without food.

The Naga people who decided to fight against the Japanese atrocities were killed mercilessly. The Naga women were exploited ruthlessly. Bodies of Angami women were found lying in the forests, raped and killed. As doubly marginalized, the women suffered more pathetically. Due to lack of food and unhygienic living, the people began to fall ill. All these facts were never admitted by the historians. The intellectuals were involved in the process of emulating the Westerns and condemning the Naga people into oblivion.

According to Gayatri Spivak, in the Indian context, the 'subalterns' are defined as those who did not belong to the colonial elite class, like the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, wealthy peasants and the upper middle class peasants. In the 1980s a radical group of historians in India formed the Subaltern Studies group and used this term, centering their attention on the deprived people of India. Spivak questioned this accepted notion that the subalterns were heterogeneous class. She pointed to the action of decimating their voice and identity, and regarding them as unfit for the structure to which the colonial elite class belonged. Aviu and her sisters were completely severed from their family members. They had to fight for their lives from both the Japanese force and also from the wild animals. The flickering ray of hope residing within Aviu of being reunited with her fiancé was also doused. Vic got killed in the war by a Japanese sniper. The news was a deathblow to her. After being separated from their father and mother for three months, Aviu and her sisters were finally able to reach out to

them. The feeling of being reunited healed all the pangs of losing the loved ones, losing their homes.

After three months of continual struggle the Angamis were impatient to return back to Kohima. Their period of ordeal was over. Sam, Aviu's brother who helped the British informed them that they had reinstated all the places from the Japanese and pushed them back to the border of Nagaland. People who were rescued were in tears to be found alive. When the Angamis entered Kohima, it shocked them to stand on a completely crumbled town full of debris of dilapidated houses and camps. However, the Angamis were already habituated to this sort of living during the war.

Silence and violence was an indispensable part of their lives by then. Even the small children did not seem to feel uncomfortable in the war ravaged Kohima. Their innocence was already sacrificed to the mutilations of war. The streets were chaffed with corpses, littered with rifles, grenades and mortar shells. Thus the Kohima which was a paradise for its inhabitants turned to a dark world. Kohima, that seemed a faraway land became known to people as the British constructed roads and railways for better communication. Concealment of the Nagas from the outside world was no more needed. The Nagas understood it very well that to make the world aware of their existence, they should focus more on education. Education is the only medium through which they can make their voices heard. The Nagas wanted to safeguard their community by accepting the Master's discourse but to confirm self-rule. This was the first step towards the establishment of the Naga identity.

There are ample evidences in the novel MARI about Naga people helping the British forces in carrying their arms and ammunitions, guiding them in the deep forests. In return

of their service, the Nagas simply expected a good future. The subaltern Nagas wanted make their own history and be the architects of their own destiny. The main focus of the Subaltern theorists is to concentrate on how the knowledge of history is produced and how its construction can be 'decolonized'. Subalternists had found out that the colonialist, nationalist, and Marxist interpretations of Indian history had denied the role of the common people and their agency.

This text acts as a mode of historical representation even after so many years of colonial freedom. Continual rejection of the Nagas in their desire to become a part of the mainstream society is one of the dominant characteristics of subalternity. The British tried to give a shape to the Naga people by disseminating their language. They wanted to interpret the Nagas in order to suit their needs. The Naga identity was reconstructed by the British. Antonio Gramsci's idea of subalternity analyses the need of the dominated class to confront the structures of power in order to break the mould of invisibility imposed upon them. After the war was over, the British established a cemetery in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their motherland. The epitaph on the cemetery reads,

"When You Go Home
Tell Them of Us and Say
For Your Tomorrow
We Gave Our Today".

It is written to remind the post-war generation that they have been given a scope to confront the outside world and to re-define their own identity. The life of the Nagas before the war mattered least after what they underwent during the war. Due to this war, they realized their precarious state of life. According to Gramsci, if the subalterns were given proper space in society, they would be understood in their actual

historical context and the manner in which they were dumped into oblivion would be exposed.

MARI is a novel about the people of Kohima. It is a story about those people who never demanded for acknowledgement for their service during the war of 1944. It is about those people who were significant in helping the British come out victorious but were always kept at the backdrop. The devastation of the war tattered the lives of the Nagas but they still had the indomitable courage to start life anew.

The subaltern Nagas were not stable economically and so the British made them believe they could not contribute much to the society. They needed the White man's assistance to survive. The colonizers came from outside lands and occupied the natives and treated them as the "Other". The British were very good diplomats. They knew the strategy to subdue the Nagas. The British from the very beginning followed the "Divide and Rule" policy. They bifurcated the native community into a developed and a backward one, thus wiping any possibility of a united resistance against the British.

Easterine Kire in her novels tries to depict the stories of the people of Nagaland who were always regarded as a separate section within India. As said by her in an interview for receiving the Catalan Pen International Voice Award in Spain, "The national media must really make an effort to stop sensationalizing and exoticising the Northeast". (POLITICAL ANIMALS: Nagaland's Voice; Sanjukta Sharma). MARI is the story of the people of Nagaland, their lives that got entangled in an event that breathed in new life to them. Even today the war cemetery reminds them of the brilliant days that passed by: a time consisting of battle, love and life.

When Aviu compared those war ravaged years with that of the present period, she felt that the past never deserted her. It flowed in her veins. It was a time that was the reason for her aspiration to become a strong woman. Gayatri Spivak's theory of subalternity can be applied to Kire's MARI. She speaks for the denied space attributed to the women of the Third World. The doubly marginalized Naga women did not get a proper stage to express their desires. These disempowered women were not able to acquire their equal political and social status at par with the Naga men. Northeast India has always remained a politically hypersensitive and disturbed region.

Kire recounted the incidents recorded by her aunt so that the world becomes aware of the rich culture of Nagaland that has always been subordinated. This novel engulfs within its range the history of the Naga tribe who came into the fore due to the Battle of Kohima. During the period of reconstruction, the unshakeable mentality with which the people started to rebuild their houses is appreciable. They knew how to return back to normalcy, by leaving behind the dreadful memories of the war. They ingrained the habit of forgetting the nefariousness that the war marked upon them. The undaunted heroism of the Nagas who fought for their land fills the post-war generation with pride. Historians should admit the indispensable role of the Nagas in the Battle of the Tennis Court. The mass violence and destruction was camouflaged by the manipulators of history. Thus, Easterine Kire's bold step to deal with such sensitive issues in her novels is indeed laudable. Towards the end of the novel, Aviu talks about the intermingling of the past and the present. The past is very precious for the Nagas as it moves like a shadow with the present generation and the present

teaches them not to forget about the sacrifices made for the better living of the post-war generation.

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11

Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi: A Contrapuntal Reading

MR. AMARESH ACHARY

“History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.”

– James Joyce, *Ulysses*

This paper is an attempt to critically appraise the book, *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* by Charles Theophilus Metcalfe and unravel an interesting perspective. The book as the title suggests, consists of two native narratives of the Revolt of 1857. One of them is a memoir by Nawab Mainodin Hassan Khan and the other is a diary by Munsji Jiwan Lall. Both are translated into English by Charles Theophilus Metcalfe and brought out in one book with an introduction and the appendices. The book was first published in Westminster in 1898 posthumously by the translator’s wife, Esther G. Metcalfe. Unlike a work of fiction, this book is considered as a historical document for reference and source of information on the Indian Sepoy Rebellion of 1857. The translator in his introduction and his wife in the prefatory note claim that this is the first trustworthy contribution, from the native side, to the history of the Indian Mutiny. One of the narrators is a participant whereas another is an eye witness of the events. They narrate us the battle between two sides; the English and the Indians where we are informed as to who are the heroes and who are the villains in the great phenomenon;

whose cause is just and whose unjust; what kind of people are the English and the Indians; why did the battle take place, why it is called “a mutiny” and not a war of Independence.

This paper seeks to demonstrate that the book is guilty of many shortcomings. It justifies the English by deliberate suppression of many facts and by emphasizing others in favor of the English. It presents only one side of the picture and shows Indians in an unfavorable light. It is pro English in its stand and is not a disinterested piece of work. It out rightly rejects and condemns the Rebellion.

In his introduction, Charles Metcalfe asserts the cartridge issue is only a “creation,” “In order to create a sympathetic movement of both Hindu and Mohammedan in a joint resistance to the British power, the cartridge grievance was created” (Metcalfe 6). He rather attributes just British administration over India as the cause of the Mutiny. The last Mogul Emperors of India, he finds totally incapable of governance. About the Palace of Delhi Charles Metcalfe writes:

Dirt and filth were everywhere, inside and outside. Rich carpets and dirty mats were side by side on the floors; ivory and silver chairs were covered with filthy rags. The English mind of the well-to-do classes, trained in the domestic life of an English home, and to a great extent guarded from contact with evil, has no conception of the life within an Eastern palace, such as existed at Delhi. Hundreds of young men and women living without occupation and with little to amuse them; hundreds of worn-out old men and women, with nothing to look forward to but the grave were—the young, given over to lust—the old to intrigue. Conceive a life where human passions were inflamed by every possible indulgence, and stimulated by devices unheard of even in the lowest haunts of vice in Europe; every natural law violated. Where there is no restraint there can be no morality. Incest, murdering, poisonings, torturing, were daily occurrences. A school of professors of the art of crime flourished in the purlieus of the

King's Palace. Men and women skilled in the preparation of poisons, of drugs to cause unconsciousness, so as to facilitate robbery and incest, trove within the palace walls. Wrestlers, jesters, dancing girls who danced naked to inflame the passions of old age, musicians, forgers, swindlers, thieves, receivers of stolen property, distillers of spirits, compounders of sweetmeats and opium, all formed a part of the palace community. Criminals, to escape punishment, sought refuge there. Political intrigue was as rife as sensual. Wives intrigued against wives, harlots against wives, mothers against sons; men and women scoured the country far and wide for beautiful girls to sell as slaves within the palace. In such a hotbed of villainy, any conspiracy was possible. Assassinations were frequent, and the silent river was close at hand to bear away all traces of the victim . . . (12-13)

According to the writer, life in an Eastern Palace is far inferior even to the lowest hunt of Europe. The inmates of the Delhi Palace are devoid of any kind of morality, good-conduct, law or religion. They do not have any sense of cleanliness. They are rather robbers, thieves, criminals, murderers, prostitutes, forgers and swindlers, receivers of stolen property and distillers of spirits. The writer gives us a picture of the Palace life that is devilish, savage, unrestrained, and brute.

Throughout the book, the Sepoys and the natives are described in terms like "murderers," "butchers," "rappers," "plunderers," "oppressors," "flatterers," "treacherous," "fanatics," "baxis," "budmashes," "indiscipline," "greedy," "corrupt," "rascals," "cowards," "blood-thirsty-wretches," "decapitated-fowls," "blood-thirsty-ruffians," "blood-hounds," "bad-characters," "evil-minded," "ignorant-people," "faithless-traitors," "wicked-men," "seditious," and "scoundrels,". To quote some of the lines which describe them:

. . . There soon gathered in and about the palace a band of dissolute and desperate men. (11)

. . . Sir Theophilus' house was completely blocked by the bodies of mutinous soldiers and ruffians, who were past all control and bent on murder and rapine. (45)

. . . For the wicked and miserable murderers were employed in burning bungalows and killing the women and children. (51)

Mr. Jennings tried to get out of the door, but was immediately cut to pieces by the blood-thirsty ruffians (83)

Appeals were made to him to repress the plunder and rapine now common throughout the city. (86)

For the mutineers would neither leave the city nor protect it. They remained only for plunder and violence. (94)

... the mutineers were a treacherous, blood-thirsty class, on whom no dependence could be placed. (95)

The mutineers and soldiers, who were beyond all discipline . . . (99)

Some flatterers attended the King's audience today. (102)

In the absence of the English, the mutineers were as lions, but on hearing of their approach, they sought places of refuge like rats in the presence of a cat. (102)

From him, too, did these bloodthirsty wretches draw the clothing of life. (107)

The Delhi Hindus, who had suffered much at the hands of the mutineers since their arrival in the city, expressed their joy that these wicked men, like decapitated fowls, with bloody wound, had now themselves been tossed hither and thither, and had lost all their manhood and bravery. (108)

Five Hundred fanatics returned with an elephant they had taken from the English, and presented it to the King. (131)

. . . A crowd of mutinous soldiers and scoundrels, who only became more bloodthirsty when they discovered it

was impossible either to obtain access to the place
(233)

These and some other lines describe the Sepoys and the natives presenting them as such throughout the narratives. The book presents the Indians as sub-human, barbarous, brute, evil-minded, uncivilized, half-devil savages needing severe punishment and suppression. They have broken a breach of loyalty and committed a severe crime by rising in rebellion against a just Government and by killing the Europeans who are not only their masters but also a higher race. The text is full of descriptions of such events where the native or the Sepoys are seen at fault. This not only describes the common natives or Sepoys; it largely depicts the wrongs done by the upper strata. The Hakims and the Princes are described as greedy, corrupt, quarrelsome, uncivilized, treacherous men. The commander and officers of rebel army are depicted as uncivilized, disobedient, boastful, greedy, disloyal, plunderers and cowards.

In this book, the Sepoys loose all ground for rebellion. The text justifies that they should, as they get severe punishment for rising in rebellion and for killing innocent Europeans. On the contrary, the text narrates the English as the brave, heroic, courageous, kind, lawful, generous and just rulers.

To the authors, the rebellion is not a popular movement as most natives do not support it and as it is hopeless against the English. Jeewan Lall writes: "There was both rejoicing and sorrow in the city at this occurrence; rejoicing that so many murderous and faithless men had been blown up, and sorrow that the English soldiers, who had all day been anxiously expected, had failed to appear . . ." (82) The atrocities made by the English mentioned in the text are insignificant

compared to those of Indians. And these English atrocities follow with justifications. To quote some English atrocities from the text:

News was received of villages burned by the English, and of the execution of four Zemindars, who were very popular, for insulting conduct to an English lady. (116)

. . . The English had entirely destroyed the village of Pakhoa, and had burned it, because the villagers had refused to pay their revenue. (227)

The English atrocities are shown as right and justified. They are justified for avenging against all the crimes the Sepoys and the natives have committed on innocent Europeans and by becoming disloyal to a just government.

Written in and about a troubled period one cannot expect the narrators to render a balanced view of the events. Anything against the English would surely put them and their family in difficulty. Moreover both the narrators, Mainodin Hassan Khan and Munsji Jiwan Lall are beneficiaries of the English Government and they know that their narratives will be read and evaluated by their English masters. Mainodin Hassan Khan himself, a participant in the Rebellion on the side of the King against the British. He is pardoned of all complicity in the murder of Europeans and his share in the fighting at Delhi in consideration of his service to Sir John Metcalfe. The British also out of generosity confer a sum of money to be settled upon him and his heirs. Even before the Rebellion he has always received kindness and protection from the Metcalfe family.

Munsji Jeewan Lall from the very beginning of his narrative declares himself to be a faithful servant of the English when he writes, "Whereas by the mercy of God the English rule was established in the country" (75). Again, "I

was moved by the thoughts that for many years I had eaten the salt of the English Government and wished it well and now was an opportunity to do all that was possible with heart and soul for those I had served . . . I would guard them like the apple of an eye, or the soul in my body" (77). He takes his stand on the side of the English and against the Rebels. During the rebellion he is put to hardship by the Rebels including an attempt of murder. (187) When the British power is re-established, Jiwan Lall is made an honorary Magistrate and a Municipal Commissioner. The translator writes of him as, "No more trustworthy or loyal native servant has the British government ever had . . ." (3).

So how can one expect them to give a true account of the events as they are? They are claimed to be the "true history" (31) and "trustworthy or reliable source of information" (3) Not only this book but also many historical books by the English present this stereotype of condemning the Rebellion and praising the English heroism. These established accounts of the Sepoys Mutiny nobody dared to challenge until Vinayaka Damodar Savarkar in his book *The Indian war of Independence* (1909) advocated the side of the Rebels and termed the "Sepoy Mutiny" as "India's First War of Independence". Later, Edward Thompson in his book *The Other Side of the Medal* (1925) brings forward the large scale and inhumane English atrocities committed on Indians which makes the history of Indian Rebellion different from earlier histories on it. Moreover, Rajat Kanta Ray in his book *The Felt Community* (2003) brings out the Indian mentality behind the Rebellion more clearly. For the Sepoys, the English are the Rebels not they, the English are mutinous, not they. To quote from *The Felt Community*:

They spoke, instead, government of the legitimate Mughal Sovereign, of restoring the rightful chiefs of Hindustan to their

respective positions. As far as they were concerned, the English were the rebels, not they. ... the frightened message of a white man from Lucknow that the scum of the populace were determined to turn the world upside down, did not accurately represent the popular point of view; to the rebels' way of thinking, the white men had turned the world upside down, and they were merely turning it back. (Ray 358-359)

The text *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* attempts mainly to suppress the information supporting the rebels and emphasizes those which degrade them in the eyes of the readers. In the text, the Sepoys are painted not only to have committed rapine of the white women but also as a threat to the Royalty. On the other hand, the English are chivalrous heroes and the up holders of moral values. Ray inquires in his book:

Because the white soldiery regarded their opponents as 'savages', they had no compunction in outdoing the latter in savagery. The Sepoys massacred men, women, and children, but they went in for straight execution and not torture, and except in rare instances, they did not rape women. The British sought proof of their higher civilization in the claim (quite contrary to the facts) that women and children had nothing to fear from them⁶².... The natives knew, to their bitter experience, that the British not only executed thousands of men, but also raped women;⁶³ that thoughtless boys, who displayed the rebel colors beating the tom-tom, had not a chance of being spared their young lives.(Ray 365)

At another place in the book he writes:

... No less dastardly crimes lay upon the soul of the British soldiery, who killed women ⁽³⁰²⁾ and dishonoured them. ⁽³⁰³⁾ They were, however, quite convinced of the superior civilization and of their chivalrous treatment of women; and there was no damage to their psyche. Victory made all the difference in the world. (ibid. 416)

Sir William Muir, head of the Intelligence Department has put on his record, "however much of cruelty and bloodshed there was, the tales which gained currency of dishonour to ladies were, so far as my observations and enquiries went, devoid of any satisfactory proof" (Savarkar 104).

The English atrocities which are insignificant and are perfectly justified in the text are exposed and condemned by Edward Thompson in his book *The Other Side of the Medal*. That the English do not simply hang but kill after severe physical and psychological torture are brought out in these following lines, quoted in his book:

. . . the horrible smell of his burning flesh as it cracked and blackened in the flames, rising up and poisoning the air—so in this nineteenth century, with its boasted civilization and humanity, a human being should lie roasting and consuming to death, while Englishmen and Sikhs gathered in little knots around, looked calmly on. No one will deny, I think, that this man, at least, adequately expiated, by his frightful and cruel death, any crimes of which he may have been guilty. (Thompson 22)

And then,

All these kinds of vindictive, unchristian, Indian torture, such as sewing Mohammedans in pig-skins, smearing them with pork-fat before execution, and burning their bodies, and forcing Hindoos to defile themselves, are disgraceful, and ultimately recoil on ourselves. They are spiritual and mental tortures to which we have no right to resort. (ibid. 22)

On another page in his book he quotes:

Within forty-eight hours of the date of the crime, there fell by the law nearly 500 men.' What crime? What law? The reader may ask, demanded the extermination of a helpless multitude, described by the very best authority as unarmed and panic-stricken, famishing with hunger, and exhausted with

fatigue?⁶⁶...Greathed remarks: "the sacrifice of five hundred villainous lives for the murder of two English is retribution that will be remembered."⁶⁷(ibid. 33)

Again, V.D. Savarkar in his book *The Indian War of Independence* asserts:

And who have the right of sitting in judgment on the people of Hindusthan for the offences they are alleged to have committed? The English? If there is anyone in this wide world who has the least right to condemn the conduct of the Revolutionaries, it is these English! Is it England that is to declare that Hindusthan was guilty of one or two massacres?—the England who produced Neill? Or the England which devastated by the sword and destroyed by the fire villages after villages with the women and children in them? Or the England which bound to the stakes, and burnt, those brave fellows with the spirit of Panday in them, fighting for their country—deeming hanging not a sufficient punishment? Or the England which seized the innocent Hindu villagers, sentenced them to be hanged, and then pierced them with 'bayonets, and then, Heavens! Thrust beef dripping with blood—the blood of the cow—down their throats, at the point of the bayonet—a desecration to which they would have preferred being hanged and, even, being burnt alive? Or the England which ordered, under the very nose of the Commander-in-chief, that the body of the Nabob of Farrukhabad should be smeared all over with the fat of the pig? Or the England which advocated these and hundreds of other similar crimes as justifiable revenge on the 'mutineers'? Justifiable vengeance! Whose was the justifiable vengeance—that of the Panday party enraged and vowing vengeance because their mother—the country—was being ground down under oppression for a hundred years, or that Feringhee party which was guilty of that National oppression? (280)

After the ruthless suppression of the Rebellion, the English tried to hide the true account of brutality and excesses committed by them. And wherever it came to the limelight they justified it. They justified their actions through

this kind of narratives which Savarkar's extract above exposes. Regarding such books which present only one side, that of glorifying the British and condemning the Indians, Thompson writes: "That side has received abundant attention. Yet, even this record of mutinies and massacres needs more critical treatment than it has yet had if we are to be just"(Thompson 59). This is because texts like *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* which claims to be true historical documents on the Revolt attempt to pervert truth and create false knowledge.

Thompson might have overdrawn and over emphasized the British atrocities in his enthusiasm to bring the truths to light or V.D. Savarkar to infuse nationalistic feelings in Indians, yet it can be said that the text *Two Native Narratives of the Mutiny in Delhi* gives one side of the picture and shows Indians in a despicable light. These historical narratives suffer from an eagerness to gloss over the unpalatable facts, and reveal largely the British justification of the conquest of India and the suppression of the Mutiny.

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The Dialectics of Caste and Nation in Hindi Dalit Writer's Autobiography: Position and Proposition

DR. SHYAM BABU

The idea of modern 'nation' discourse is a unique phenomenon of social order which goes back to the 18th century European Enlightenment project. The idea of nation (hood/ism) underlines our civilized sense of being in a geographical boundary but in an open political domain where dissent exists and difference is maintained across the line of gender, sexuality, class, caste, ethnicity and religion. As hugely diverse country as India, with its multitudes of pursuits, host of convictions and widely different, divergent convictions, it has been mandatory of sorts to study the nation from time to time from the point of view of the literary/cultural discourses. In post colonial study the idea of 'nation' along with hybridity, sexuality, home, is very fluid and equally ambivalent to define. Nation(ism) however, it may appear precarious or outdated because of the globalization and the idea of cosmopolitanism and the ubiquitous availability of gadgets and non-print media of communication with inherent capitalist impinge; it is hugely pertinent as a part of political discourse and ethnographic study of any society. The 'nation' (in Indian context) fixes on the complex relations of religion, language, political power and most importantly 'caste'. Geographical boundary though

is the marker of any nation-state, but it is only the structures of power such as society (civil-political) culture, religion, patriarchy among others which establishes the idea of nation. Nation is not a predetermined or preconceived notion; it is ever expanding and shifting phenomenon with host of contestations and reconciliations. Since Indian social fabric is based upon varnashram, it has been divisive across the castes/jatis apart from language, gender and other such cultural politics of identity.

India as a nation likewise has a different sort of engagement with its dalits who were earlier considered to be 'untouchable'-polluted since millennia. Individuals' identity in India is more comfortably defined in terms of their caste than the personal accomplishments. Therefore, the question of nation(ism) becomes hugely important to study from the 'dalit gaze' when the dalit literary writings achieve a distinct generic position and aesthetics of its own in the general literary sphere. The paper addresses the questions of nationalism from the point of dalit subjects and their engagement with it. The concerns therefore are: what are the available forms of nation (ism) to dalits? Does dalit discourse/narrative subscribe to the idea of nationalism? Further, I contend that Indian nationalism (if any) has a dialectical relationship (not necessarily antagonistic) with the caste/jati. My main proposition is that the postcolonial (Indian) nationalism emerges out of contestation between the upper caste Hindu nationalists' urge to go back to religious myth of heroism to achieve political freedom from the colonial imperialism vis-a-vis dalit subjects' sense of deprivation of freedom from the Hindu hegemonic caste/varna system. I take Hindi dalit autobiography namely *Joothan* (Omprakash Valmiki) to showcase as to how Indian nationalism which emerges as an anti-imperialistic movement

has a counterproductive agenda when we think of dalit and modern(Indian) nationalism.

There is a parallel discursive process of nationalism against the dominant Hindu ideology of 'Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan'. For the above objective the emphasis is laid on to the layers of self-narrative and the politics of description of 'filthy or unpalatable reality of the dalit community life as sort of civil resistance to the political society or broadly to the nation. The dalits (narrators/protagonists) autobiographical narratives are circumscribed to a dogged life of the dalit community, their cultural oppression and subjugation at different levels in the society. Society and nation at large appear to be an oppressive state mechanism for the dalits. Nation as a state turns into a kind of an alien land/territory for them. Nation which manifests itself through apparatuses such as police, bureaucracy and school often act in congruous with the oppressive upper caste Hindus in the most acrimonious fashion. They trigger their subjection through the cultural, hegemonic practices of exclusion from society under the Indian (Hindu) nationalism (ritualistic) flag. Dalit writing is an assertion of the dalit identity and valorization of their subject-position/subject hood. Their occupancy as the subject in the narratives is a gesture of self-awakening, 'ontological positioning of the self', if it can be coined. Their voices, positions as subject are the distinctiveness of their narratives and expressions.

The subject's position in any society actualizes through the process of identity formation; however, in Indian caste ridden society it is less probable and hardly acceptable. The formula of Indian identity is based on the stereotypical Hindu ideology of *chaturvana* system. Since caste is something which never goes out in one's life as Girish Karnad eloquently has opined that caste is like the skin of body when you pull it off

it comes again with same ignominy. (See Karnad's *Introduction to Collected Plays-I*) Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, (popular as Baba Saheb) one of the prophetic modern intellectuals, has stated that the dalits have a distinct cultural identity of their own. He claims that the dalits are different from the caste Hindus by their distinct cultural/social practices. When we look at the ethnographic study of Indian (Hindu) society, the fact emerges that the Shudra (modern dalits/lower castes) were assigned the task of serving the preceding three varnas (other being Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishya respectively); as they were born in the low varna or caste they are responsible for cleanliness, scavenging and manual labour. The theological arguments supports this bondage of the dalits by reasoning that they had desecrated some holy shrine or committed some sins in their previous birth, hence they are born in the low, untouchable castes to redeem themselves off by serving the preceding castes without any conditions; which follows that they should not ask for any remuneration or repayment for their service. Therefore, the system of caste in India since antiquity had serious socioeconomic bindings. The Shudras thus were restricted to the access of 'power-knowledge' and life giving resources since millennia. The hegemonic varna system was justified subsequently under the pretext of 'religion' as they were not allowed to engage themselves in any sacrosanct rituals. The fear of state punishment was used as a deterrent to oust them not only from the so called respectable jobs like business, teachings and archery-the professions of upper caste, badralok they were also feared of defiling the Brahminical cultural practices and Hindu scriptures/Shashtra by their very touch or access. They were mechanically and systematically excluded from the manifold of society and as result of which they lost their freedom and subject-position as time elapses. The modern dalit literary

movement is thus a cultural awakening, a literature for new life and new aspirations. It is poised to retrieve or claim the subject position hereto was denied to them and de-ostracize the stereotypical notion of the dalits subjecthood.

Discourse of India and Its Dalits

The root of nationalism is not inbuilt in the consciousness of human minds as language is. However, its configuration is made possible by the structure of culture and community's sense of belonging. Nation is reflection of our developed thought; a sense of social responsibility. It reflects our socialized sense of being, an awareness of being a civil society and to be able to think individually but responsibly. Some key cultural/political thinkers have defined 'nation' in the multiple ways as an imagined political community (Benedict Anderson), feeling of connectedness (Paul Gilroy), a system of cultural signification, as the representation of social life (Homi Bhabha), nationalism negotiates with the most private in the interest of controlling the public sphere (Gayatri Spivak), a terrain of struggle and contestation (Aijaz Ahmad), nation is the result of ethnic versus civic forms of nationalism (Ozkanli), nationalism is a political system evolved out of a democratic religious value (Kancha Iliiah) so on and so forth. Benedict Anderson in her formulation of nation remarks that literature is the repository of nation; and when dalit writings are on boom during the last two decades, it becomes important to re-configure nation from their literary writings. These literary representations seek to unpack the fact whether dalits—bahujans define the fringes of the nation or they are simply anti-national elements.

Nationhood also gives us a sense of uplifting oneself from the narrow conceptions of self, body and religion. The spirit of nationalism is the byproduct of self-sacrifice (non-

indulgence), a basis to the formulation of social code and integration. India as a nation (political state) generally believed to have emerged after 1947 but it has always been an enforced entity or rather an imported idea from the Europe/ First World countries after the long British colonial rules nearly for 200 years. The present India as a political 'nation-state' is presumed as an elite, Hindu homogenized entity instead of a secular vibrant nation because of the nationalists ideologues' appropriation of Hindu mythology in the nation making. Further, nationalism in India emerged as an anti-colonial enterprise to consolidate the different ghetto groups into a political society. Nation, however, with dalit's or 'other' perspective as a political entity fails to deliver its political promises i.e. nation as state seems oppressive and forthrightly acrimonious to the dalit subjects with its allegiance with the upper caste Hindu nationalists as a national, universal figures. Modern India as an inclusive democratic nation state literally becomes dysfunctional at many junctures due to its homogeneity and Hinduization of the nation.

Since the process of imagining the nation by the dalits became faster with the rise and growth of literacy, print technology and the act of writing. They mostly imagined their nation in the historical biographies of their national heroes and freedom fighters, who, in their perception played a greater role to free and develop the nation than other conventional heroes of the nationalist movement observes Badri Narayan, ("National Past and Political Present", EPW 3533). The hitch in the formation of India as nation-state is not that it has not succeeded in dealing with the western modernity, citizenship, or the dualism between state-machinery and citizen but rather in its own "multiple indigenous (*contestatory*) inheritances" (Guttman *The Nation of*

India, 13 emphasis added). It is also so because Indian nationalism is held hostage by the Indian socio-spiritual elite who have kept the country under the grip of a spiritual fascism that hates social and spiritual equality and modernity, observes Kancha Iliah (*Buffalo Nationalism*, 28). He further cautioned that indignity of labour or devaluation of labour is another serious cultural problem in India which obstructs its way in the realization of India as a modern, unified nation.

The idea of dalit nationalism picked up momentum with the idea of alternative 'nationalism' which propped up in the eighties in the Subaltern Studies School led by Ranjit Guha. The practice of studying nation in colonial/ postcolonial frameworks preoccupied the academic establishments on unprecedented manner. The scholars began to redefine 'history' and 'nation' from the such cultural expressions as folk narrative/tales, oral legends, ballads, *kissa*, and songs which were unwritten/recorded from the common people, dalits, oppressed community as a part of their new theoretical agency. Their entire endeavour has been, as it were, "to rewrite the nation outside the state-centered national discourse that replicates colonial power/knowledge ..." (Luden, *Reading Subaltern Studies*12). Luden further maintains that writing such history (of the nation) constitutes subversive cultural politics because it exposes forms of power/knowledge that oppress subaltern peoples and also because it provides liberating alternatives. Parth Chatterjee, (one of the key Subaltern Study scholars) however, in his observation critiques the idea of "below perspective" by stating that Subalterns Scholars willingly emphasize on to dis-positioning of the nationalist subject position/dominant narrative to give voice to the suppressed subjects turns out to be a self-detrimental effort. He argues subaltern scholars are "[o]bsessively concerned with the West and other forms of

local elitism, nationalism fails to speak for its own people: on the contrary, it suppresses the politics of subalterity" (qtd. In Guttman 11). Chaterjee's arguments are directed towards the relevance of logic of using western model by subaltern scholars to conceptualize the idea of Indian nationalism. He however, admits that nationalists' ideologues such as Nehru, Gandhi were trying to create a national consciousness after the western nation discourse and for which they channelized the energy of mass-power, and associated the nation with the spiritual domain; as goddess, better than heaven (*janani janmabhoomi scha swargadapi gariyasi*).

The notion of nation thus calls for the commitment from the all sections of society irrespective of caste and gender. The divine dimension/ spiritual domain got intertwined with the politics of the state and mundane social norms. It subsequently got affiliated with our sense of 'being' and 'becoming', a cultural space for our material gains and spiritual evolution. Chaterjee further observes that the evolution process of (Indian) nationalism was coterminous with the colonial agenda of imperialism based on its subordination of the colonized people and power domination. Anti-colonial nationalism was scarcely on the democratic principles of freedom of expression and protection of the all individuals' rights. Postcolonial nation-state (India) emerges out of the conflicts between the materialistic gain as the British found India a vast, rich, resourceful virgin land to be exploited and to establish it as the part of their mighty Empire on the one hand and the postcolonial state which is "drawn from the ideology of the modern liberal-democratic state" (*Nation and its Fragments*, 10), by the "moral-intellectuals leadership of the nationalist elite" on the other (10). The role of elite intellectual leadership in the nation discourse is, thus very clear. The nationalist

ideologues made nationalism at par with Indian culture and its pristine heritage. To counter the imperialism and the imported idea of nationalism and to make India as a distinctive from the western models, (Hindu) nationalism forges a connection between the religious ethos to unite against the Colonial power and also differentiate it from the European model at the same time. This is precisely here nationalists (Hindu) such as Gandhi and *et al.* felt “the greater need to preserve the distinctiveness of one’s spiritual culture” and consequently, “nationalism declares the domain of the spiritual its sovereign territory” (15).

In the colonial times the mass energy was channelized by the nationalists for the political freedom, however, the working class and the condition of the dalits remained the same even after the six decades of decolonization of the nation. The idea of dalit nationalism, however, can be traced out from the colonial period when the wind of freedom was blowing in its full swing under the tutelage of M.K. Gandhi. Gandhiji’s silent resistance to the British power for the sake of ‘*hind swaraj*’ (self-rule) purely based on pragmatic, rural fraternity, was much touted discourse of political independence as opposed to Dr. Ambedkar’s notion of nation based on equality and individual’s self-respect across gender, caste, ethnicity and economic lines; a utopia of the kind free from the Brahmanical cultural hegemony. Both Gandhi’s and Ambedkar’s universal kind of nation, free from all sort of oppressions, were started with a sense of indignation against the domination but would profess diametrically different approaches to achieve the goal. The Hindu nationalist ideologues such as Golwarkar, B.D.Savarkar including Gandhi among others sought to invoke the image of ancient Indian legendary past in different ways to fight back the British imperialism. EV Ramaswami Periyar and Dr.

Ambedkar, the contemporaries of Gandhi however, chose to fight for the rights of dalits and underprivileged first from the Hindu cultural imperialism that is its old caste/ *varna* system than to fighting with the external imperial forces. Gandhi and *et al.* struggle to get political independence was hence overt and visible in the form of British out there, but Ambedkar and E. V. R. Periyar would fight against the invisible and subtle forces, a type of a pseudo nationalism which was under the garb of religion such as Gandhi's preaching of *ramrajya*. Ambedkar considered that Gandhiji's model as the destructive Hindu force. Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar particularly, the two thinkers of modern India defer hugely when it comes to a phenomenon called 'caste' or '*varna*' system. This difference of opinions on 'caste' distinguishes them and their approaches to the idea of nationalism. As it is open secret that Gandhi was not in the favor of dalit's freedom from the *Varna* system, as he would consider *Varna* the very principle of Indian social set-up, however, admonishing the idea of untouchability in Hinduism (Gandhi, *India of My Dreams* 248-51). Dr. Ambedkar would consider Hindu *chaturvarna* as the worst hegemonic social structure and advocated for its complete eradication. He concedes that Hinduism is the chief cause of the dalits' sufferings. He further reasons that the Hindu religion is debilitating by nature and detrimental to the rights of the dalits, than the British were and asserts, that it is 'veritable chamber of horrors' (Roy, Introduction 20).

Ambedkar's demand for the separate electorate for the dalits and participation of non-Brahmins in Indian National Congress in the 30s is one of the early gestures to give the political status to the 'untouchables' of India (Rao, *Caste Question* 2009). Ambedkar's participation in all three Round Table Conferences held in London is the testimony of his

seriousness towards the emancipation of dalits and their political recognition as the self-conscious, modern citizens of the nation free from Brahmanism. Considering the ideological hegemony of Brahmins in (would be) nation state, he began to develop the idea of a separate electorate for Untouchables. In 1919, he submitted a written testimony to the Southbough Committee on electoral reforms. The Congress boycotted the committee. The committee's proposal was to introduce 'a scheme of territorial constituencies based on...separate communal for Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs...' (Roy, *Annihilation of caste* 103). Ambedkar's conceptualization of national(ism) was based on equal rights and freedom of all individuals. He wanted to fight as Mohan Dass Namishray observes, "the two-thousand year old tyranny and oppression of the Caste Hindu and secure social equality above everything else. He was not opposed to freedom; he ardently desired an immediate transfer of power-as much the Congress people but he wanted for the Depressed Classes their rightful place under the Freedom's sun. He could not fight on both the fronts. So he concentrated his fire on the issue of social oppression as against political freedom" (*Dalit Freedom Fighters*, 202). Ambedkar's deep understanding of the Indian hierarchical societal frameworks made him evoke self-dignity among dalits through his initiatives of publishing journals, raising dalit self-dignity and further he went on to suggest conversion into Buddhism as a final resort to fight against the Brahmanism. Ambedkar's and Naicker's duo fight, one from the south and another from the western part of India, reproduced the new political discourse of the nation as even before India would have achieved its formal political independence from the British empire.

Parth Chatterjee in *Empire and Nation* (2010) states that the history of the nation's discourse was the history of

'nationalization of Hinduism' which to me, echoed Ambedkar's ideology of nationalism. He further maintained that Indian nationalism has been constructed and postulated by the elite, nationalists with their spiritual outfit/façade. Ambedkar's view of nationalism was doubted at the several occasions, however, he remained to be a strong challenge to the Hindu nationalists who on the one hand were trying to exploit the dalit masses against the British, and on the other hand they did not want to assure them the equal rights in the economic and cultural terms. Contemporary Indian nationalism based on 'hind-hindu-hindustan' ideology is purely a by-product of the late 20th century political discourse initiated by Hindu right wing based on the religious imperatives. Himani Bannerji in *Making India Hindu and Male*, has vociferously contended that Indian nationalism is based upon Hinduism. He further indicts that "Hindu" means the Hindu right of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and continued that aggressive masculinity and organized violence as an attempt to construct and maintain the national space. Scholars such as Kancha Iliah and Gail Ombedt particularly, have tried to deconstruct the Hindu cultural hegemony by their arguments that state power in the garb of democracy is promoting the Hinduism. The idea of nationalism, Iliaih contends, is based upon the religious attributes and symbols of the Hindus such as 'cow' (as a holy animal), mother goddess (*bharat mata*) as a national symbol. He eloquently argues that they are quite alien to the local gods and goddesses of the dalit-bahujans, the working class. He instead advises and promotes the 'buffalo nationalism'. He argues that buffalo is the most productive animal and ideal national symbol of prosperity and progress. Dalits-bahujans identify 'the nation' through buffalo and working equipment than the nation inscribed through the Hindu religion. The

configuration of the Nation in the dalits autobiography will be located at the sites such as police, bureaucracy, schools, employers and many such places where dalits are employed and they are deemed to face this malignant syndrome of casteism and their purity and commitments as they are constantly staked or interrogated in the public spheres. This study vociferously seeks to unpack the unequal power relations between dalit officers and non-dalit subjects. The latter's hegemony in the name of high caste and elitism makes us understand that cultural dominance or colonization has proven to be self-detrimental for the unity of the nation.

Hindi Dalit Autobiography and (counter-) narrative of the nation

Dalit autobiographical texts such as *Joothan*, *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi*, *Prison We Broke*, *Apane Apane Pinjare*, *Kurruku* among several others are some of the major works which define dalit subject positions across the caste and gender lines. In these texts, dalit narrators engage in fierce confrontations with hegemonic structure of caste in radical ways. These texts chart out the engagements of the dalit self with different domains of power; caste, patriarchy, religions and state. Omprakash Valmiki is one of the famous dalit intellectuals writing in Hindi who seeks to debunk the *brahminical* mentality through his pen. His autobiography *Joothan* is a renowned work of dalit assertion and *chuhara* ghetto life. The argument progresses to look into how Hindi dalit writer forges to subvert the homogenous national identity? How a writer strikes a balance with the fact of being a dalit community representative and the narrative persona speaking for the masses simultaneously in the text? How power is exercised in the name of social order to institutionalize the dalit subject's position?

The anger and frustration is the driving force of the dalit writings. The experience which emerges out of the segregation and practice of untouchability has been expressed with a deep sense of urgency in all dalit narratives. It poses a serious challenge to the dominant episteme by its insistence on representation of dalit community's daily life events in the literary productions. Dalit literature, thus exclusively deals with the anguish of the dalit community; their subjugation, coercion through the power structures of dominant caste and culture in straightforward manner. It provides a kind of (dalit) 'space' which gives priority to the hitherto invisible section of society such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and dalit woman. In autobiographical narrative, no matter the agency remains to be the individual 'self; it pours-out the humiliation of the dalit collective self. Hence self is the blueprint of the dalit collective conscience in all the dalit writings."It is through the autobiographical writings of the first-generation Dalit writers that readers in Marathi, Tamil, and Hindi have become aware of what a Dalit's life was/is really like in independent India. These works have been translated into other Indian languages and English to spread awareness across the country, and sometimes, build solidarities across languages and regions" says, Mohd. Asaduddin (*Chronicle of an Outcast from India*, a review of *Joothan*). Though dalit writings are marked by the quest of identity, the idea of community, self and nation-state are not alien to the dalit discourse. The entire post-independence literary writing is underlined by the idea of 'quest of identity' and 'search for a national form'. Avtar Brah rightly observes that "'Indian identity' as a set of identifications with a nation-state was the outcome of resistance and struggle against colonialism rather than something that existed prior to this period" (Brah,

Cartography 101). In the same fashion it can be argued that dalit identity formation is a part of their resistance with Indian Brahmanical institutions and cultural values.

The contemporary Hindi dalit literature has its traces in the fictional works of Premchand, Surya Kant Nirala, Bechan Sharma 'Ugra' among others but the present dalit discourse picked up rather late in Hindi in the early 90s when Dalit Literature in Maharashtra was at its peak of creativity. It was institutionalized and made visible in the Hindi dominant literary critical parlance by Rajendra Yadav¹. He construed it as the "discourse of otherness" (Sharma, *Pashchatya Samiksha aur Samikshak* 311). As a result of which some prominent dalit writers emerged in the late 90s such as Kanval Bharati, Omprakash Valmiki, Sheorajsingh Bechain, Suraj Paul Chauhan, Mohandas Namisray among many others and they began to write novels and short stories dealing with the dalits subjects and their atrocities by the upper castes. Their creative outpouring, however, most vigorously is visible in their autobiography. These prolific writers have created a dalit 'public sphere' in the Hindi speaking belt. Their writings have increasingly projected the dalit issues and eventually strengthened the dalit community at the ideological and philosophical levels. They made a sustained effort to render a qualitative shift to the understanding of the dalit subjects, their contradictions and muster courage among the dalits to fight against the very hegemonic structure of Hindu/hindu society. Prakash Manu while assessing the dalit short stories and their ideological impact of the dalit community and to

1 R Yadav was a well established modern Hindi novelist and eminent critic. He was editor of leading Hindi journal Hans till his death in 2014. He has outspoken about the dalit rights and sought to bring dalit discourse in Hindi literature.

the wider reading public observes that "In the history of dalit short story writers such as Omprakash Valmiki, Sheoraj Singh Bechain, Premkumar Mani, Chandrashwar Karna . . . have portrayed such a horrendous reality which perturbed us and which was earlier ignored or look down upon (by the non-dalit writers)" (qtd. in Valmiki *Dalit Sahitya ka Saundarya Shashtra* 116). It is with this collective responsibility and political awareness these dalit writers strive to write for the emancipation of their dalit community; however, their depicting the flight of the dalits becomes more poignant and deep as the self-narrative moves on to engage itself with the public self. Hence private and public boundary spills over in their writings. It is also because of the fact that their self (which suffers) is the subject and narrator of the story.

Joothan: A Dalit's Life

Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* (1997)² describes the dalit community beyond the individual self; it is a sincere effort to critique the stereotypical notion of the dalit as subservient subjects to upper castes. It's invocatory, hard hitting and anti-Hindu philosophical tone, suffused with the personal unpalatable memories which haunt the writer for a long time, becomes a strong deterrent against the domination of upper caste Hindus. The narrator (Valmiki) opens up to depict his personal memories of humiliation deep seated in his psyche and find it difficult to put them into plain words. He pleads "Dalit life is excruciatingly painful, charged by experiences.

2 Joothan refers to the left over food or thrown out eatable things. While translating Valmiki's joothan A P Mukherjee gives many variable English terms to define the Hindi connotations but she chose to keep it original Hindi as English term fails to convey the sheer humiliation and domination of the joothan term. (see Mukherjee's Introduction to the text)

Experiences that did not manage to find room in literary creations. We have grown up in a social order that is extremely cruel and inhuman. And compassionless towards Dalits" (Preface *Joothan*).

The text *Joothan* exposes the Hindu (also Hindi speaking) society who feels proud of their high caste and highlights the pangs of being an untouchable. The text gets richer when it describes the narrator's hardships at different levels. The text manages to capture the tensions between the two forces; private and public. The real tension of the text is interwoven precisely around the individual self's dialectical relations with the society, state and the nation in the form of Hindu imagined community. Valmiki's memories of the past as a *chuhara* child are littered with his confrontations with the hostile society he lived. The untouchable narrator is the differing subject(s) in the self-narrative. Self gets transformed into the community self. Though the autobiography is set at Barla, in Mujaffarnagar, a town in western Uttar Pradesh, nonetheless it becomes a microcosm of the entire 'nation'. The village enacts the role of nation and it also deconstructs the boundary building within the nation. Valmiki's interrogation with strong conviction that 'why it is a crime to ask for the price of one's labour is one of the consciousness pricking statement. The manner in which the state power which mostly manifests in the upper castes people, hold a dalit subject, interpellate him is quite obvious in the text. State machinery is literally non-functional to the dalit *basti*. Their life remained in oblivion and darkness. The *chuhra* community (of the narrator) is reined by poverty and illiteracy. Even the two time meals appear to be a distant dream to the *basti* people. Such chill penury of the dalit *basti* where they are forced to eat none-eatable or 'left over' items is direct inversion of the state and at large of the nation.

Joothan among other things is replete with contradictions of positions. Dalit subjects and their subjugation through different power structures such as caste, religion, state and political institutions are described in subtle manner. Valmiki's personal account from his school days times to his position as an employer in Ordinance factory at Dehradun is a struggle to create a community sense, an ethnic group congenial to the dalits. Here personal and public spheres coalesce. The dalit individual self is dominated by the upper caste Hindu society. As a boy in the school he was forcibly made to sweep the entire school premises, instead of being taught some alphabets. Young Valmiki's segregation from his other peers instills in him the sense that he does not belong to this (Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan) nation. Hegemonic Hindu society does not feel at ease to impart education to its dalit people on fringes. Dalits are the others for the entire nation's community. It is so because dalits' emergence as political subjects would be posing a potential threat to the caste Hindu community. Valmiki's abhorrence to Hindu rituals and belief systems is an attempt to overcome the universal slavery of the dalit subjects from the religious bondage. Valmiki's text shows resistance to the Sanskrit texts such as the *Gita* and its preaching of karma without reward and its message of impermanence of the human life debased by the crude reality of the dalit life and the hypocritical life of the caste Hindu he describes. Even though the narrator faced humiliations from both upper caste teachers and his peers at public places during the college life, he continued his studies as an unwarranted citizen. As the title *Joothan* suggests, his family was heavily depended on the scraps or food left over by the upper caste people. His community not only was enforced to eat the non-eatable things, the thrown out foods, they were also compelled do the traditional menial job such scavenging,

cleaning and disposing off the dead animal without any wages. *Chuhara* Basti was considered as bondage laborers by the Tyagis, upper caste Hindu of Uttar Pradesh. Omprakash Valmiki, while writing his self-narrative is absolutely aware about the freedom, dalit subject positions and their prospective liberation. As a writer he has got a collective duty to respond to the different levels of oppression of the dalits in the Hindi heart-land. He firmly believes that writing about dalit is fighting the injustice done onto them. Writing for him is also a very painful process as he has to undergo again the same kind of humiliation and taunts he had suffered in the past. It is a kind of going back and to relive the same traumatic life. Hence, memory is the rich archive of the narrative. His autobiography *Joothan* is an enactment of memory of the past he wished to escape from. However, in process of writing the utter humiliation and all sorts of atrocity onto the dalit community empowers him to write back with a sense of dalit pride. His effort is to subvert the cultural and political setup which does not recognize the dalits as the human beings. Through the varied struggles and staunch believe in the Ambedkarite ideology of equal opportunity, he instills in the Hindi dalit community/readers the new sense of civil community, a civil nationalism which based upon the principles co-existence and shared sufferings. Chuhara community deep attachment with the rural setting is yet another form of the disjuncture which pervades the nation narrative till date that is dichotomy between the urban, educated, upper caste social habitats vs. rural, uneducated, dalit mass without the access to education and economic opportunity. But the 'hindu rastra' inclines on to promote their emancipation under the constitutional framework without realizing the local, village levels power dynamism. And without which nation's all economic policy is withheld

by the upper caste bureaucrat eventually. The dalit community remained on the receiving end within the nation. The Hindutva forces promote rigorously more a homogenous, cultural nationalism which practically distances itself from the dalit community or dalit working classes. Lower caste and class do not directly have any say in policy making of the nation(ism), for instance, a laborer is not concerned about the dual citizenship but a politician is. This kind of civic, local sense of ghetto community struggle for survival, and their identity based on caste purely stands opposed to the Brahminical, Hindu *rashttra* sentiment which is more ideological and abstract.

Conclusion

The text creates an imagined community of the collective (ghetto) dalit self. The very civil sense of dalit community stands as opposed to the dominant ideology of the singular, homogenous elite nationalism. Unlike the 'Hindi' nationalism which is domineering and beyond the temporality of dalits' concerns, dalit civic sense of going to native roots and their ancestral practices without any sense of regret juxtaposed and tries to invert the preconceived notion of hierarchical notion of nationalism. Valmiki strives to create a new sense of community. As SK Limbale, another pre-eminent dalit writer and critic has tried to establish a new dalit identity by his seminal Marathi autobiography—*Akkarmashi: the Outcaste*. In the autobiography the narrator is always on a search for an individual identity, likewise Valmiki too fights for the respect of the entire *chuhara* community through *Joothan*. In this way the text is the interrogation against the all sort of oppressions and the domination of the Hindu nationalism over the dalit 'Other'.

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**Globalectics Beyond Postcoloniality:
An Explication of Salman Rushdie's
*Midnight's Children***

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The concept “Globalectics” is the brainchild of Kenyan theorist Ngugi Wa Thiong’ O, who in his seminal book *Globalectics: Theory and Politics of Knowing* (2012), has repudiated the “single centre” (Ngugi Mukoma 8) theory in favour of “the center is everywhere” (8) proposition. This is in strict reaction to the largely accepted view that thinkers from Global South often resort to western ideological constructs for their self-expression. While formulating the framework of their theory, the west is absorbed in their mind, keeping their original and indigenous ideas at bay. Apart from facing challenges of freeing their literature and culture from the stranglehold of the west, they have to free themselves from the trap the western think-tank has woven around. An urgent need to address the problem and politics of post colonialism, free from any “inbuilt hierarchies” (8), is being felt among the scholars hailing from the colonial countries for their very survival. It is with this objective in mind that the concept of “Globalectics” has its provenance and sustenance in relation to the literature coming from the Global South.

Astrophysics has proved it with commendable ease that so many centers are at work due to the gravitational force of

the Earth; why can't we adopt the same practice in literature, is the main contention of Ngugi. In a sense, Globalectics is a way of pooling knowledge available from the global south. In other words, the bits and pieces' resistance to the colonial hierarchy would not serve us well; rather, we must put up a united face to fight against the western hegemony in the face of it.

In this paper, my purpose is to analyze Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* from the vantage point of Globalectics; Rushdie has been successful in projecting united and indigenous experience to stand him in good steads in the global market of literary hype and success. According to Mukoma Wa Ngugi, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's Globalectics is: "To read the text with the eyes of the world; to see the world with the eyes of the text" serves as the starting point of our interpretation of Rushdie's seminal novel as a path breaking novel having international critical acclaim and universal significance (Ngugi, *Globalectics*60).

A reader familiar with Rushdie, more specifically *Midnight's Children*, will undoubtedly agree that he has heralded a saga of change for the whole nation as well as a coterie of writers hailing from India to imitate and emulate. Rushdie's watershed work of fiction has emphasized the indigenous acclimatization of tradition and culture into the English language, posing a threat for the colonial legacy to take a backseat. Using the colonial language, he has given the colonized a chance to establish their identity in the global market, a paradigm shift in carving out a niche for writers from the third world to pay the colonial legacy through their own coin. His ground breaking essay *Imaginary Homelands* (1982) puts forward a unique case of defense against the Indian English writing against the *bhasa* writers as English language serves their very purpose of being considered at par

with global literature. The use of English language gives them an edge for international recognition and they get a global market to sell their indigenous images. In *Imaginary Homelands* Rushdie retorts in defense of the English language and his settling down abroad:

It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back even at the risk of being mutated into the pillars of the salt...But if we do look back, we must do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (10)

The advent of Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981) saw a sea change in the genealogy of the Indian Novel in English and Rushdie's successors came to be known as Rushdie's children. This is certainly keeping the project of Globalectics afloat. In Rushdie's terminology, the novelist is regarded as an archeologist who has the acumen and expertise of accumulating obscure elements and collating them for an accomplished version of history in a marked departure from the established trend, it deviates from the realistic description of things *per se*. Reconstruction of the history through a fragmentary device serves as the key to the successful use of open ended technique in place of the usual practice of a grand teleology. Salem Sinai, Rushdie's unreliable narrator, cannot do away with the riddle of mixing up events with chronology in his bid to save his "memory from corruption of clocks" (*Midnight's Children* 38). Memory cannot hold a true picture of reality forever; this is precisely the reason why Rushdie has employed a fragmentary technique to recount past history in an interesting and engrossing way.

Taking the cue from his most illustrious predecessors like Gunter Grass, Milan Kundera and Garcia Marquez, who have explored the postmodern genre by foregrounding the importance of gaps, discontinuities, ruptures while presenting an extremely unreliable account of the past, Rushdie develops a kind of departure from conventional narrative technique of historical inquiry. Reality interplays with history harmoniously blending it with fantasy.

Ngugi's seminal book *Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing* (2012) draws upon the theory of knowledge production and Globalectics. He traces the roots of the theory in contention to the theory of the earth's gravitational force:

Globalectics is derived from the shape of the globe. On its surface there is no one center; any point is equally a center. As for the internal center of the globe, all points on the surface are equidistant to it—like the spokes of a bicycle wheel that meet at the hub. Globalectics combines the global and the dialectical to describe a mutually affecting dialogue, or multi-logue, in the phenomena of nature and nurture in a global space that's rapidly transcending that of the artificially bounded, as nation and region. (8)

Blurring the distinction between center and periphery seems to be the main thrust of Ngugi's theory of globalectics. The notion of center and periphery as the contesting terms is discarded and a mutually agreed arrangement of convenience containing an underlying cultural paradigm is put in place. Duncan McEachern Yoon succinctly sums up the idea of globalectics in an insightful essay:

The equanimity at the heart of Ngugi's project grows out of a desire to conceive of the world as simultaneously coalescing and diverging, as a mutually transformative exchange stripped of the racist hierarchies of a colonial world and its afterlives. To extend his metaphor, if a bicycle is meant to spin, propelling the rider forward, then Ngugi's globalectic retains a

commitment to a greater dialectical synthesis, if tempered by the experience of decolonization and independence.(24)

Ngugi's theory opens up new avenues to reach up to the world of theorization beyond postcoloniality to the global perspectives. His "decolonial space" (18) has the potential to open the floodgates of another theoretical proposition where writers and intellectuals can work together with gay abandon. It aims at a larger audience for the "world literatures", a theoretical frame work equipped with "a more engaging international model of thinking and studying literature and culture" (20).

Bijay Kumar Das in a perceptive and thought provoking article gives a more simple and understandable interpretation of the concept of globalectics as "totality and mutual dialogue across culture" (14). He also cites Ngugi's reference to Franz Fanon's observation on the colonial plight to explicate the concept with reference to the Indian context:

"Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic it turns to the past of oppressed people and distorts and disfigures, and destroys it" (Fanon 210). Your past must give way to my past, your literature must give way to my literature, my way is the high way, in fact the only way.(Das 14)

One is reminded of Shashi Deshpande's objection to the Indian writing in English which, she terms as a part to be compared with the whole of the *bhasa* literatures. Even if our literature has its roots in thousand year old antiquity and culture, English literature has thwarted its importance through the colonial hegemonic implications and ideological constructs. It is against this hierarchical back drop that Ngugi's theory of globalectics is grounded where all contesting positions, whether indigenous or western, are

dismantled to bring them together under a catch all concept of Globalectics. Ngugi writes candidly about the concept where the local and global blend in a harmonious relationship:

Globalectics assumes the interconnectedness of time and space in the area of human thought and action. It's best articulated in the words of my all time favorite, William Blake when he talked about seeing the world in the grain of sand, eternity in an hour. Any text, even human encounters, can be read globalectically. (Das 13)

The metaphor of sand explains the concept of Ngugi as it has universal acceptance of being primarily connected with land, an engrossing issue in postcolonial writing. That is to say, in Ngugi's world there are no hierarchies, the marginal and subaltern are placed at par with the privileged. He has a certain goal of bringing the world literatures into one universal platform where everybody has equal access. He is perhaps advocating for a niche, a project of globalectic reading where free speech becomes his forte:

Globalectic reading means breaking open the prison house of imagination built by theories and outlooks that would seem to signify the content within is classified, open to only a few. This involves declassifying theory in the sense of making it assessable—a tool for clarifying interactive connections and interconnections of social phenomena and their mutual impact in the local and global space, a means of illuminating the internal and the external, the local and global dynamics of social being. This may also mean the act of reading becoming also a process of self-examinations (61).

The concept of globalectics has its advantages and disadvantages but what is important for us is that Ngugi has imparted freshness to the literature around the world, liberating it from all bias which is our focal point for reading Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* where the local and

global find equal expression. He attempts to rewrite the genre of Indian past through “chutneyfication of history” (459) thereby, mixing indigenous flavor with global colour. The interplay of private lives and national vision makes Salem Sinai’s history, blur the boundaries of history and attract the attention of the international audience in an excellent production. History is recapitulated with retrospective effect through broken and fragmented images initiating a poetic flow to historical evidence. More than history, fiction recounts the emotional outburst of the nation in its typical way. Rushdie has the prowess and acumen to acclimatize an indigenous theme to English language for global acceptance; he succeeds exceptionally well with his mission. Edward Said’s illuminating and path breaking ideas of literature as resistance, as posited in his epoch making book *Culture and Imperialism* holds good for this purpose:

Three great topics emerge in decolonizing cultural resistance, separated for analytical purposes, but all related. One, of course, is the resistance on the right to see the community’s history as a whole, coherently integrally.... Second is the idea that resistance, far from being merely a reaction to imperialism, is an alternative way of conceiving human history... Third is a noticeable pull from the separatist nationalism towards a more integrative view of human community and human liberation.(Said 260-61)

Three important traits of Said’s assertion that go to redefine the position of Indian literature written in English need to be explicated further to situate it in the proper context. The entire history of the nation concerned needs to be redefined in terms of indigenous experience. Instead of resisting the imperial version all the time, an alternative mode of interpretation should be devised to teach the colonized version a lesson. The third important ingredient that Said advocates is a bias free “nationalism” where narrow

parochialism would pave way for 'human liberation' as the main motto.

Satya P. Mohanty has tried to give glimpses of alternative modernities radically different from the British modernity in course of an interview with Dube Bhatnagar and Rajender Kaur in a leading fortnightly magazine *Frontline* (6th April 2012). While in India we emphasize our mythical cultural and spiritual roots and above all the place and landscape based on geography, the Western canon privileges history over other subjects for expression. Mohanty seems to keep the western history at arm's length, and endorses the views of the traditional cultural roots but in any case he is not averse to the good things available in the Western model. He seems to advocate an above board formula in which the essence of the both the cultures would find equal expression and justification. He writes:

Imagine trying to read Dickens with the primary goal of showing how great English culture is! Or reading Tukaram with the sole purpose of celebrating the greatness of the Marathi culture, and Sarala Das, who wrote subaltern versions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in the fifteenth century, to exemplify the glorious literary history of Odisha! Such attempts would be wrong-headed because they prevent us from seeing the rich cultural crosscurrents that shaped the medieval and the early modern Indian culture, the culture of the Natha yogis and the itinerant hands who roamed from region to region creating a new moment in the subcontinent's history. To read Tukram and Sarala Das in narrowly literary-historical terms is in effect to clip their visionary wings, to be blind to the subversive power of their work. (*Frontline* 89-90)

As a matter of fact, there is no harm in reading literature from the standpoint of one's culture but to privilege one over the other does not make any logic what Satya P. Mohanty terms as unhealthy practice: "Jingoism is an unhealthy

cultural development and it should not be confused with genuine pride in one's culture and community"(90). As a rule, the popular belief goes with the idea that there is a subversion of the caste system of a particular moment in the history of India, but a sensible reader would definitely see different connotations foregrounded in a sacred 'text' that highlights deep rooted consciousness of our culture. Certainly, culture plays a major role in exploring the rich layers of literature that our great tradition and culture offer us to follow and emulate.

Franz Fanon makes a clear distinction between native culture and acquired culture while addressing the conference of Afro-Asian Peoples' solidarity Organization (AAPSO) and points out the weaknesses of a universal culture:

You, brothers from Asia, invite us to defeat the historical mystification that aims to present a certain culture as a peak of universal culture. And through your work, through your research and by means of your triumphs, you have proved that universal culture, [and] the conception of a man to [the] size of the world, have only just started. We say: This is exactly what we wanted to affirm. (Fanon, 128)

B. K. Das sums up the influence of one's indigenous culture on the formative and creative mind without any bias in a brilliant article "Learning Literature Through Alternative Culture", highlighting the alternative modes of culture to interpret literature in *The Critical Endeavour*:

The writers like Nehru, Franz Fanon, and many others from India and Africa make two things clear. No more to ape the west and do injustice to any other section in our own country on the basis of gender, minority and race. We should dive deep into our roots and read our literature along with our culture. In a multicultural country like ours, it is imperative on or part to correlate culture and literature. The problem is while contesting the dominant culture, we should not lose sight of

the discrimination made in our country in the name of caste, gender and religion. It is good to love one's culture and nation. But why should love stop at the border (21).

Rushdie's novel brought about a renaissance of sorts, outshining the earlier emphasis on the rustic idealism. Admittedly being the mainstay of the many successive younger generation novelists, it has adopted some pyre-techniques, postmodern perspectives, historical revision, playful abandon of language use, allegorical access, sexual boldness, proximity to Bollywood to lend credence to the novel. Rushdie uses language with a comic vision in view of the linguistic diversity of our country. English language becomes an urgent necessity for Rushdie to blend all the heterogeneous elements together.

In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie tires to revive and reconstruct Indian history in bits and pieces, taking recourse to memory as the mode of representation. He blurs the distinction between fact and fiction which is not unintentional:

Time and migration had placed between me and my subject a double filter, and I hoped that I could imagine vividly enough, it might be possible to see history once more without the filters; as if I had never gone away. But as I worked I found that what interested me more and more was the process of filtration itself. (Rushdie, "Errata" 99)

Rushdie's assertion seems to be somewhat similar to Nehru's discovery of India. The latter came to terms with India's past and culture only after he returned from England with the eye of a detached observer. Rushdie's account of Indian history might not be an authentic one or far from it. By the time Rushdie came to write, the initial craze for a cultural nationalism was rare. He attempted a trivial account of Indian history at his memory's expense, to suit to his purpose

of giving an entertaining version of the otherwise dull sequence of events:

‘I told you the truth’, I say yet again, ‘Memory’s truth, memory has its own special kind. It selects eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies and vivifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events’ (Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* 253).

The wavering account of representation of history is certainly a challenge to the established trend put forward by the western canon which the novel tries to unsettle in its inherently unique way where the western and the oriental trends get equal justification in conformity with Ngugi’s globalectics. Rushdie’s narrative can be considered as a representative text which looked forward to exploring Ngugi’s findings without doubt. Saleem’s solipsistic truth gets away with boundaries of realism and fantasy, a clear break from the strictures of the established canon. He mixes up fiction and truth ensuring a fractured version of history where closures, teleology, order and sequence are removed from reality. Saleem’s imagined account finds favour with the readers where fantasy and dream play a vital part. No wonder we have an extremely unreliable narrator in Saleem who is a doubtful starter. His version is a mere distortion relating to the emergence of India as a nation and what is even more important is the narrator’s insistence on validating his version of the history as an authentic one:

There was an extra festival on the calendar, a new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into the world which, although it had five thousand years of history... was nevertheless quite imaginary; into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will—except in a dream we all agreed to dream; it was a mass fantasy shared in the varying degree by Bengali

and Punjabi, Madras and Jat, and would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood, India, the new myth—a collective fiction in which anything is possible. (Rushdie, “Midnight’s Children” 129-30)

Both a constructive past and willed future coalesce to project India as a collective potential following linear pattern rather than a cyclical one. Rumina Sethi aptly comments this instability in Rushdie’s novel: “Rushdie transmutes all previously existing essentialist responses to the new nation into an inchoate model of political identity that represents ‘reality’ as conflictual, arbitrary and multi-dimensional. In Rushdie’s hands, India’s identity becomes a project that needs to be recuperated. That only can be his reality” (112).

Midnight’s Children is a postcolonial narrative that accommodates multiple voices and narrative techniques, sometimes gives conflicting accounts, to impinge upon not only the colonial texts like E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924), but also possibly to repudiate the foregrounding of nationalist narratives revolving in and around Gandhi, in ignorance and exclusion of other emerging trends and value system. Linda Hutcheon argues that Rushdie’s work undertakes the project of taking the Western models of historical account to task, but he does not veer back to challenge the existing nationalistic discourse: “a novel like *Midnight’s Children* works to foreground the totalizing impulse of western—imperialistic—modes of history-writing by confronting it with indigenous models of history” (62). Innes writes about Rushdie’s technique explicitly:

different bits selected for preservation will blend and mingle to create new flavours. (39)

In keeping with Ngugi's view that we have to free ourselves from the stranglehold of colonial hegemony to address a global audience, Rushdie's novel can be considered as an attempt to do justice to the misrepresentation of our indigenous history and culture through self-representation. Rushdie found an able ally in Marquez who felt that the Western viewpoint on their native history has written them off of their own inseparable past due to the consideration, that they are the nation of savages, only a western intervention could uplift them from their marginalized status. A blunt denial of the point of entry into their own past is the key to devise an indigenous method of protesting effectively against the inadequate western representation. Here is an attempt to interpret contemporary reality, imbibing both fact and fiction, which contests the western model. It also gives the postcolonial writer a well deserved access in the global market vindicating the view propagated by Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's concept of Globalectics.

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Cinema in *Midnight's Children*: A Postmodern Analysis

RAJASHREE BARGOHAIN

Ever since its appearance in 1981, the most widely held reception of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has been in terms of a 'national allegory'¹. Such an emphasis, however, does not reduce other narrative priorities of the text. It can also be read as a postmodern text, which questions the validity of such grand narratives like that of the Nation. It embodies a denial of the very possibility of meaning. Rushdie says in his 1982 essay, "Imaginary Homelands":

Meaning is a shaky edifice we build out of dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved..." (Rushdie 1991: 12)

This shaky nature of 'meaning' is conveyed in his novel by the motley narrative's conglomeration of these sundry elements, which include 'old films'. Rushdie further says that his novel *Midnight's Children* was born, "when I realized how much I wanted to restore the past to myself" (Rushdie 1991: 9-10). This implies that the novel is a restructuring of his memories or perhaps of a collective memory. Memory is not an objective recalling of past events. It "eliminates, alters, exaggerates, glorifies and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality" (Rushdie 1981: 253).

Calling himself “a cinema addicted Indian” and Bollywood “the world’s number one movie city” (Rushdie 1991: 107), he wishes to restore his memories “in Cinemascope and glorious Technicolor” (Rushdie 1991: 10). In a way, then, his intention is to produce a cinematic reproduction of the India of his memories through words. At a metaphorical level, Lifafa Das—a character in his novel does the same thing through his ‘peep-shows’. His bioscope show is a miniature form of the wider canvas of the Cinema that has an imminent presence throughout the narrative of the novel. The popularity of Bombay Cinema is based upon its recurrent use of improbable characters and situations—larger than life heroes and villains, impossible stunts, abrupt introduction of music and dance—all making up a magical spectacle which is similar to the spectacle of power which gives rise to the semblance of a nation. Rushdie’s juxtaposition of filmic elements in his ‘national allegory’ is, thus, quite strategic.

In the popular Hindi film one can find everything—comedy, tragedy, dance etc; all aspects of human life in the same film. The highly unlikely is always possible in the Indian ‘masala movie’, miracles and sensational *deus ex machinas* are run-of-the-mill. Indian films create a universe parallel to reality but a little more attractive and gaudily dressed, with scenarios that eschew logic. Rushdie incorporates this filmy ‘monstrous’ diversity in *Midnight’s Children* where “melodrama upon melodrama” (is produced) and “life acquires the coloring (sic) of a Bombay talkie” (Rushdie 1981: 203).

Against the convenient fictions of the pre-modernist periods, the condition of the post-modern, as explained by Lyotard, is one of language games, social meaning dissolved into a vast spectacular *combinatoire*, a dissociation of cause

and effect, a concentration on the seductiveness of means and a concomitant disavowal of ends. The value of the filmic narrative lies in its being a spectacle, it embodies what Dana B. Polan calls the "will-to-spectacle", the assertion that "a world of foreground is the only world that matters or is the only world that *is*." (Polan 1983: 135). Its ultimate aim is entertainment; against traditional realist assumptions, it does not aim at the representation of a 'truth', or what Derrida terms as the always already present 'transcendental signified'. It epitomizes "a world of signs without fault, without truth and without origin, which is offered to our active interpretation" (Derrida 1966: 120). Even the film as a medium of entertainment, does not always aim at coherence, in Polan's words, "what it offers is exactly that of a breakdown of coherence, a disordering of order for the sake of visual show" (Polan 1983: 133).

Midnight's Children challenges the conventions of classical realism. It is often episodic, fragmentary. The presence of the (seemingly) naïve narratee—Padma, with her "what-happened-next" demands is symbolic of the traditional expectation of linearity or wholesomeness in meaning in a work of art. But Rushdie's narrator challenges the expectations of reliability, "often undermining [his] own seeming omniscience" (Hutcheon 1988: 11); Saleem Sinai's body is, in fact, cracking apart gradually. His tale is not the manifestation of an organic vision, but something that Rushdie would term "a shaky edifice" (Rushdie 1991: 12). It is a departure from what Walter Benjamin has termed the 'auratic' nature of art. Rushdie says in his introduction to *Midnight's Children*:

...I have treated my writing simply as a job to be done, refusing myself all (well, most luxuries of artistic temperament. (Rushdie 1981: xi)

It is this scepticism towards the possibility of a perfect wholesomeness in art² (thereby, in life) generated by an epiphanic vision, that seems to be manifested in Rushdie's "shaky edifice". It is embodied in the anti-realist character of his narrative. Saleem Sinai's is not a telos-driven world, nor is his story. At one point, he tries to invoke the abstractions of destiny and purpose:

The thing is, we must be here for a *purpose*, don't you think? I mean, there has to be a *reason*, you must agree? (Rushdie 1981: 305-06)

In immediate response, Shiva, Saleem's alter-ego, deflates this invocation of reason:

What *purpose*, man? What thing in the whole sister-sleeping world got *reason*, yara? For what reason you're rich and I'm poor? Where's the reason in starving, man? God knows how many millions of damn fools living in this country, man, and you think there's a purpose! Man, I'll tell you—you got to get what you can, do what you can with it, and then you got to die. That's reason, rich-boy. Everything else is only mother-sleeping *wind*. (Rushdie 1981: 306)

Shiva's heated rebuttal of the tenability of reason or purpose is an expression of an underlying post-modern "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 1979: xxiv), a rejection of the 'grand narratives' of progress and perfectibility in favour of the contingent or the provisional. The central character and narrator in *Midnight's Children*—Saleem Sinai's own identity is fluid and ambiguous; he invokes destiny, but ironically, what he is reading as destiny is really only a matter of chance, for he is, after all, a changeling.

This is a refutation of the assumptions of liberal humanism, which is centered upon an always already 'present' autonomous individual who has found "release

from his self-incurred tutelage", an "idealized natural human being: an unsleeping self-examining, ever-enlightened being, discovering and illuminating things and fighting secrets, ambiguities, darkneses, twilights" (Lal and Nandi 2006: 5). Postmodern thought challenges the foundations of such dichotomies like adult/infant and high culture/low culture. In *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai grows up to be thirty-one years old, but even in adulthood, he maintains a free commerce between fantasy and reality, which is considered 'normal' in children but 'madness' in adults. This provides him with an alternative reality, which is reflected in the juxtaposition of the magical and the realistic in his narrative technique. Besides, it also embodies, for Saleem as for Rushdie, a 'third principle'—an alternative to the anarchy or rigidity brought on by the 'adult' faculty of 'reason'. In his interesting study of the 1939 film 'The Wizard of Oz', Rushdie contends, "[it] is a film whose driving force is the inadequacy of adults, even of good adults, and how the weakness of grown-ups forces children to take control of their own destinies, and so, ironically, grow up themselves." (Rushdie 1997: 3) His observation embodies a questioning of hierarchical systems in art as well as life. Nadir Khan, a character in the novel says:

I do not believe in high art...Now art must be beyond categories; my poetry and-oh-the game of hit-the-spittoon are equals. (Rushdie 1981: 54)

Samir Dayal points out that the gross physicality in the novel is Rushdie's attempt to revalorize the body to reverse the hegemony of the mental, intellectual and the "high" over the physical, visceral and the "low" (Dayal 1992: 435).

Søren Frank, in *Migration and Literature* points out that minor literature attempts to disturb the innocence and transparency of official language. "It follows the a-signifying,

intensive lines outlined by sounds and smells, by light and tactility, by the free shapes of imagination, and by elements from dreams and nightmares." (Frank 2008: 155). He says that the intention is to escape the straightjacket of 'meaning'; the idiosyncratic use of language that escapes doxa manages to create exceptional conditions through the internal tensions of language and by way of exploiting the materiality of language. Rushdie, in his novel, dislocates the English language and opens it up so that other things, apart from conventional reality can leak into it—substances, intensities, affects, sensations and lines of flight.

Many of Rushdie's 'sundry elements' do not qualify as 'high art'. There is an interesting connection between the Bollywood ethos and the novel's narrative which contests the hierarchical outlook on aesthetic sensibility and cultural consumption. One of the foremost criticisms against popular Indian cinema is its 'lowbrow' quality manifested through "meaningless digressions from the core narrative, maudlin melodrama, an embarrassingly juvenile conception of the comic as well as the romantic, and ahistoric, inconsistent sequencing" (Lal and Nandi 2006: xiv). This is the outlook generated by the assumptions of the Western film world. Classic Western film theory insists on logical sequencing in films. Sergei Eisenstein, for example, has defined the "basic aim and function" of films as—"that role set itself by every work of art, *the need for connected and sequential exposition of the theme, the material, the plot, the action, the movement within the film sequence and within the film drama as a whole.*" (Eisenstein 1947: 3). Popular Indian Cinema does not comply with the Naturalist expectations of western aesthetics, which is devoted to promoting a cinema of rational perception. However, instead of judging the Indian film ethos on the basis of homogenizing Western aesthetic principles, probing

the social and cultural forces behind the production and consumption of this popular genre can lend an insight into understanding its nature and thereby of the subaltern voices within it.

Critics see Popular Cinema as playing “an anti-theoretical role, occasionally offering an explicit critique of the application of Enlightenment assumptions to the Indian context”. (Lal and Nandy 2006: 14). The narrator in *Midnight's Children* says in the beginning of the chapter “All-India Radio”: “Reality is a question of perspective” (Rushdie 1981: 229).

Rushdie's use of magic realism itself offers an alternative take on the standard Realist perception of ‘reality’. When Padma, the narattee, expresses incredulity at Saleem Sinai's claims to having a thousand gifted friends with magical abilities—the midnight's children, he argues for the plausibility of his experience by resorting to Islam, Christianity and Hinduism by turns—

Even Muhammad...at first believed himself insane: do you think the notion never crossed my mind? But the Prophet had his Khadija, his Abu-Bakr, to reassure him of the genuineness of his Calling; nobody betrayed him into the hands of asylum-doctors...What is truth?...What is sanity? Did Jesus rise up from the grave? Do Hindus not accept...that the world is a kind of dream; that Brahma dreamed, is dreaming the universe; that we only see dimly through the dream-web, which is Maya. Maya...may be defined as all that is illusory; as trickery, artifice and deceit. Apparitions, phantasms, mirages, sleight-of-hand, the seeming form of things: all these are parts of Maya. If I say that certain things took place which you, lost in Brahma's dream, find hard to believe, then which of us is right? (Rushdie 1981: 293)

It is this paradox of the illusory nature of reality that Rushdie seems to be negotiating through his use of magic

realism. At one point, Saleem Sinai uses the metaphor of a schizophrenic moment in a movie hall to illustrate the ambivalent distinction between reality and illusion:

Suppose yourself in a large cinema, sitting at first in the back row, and gradually moving up, row by row, until your nose is almost pressed against the screen. Gradually the stars' faces dissolve into dancing grain; tiny details assume grotesque proportions; the illusion dissolves or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself *is* reality... (Rushdie 1981: 229)

In one of the incidents in the novel, Rashid the *rickshaw* boy, is found watching an 'eastern-western' called '*Gai-Wellah*' (Rushdie 1981: 60). It is a parody of the western popular genre—which is itself a departure from Western codes of rationality and verisimilitude. The distinction between 'real life' and (filmic) 'illusion' is once again mocked when Rashid, "still full of the spirit of Gai-Wallah [sic]", on his way back from the theatre, 'rescues' Nadir Khan in 'cowboy style', only, like the lock that comes off, it's "Indian-made" (Rushdie 1981: 62). In "Imaginary Homelands", Rushdie refers to the song "Mera joota hai Japani"³ from the film *Mr. 420* and says it could almost be Saleem's theme song. An identifying feature of India's popular Cinema is the extensive use of music and drama, which transforms it into a magic spectacle. The genre has affinities with the traditional oral and dramatic forms in which music and dance were essential components. This feature of popular films can be explained in terms of the *Rasa* theory in classical Indian aesthetics which bases the aesthetic experience upon the evocation of some specific eight categories of moods called *rasas*. Here, the emphasis is not upon the representation of a 'reality' but in the production of a certain effect/affect upon the audience. Traditional Indian art is, thereby, oriented more towards the 'desire' of the spectator, and so is popular Indian cinema. In other words, it

is conscious of the presence of an audience gaze; the look of the camera presumes the look of the spectator in front of the screen. This is in keeping with Walter Benjamin's observation in his essay, "The Work of art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility":

For the film, what matters primarily is that the actor represents himself to the public before the camera, rather than representing someone else. (Benjamin 1936: § IX, ¶ 1)

Reception-theory distinguishes the two poles in a (literary) text—the artistic and the aesthetic:

the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader...the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two...The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence. (Iser 1972: 207)

Although Iser refers specifically to the literary text, his theory can be extended to the filmic text as well; it inhabits the virtual space created by the interaction and exchange between the film and its audience. The popular film's deviation from standards of rationality and linearity can be explained on the basis of this production-consumption dynamics⁴. This has affinities in the novel too: the narrative makes no claims to an autonomous existence. Saleem Sinai's account is continually influenced by the demands of the narratee, what he calls "Padma pressures":

As my decay accelerates...the risk of unreliability grows...in this condition, I am learning to use Padma's muscles as my guides. When she's bored, I can detect in her fibres the ripples of uninterest; when she's unconvinced, there is a tic which gets going in her cheek. The dance of her musculature helps to keep me the rails; because in autobiography, as in all literature, what actually happens is less important than what the author can persuade his audience to believe. (Rushdie 1981: 376)

Thus, the narrative is non-mimetic in that its central concern is not the representation of a presumed 'reality' or 'origin', which according to Derrida is a philosophical fiction. It is shaped and modified by the expectations and reactions of its audience.⁵ Rushdie presents the character Hanif Aziz, "the arch disciple of naturalism" (Rushdie 1981: 339) as a failure; his adamant insistence on a strict Realism in his scripts doesn't work in the Bombay film industry. "In the temple of illusions, he had become the high priest of reality" (Rushdie 1981: 338). Rushdie highlights the precariousness of his ideological position by contrasting it with the miraculous nature of his nephew Saleem Sinai "which involved [him] beyond all mitigation in the (Hanif-despised) myth-life of India." (Rushdie 1981: 338-339). Hanif's dream project "The Ordinary Life of a Pickle Factory" turns out a failure, he tries to do away with melodrama in favour of documentary realism, but as Saleem acknowledges, the representative Bombay movie is all about melodrama: "Melodrama piling upon melodrama; life acquiring the colouring of a Bombay talkie" (Rushdie 1981: 203). The realist mode no longer proves adequate for the post modern Indian experience and as with popular Bombay Cinema, the Indian English novel cannot be written by a simple realist, but by one who admits the improbable and the fantastic into his narrative.

Thus, the Cinema in *Midnight's Children* operates as a symbol of the novel's inherent critique of traditional Humanist principles of rationality. Popular Cinema, by the standards of Realism, is 'irrational' and therefore 'non-serious'. However, Probal Dasgupta, in his essay "Popular Cinema, India and Fantasy" brings in the metaphor of *Dhyanabhanga*, "enchantment's victory over meditative attention, [as] iconic of the Indian aesthetics' solution to the level ordering problem of languages and meta languages"

(Lal and Nandy 2006: 10), a problem which, according to him, cannot be solved in relation to the self of the Enlightenment subjectivity. He points out that the sage's meditation in *dhyana* would be completely focused and the very idea of a semi-divine temptress seducing him would be ungrammatical had not seriousness itself been a wish or a desire that shares the same perceptual matrix with wishful thinking. If popular cinema is 'non-serious', he positions it in relation to "the dialogic concept of the ludic as a mode of popular deflation of official visions." (Lal and Nandy 2006: 15)

Mikhail Bakhtin discerns an inherent carnivalesque spirit in the spectacle, which "belongs to the borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play." (Morris 1994: 198). Bakhtin's association of the element of 'play' with the carnival, and thereby, the spectacle, once again points to a critique of 'reason' that the latter embodies. It inhabits the virtual space between reality and illusion, just like the narrative of *Midnight's Children* does. Popular cinema manifests the carnivalesque spirit by functioning as a spectacle⁶, for its function is not mimetic, but one of a free play of desire in a production-consumption dialectic, pointing to Bakhtin's association of the (medieval) spectacle with the culture of the marketplace. In the words of Dana B. Polan, "In the phenomenological world of spectacle—a world of instant perceptions bracketing out the value of perception—an experience, especially in the way it becomes little more than a perceptual impulse, is seen to matter in and of itself." (Polan 1983: 136). Thus, a cultural analysis projects the Cinema in *Midnight's Children* as a metaphor for an alternative take on 'reality' and 'artistic representation', which constitutes a central concern of Rushdie's novel at a thematic as well as technical level.⁷

Notes

1. 1. "Salman Rushdie's brilliant novel *Midnight's Children*, from which I have crafted a title for this essay, is about the birth of a child and a nation"—Mohammed, Patricia. "*Midnight's Children* and the Legacy of Nationalism"
2. "In depicting the nation as a corpus, *Midnight's Children* belongs to a group of postcolonial novels—among them, J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* (1986), and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991)—that allegorize national history through the metaphor of the body politic"—Kane, Jean M. "The Migrant Intellectual and the Body of History"
3. "...as is well known, Rushdie's novel is a national allegory"—Hogan, Patrick Colm. "*Midnight's Children*: Kashmir and the Politics of Identity"
4. "Readings of *Midnight's Children* either insist on Rushdie's allegiance to nationalism—Josna Rege, for example, suggests that "[d]espite its conceptual freshness and vitality, *Midnight's Children* remains very emotionally committed to the narrative of the nation" and that the novel "romanticizes the Congress party ideal of 'unity in diversity'—or, alternatively insist that Rushdie is disillusioned not with the nation per se but with the corruption of the postcolonial nation, because those who acme to lead it were, as Timothy Brennan put it, "sell outs and power brokers"."—Heffernan, Teresa. "Apocalyptic Narratives: The Nation in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*"
2. This idea of 'pure art' is closely related to the theory of *l'art pour l'art*, which denies any social function in art.
3. *Mera joota hai Japani*
Ye patloon Inglistani
Sar pe laal topi Rusi-
Phir bhi dil hai Hindustani
 —which translates roughly as
O, my shoes are Japanese
These trousers English, if you please
On my head, red Russian hat-
My heart's Indian for all that.

[This is also the song sung by Gibreel Farishta as he tumbles from heaven at the beginning of *The Satanic Verses*, Translation by Rushdie]

4. It endorses Walter Benjamin's contention that with the advent of the New arts, especially film and photography, the total function of art has shifted from the pole of ritual to that of politics.
5. Just as the narrative or the art work is influenced by its receiver, so is the latter 'shaped' by the former; none of the two has an existence independent of or prior to each other. Both 'exist' in the virtual space created by the interaction between the two.
6. The 'spectacle' assumes the character of what Baudrillard calls 'simulacra', "in which there is no longer any God to recognize his own, nor any last judgment to separate truth from false, the real from its artificial resurrection, since everything is already dead and risen in advance". (Poster 2001: 171)
7. Although the discussion presents Rushdie's narrative as a championing of the Carnavalesque spirit, an espousal of the 'non-serious', ironically, it is only a 'serious' return to the 'non-serious', for Rushdie's own work is often accused of intellectual elitism.

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Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet: A Role Model for the Third World Woman

SAMITA MISHRA

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the heroine of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet, in the image of the third world woman. Alfred Sauvy first used the term 'Third World' in 1952 to designate countries which were aligned neither with the United States nor the Soviet Union in the Cold War period. The term became increasingly racialised and referred to poor African and Asian countries which were European colonies. The Third World invoked ideas of poverty, disease and war. It became a stable metaphor for non-culture and underdevelopment. The third world woman is presented as the most unfortunate creature. She is subject to the hegemony of both patriarchy and colonialism. The average third world woman is represented as ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domesticated, family-oriented, and victimised. She is "victim par excellence the forgotten casualty of both imperial ideology and native and foreign patriarchies" (Gandhi 83). She is never privileged to speak about herself. She did not have the freedom to choose a career. She is the keeper of the home who looks after the family.

The third world woman is silenced by contesting systems of representation. According to Gayatri Spivak "between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution

and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shifting" (306). The tradition of male dominated society and the modernization of colonial rule which exposed the third world woman to the western world worked together to prevent her from living with a free mind. In fact, the restrictive social system has always limited her choices in life. She is variously exploited. Ania Loomba writes:

Colonized women were not simply objectified in colonial discourses-their labour (sexual as well as economic) fed the colonial machine. If female slaves were the backbone of plantation economies, today third world women and women of colour provide the cheapest labour for sweat shops, the sex-trade, large multinational as well as smaller industries, and are the guinea pigs for exploitative and dangerous experiments in health and fertility. They remained the poorest of the poor in the post-colonial world. (145)

The third world woman is thus made to sacrifice everything she considers valuable to fit into the slots created for her by different ideologies. Even when there are attempts in feminist discourse to essentialise the difference of the third world woman, it is only repetition of the imperialist axioms. Talpade Mohanty contends:

Without the over determined discourse that create the 'third world', there would be no (single and privileged) first world. Without the 'third world woman', the particular self presentation of western women ... would be problematical ... the definition of 'the third world woman' as a monolith might well tie into the larger economic and ideological praxis of 'disinterested' scientific inquiry and pluralism which are the surface manifestations of a latent economic and cultural colonization of the 'nonwestern' world. (216)

Jane Austen's novels are situated in the nineteenth century when the social conditions were heavily against

women. They did not have many avenues for employment. They did not have access to public schools for education. The more fortunate women who had wealthy families were educated in private seminaries. Marriage to respectable young men with independent income was their only goal in life. This alone would secure their futures. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet had five daughters: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty and Liddy. Jane was extremely good looking. She had all the feminine qualities that men love: grace, mildness and an equitable temper. Elizabeth was witty and independent minded. Jane ends up marrying Bingley and Elizabeth marries Darcy. The course of Elizabeth's love is a pointer to what a third world woman should do to gain respectability and an honourable image.

Like the third world women, English women in the nineteenth century were expected to perform various activities determined for them by a patriarchal society. This is, for example, what Darcy and Caroline include in the list of accomplishments for a woman to be really called "accomplished".

"Oh! Certainly", cried his faithful assistant, no one can be really esteemed accomplished, who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing and the modern languages, to deserve the word and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved.

"All this she must possess", added Darcy, "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading. (33)

This long list made Elizabeth sarcastically remarks that it was impossible to meet even one such accomplished woman.

She said: "I never saw such a woman. I never saw such capacity, and taste, and application, and elegance, as you describe, unified" (35).

There are strict rules of elegance which young ladies were expected to conform to. When Elizabeth in her eagerness to see the sick Jane walked three miles all the way to Netherfield and appeared there "with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise"(31), her appearance created a great deal of surprise. Caroline Bingley found fault with her:

To walk three miles, or four miles, or five miles, or whatever it, above her ankles in dirt, and alone, quite alone! What could she mean by it? It seems to me to shew an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most county town indifference to decorum (33).

Similarly when Elizabeth had to return to Longbourn from Hunsford Lady Catherine de Bourough insisted:

Mrs. Collins, you must send a servant with them. You know I always speak my mind, and I cannot bear the idea of two young women travelling post by themselves. It is highly improper. You must contrive to send somebody. I have the greatest dislike in the world to that sort of thing. Young women should always be properly guarded and attended according to their situation in life. When my niece Georgiana went to Ramigate last summer, I made a point of her having two men servants go with her ... you must send John with the young ladies, Mrs. Collins. I am glad it occurred to me to mention it, for it would really be discreditable to you to let them alone. (130)

In this society young ladies had thus to conform to various fixed patterns of behavior even against their best judgment. So even when they are in love they have to be guarded. Elizabeth's relief when she noticed Jane's love for Bingley can be mentioned here:

... and to her it was equally evident that Jane was yielding to the preference which she had begun to entertain for him from the first, and was in a way very much in love, but she considered with pleasure that it was not likely to be discovered by the world in general, since Jane united with great strength of feeling, a composure of temper and a uniform cheerfulness of manner, which should guard her from the suspicions of the impertinent. (125)

Since respectability is gained only as wife of a gentleman, all the efforts to the young women were for captivation of such men. Caroline Bingley's pathetic effort to draw the attention of Darcy, to captivate him, reminds us of the misery of even the economically better off women. In such scenario, Charlotte Lucas, a sensible woman, decides to marry the fatuous Mr. Collins. She is cynical about marriage.

Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation; and it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life. (26)

When Charlotte married Mr. Collins Elizabeth was shocked. Charlotte accepted him "solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment" (82). Elizabeth felt her friend had disgraced herself because in this marriage she had "sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage". But Charlotte had no regrets:

I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins character, connections and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. (84)

The fact that a sensible woman like Charlotte Lucas should only ask for “a comfortable home” and therefore, marry the stupid Mr. Collins is itself an indicator of the status of women in the nineteenth century which was no better than that of a third world woman subject to patriarchal hegemony. Elizabeth’s conduct in these repressive circumstances offers a hope to the third world woman to improve her image.

The low connections of Jane and Elizabeth would, Darcy believes, “materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world” (33). Elizabeth is fully aware of this. Yet she rejected Mr. Collins’ offer of marriage. Mr. Collins was not a sensible man. He is like Shakespeare’s Bottom, a strange amalgam of self-importance and humility. Elizabeth would not be able to spend her life with such a man. So she was forthright in her rejection of Mr. Collins “Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposal, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them” (73).

But Mr. Collins’ reaction makes clear the patriarchal hegemony “... in spite of your manifold attraction it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualification” (74).

Elizabeth, however, had the courage to stand up for herself. Her mother’s commands could not change her mind.

Rejecting Mr. Collins was relatively easy. But to reject Darcy’s hands was almost impossible. She knew what it meant to be Mrs. Darcy when she was dancing with him at the Netherfield ball and all eyes were riveted on her. Yet she had to reject it because Darcy made the offer in a manner that

was offensive and rather ungentlemanly. When Darcy proposed to her:

...there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority of its being a degradation of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit. (118)

She rejected him because he offended and insulted her by telling her that he liked her against his will, against his reason and even against his character.

But once her prejudiced dislike of Darcy, augmented by Wickham's lies, is removed by Darcy's candid confessional letter, her love and admiration for him increases with a rapidity that surprises everyone. She protects her love with an aggression that is the dream of any third world woman. She would not be intimidated by Lady Catherine's high handedness to promise that she would not be engaged to Darcy. She declares openly:

Neither duty, nor honour, nor gratitude", replied Elizabeth, have any possible claim on me, in the present instance. No principle of either would be violated by my marriage with Darcy. And with regard to the resentment of his family or the indignation of the world, if the former were excited by his marrying me, it would not give me one moment's concern—and the world in general would have too much sense to join in the scorn. (108)

The openness of Elizabeth Bennet, her refusal to accept conditions dishonourable to her, her determination to be heard and visible presents a different image of the third world woman, an image alluring and enviable.

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Fusing Together of the Dionysian and the Apollinian Impulses: Nietzsche's Notion of Tragedy

SANJAY KUMAR DUTTA

Next to Aristotle's account of tragedy, the theory of tragedy developed by the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) is the most referred and quoted in the West. According to Hegel, Tragedy arises, when a hero courageously asserts a substantial and just position, but in doing so simultaneously violates a contrary and likewise just position and so falls prey to a one-sidedness that is defined at one and the same time by greatness and by guilt. Next to Hegel, the other German philosopher to have a profound impact on the theory of tragedy is Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) who gave a new life to the modern reception of tragedy, especially in its ancient Greek form. With Nietzsche, observes Porter, "tragedy not only rose to prominence as a supreme literary and cultural achievement, but at the same time tragedy also became a clarion call for modernism and a benchmark by which to measure the claims and aspirations of the modern world against the classical past" (68). With Nietzsche tragedy became a powerful label, one that could be applied to cultures, mentalities, historical moments, and sweeping historical patterns.

Nietzsche's philosophy is based on the conviction that the greatness of man and the development of a culture can be realized only within a spirit that he calls tragic. I contend that it is the central aim and purpose of his philosophical writings to clarify the meaning of the 'tragic disposition' and to help and initiate the coming of a tragic age, which he sees as the only hope for the future of mankind. The writing that contains Nietzsche's most concentrated reflections on tragedy is *The Birth of Tragedy*, first published in 1872 as *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* when he was 27, the book was republished in 1886 as *The Birth of Tragedy, or, Hellenism and Pessimism*, with a new preface that revived the earlier controversy and in ways sought to palliate it as well.

At the heart of *The Birth of Tragedy* lies the opposition between the two Greek gods, Apollo and Dionysus, who in turn stand for two antagonistic aesthetic principles that are none the less complementary and equally vital to the production of the highest art. Apollo and his abstraction the Apollonian represent the realm of clear and luminous appearances, plastic images, dreams, harmless deception, and traits that are typically Hellenic and classical, at least to the modern imagination (simplicity, harmony, cheerfulness, tranquility, and so on), while Dionysus and the Dionysian represent hidden metaphysical depths, disturbing realities, intoxication, music, and traits that are typically exotic and therefore not classical (ecstasy, disorderliness, dance, orgy).

Nietzsche presents his tragic world view under the symbol of Dionysus and calls himself the 'disciple of Dionysus'. In choosing Dionysus as the pattern of his own tragic world view, Nietzsche stresses the god's dual character which contains the elements of destruction and chaos as well as those of productivity, power, and form. Without the full

recognition of Dionysus, to Nietzsche, is a synthesis of the negative and the positive, a fusion of opposing forces, the most essential aspects of his conception of the tragic, that underlie his whole philosophical thought, cannot be understood. However, in his early works, this synthesis is not yet accomplished, and the two opposing principles are presented separately under the banner of two deities. In his early works, written in 1871-72, Nietzsche did not glorify one principle in favour of the other, but stressed the fact that they accomplished each other. Even he claimed that only the interaction between the Apollonian and Dionysian, each opposing and yet enhancing the other, can achieve the artistic ideal and the highest culture, which he designated as tragic:

The intricate relation between the Apollonian and Dionysian in tragedy may really be symbolized by a fraternal union of the two deities; Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, but Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and of all art is attained. (*Nietzsche*130)

In his later philosophy, the two deities are no longer separated and the concept of Dionysus represents a synthesis in which negation and affirmation, and suffering and joy are reconciled in terms of a Dionysian faith that includes both gods and achieve true tragic greatness. Dionysus remains, as Nietzsche calls him, "the great ambivalent one, "forever changing, forever struggling, and yet forever giving structure and form" (Pfeffer 31). This fraternal union of Apollo and Dionysus that forms the basis of Nietzsche's tragic view is according to him, symbolized in art, and specifically in Greek tragedy.

For Nietzsche, the highest goal of tragedy is achieved in this interpretation of the Dionysian and the Apollonian, in the harmony between two radically distinct realms of art, between the principles that govern Apollonian plastic art and

epic poetry and those that govern the Dionysian art of music. In this union, Apollonian art is no longer limited to mere surfaces but, with the aid of music, reaches a higher intensity and greater depth. At the same time, Dionysian musical excitement and intensity is realized in Apollonian images, thereby gaining clarity and concreteness.

The problems of art and tragedy are not examined by Nietzsche in terms of conventional aesthetics; under the influence of Schopenhauer, the aesthetic interoperation is widened into a metaphysical one. Thus, he says in *The Birth of Tragedy*, referring to the duality of the Apollonian and Dionysian: "Having recognizing this extraordinary contrast, I felt a deep need to approach the essence and, with it, the profoundest revelation of the Hellenic genius; for I at last thought that I possessed a charm to enable me—far beyond the phraseology of our usual aesthetics" (Nietzsche100-1). Art is interpreted as a dialectical process that symbolizes the productive activity of nature. The two sponsoring deities become symbols of the metaphysical principles of life and being; the two interacting artistic impulses, in their continuous evolution of Apollonian and Dionysian duality and their continuous reconciliation, are likened to the very forces of nature, which contain both decay and generation, both passing away and coming into being. Both art and nature work according to the same pattern, a pattern that Nietzsche calls tragic, consisting of two opposing yet complementary activities that inevitably blend together, eternally destroying and perishing and eternally creating and giving birth.

As noted before, to understand Nietzsche's tragic concept fully, we have to look primarily at his later, mature works and also at the posthumously published notes, the *Nachlass*. To overlook the development in Nietzsche's

thought, to ignore his many modifications and even rejection of earlier ideas, and to accept his early works as his final position is to misinterpret his philosophy. This is particularly the case with regard to *The Birth of Tragedy*, which has become Nietzsche's most read, most celebrated, and also his most overrated book. Some interpreters continue to regard this early work as the expression of Nietzsche's full and complete view on tragedy and art and ignore his later revisions and his own criticism of this work. They point to certain passages and end up mistaking the part to be the whole. The modifications, revisions, and holistic approach of Nietzsche's maturity are often ignored by the one-sided focus on the product of his early years. Nietzsche's initial attempt to work out the details of his view of tragic drama as a natural unity, as a 'whole' composed of disparate elements, appeared in two public lectures given on the 18th of January and the 1st of February, 1870. In these lectures, we see the first clear expression of what he later calls the "two decisive innovations" presented in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

In the first lecture, *The Greek Music Drama*, Nietzsche characterizes the Dionysian phenomenon as it was originally expressed in Greek tragedy. Instead of following the standard, popular view put forth by Aristotle, Winckelmann, and Lessing, which regarded Sophoclean drama as the archetype of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche goes back to the earliest beginnings of tragedy in order to understand its original purpose and appeal.

Greek tragedy emerged from the Athenian festival in honour of Dionysus, the god of organic nature, instinct, fertility, and ecstasy. Nietzsche suggests that the purpose of the Athenian Dionysia was to bring the spectator to a peculiar psychological state whereby the ordinary sense of individuality is lost and an aesthetic experience of the

wholeness and unity of nature is achieved. In the subsequent developments of tragic drama, this immediate aesthetic pleasure (*Aesthetischen Genuss*) was lost with the mediation of actors, plots, scenery, and other theatrical trappings. Yet, in the early plays of Aeschylus, we see an attempt to re-achieve the original aesthetic pleasure of the Dionysia not by avoiding these mediational trappings but by combining them in a particular way. Thus, with Aeschylus, Greek tragedy became a 'total art form' (*Gesamtkunst*), a Gestalt of the visual arts (scenery, costumes, and dance) and the auditory arts (poetry and music). By combining these various modes and forms of aesthetic experience in a unified way, the early plays of Aeschylus were able to bring about, to some extent, the elemental realization of oneness with nature which was the original purpose and effect of the earlier Dionysia.

In the same lecture, Nietzsche forms the foundation of the first 'decisive innovations' expressed in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The functional motive behind Greek tragedy is described as a 'Dionysian phenomenon'; an attempt to bring about oneness with nature through aesthetic experience. In his second public lecture of 1870, entitled *Socrates and Tragedy*, he lays the groundwork for the second decisive innovation gap-the view that Socrates' rational optimism represents a fall from and a distortion of the immediate aesthetic experience of the natural and instinctive 'Dionysian truth'. Here Nietzsche expresses for the first time his unique alternative to the well-entrenched dogmas that regard Socrates as the highest expression of the true 'Greek spirit' and that see reason and science as the only true means for understanding human reality.

For Nietzsche, the true essence of tragedy consists in its ability to transform the ordinary psychological state of the observer to a more basic, more primitive, more natural one. In

Greek literature, the early works of Aeschylus represent the clearest expression of this essential function. As tragedy developed, however, it became increasingly complex. What was originally a religious celebration involving a simple, antistrophic poem, or dithyramb, had become a theatrical drama involving complicated plots, multiple characters and complex forms of poetic expression. Instead of serving to transport the rational mind of the spectator to a more primitive and irrational state of aesthetic pleasure, the later Attic dramas depended for their effect on the rational attention of the observer. The tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, in particular, required the observer to maintain a conscious awareness of everything happening on the stage and to think about it.

The shift of purpose in tragic drama—from providing the means for an immediate aesthetic realization of the fundamental unity of nature, to compelling the spectator to achieve a rational understanding of the apparent complexity of the world—represents for Nietzsche the death of tragedy. This death struggle of tragedy goes by the name Euripides. “It was Euripides who fought this death struggle of tragedy; the later artistic genre is known as *New Attic Comedy*” (*Birth of Tragedy*, (11), 76). Thus, the flowering and high point of Greek music drama is Aeschylus in his first great period, before he was influenced by Sophocles; with Sophocles, the whole gradual downfall begins, until finally Euripides, with his conscious reaction against the tragedy of Aeschylus, brings about the end with the violence of a storm. Nietzsche insists that Euripides represents the death knell of Greek tragedy in as much as he introduced the Socratic world-view into art.

The problem for Socrates was that he discovered that all the great artists and politicians of Athens practiced their

professions only by instinct—tragic art for Socrates was a lie and he developed the logical part of human nature which was ‘prevented from turning against itself’—he was a typical non-mystic. For Nietzsche on the other hand, it is instinct that creates and consciousness that criticizes. Hence, he argued against the entire western philosophical tradition embedded in the Socratic error of promising us a real and true world that is beyond our material ‘apparent’ world. “Whereas in all productive men it is instinct that is the creatively affirmative force and consciousness that acts critically and dissuasively; with Socrates it is instinct that becomes critic, and consciousness that becomes creator—a perfect monstrosity *perdefectum!*” (Nietzsche 88). Socrates’ faith in the intrinsic value of reason is said to be motivated by a drive towards ‘Apollinian clarity’; thus, Socrates is represented as the optimistic ‘herald of science’.

However, Nietzsche contends that such optimism runs contrary to the essence of tragedy, which was originally pessimistic in the extreme. It depicted human existence as something terrible and horror. But the Socratic attitude, with its optimistic belief in the necessary union of virtue and knowledge, of happiness and virtue, had, through the mediation of Euripides’ plays, introduced into art a duality between night and day, music and mathematics. Hence, with Euripides, as Sweet puts it: “tragedy turned into an optimistic dialectic and ethic for reason ... and music drama turned into a blemish, into music, for reason” (356).

In the lectures, *The Greek Music Drama* and *Socrates and Tragedy*, Nietzsche introduces the seminal ideas that would become the foundations of the theory expressed in *The Birth of Tragedy*, many of which were incorporated, in some cases verbatim, in Sections 8-15 of the book. He suggests that the true and original aesthetic value of Greek tragedy lies in its

ability to bring the everyday consciousness of the observer to a more natural and more unitary state of awareness, and that this function became lost with the intellectualization of tragedy in the hands of Euripides, that is, with his introduction of Socratic rationalism into drama.

Yet, there is an obvious problem with Nietzsche's account at this stage of development. He says that the early plays of Aeschylus were able to achieve something of the original aim of the ancient Dionysia despite the fact that they involved many of the same complexities which, in the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, contributed to the demise of tragedy; for example, a multitude of characters, a diversity of poetic styles, the trappings of dramatic staging, and a rational plot. In Euripides, these features were said to lead the spectator away from the original unity and aesthetic power of the Dionysian experience, whereas in Aeschylus, they were said to blend together into a new 'total art form' and *Gestalt*, which led the mind of the spectator to an awareness of the aesthetic pleasure characteristic of the Dionysian attitude.

During the summer of 1870, Nietzsche wrote two essays which attempt to come to terms with this problem. The solution he develops here would ultimately become the heart of the theory presented in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The first essay is entitled *The Dionysian World-view*, and the second is called *The Birth of Tragic Thought*. Since, both make essentially the same points, it would be appropriate in this regard to limit the discussion to the first essay.

In the two public lectures given in January and February of 1870, Nietzsche had implicitly suggested a fundamental contrast between the Dionysian character of true tragedy, which involved an ecstatic aesthetic realization of the terrible, absurd, albeit creative powers of nature, and the

'Apollonian clarity', that characterized Euripidean tragedy, which involved a rational understanding of the world as a logical and purposeful phenomenon. In *The Dionysian Worldview*, he makes this distinction explicit by drawing a sharp contrast between these two diametrically opposed aspects of art and life, the Dionysian impulse and the Apollonian impulse. These impulses represent an antithesis of styles in the domain of art. "These names represent stylistic opposites which exist side by side and in almost perpetual conflict with one another, and which only once, at the moment when the Hellenic 'Will' blossomed, appeared fused together in the work of art that is Attic tragedy" (*Birth of Tragedy and Other writings* 119).

Whereas, before the essence of tragedy was said to consist more or less exclusively in the Dionysian impulse, Nietzsche now suggests that the essence of tragedy consists in the fusing together (*verschmolzen*) of both the Dionysian and the Apollonian impulses. Dionysus is the god of the wild, uncontrolled excesses of nature, who was dismembered by his enemies and later restored by his brother, Apollo. Similarly, the Dionysian impulse in art represents the primitive, unrestrained energies that must be brought together, sublimated, and harmonized through the constructive constraints of the Apollonian impulse. Apollo now becomes the artist-god (*Kunstgott*), one who, through the use of metaphors and symbols, is able to represent what is terrible and absurd in an artistically stylized and aesthetically pleasing way. Greek tragedy, then, becomes the purest expression of this fusion of Dionysian matter with Apollonian form: "For all [tragic art] aimed at transforming every repulsive thought about the terror and the absurdity of existence into representations that allowed for life itself. These are the sublime, as the artistic mastery of terror, and

the ridiculous, as the artistic discharge of an aversion to the absurd" (Sweet 357).

According to Nietzsche, as long as the Apollonian imagery is recognized as an artistic sublimation, or masking of the Dionysian impulse, the effect is true tragedy—an aesthetically generated affirmation of life in the face of the terrors of existence, through the medium of artistic representation. When, however, the Apollonian representation is misinterpreted as the truth, as the substance of art rather than the symbol, tragedy becomes ridiculous.

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INTERVIEW

An Interview with Sarah Joseph

NIYATHI. R. KRISHNA

(SARAH JOSEPH is a novelist who wrote novels on the condition of women in India. One of the major themes of her novels is that of Eco feminism. She is a prolific writer and her major novels are *Thaikulam*, *Aalahayude Penmakal*, *Maattaathi*, *Othappu*, *Aathi*, *Ooru Kaval*, *Aalohari Anandam*. This interview is conducted with a view to write a thesis on Eco feminism with special reference to the novels written by Sara Joseph. The term Eco feminism has been defined in various ways by different authors. To know the real essence of Eco feminism it is good to know Sara Joseph's views on Eco feminism. Sarah Joseph has nurtured the theme of nature and women in her writings quite prominently and gave a new direction and dimension to the discussion of feminism.)

NK: Woman vs. nature and man vs. culture is a common debate. When we connect women with nature, are we, in a way, alienating men from nature and nurture. What is the stand of eco feminism in this?

SJ: First of all, we have to understand that woman carries man also. Mother and son is an unavoidable relationship. A woman cannot alienate man. She may give birth to a baby boy. It is natural. So the gender

issues we talk about could only be defined socially, economically and politically, not ecologically.

At the same time, the Eco feminist concern is how much Patriarchy and masculine attitudes are involved in ecological destruction. First is in the difference of perspectives. We are asking, are Female perspective and male perspective different? We can see that all the ideologies based on patriarchal values alienate both woman and nature in the same way to impose the politics of power. In a way, it alienates all marginalised categories like Dalits and Blacks. There starts the conflict between man and nature. Here, Man means patriarchal values and any one following it, which can be both man and woman. When patriarchal justice is created, it always shows injustice to woman and nature. Here, Woman means any marginalised class.

You can read and analyze it with books on eco feminism. There are plenty of them available. As the time restricts, you ask me more about my novels which will help you in your analysis part.

NK: Sure Madam. I am taking all your five novels for my research.

Oorukaval

NK: In your novel, Oorukaval, what made you put Angada as the central character?

SJ: I intentionally made 'Angada' as the central character of this novel. I wanted to illustrate the conflicts of Angada, not Thara. Thara is also very important as the wife of Bali and mother of Angada. But Angada's conflict is like that of Hamlet. Duty of finding the wife of his father's murderer is being forcefully assigned to

him. He is afraid inside because he is legally eligible to be the next king, as their community follows patriliney. In that way, he is Sugriva's enemy. The coccus of Rama, Sugriva and Hanuman frightens him. His life is very insecure. Any time, he can be killed and Sugriva can remain as the King forever. Sugriva captured both the country and his mother, Thara. She is also worried about her son's future. These conflicts are not detailed in Ramayana, because it says the story of Rama. So sub characters are not given that importance. While reading Ramayana, one scene struck me. While Rama and the soldiers from Kishkinda along with Angada, who are assigned to find Sita, walk through the forest, Rama and Lakshmana cannot move as fast as these people do. So Angada is asked to carry Lakshmana in his shoulder. This novel takes birth from the thought on Angada's mental condition; being forcefully assigned the duty of finding the wife of his father's murderer and carrying his brother in the shoulder. The novel is essentially of invasions. Kishkinda is a very unique land under the rule of Bali. Its borders are covered by bamboo forests. You can relate it to our 'Wayanad'. In search of Sita, Rama and team travels through our Western Ghats and build Rama Sethu from Kanyakumari. The novel describes the huge ecological destruction due to the building of that bridge. We can re-read it with modern times. With the advent of technology, new areas have developed, but these are accepted not asking whether our country and its people need it. We don't even have a chance to understand whether it comes for good or bad. For that, we have to determine our needs. So many MNC's are coming in the name of development, but they do not

care whether it benefits the majority people over here. The best example is that of BOT pathways in Kerala. When they make six line pathways taking away the houses and properties of so many poor people, we should think it is for whom and what are the motives behind. It is being built taking away that are meant for the public. Good roads are our right and the government is responsible for making good roads. At the same time, they are forcefully taking the land of poor people without giving proper compensation. They will need minimum 60 m width. The State government is allowing a private company to take this much land for a long term in lease and to collect Tolls from people. The intervention of these companies to our culture is to control the land, its people and to decide our needs. This is what is happening all the time. With Rama's arrival, the same invasion phenomena works. While building the bridge, thousands of trees, hills and rocks were uprooted. In Ramayana, it is described that they were waiting to be uprooted for Rama and Rama demanded their sacrifice. When a habitat is destroyed, millions of living beings associated with it are destroyed. And when we ask the question why the bridge is being built, the answer is for a war, destruction for destruction. So you can read *Oorukaaval* as a novel wrote against wars.

Aathi

NK: Your recent novel *Aathi* is about an innocent place and its people over there who are being threatened with development. Is there a real place called *Aathi*?

SJ: There are so many places in this earth which are too delicate to be touched with machines. Like Himalayas and like many other places, Aathi is also such a place. It is fictional, but I present a lot of important datas in that. It was written in a specific manner. When I was writing *Aathi*, Fr. Valson Thampu was translating it simultaneously. I and Fr. were confident to write it in that way. He used to tell me about water scarcity in Delhi. I used to continuously discuss each and every part of the novel with my son Vinaya Kumar over phone.

It is also about invasion. Invasion imparts Human Right violations. Mainstream political parties also conduct Human Rights agitations in micro levels. But they are also being ruled by the corporate world. So I doubt on its actual reach to people. Ideological agitations have multi-dimensional aspects according to their ideology. For instance, Dalit agitations; you cannot see Dalits as a single entity. There are so many categories among themselves. It is hopeless to know that there are practices among themselves. They cannot form a 'Dalit Mahashakti' until and unless they are united. Even though there are various groups in feminism, they are radically a step forward. Even though they share different perspectives, it is essentially progressive.

Aalahayudepenmakkal

NK: In your first novel *Aalahayudepenmakkal*, the central character 'Annie' never grows. What made you write a novel like that?

SJ: I intentionally made it like that to narrate the story with a child-like innocence. But I never find it difficult

for a reader to relate or understand. It is the story telling of a culture and a place with historical elements. I wanted the central character to be honest and innocent like a child so that all the incidents she sees could be narrated accordingly. Even in Bible, it is stated that 'Be like a child'. Child dares to tell the truth. So if Annie grows up, she may hide so many things. While I was discussing about the possibilities of translating that novel to English, Fr. said it is a different cup of tea in the sense that it cannot be translated as such. It reveals the prayer of 'Aalaha' and a particular dialect of Thrissur area. Kokkanchira is a place similar to my place Kuriachira where I am born. So Annie has my elements and my childhood memories too.

Maattathi

NK: *Maattathi*, on the other hand, portrays the growth and life of Lucy. That too set up in Thrissur Christian background. What were your concerns while writing a trilogy?

SJ: While writing *Aalahayudepenmakal*, I knew that there is possibility of creating a trilogy. So *Mattathi* was born out of it with the growth and life story of Lucy. There are so many common factors, but the period is 1980's. So when you read the novels one after another, you could see the cultural changes and advent of globalization and development.

Othappu

NK: Writing a novel on Nunship and spirituality, questioning many rituals and practices of Catholic Christians. Wasn't it challenging?

SJ: I have many friends who could authentically inform me about the life and practices inside the cloisters. I have done ample research and gone through the life stories of many nuns before writing the novel. Once they reach the Seminary, it is like they are completely out casted from the family. They have no rights over properties or any other means of livelihood. So nobody can easily think of leaving a seminary and live in a world outside. These issues agitated me to write '*Othappu*'.

Niyathi, my new novel is being published chapter wise in '*Mathrubhumi*'. It will be published as a book within 3 months. You can consider that novel also, because it also deals with the life of a man very close to nature and his struggles. It is titled '*Aalohariaanandam*' (Per capita pleasure).

NK: Sure Madam. The names of all your novels are very unique. I will keep in touch with you via phone calls or mails. I hope we can discuss more once you regain your health.

While going through the pages of this Interview one can gather fruitful results out of it specially to understand what is Ecofeminism.

BOOK REVIEW

Folk-tales of Tripura, authored by Dr. Jagadish Gan-Choudhuri, published by Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura; January 2015, Price Rs. 253.

BHASKAR ROY BARMAN

The book under review, written by Dr. Jagadish Gan-Choudhuri, a prolific author of excellent books written in English and Bengali and an editor of no mean number of anthologies, English and Bengali, is an important and significant contribution to the research into the folklore of Tripura, nay, of North-east India. Several years of research into the folklore of Tripura and that of Northeast India, has culminated in the preparation and publication of this mammoth book, as the author's preface informs us. This book is inundated with a flow of folktale out of the folklore of Tripura and other northeastern regions. All the folktales, one hundred and thirty-two in number that have peopled this book is a reminiscence of the bygone or rather, halcyon "days & smiles...Theses folk-tales, varied in contents and theme, have a rural flavor" (xi). In compiling a selection of the folktales the author has laid a particular emphasis on the folktales of Tripura and the Bengali folktales. The Bengali folktales that the Bengali refugees from Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) brought across to Tripura and the tribal folktales have intermingled in a common folklore. Dr. Gan-

Choudhari has not, as befits a true scholar, trodden the wonted path of compiling only tribal folktales; he has incorporated the popular Bengali folktales that have mingled in the folklore of Tripura, based upon the mass exodus of the Bengali refugees into Tripura.

What is likely to tantalize the reader, when he/she is reading through the book is the title of the book itself. He is likely to find himself wondering as to the appropriateness of the title to the contents of the book. The averment with which the preface to the book begins ('In Folk-tales of Tripura one hundred [and] thirty-two folktales of north-eastern India have been incorporated') does not bear out the appropriateness of the title. The initial confusion the reader is initially exposed to could have been avoided if the title had been written as 'Folktales of North-East India'. Every researcher into the folklore of Tripura knows that 'folktales of Tripura' meant the tribal folktales of Tripura. But in this book, the Manipuri folktales and the Bengali folktales are juxtaposed with the tribal folktales. It is the nature of every folktale to travel, riding on the shoulders of men, from one country to another country and from one state to another state, but it does not get rootless and lose its intrinsic characteristics, though it mingles in the folklore of the country or the state to which it has travelled.

The purpose that has governed the author's compilation of the select folktales of Tripura is to acquaint the readers living outside Tripura with the richness and diversity of the folktales of Tripura in the hope that they will find in the tales incorporated: a deep sympathy with the flora and fauna of Tripura; with the hills and the rivers of Tripura; with the rites and rituals of Tripura and an element of heritage of Tripura. These tales, as the author avers, demonstrates the spirit of the age and the supernatural view of the world.

Now, a few words about the foreword to the book.

The forward is written by 'Sailohnuna', Director, Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura, Agartala. In the foreword he heaps praise on the author, but does not write anything worthwhile to prepare the reader for what he/she is going to read. The reader shall rest satisfied with knowing that the author is a great scholar and the book contains such and such things that habitually embellish the books of such kind.

It deserves to be mentioned in this context that we have heard since our childhood that folktales are meant for children only to read and enjoy. This idea has birthed a lack of interest in the folktales when children have reached their majority. But in the folktales is enshrined a realistic history of how ancestors used to live their familial and social life. This history enshrined in the folktales is not revealed to children; it is revealed to them when they have grown up. Nowadays a considerable emphasis is laid throughout the world on the study of folktales to unveil the social history of the ancient races. Dr. Gan-Choudhari has attempted to unveil the social history of the ancient people of Tripura in the folktales of Tripura.

This book features twenty seven Tripuri, one Jamatiya, three Reang, one Noatiya, seven Lusai and sixty-eight Bengali folktales. The book deals, in addition to these folktales, with five myths and legends of Tripura. Nowhere in the narration of the folktales does the author exhibit his erudition, rather he has chosen to use simple but lucid language so much so that all the folktales have become pleasant reading, equally to the young and the old.

In the Tripuri folktales chapter, the author has dwelt upon some common terms which we come across in the

folktales of Tripura. They are Larima (kindhearted goddess), pilgrimage of the soul, the sky and so on. Apropos of the five myths and legends of Tripura referred to by the author says that there were several ancient settlements in Tripura which had their local myths and legends which have got embalmed in the royal chronicle of Tripura. Tripura can pride itself on being an ancient source of mythology. Many of the myths and legends, not chronicled, were lost in an abyss to oblivion. The five myths and legends that have survived the onslaught of time are: 1) Sato's right leg falling in Tripura, 2) The Killing of Tripurasur (the name of a demon), 3) A God's Tragic Visit to Tripura, 4) Treasure in a Pond and 5) The Spot where one Horase was Shot Dead by a Prince.

What distinguishes the book from other books dealing with the folklore of Tripura is the appendices. As appendices the author deals with motif and motif-index, the quality of life, the ethnography of Tripura, folktale as a genre, the rational interpretation of myth and a glossary of terms. This book is embroidered with index. In his brief note on motif and motif-index the author confesses to his failure to collect Prof. Stith Thompson's complete list of motif-index. He admits that he had to rest content with alluding to Dr. Verrier Edwin's Tribal Myths of Orissa which, Dr. Gan-Choudhari says, "contains an incomplete list of mythological morifs" (479).

As says the author, this folktale book is divided into two groups, one group related to the culture of the greater Tripuri communities and the other to the culture of the Bengali people who are co-living with the tribal people in Tripura. The tribal people call a folktale *kerengkathama* whereas the Bengali people call it *Rupakatha* or *Galpa*. The folktales of the Tripuri communities contrast with the Bengali folktales in this: the Tripuri folktales tell of animals, plants, family life,

love and romance, jealousy, cruelty, wickedness, foolishness, unusual heroism, magic, chain of events, and formula, whereas the traditional four-fold caste structure that characterizes the Bengali society has moulded the Bengali folktales. Almost all Bengali folktales begin with—There was a poor Brahmin.

Further down the note the author touches upon the term 'motif', originally a French term. "Motif has", he says, "various shades of meaning, such as motive, a theme, a factor, an element, an emotion, an intention, an indication of behaviours of a person" (481). It acts upon a person to behave in a particular way and appears as a theme in a literary composition.

Subsequently the author sets out to deal with the quality of life revealed in the folktales of Tripura. In his brief discussion on the quality of life the author strives to present the historical background till the modernization of the tribal folktales, subject to foreign influences. The author has not omitted the ethnography of Tripura which will help the reader to understand the motif of the folktales of Tripura. The scope of this review does not allow of even a brief description of it in this review lest it might jar on the patience of the reader.

The author's note on folktale deserves to be expatiated upon in a few words. He says, to begin with, that the 'habit of telling stories and listening to these stories is a sort of craze, eternal and universal.' (501). Recorded long ago were some of the folktales. Emotions as examples of the folktales recorded the Pancha-tantra, the Hitopadesa, the Vetala Pancha-Vimsati, the Katha-saritsagar, and the Jataka.

The author in his note on folktales endeavours to interpret in simple language 'myths', 'legends', 'folktales',

'allegories', 'proverbs', 'ballads', 'folksongs', 'anonymous authorship' and so on. I do not, as a reviewer, subscribe to his interpretation of 'anonymous authorship'. In his note on anonymous authorship he says, "It is very difficult to ascertain the authorship of folktales. In some remote past and in some remote place, an intelligent person might have started a nucleus of a story; subsequently matters gathered around the central mass" (503). This hypothesis goes against the nature of a folktale. No one wrote or imagined folktales. They originated from the ancient soil. Illiterate grandmothers used to tell these tales to their grandchildren; they themselves had listened to their illiterate grandmothers tell them the tales. They have passed through the generation down to the modern age.

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