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RESEARCH PAPERS

1

Prominence given to the Female Characters in Virginia Woolf's Novel *To the Lighthouse*

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Abstract

Virginia Woolf, a prominent 20th century writer is known for her major contribution in the area of women's writing through her innovative technique widely acknowledged as 'stream of consciousness'. Her famous essay *A room of one's own* (1929) examines women's role in literature. Woolf has remained persistent in creating a unique identity for the female persona in her works. The female of the 20th century remained aloof towards the external world and unacknowledged in her sphere. The present paper centres around her another famous masterpiece *To the Lighthouse* wherein she analyses and brings to the forefront the importance of female characters. Through her constant focus on the female protagonist Mrs. Ramsay, Woolf focuses on Mrs. Ramsay's life and inner emotions. One might come across several characteristic features of Mrs. Ramsay and her relationship with other characters in this paper. Alongside, this paper also conducts a comparative study in the life of a married female vs an independent female. With this attempt one concludes that although both the female characters have their ideals, both are essential to the plot of the novel. Withstanding Mrs. Ramsay's and Lily's different ways of living their life, the novel sets a milestone in depicting the feminine gender more powerful than the masculine one.

Keywords: stream of consciousness, persistent, 20th century, female protagonist, milestone

Introduction

Virginia Woolf, widely regarded as the most innovative writers of the 20th century, experimented with style and technique in her works. Woolf is best known for her novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Woolf wrote ten novels and most of them were written with the stream of consciousness technique which focuses on the character's inner thoughts more than the plot of the novel. *To the lighthouse* is a classic example of stream of consciousness technique. Written as thoughts and interior monologues, there are little dialogue and almost no action. The plot of the novel is set in two days ten years apart and it revolves around the Ramsay family's predictions and contemplations upon a visit to a lighthouse near the summer house on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. With life-size characters who struggle through the chaos to bring meaning in their lives, Woolf explores the lives of women who are bound by the ethos of the society and the lives of people in times of war. A story of childhood and marriage, loss and grief, it examines and analyses human perceptions and relationships.

This paper focuses on the prominence given to the female characters in the novel *To the Lighthouse*. Woolf places Mrs. Ramsay (the female protagonist) at the centre of the novel in order to explore her perceptions and dreams. Mrs. Ramsay keeps the plot of the novel moving. But after her death in the second part of the novel, one finds a sudden break in the narration of events as it becomes slow. From now onwards, Woolf brings Lily to the scene. She is another important female character highlighted in this paper, a single woman who pursues her passion for painting till the end of the novel. The novel ends with her putting the final stroke to her unfinished painting. Both these female characters have been analysed closely with the use of particular instances from the novel. My paper attempts to scrutinize Woolf's ideas and the social conditions prevailing during her time, arguing that Woolf has given prominence to the female characters to highlight their importance and struggles in society. Both Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe together form a two-dimensional figure of a Victorian woman that Woolf is trying to project in her novel. While both these women have a different approach to their life, they also inspire each other. The paper doesn't attempt to focus on any other female character in the novel. Thus, there remains scope for future researches to take place in the said area.

Importance of a Married Woman

Virginia Woolf has given importance to the role of a married woman in her novel. The first part of the novel titled "The Window" revolves around Mrs Ramsay's character. The readers are informed about the other characters through her. As Woolf engages in the perspective of other characters, Mrs Ramsay, being the matriarch of the family, sees to it that all her guests are doing fine at their summer house. She always wants everyone to communicate with one another and visualizes the visit to the lighthouse. In this manner, Woolf has portrayed the picture of the aspirations that a female has with her family.

Mrs Ramsay is the only married woman in the novel. She acts as a unifying force in the novel. As a married woman, Mrs Ramsay justifies her role completely. She fulfils all her responsibilities, and this can be verified through her hostile actions, for instance, at the dinner table. Narrating Mrs Ramsay's description Woolf states in the 17th chapter, "And the whole effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. Again she felt..., for if she did not do it nobody would do it" (Woolf 2018: 91)¹. Having said that, Woolf assures her readers that, it is only through Mrs Ramsay that everybody has come together. Thus, it can be concluded from the above explanation that for Mrs Ramsay the meaning of life lies in marriage and family.

Woolf projects Mrs Ramsay's importance through her influential behaviour. The greatest impact of Mrs. Ramsay's behaviour is found on Lily Briscoe. Lily was as much inspired by Mrs. Ramsay as she opposed her. To give an illustration, I would like to cite Lily's comments regarding Mrs. Ramsay stating that, "Everyone could not be as helter-skelter, hand to mouth as she was" (*THL* 58). The two women shared an intimate relationship while they had a difference in opinions. Likewise, the men too admired Mrs. Ramsay for her softness and sympathetic nature towards all beings. Woolf notes Mrs. Ramsay's power of her influential behaviour stating that "Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection" (*THL* 12). Woolf has maintained a linear progression of Mrs. Ramsay's influence in the novel not only through her impact on

¹ All further references from the text will be cited from the quoted version and abbreviated as *THL*.

other characters but also by placing Mrs. Ramsay at the centre of the whole novel.

Mrs. Ramsay has an optimistic approach towards life as compared to her husband.

Mrs. Ramsay's first word in the novel is "yes" which reflects her affirmative and positive nature. Throughout the novel, we find Mrs. Ramsay keeping high spirits in her son's hearts. She says, "But it may be fine – I expect it will be fine" (THL 10). "Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing, she said compassionately, soothing the little boy's hair" (THL 21). In comparison to her husband, who often looked at the impossibilities of going to the lighthouse, Mrs. Ramsay never thought or talked negatively. She was always firm about whatever she said and meant. Mrs. Ramsay was always positive about her life and the people around her. To quote from the novel, as Woolf describes Mrs. Ramsay opposite to her husband, she says, "She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband." Mrs. Ramsay was a thoughtful person and she cared a lot for people around her. All things considered, it can be said that Woolf has given a higher position to Mrs. Ramsay than Mr. Ramsay.

Independent Spirit of a Single Woman

Virginia Woolf highlights the independent spirit of a single woman in the novel. Lily Briscoe, the painter in the novel, unlike Mrs. Ramsay, lives for herself and pursues her dream. Lily's character has given a two-fold dimension to Woolf's analysis of female perspective in the novel. As JúliaViscarri rightly said of Lily in her journal article, that, "Contrastively, the author uses Lily Briscoe's evolving personality to embody the feminist rebel that was so needed in the social context of the twentieth century. In this way, Virginia Woolf's modern literature began to state the canon of new womanhood through a female artist's point of view" (3). Lily's presence in the novel is consistent and verifiable.

Lily is a free-spirited woman who despises societal laws. Despite of Mrs. Ramsay's dream to get her married with William Bankes, Lily stayed unmarried till the end of the novel. Lily also proved wrong Mr. Tansley's comments that "Women can't paint, women can't write..." by completing her unfinished painting. As Bani-Khair and Neimneh have

rightly claimed of Lily in the journal article, that, "She does not stop and surrender to frustration, stifling conditions, and patriarchal domination" (247). Lily fights for her rights and achieves her vision. The novel begins with Mrs. Ramsay's affirmation and ends with Lily's confirmation. Lily speaks the novel's last line: "I have had my vision" (*THL* 220). Thus, Woolf creates a woman who challenges the male dominance in society and fulfils her desires.

Lily's views of life are inspired by her art and paintings. The third section of the novel is an explanation of Lily's views of life and the people around her. The painting that Lily was working upon is a parallel for death and life images. Woolf defines Lily's character as an "ideal artist" by stating, "She looked at her picture. That would have been his answer, presumably-how "you" and "I" and "she" pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but, not words, not paint. Yet it would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be rolled up and flung under a sofa; yet even so, even of this scrawl, not of the actual picture, perhaps, but of what it attempted, that it remained forever, she was going to say, or, for the words spoken sounded even to herself, too boastful, to hint, wordlessly; when looking at the picture, she was surprised to find that she could not see it. Her eyes were full of a hot liquid (she did not think of tears at first) which, without disturbing the firmness of her lips, made the air thick, rolled down her cheeks. She had perfect control of her self-oh yes! – in every other way" (*THL* 190). For Lily, life was transient and so was her painting. According to Bani-Khair and Neimneh, Lily's artistic views about life are described as "Lily could also see how death can just be a natural part of life's cycle. But she could also see how immortal art is, even though she doubts that her painting would be and that one day it is going to die exactly like human beings. Lily also starts to realize that death could be as necessary as life and that all things would die because they are all part of nature. Lily could see both death and life in her picture, and that immortality through art might also be something impossible" (251). As against Mrs. Ramsay who looked for permanence in life, Lily was aware of the transitory nature of life. She never fixed herself to one thought, one life. For her life was mixed of "little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark." (*THL* 171). In this way, art inspired much of Lily's thoughts in the novel.

Lily Briscoe's character has undergone several changes in the novel. At the beginning of the novel, Lily was insecure about herself as well as

the painting because of people around her dejected her ideas. As a female, it was difficult for Lily to stand by her profession and keep her dreams alive. As an artist, she was trapped between what her heart said and what her eyes saw. It was difficult for Lily to transfer the scenes that she saw onto her canvas. As Woolf records Lily's struggle, she states, "It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child" (*THL* 157). Giving a psychological aspect to Lily's struggle, Bani-Khair and Neimneh in their journal article stated: "On a psychological level, Lily's character and image of the self have undergone several changes which are actually in association with the psychological and social representations for the lives of people around her and the image of the inspiring place. Lily who has a dream to become an artist, and who just keeps seeing her potential of pursuing her artistic dreams toward the very end of the novel, keep struggling with an inner conflict, suspecting her desires and dreams, and doubting her potentials... Throughout the development of her artistic character, she could overcome her doubts and feel the sense of triumph over the fear within her by the moment she had that epiphany about herself, when she could arrive at what she was seeking from the very beginning of the novel." (248) Here we can see a sudden shift in Lily's perspective about herself. Previously, Lily was constantly thinking about what treatment will be given to her painting. By the end of the novel, she became free of that worry and began to do what she wanted. Woolf marks Lily's transformation by showing us the change in Lily's attitude, "It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? She asked herself, taking up the brush again" (*THL* 220). Considering this it can be understood that Lily had become more confident and achieved what she desired by the end of the novel.

Stream Of Consciousness as a Window to a Woman's Desires

Woolf celebrates women's freedom for desires through the device of the stream of consciousness. The phrase 'stream of consciousness' was first coined by William James to describe the flow of thoughts. Woolf uses this technique to highlight individual desires and consciousness. Elizabeth Hirt talked about the power of silent narration in *To the Lighthouse*. She has said, "By using an indirect way of showing us a character's wandering interior monologue, Woolf is able to share the subjectivity of

the characters but guarantee that they are never totally understood" (63). According to Virginia Woolf, the conventional novel did not express life adequately. She believed that life was a shower of ever-failing atoms of experience and not a narrative line. Life, she said, was a luminous halo (radiance), a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to end. She tried to experiment with the same technique in her novel, *To the Lighthouse* in which the characters reveal themselves very much in the same way.

Mrs. Ramsay's monologues emphasize female desires. On a superficial level, Mrs. Ramsay appears to be a traditional housewife who takes care of her family and keeps everybody intact. But certain incidents as described in the novel portray Mrs. Ramsay's dissatisfaction with her life. For instance, at the dinner table when Mrs. Ramsay is serving everyone, suddenly she looks at Mr. Ramsay who sits at the far end of the table. She speaks to herself, "But what have I done with my life? Thought, Mrs. Ramsay taking her place at the head of the table and looking at all the plates making.....What at? She did not know. She did not mind. She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or affection for him...And meanwhile she waited, passively, for someone to answer her, for something to happen" (THL 90). While Woolf describes such inner conflicts, she brings the particular character ahead of her ideas and lets the character himself/herself communicate with the readers. Thus, through the technique of the stream of consciousness Woolf gives space to Mrs. Ramsay's desires.

The 'self' is portrayed through the consciousness of the female characters. "Essays on the self" is a collection of Woolf's twenty years of writing in which she explores the aspects of individual experience and questions of identity. The thirteen essays are introduced by the novelist Joanna Kavenna who writes about Woolf's idea of the self, stating that, "The essays in this collection are, of course, not merely concerned with the self. Woolf does also discuss the rights of women, the revolution of modernity, the past, present and future of the novel. She is eloquent on social inequality and the agony of war." The last line of this introductory excerpt is very relevant to the novel in a manner that Woolf has shown the influences of war and social inequality on the lives of the women of the 19th century. The women in the novel, more importantly, the two main characters – Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe have faced problems due to the social conditions around them. These problems are not expressed

through their dialogues but through their 'self' that Woolf is constantly trying to bring on the surface throughout the novel. This 'self' I may say, would have remained silent if Woolf hadn't given it a voice. The struggles that these women face are voiced through the stream of consciousness technique. The final section of the novel works as an answer and justification to our female characters. Lily was back at the Ramsay summer house after 10 years. We find that Lily is uncomfortable with the fact that her soul companion Mrs. Ramsay is no more. Soon she finds solace for herself and her incomplete desires. Describing her firmness to pursue her dream, Woolf records Lily's perceptions saying, "she had borne it in her mind all those years. It seemed as if the solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do" (THL 158). These years indicate the constant criticism that she had been facing for her work and the wars that had changed everything. This firmness of the 'self' is what Lily wanted to have since the beginning of the novel. Lily's consciousness of her 'self' and her abilities has given importance to her dreams.

The desires of a single woman are portrayed through Lily's character. Lily is the only woman who has remained persistent throughout the novel. She came with a set goal in her mind and achieved it hurdling through the inequalities that came in her way. As a single woman, she never had feelings for any man. As against this, she disliked men for being judgemental. She was a woman of high dreams and an open mind. Through Lily, Woolf has shown us what it counts for one to live life on one's own terms. Lily went against society and followed the path of her dreams. She triumphed over everyone and especially Mrs. Ramsay. After Mrs. Ramsay's death, Lily comes to the picture where she paints and designs everything according to her wish. There was no one to stop her. Lily thought that the picture Mrs. Ramsay had painted in her mind was left unfinished as she lived shortly. But Lily was there to witness everything and thus completed her painting. Thus, Lily could dream, see and live through her dreams only because she was single.

Conclusion

To the Lighthouse is closely connected to Woolf's personal life. The basis of the characters' lives in the novel is inspired by her parents and siblings. Woolf challenged the views of her society and explored human consciousness through her literary narrative. She is best with her female characters. The two female characters talked about in this paper appear

as Woolf's finest creations. Both Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe are unique in their way. Their precise and intuitive nature puts them ahead of the male characters. Also, much of the novel's narrative is based on Mrs. Ramsay's and Lily Briscoe's giving a view about other characters. There is not much that the other characters know or talk about them.

For concluding my argument, I may say that the two female characters have been central to my research as they are to the novel. Their lives are not only influencing each other but also challenging themselves to be better. Much previous research conducted has talked about the ambiguity and anti-nature Mrs. Ramsay and Lily. Thus, my paper attempts to highlight their importance and gradual succession in the novel.

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2

Effective Communication Skills: A Key to Success

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to find reasons and solutions for lack of good communication skills mainly among students and learners. It focuses on the issues faced by the students and some recommended solutions to overcome the problem is given. The objective of the paper is to point out the reasons for the lack of good communication skills. The paper discusses confusion between language and communication, lack of awareness and realization, the role of teacher, language barrier and unaware of body language and required solutions to have been discussed.

Keywords: Language vs communication, role of teacher, unawareness, language barrier, body language.

Introduction

Communication skills are the most important aspect for an individual to get success in life, work and relationships. Communication skills are essential in everyday life. Communication is successful only when the sender and receiver of the message understand the same information clearly. Many successful personalities have spent their valuable time to acquire this skill to achieve in life. Many individuals continue to struggle with the inability to communicate effectively and this holds them back not only in personal relationships but also in their academics, careers and even in social relationships. Without effective communication skills, it is hard to survive as an individual. Poorly delivered message can turn in to misunderstanding between the people. To achieve one's confidence one has to work on their communication skills. Communication has the

power to have a good command of over a language and helps people to have an amicable environment. The paper aims to present the reasons and difficulties facing by students especially from rural background and learners in good communication skills.

Unfortunately, many students, especially those who are from rural backgrounds are suffering due to lack of awareness regarding this skill. They fail to acquire this most essential skill. Students are very much focused on developing their subject knowledge. They try different methods and put enormous efforts to develop subject knowledge. They are forced to learn new ideas and concepts of their field. They fail to put the same amount of effort to develop their communication skills. One cannot be succeeded only with the subject knowledge in their life. It is a pity that students are not aware of the importance of communication skills.

The ultimate aim of learning new ideas and concepts is to apply and share this could be possible only with proper communication. Without good communication skills, one cannot share any information with accuracy. Many students failed to understand this concept. There are many reasons for this lack. Discussing and finding a solution is also the aim of the paper.

Communication vs. Language

There is a common misbelief among school and college students that communication means speaking in English. Particularly, the majority of students from rural backgrounds believe this concept. They feel that speaking English is not meant for them and it is meant for some upper-class people in society. Also, they see this only knowledgeable people can speak proper English. Though it looks strange this is a fact. As they relate communication with language, this thought creates a kind of fear and that fear stops them from developing communication. Not only students even many educated people confuse language and skill. It is much more important to eradicate this confusion. The difference between language and communication should be taught clearly. Language and communication are two different skills. The same approach should not be given to both the skills. As most of us know, communication deals with four different things. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. To enrich our communication, one must develop all the above four skills.

Learning to communicate needs patience and we can't achieve it in a single night.

For any language communication is common. There is no separate way for communication in different languages. For instance, if one needs to speak Tamil, he/she needs the environment of listening and speaking in that particular language. Primarily to speak any language we need listening and speaking skills. From this, it is very clear that communication is the same for any language. To understand the difference in a clear way one must understand the following lines. To explain a concept, one needs language. To explain the concept clearly and understandably one must be very good at communication skills. To develop this one must involve themselves in practising the language and to communicate properly. Practising is the main key to achieve success in communications skills.

Lack of Awareness and Realization

Another main reason for the lack of communication skills is lack of awareness. The importance of communication skills is not taught to students or learners of a language when it is needed and even students are not ready to learn this needy skill. As communication involves four different skills students must show interest in learning those skills. Nowadays it is very difficult to find students who have reading habits. Without reading habits, it is highly impossible to develop reading skills. As students are busy with electronic gadgets, they don't find time to spend with elders at home and in society. This point may look irrelevant. But we can't refuse that from elders we learn very good communication skills. Only that gives practical knowledge because they know where to talk? How to talk? What to talk about? Our elders are experts in speaking skills. They teach us practically because of their experiences throughout times. Yet another bitter truth to be accepted is students are not ready to mingle with society. Even it is very hard to find students in the playground. They are busy with mobile and they find comfort in being alone. Only when you mingle with others you will come to know about different kinds of people and from them easily, we can learn these skills. These things must be eradicated and the necessary steps must be taken to become good at communication skills. The majority of the students are complaining they don't find the atmosphere to develop the skill. I

wonder why they didn't create an atmosphere if it is not there. It is wise to create opportunities when it is not there.

The important point is one must have a clear understanding of the definition of communication skills. The basic definition of communication is conveying information from a single person or group to another single person or group. The meaning has to reach the next person exactly as how the person has intended to convey the message or information or opinion or emotions. For communication the sender, message and the receiver are essential.

There are a few methods to develop communication skills. Remarkable of them is group discussion and public speaking. Many of us could have witnessed most of the multinational companies conduct group discussions during the interview process. The very purpose of conducting group discussion is to analyse the efficiency of the candidate's communication skills and other qualities. As they check our communication skills in the interview, we can realize the role of communication skills in a job. So participating in group discussions will enrich our communication skills. In every classroom group, the discussion must conduct because it plays a vital role in developing communication skills through sharing knowledge.

Role of a Teacher

It is not justice to blame students alone. The role of teachers in moulding students is a herculean task. They should teach them essential qualities which are necessary for their personal and professional growth. As communication is not in the syllabus, many teachers are failing to focus on communication skills. Most of the teachers think that communication skills are meant for English handling staff and soft skill trainers. Yes, of course, their role is vital and it must be accepted. But department staff have to understand that even they can insist on the importance of communication. Also, they must assist in developing student communication skills. Only if they know how to communicate, they can teach their students. It is not good to stop communication skills with English handling staff and soft skill trainers. When every staff insists on one particular aspect student may realize the seriousness of the issues and he/she may start cultivating the habit of possessing those skills.

Language Barrier

The language barrier is also a reason for the lack of good communication skills. Since English is a universal language, most companies and working places are expecting the candidates to speak in English. As communication is a two-way process one must speak clearly to be understood by the next person. As students do not know how to speak English, he/she may not be able to reproduce his/her thoughts which are there in their mind as thoughts into words. Moreover, this particular thing collapses their communication. To some extent, it creates an inferiority complex in the students and learners.

Also, while speaking preconceived ideas can affect proper communication. That means when a person is speaking about a particular thing, the next idea to be continued will interrupt and our mind starts framing sentences and finding words for the next concept while the first concept is still in process. Sure, preconceived ideas will affect one's communication so awful. This can be an outcome of nervousness. To avoid these preconceived ideas, one must stay calm and relax. He/she must not be a hurry while speaking.

There are few barriers which would affect good communication. One must not judge a person so quickly with preconceived notions. It will affect negatively in communication as well as personally. Judging a person whilst talking to a person could be diagnosing them. It is not good. If one wants to be a good communicator, he/she must be open-minded and listen to the person patiently with much attention. If we are not listening to the thoughts or feelings of the person one may not become a good communicator.

Unaware of Body Language

When it comes to good communication common misunderstanding is that many students including staff are unaware of body language. They are unaware of the role of body language in communication skills. Everybody should understand that there are two types of communications. Verbal and non-verbal. Just speaking using words and sentences is verbal communication. There are thousands of species which use nonverbal communication. Also, while communicating there are few things to be followed to make our communication more effective. It is not just the content, but how you deliver your communication matters a lot.

Communication gets fulfilled only when the next person receives the message accurately what the first person wanted to say. To reach accuracy, one must follow certain rules. Remarkable of them are having proper body posture, eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, intonation, voice and stress needed to be considered. Some bad traits of body languages are folded arms, fidgeting mobile devices, scratching head, nose or ears, poor eye contacts, low voice level, trembling legs, tensed facial reactions and bad gestures. Thus, to make our communication effective it is important to work on all these things.

Conclusion

Communication is a dynamic process. Active listening, empathy, proper rapport, developing trust, open-mindedness, acceptance, clear and succinct sentences while speaking, good body language are key to success for good communication. Clear understanding about communication and rectifying the above-discussed points may help the individual to become a successful communicator. One shall not forget to remember the proverbs that no pain no gain. Enormous efforts and steady motivations alone will help one to achieve the dream and confidence. The paper highlights becoming good communicator is not something unachievable. Also, not all good communicators are not born with loaded talents. Certainly, hard work and patience take the learners to the place where they want to reach in their life is mentioned.

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Anima-Animus and Male Bildungsroman: A Study of Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf*

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Abstract

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf* can be read as *Bildungsroman* wherein one can trace the spiritual, moral, psychological development of the central character, a male protagonist. This growth can be read in Jungian terms when the hero takes a woman as a shadow, a mentor, and a hinderer or tempter. The growth of the hero can be read using Carl Jung's theory of archetypes based on Anima-Animus that transcends the personal psyche and acts as a bridge between personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The process of individuation which brings the personal unconscious to light for a heightened understanding of self is otherwise known as *bildungsroman*. This article seeks to recognize the important role that female characters play in Hesse's work by helping the male protagonists to reach their goal of self-realisation.

Keywords: Anima, animus, individuation, self, collective unconscious

Introduction

Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf* can be read as *Bildungsroman* wherein one can trace the spiritual, moral, psychological development of the central character, a male protagonist. This growth can be read in Jungian terms when the hero takes a woman as a shadow, a mentor, and a hinderer or tempter. The growth of the hero can be read using Carl Jung's theory of archetypes based on Anima-Animus that transcends the personal psyche and acts as a bridge between personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The process of individuation which brings the personal unconscious to light for a heightened understanding of self is

otherwise known as bildungsroman. This article seeks to recognize the important role that female characters play in Hesse's work by helping the male protagonists to reach their goal of self-realisation.

Anima-Animus

In Hermann Hesse's novels "women were allowed to be muses, allegories, love and sex objects of inspiration. They were a historical beings in many ways, beyond or incapable of development and that was the extent of their visibility" (Murti 265). The female character never occupies the organizing centre of the narrative. In Hesse's work, the significance of a woman character is based on the pivotal role played by her for unravelling the individuality of the main protagonist. "She represents the Other as the Foreign and Unfamiliar, perceived not as a threat to man's existence but as his missing part. She seems to be in conscious possession of the other side of man that remains to be reached so that man may acquire the internal coherence and unity of his existence" (Evi 7). Such events in the narrative can be considered as modernist complementarities, where the Other acts as the representation of the feminine who complements the masculine.

In the process of individuation, it is important for a person to embrace one's anima or animus. Hermione and Kamala represent the feminine element that exists in every male. This refers to Carl Jung's concept of anima and animus. Anima refers to the feminine part of the man's soul and while animus refers to the masculine part of man's soul. Anima is the suppressed feminine weakness of an outwardly strong male. The rejection of feminine element in a man while projecting it on a woman in his life can be seen in the relationship of Siddhartha-Kamala and Stephen-Hermione. He sees his lover or wife not as herself but as his own unconscious female counterpart.

Siddhartha enters the world of senses by crossing the river to explore a different dimension of his life. His involvement with stunningly beautiful and rich courtesan Kamala makes the world of senses his new playground. Siddhartha comes back to the banks of the river that he crosses to embark on a materialistic life. As he spends the night in the ferryman's hut, he dreams of embracing his friend Govinda, who in his arms is transformed into a woman. The psychoanalytic interpretation of this dream returns to the idea of Govinda as *shadow* of Siddhartha, and here he is presented as the animus of Siddhartha. Siddhartha feels aware

of his own sensuality. On embracing Govinda, Siddhartha feels the presence "of woman and man, of sun and forest, of animal and flower, of every fruit, of every pleasure" (Hesse, "Siddhartha" 48). When he enters the world of senses, he "can think, wait and fast!" (56) which are absurd qualities, using which he cannot win over Kamala, a courtesan. Siddhartha's "heart rejoiced" (51) when he saw her for the first time. In order to enjoy the company of Kamala, he becomes truly worldly and starts working with Kamaswami, the rich merchant so that he can meet Kamala's conditions of acceptance. The extent of his worldliness is well expressed in the poem he offers Kamala:

".... Better, thought the young Samana,
To make sacrifices to the fair Kamala,
Than to offer sacrifices to the gods" (Hesse 56).

These lines show that Siddhartha has completely broken away from his former self to immerse in the new world of sensuality. It is also worth noticing that it is only Siddhartha who acknowledges "the fullness of knowledge and learning" (57) that Kamala offers, as a courtesan. Siddhartha considers life at town as simple and free from difficulties. In fact, "everything was difficult, irksome and finally hopeless" (58) when he was a Samana, while following the instructions of Kamala seems easier to him.

Siddhartha and Kamala's relationship is symbiotic. Even before Siddhartha had his first conversation with Kamala, he was sure about his "intention to learn about love from the most beautiful woman" (60) and that Kamala would help him. His regular visits to the attractive courtesan Kamala, makes him learn the art of love in which, more than anything else, giving and taking becomes one. His conversations with Kamala were acts of learning for him. There was also an exchange of advice regarding the other's life. Both of them grew up symbiotically complimenting each other.

His life in the world of *Samsara* gains meaning and value from Kamala and not from Kamaswami. Siddhartha is indifferent to the material world. He has a sense of detachment and therefore, is not bothered by any profit or loss in business. It is because of and with the help of Kamala, who refers him to Kamaswami, that he enters the world of materialism. However, he is not able to erase all the traces of his past life and therefore feels separated from his fellow-beings. His awareness

of the gulf between himself and the common folk draws him closer to Kamala, who understands Siddhartha better than Govinda did. His passion for Kamala is evident when he admits, "O Kamala, you are the first woman to whom Siddhartha has spoken without lowered eyes. Never again will I lower my eyes when I meet a beautiful woman" (53).

When his notion of being an *outsider* surfaces again, Siddhartha begins to feel the same sense of discontent, which years ago had driven him from his home and had mooted the process of individuation in him. His personal unconscious that influences his conscious actions seem silent and inwardly he is *dead*. He engages in reckless gambling to compensate this feeling of inadequacy. Siddhartha's life reaches a further turning point when for the first time he hears grief and fatigue in Kamala's words during their intimacy. Siddhartha realizes that twenty years have passed by and he is nowhere near his goal. The passage of time is depicted by images when Siddhartha notices his first grey hair and realizes that he is no longer the man famed in his youth for his vigour and visage. He also notices, signs of fading splendour on Kamala's once exquisitely chiseled face. He is haunted by the fear of old age and death, a fear that also haunts Harry Haller in *Steppenwolf*. It is same sense of fear and anxiety that Gautam Buddha felt before he embarked on the path of renunciation.

Dreams in Hesse's novels are a clue to his fictional character's soul. When Siddhartha tries to sleep off his miseries that results from his awareness of his totally dissolute life, he has a dream. The death of Kamala's rare songbird, in his dream, reminds him of the life he had left behind years ago. In his dream, he learns that he has thrown away all that was good and of value in himself and leaves his love. When Siddhartha leaves, Kamala releases her rare songbird which symbolizes that her life, as a courtesan, comes to an end. From a courtesan, Kamala becomes a mother and eleven years pass before she meets Siddhartha again. Years pass by and Siddhartha undergoes a transformation by listening to the river and in the companionship of Vasudeva. On hearing of the impending death of the Buddha, devotees from all corners flock to receive his last blessings which include Kamala and her son. Kamala is bitten by a snake near the ferry and carried by Vasudeva to his hut, where she is immediately recognized by Siddhartha, who now sees that he has a son. More poignantly, he also sees that Kamala is dying, and that he can do nothing to stop it. The irony is that Kamala had come to see

Buddha's death but, instead, is compelled to face her own. Before she dies, however, she learns that Siddhartha has found peace, although unknown to her, that peace is soon to be shattered by the flight of their son.

In a heart-rending scene, both Kamala and Siddhartha are united emotionally, before Kamala dies. She recognizes that he is and yet he is not, the same man. Outwardly, he seemed no different but, inwardly, he was rejuvenated. The transformation in Siddhartha that Kamala notices continues and although he does not share the thoughts and views of ordinary people, he shares his life's urges and desires. Kamala dies, but leaves behind their son who teaches Siddhartha the final lesson to enlightenment. Siddhartha's new-found love for his son brings him pain rather than joy. All his attempts to win his son's affection results in isolation and finally his son flees and Siddhartha learns the rare virtue of detachment.

Bakhtin's concept of understanding the self in relation to other, that involves 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. (Holquist 36-37)

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" (Hesse, "Siddhartha" 71-72). Complementing Siddhartha's observation, Kamala makes an observation that heightens his understanding of self. 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?" (Hesse 73). This involves surplus of seeing by both the characters about each other. The self-theory of Bakhtin as cited by

Michael Holquist posits that our consciousness 'I' has neither any beginning nor any end. One gets to know about his birth solely through the account of others. Like birth, one can't know about his death and similarly, the facts are solely restricted to the knowledge of others.

The 'Kama' in the courtesan Kamala's name means physical love, an aspect of the material and sensual world. Kama also represents the Hindu god of desire. Outwardly, Kamala seems a worldly woman, who accepts Siddhartha only when he comes well-dressed and brings gifts. It is important to note that on a deeper level, she too is a seeker. She gives her pleasure garden to the Buddha and his monks, and at the end she undertakes her final journey to pay him honor on his deathbed. She admits that she is unable to feel love, and she observes this same deficiency in Siddhartha. In *Siddhartha*, Kamala dies of snakebite but in *Steppenwolf*, it is Hermione who orders Harry to kill her as part of the cycle of destruction and creation at the Magic theatre. Both Hermione in *Steppenwolf* and Kamala in *Siddhartha*, aid in the transformation of the main protagonists, yet have a uniqueness of their own.

In *Steppenwolf* even before Haller is sure about her name, he describes her as "the tiny little window, the minute chink of light in the dark cave of my fear...my one way out in the open air" (Hesse, "Steppenwolf" 113). He considers her as his source of salvation which pronounces Hermione's role in the *bildung* of Harry Haller. After his first meeting with Hermione, Haller wants to learn about survival. She can either make him "spring to life or reduce it to ashes" (113). For mysterious reasons, she becomes profoundly important to Haller. Haller himself states that she helped me to understand my own psyche and thereby understand the reason behind his torment and shame. As the novel begins, Haller is presented as an intellectual who agrees that he is capable of making intelligent observations pertaining to his suffering and mental ailment but knowledge and understanding is not what he craved for. Instead, he "was desperately longing for experience, decisive action, the cut and thrust of life" (114). The existence of Hermione is itself a miracle for him. Haller's opinion about Hermione as stated above gives a crystalline picture of the latter's importance in his life. Like Haller, Hermione also represents individualism, a pronounced trait of the novel when she says that she may earn her living by men but has no desire to be kept by Haller.

The role of Hermione seems to have deeper connotations when she asks Haller to pay attention to her face that sometimes looks boyish. Jung's concept of anima-animus finds expression in the image of man and woman that is presented through portrayal of Hermione. She acts like a mirror for Haller who responds and understands him. As a reader it seems that Hesse wants all human beings to be mirrors for one another so that we respond and relate to each other. Haller considers her as his opposite who has everything that he lacks. Hence, she makes him feel as complete man. Harry was enthralled at her "hermaphroditic charm" (119). Hermione is important in Haller's life as he is in need of her "to learn how to dance, to learn how to laugh, to learn how to live" (119). All that Haller needs to learn to transform as a better human being is stated in his dialogic interaction with Hermione. As Hermione says, he needs to learn and develop all those things that comes naturally to other people i.e., dancing, laughing etc that makes us feel alive. Her role as a mentor finds expression in the words of Haller:

This woman who had seen through me so comprehensively, who seemed to know more of life than any wise men, was so skilled in behaving as a child, so adept at playing whatever little game life momentarily offered, that I automatically became her pupil....[He wanted to learn] how to live for the moment, to live in the present as she did, treasuring every little wayside flower with loving care and deriving value from every playful little instant, had nothing to fear from life. (Hesse, "Steppenwolf" 121)

According to Hermione, animals are true to their nature and they have no desire to make an impression, they are usually sad. When human beings are truly sad, "they always look a bit like an animal" but at such times they look "truer and more beautiful than they normally look" (123). It is through Harry's dialogic interaction with Hermione, readers realize that he is fighting for a fine, noble, splendid and honourable cause, a fight against war. Readers get to discover more and more about Harry through Hermione and vice versa.

The relationship between Haller and Hermione was symbiotic like that of Siddhartha and Kamala as both learned from each other. It was Hermione's goal to teach Haller how to dance and thereby experience a bit of happiness and foolishness and Haller's was to reveal his ideas and some of his knowledge to Hermione. Ever since their first meeting, Hermione was Haller's companion. In Hermione's words, both of them

were among the few people, “who make the highest possible demands on life and have a hard time coming to terms with the stupidity and coarseness of it” (136). Haller learns to have admirable reverence for little things in life from her.

Various things that Haller needs to learn for his *bildung* is communicated to the reader and develops an understanding of Harry. The intellectual faculty is very highly developed in Harry but when it comes to little skills needed in life, he is still an immature person. Hermione makes it sure that Harry learns to master life’s little and simple skills, and pronounces herself as the latter’s teacher. It is she who makes Haller realize that he is indeed progressing in his life, as the man who couldn’t stand music and dance has started to dance. Besides, Haller is also made to realize that he was idle to learn to dance, how to make love and that his suicidal tendency was also a part of his old, bourgeois, inauthentic existence. It is from Hermione, that he learns “to love a bit in a normal human way” (Hesse 138). In the companionship of Hermione, Haller is able to explore a new tenet of his personality as she directs, supervises and assesses him. The change through the influence of Hermione is evident in the following sentence: “Harry Haller, the gifted writer, the connoisseur of Goethe and Mozart, the author of critically acclaimed reflections on the metaphysics of art and on humanity, this melancholic hermit in his cell crammed full of books was now *being exposed*, step by step, to self-criticism, and found wanting on every count” (Hesse 139-140).

After a lustful encounter with Maria, who was sent by Hermione, Haller realizes that such an experience was enough to fill Steppenwolf’s stomach and send him to sleep, but it is not the “kind of happiness to die for” (161). Haller was a frustrated individual who considered himself as an outsider until Hermione made him realize the cause of his frustration. In Hermione’s opinion:

[Harry was] an artist and thinker, someone full of joy and faith, always on the trail of great and eternal ideas, never content with minor attractions. However, the more life brought you to your senses and turned your attention to yourself, the more acute your situation became and the more profound your suffering, anxiety and desperation until you were up to your neck in them. Then all the beautiful and sacred things you knew, loved and revered, all your earlier in human beings

and the high achievements they were destined for were of no avail, worthless, shattered into pieces. (Hesse 161-162)

Realizing one's self-worth is essential in the bildung process and Hermione becomes a catalyst in it. Haller ponders over the words of Hermione and realizes that he was indeed prepared to do great things, to suffer, to make sacrifices and thereby lead a heroic and noble life but he suppressed his abilities when he felt that the world wasn't demanding any heroic deeds from him. One has to understand the world in which he is living to come to terms with it. The world in which Haller was living was a home to people who prefer pleasure to joy, money to soul, frivolity to genuine passion and so on and so forth. Yet one has to realize that our life is a journey towards the paradise from which we are separated and therefore "our every good deed, every bold thought, every act of love is a stage along that road" to eternity (165). It is this realm beyond happiness that we are all striving with all our heart to reach and that's why we long for death. Harry understands the reason behind his suicidal thoughts. At times, the world may seem frustrating, like it seems to Harry Haller but "we have to grope our way through so much filth and rubbish in order to reach home" (166) that involves "restoration to a state of innocence" (167). Haller gives up his status of an outsider and begins to accept things as it comes in his life.

In the Magic Theatre, Hermione brings Haller closer to understanding himself and his plight. When Harry stabs the reflection of Hermione with the reflection of a knife, it is his final attempt to retain a cohesive and coherent identity. Here Hesse uses a woman, Hermione, to heal Haller. It is she who helps him laugh at the game of life. Hermione's death is symbolic as it preserves her individuality and her right to choose a companion. It also signifies that Haller must abandon her as his guide and traverse the rest of his way alone. There is a notable change in Haller's thinking as he starts taking the responsibility of his own life.

For Haller, Hermione was a companion, sister, a kindred spirit. She was like his boyhood friend Hermann. It is worthwhile to note Nietzsche's influence in depiction of Hesse's characters. Apollonian and Dionysian are terms used by Nietzsche in his book *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to present two major aspects of human nature: "The Apollonian aspect of human nature represents our rational side, our desire for tranquillity, predictability and orderliness. The Dionysian aspect of human nature

represents our irrational side, our attraction to creative chaos and to passionate, dynamic experiences. According to Nietzsche, the best art and literature reflect a fusion of these two tendencies, and the best life reflects controlled passion" (qtd. in Hergenbahn and Henley 209).

Nietzsche believed that western philosophy had emphasized the intellect and minimized the human passions, and the result was lifeless rationalism. Apollonian tendencies are much evident in Harry Haller and Siddhartha. All critical-rational power that is a part of the unique individuality of man is Apollonian in character. Dionysian spirit is the creative-intuitive power. Both the Apollonian and the Dionysian are necessary in the creation of art. To make the characters realize the Apollonian and Dionysian traits inherent in them, in *Steppenwolf* Hesse presents Hermione as a woman who sometimes looks boyish and then evolves into a woman while in *Siddhartha*, Siddhartha dreams of hugging Govinda and feels similar sensations of intimate contact with a woman. Referring to *Steppenwolf* Kurt J. Fickert observes that

Her name, which reminds Haller of his childhood friend Hermann (the author himself), suggests that she is Harry's anima, the creative (life-giving) self, an aspect of himself that he has suppressed in order to have a secure place in the bourgeois world. To prepare him for his experiences in the Magic Theatre, Hermione has previously undertaken to educate him in worldliness, that is, to teach him how to enjoy the freedom of dance, jazz music, and the world of erotic, sensual pleasures. (Fickert 5)

Conclusion

Without the Apollonian, the Dionysian lacks the form and structure to make a coherent piece of art, and without the Dionysian, the Apollonian lacks the necessary vitality and passion. Although they are diametrically opposed, they are also intimately intertwined. Hesse's characterisation is in accordance to Nietzsche's philosophy and therefore he uses women characters, Hermione and Kamala in both the novels mentioned above to present the image of a complete man which is justified by the concept of anima and animus.

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4

Friedrich Nietzsche's Modernist Thoughts: A Rupture with the Western Metaphysical and Cultural Tradition

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Abstract

Nietzsche is the first western philosopher, who cripples the whole western metaphysical tradition right from Socrates, condemns Christian morality of almost two thousand years, and disapproves progress through reason of the Enlightenment—the main characteristic of the western intellectual tradition. Registering his deep dissatisfaction at the working of western intellectual tradition, Nietzsche, unlike his predecessors, contends to recognize the dark and mysterious world of human will, aggression, and instincts, charged with cruelty, injustice, uncertainty, and absurdity. He advocates letting human feelings and emotions give full opportunity to bloom his potential. Nietzsche further argues that western philosophy is based on the external world and treats man as an object using reason. It does not deal with a human individual, but an abstract universal man. It tries to formulate definitions, which apply to all men in all situations and never tries to see the man from a subjective point of view. The present paper purposes to investigate the unconventional and modernists thoughts of Nietzsche, which marks a change and discontinuity in the metaphysical tradition. The paper also examines how Nietzsche underestimates the power of rationality and Christian moral principles dominant in Europe. They are held responsible for the decay and decline of the entire western world. He, therefore, claims that all the old values and truths have lost their validity and vitality. He calls a need for of "the revaluation of all values" of the past to bring a change and establish new systems because all the traditional values have become rickety and rotten and mountains of stinking rubbish. Adopting the qualitative methodology, the paper makes a discussion of Nietzsche's core philosophy with special reference

to the concepts—"God is dead," "will to power," "Overman," and "eternal recurrence," giving rise to a spilt in the western metaphysical tradition.

Keywords: Enlightenment, God is dead, Superman, Will-to-Power, and Christian Morality.

Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), a radical and revolutionary thinker, "a prophet of modernism," a cultural critic, is one of the most influential post-Hegelian German philosophers of the nineteenth century. There have been innumerable interpretations of his uncompromising criticism on religion, the western metaphysical tradition, and the life-denying Christian moral principles. As a big sceptic, he values human emotions, passions, instincts, impulses, and self-will, and understates the power of reason and rationality of the Enlightenment. He disregards the liberal notion that man is inherently good and exposes that life is full of cruelty, injustice, uncertainty, and absurdity. Man has never lost the instinct of cruelty; he has only refined it. Nietzsche emphasizes that aggression, will, and power are the most important human instincts. Modern industrial society and Christian morality have made man a victim of the excessive rational faculty at the cost of human will and instinct. Fascinated by the ancient Greek way of life, he undermines the Christian one, expressing his deep dissatisfaction at the western civilization. Man, contends Nietzsche, must recognize the dark and mysterious world of instincts—the true life force—"you must become who are you." Excessive rationality, he thinks, smothers the spontaneity necessary for creativity. To realize his potential, man must develop his instinct, drive, and will, instead of depending on reason and intellect. Nietzsche tries to foreground the limitations of pure reason of man on which most of the philosophers of modernity have banked upon. He holds that there is no higher world, no morality derived from God nor Nature, because "God is dead." There is no absolute standard of good and evil in a godless and absurd world. Man himself is responsible for his rise and fall. Nietzsche, therefore, rejects the whole western metaphysical tradition right from Socrates, condemns Christian morality of almost two thousand years, and disapproves progress through reason of the Enlightenment—the main characteristic of the western intellectual tradition of the last two hundred years.

The present paper purposes to investigate the unconventional and modernist thoughts of Nietzsche, which mark a change and discontinuity in the western metaphysical tradition. The paper also examines how Nietzsche, a subjective realist, underestimates the power of rationality and Christian moral principles dominant in Europe. They are held responsible for the decay and decline of the entire western world. Nietzsche, therefore, argues that all the old values and truths have lost their validity and vitality. He calls for a need of "the revaluation of all values" of the past to bring a change and establish new systems because all the traditional values have become rickety and rotten and mountains of stinking rubbish. Adopting the qualitative methodology, the paper makes a discussion of Nietzsche's core philosophy with special reference to the concepts—"God is dead," "will-to-power," "Overman," and "eternal recurrence," giving rise to a split in the western metaphysical tradition.

Attack on Western Metaphysical Tradition

Western metaphysical tradition has the most diverse and complicated development among the three traditions—Indian, Chinese, and western. Like every other metaphysical tradition in the world, Greek metaphysics also grow out of religion. This development is divided into two periods—the pre-Socratic and the post-Socratic. Western philosophy has a linear history and each new school grows out of its predecessors. It is based on realism, idealism, monism, dualism, pluralism, materialism, and spiritualism with its scientific, rational, and ethical schools. Thus, it is always a theoretical and intellectual enterprise of the wise, who begin with curiosity about and wonder at the external world. The western philosophers are extroverts and interested in external things—the external world. They treat man as an object using reason. Socrates says "Know thyself" and Plato and Aristotle try to understand the essence of man as if it outward objected. When Socrates, Plato, Descartes and others deal with man's soul, they are not dealing with a human individual, but an abstract universal man. They emphasize the necessity of values like beauty, goodness, justice, knowledge, etc. and try to formulate definitions, which apply to all men in all situations. Hence, western philosophy is objective and outward and never tries to see the man from a subjective point of view.

When we see the chronological development of western philosophy, the early Greeks raise cosmological, psychological, political, and ethical questions; the medieval philosophers were interested in theological questions heavily dependent on the other world; the Renaissance philosophers tended adopting Greek logic and humanism, and the new scientific spirit; and the modern philosophers in epistemological and metaphysical tradition.

Western philosophy has become overwhelmingly scientific and outward-looking. This aspect becomes obvious if we survey its growth from Heraclitus and Pythagoras to Logical positivists, physicalists, and analysts. So we may say that this tradition succeeded in the emancipation of the object more than the subject, of matter than the spirit, although it would be wrong at the same time to say that the tradition has had no spiritual philosophies and leaders (Raju 10).

Western philosophers would be interested in such general questions as "What is man?" "What is the existence of man?" and "What is the meaning of man's existence?" but they never raise subjective question such as "Who am I?" "What is the nature of and meaning of my existence?" "What are my potentialities?" and "What should be the goal of my existence?" All these questions are imposed on me, not from outside but emerge from my introspection. Introspection is born because of the crisis which the individual encounters in his day to day life and which forces him to choose away. Nietzsche condemns all their predecessors for their negligence of man as an individual, as a subject, and emphasizes human existence as the central issue of philosophy, giving rise to the philosophy of Existentialism.

Nietzsche gives a huge blow to the structure of the western metaphysical "philosophy with a hammer" directly, because the past philosophers are dogmatic, accepting anything blindly so far morality is concerned. He discovers that all the moral theories of the west have its foundation on metaphysics. Nietzsche attacks many traditional religious and metaphysical assumptions, rejecting the philosophical accounts of Socrates, Plato, and Kant. They believe in another world—a world after death—supposed to be real-world, which transcends the world of experience. In *The Twilight of Idols*, Nietzsche ruthlessly criticizes Socrates's philosophy of reason and ethics, because he believes that Socrates disregards human passions, emotions, and instincts, and pays special attention to questions of moral education and character,

emphasizing rational reality. Nietzsche termed Socrates as the "vortex and turning point of western civilization" (*Tragedy* 94). Socrates is always concerned with rational restraints whose only aim is to seek knowledge and moral improvement—the most important human tasks. Socrates's philosophy opposes human creativity because it denies human instincts and the value of life. He is, Nietzsche holds, responsible for bringing a form of decadence in life and society. That is why Socrates is called 'a man of decline.' In *The Death of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes: "...this very Socratism be a sign of decline of weariness, of infection, of anarchical dissolution of the instincts" (18).

Unhealthy Christian Morality

Nietzsche's basic philosophy is deep-seated in his five celebrated works—*The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Genealogy of Morals*, throbbing with the subversive spirit and unconventional ideas. A pivotal thinker, with his multidimensional framework of thoughts, he sharply reacts against democracy, social reform, liberalism, socialism, and communism. He directs his caustic criticism at the Western civilization, Christianity, and Christian moral values. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche exposes the weakness of Judeo-Christian tradition. Christianity is mainly based on the dispiriting account of original sin, sufferings, penance, prayers, God, heaven, pity, and compassion to keep the soul active in the dark-prison house of the body and undervalues human potential, dignity, and creativity, as it claims that all human beings are born sinners—weak and doomed creatures. They are solely at the mercy of the grace of God for their redemption and salvation. They have to cherish humility, charity, mercy, and submission. Men are slaves to their senses and are liable to be corrupted soon. Christian morality expresses a hatred for the human body and the earth and glorifies both the spirit and the life after death. God is presented simply as a dictator with his commandments, and man a mere responder. Christian moral universal principles are psychologically fatal and fit for only the weak and the slave. The feeling of being a sinner leads psychologically to a sense of guilt and passivity, and the celebration of suffering deprives man of his creativity and quality. Asceticism, a veil of the weak persons, chains humanity with its restrictions and crushes human impulse to a healthy life. But it is to be noted that Christ, in Nietzsche's opinion, is not responsible for Christianity and its decline. It is Saint Paul who is responsible for such

unhealthy morality. Christ was a strong and heroic figure. Unlike Paul and the Jews, he is one of the great tragic heroes of human drama, who exhibited fearlessly great physical endurance and mental serenity of the terror of the universe and the tragedy of human life without any complaints, grudge, and rancour.

Christian morality, therefore, is dead and untenable. It gives man a sick soul and stifles the free and spontaneous exercise of human instinct and will. Anyone who continues to believe in it is dishonest and inauthentic. In short, Christian morality should be obliterated because it extinguishes the spark of life. In *Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche mentions: "Christianity has taken the side of everything weak, base, ill-constituted; it has made an ideal out of opposition to the instinct of strong life." Nietzsche presents a very depressive and dark western moral landscape, which is accepted by the west without raising any question. In short, Nietzsche explores that the root cause of the decay and decline of the modern western world is Christian moral principles, which have corrupted the noble values of Roman society. He, therefore, tries to "reflect on the actual phenomena of reality; see what it is, what it is transmitted, what difference it makes" (Baier 224). In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche's basic argument is that all human values are man-made, rather than God-made, or natural or some underlying fundamental reality. He argues that 'good' and 'evil' are names that society attributes to certain actions, behaviours, or ideas for strategic reasons. Morality is never absolute. It is relative to the condition in which man finds himself. Nietzsche tries to show that the Christian world is infected with 'slave morality' and the followers of Christianity are, at their worst, passive, cowardly, conformists, attributing all the age-old values to the will of God.

Nietzsche is equally critical of the 18th century Enlightenment. His philosophy of life is founded upon a comprehensive critique of the history of western civilization: "Western philosophers have fooled themselves into believing in the possibility of absolute and total kinds of knowledge. They have brought forth escapist fantasies about transcendent worlds. It was a philosophical tradition that Nietzsche was determined to finish off." Nietzsche demands that all the old and traditional values be re-examined and reevaluated.

Decay and Decline of Christian Religion

With the rejection of the past western moral values, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche expresses fear that the decay and decline of religion, the rise of atheism, spiritual bankruptcy, and the absence of higher moral authority would lead the society to chaos and animalism. The western theological world has depended on the Bible for thousands of years, gave order to society and meaning to life. But the Christian world no longer holds sway over European thought. In other words, Nietzsche's early critique of the world view presented by Socrates and Plato, and his subsequent critique of Christianity are isolated. They do not appear in their full significance. The rise of the scientific revolution and Darwinian evolution had led the people to see the world increasingly as a meaningless and chaotic jumble. He recognizes that feelings of general insecurity, the tendencies of scepticism, and pessimism are spreading rapidly. His historical analysis of philosophy, Christianity, and morality is a search for positive values to direct the energy and will of Europe. Without it, Nietzsche holds that the society will plunge into a huge whirlpool of nihilism and drown in it, because the worship of science, Marxism, positivism, materialism, and new values have replaced Christianity creating vast emptiness and terrible form of pessimism—the fundamental problem of the western world—a world where nothing is true. Against such a disheartening and dark background, Nietzsche arrives at this conclusion that entire Europe is shrouded in nihilism and pessimism and that "God is dead."

The Death of God

After the Enlightenment, the concept of 'reality' changes. The Newtonian philosophy proves that the universe is governed by physical laws, not by divine providence. The Enlightenment has shown that the idea of divine right is no longer required and the moral theories can exist without any reference to God. This was a tremendous event. Europe no longer needs God as the source of morality, value, and order in the universe. Philosophy and science and rationality are capable enough to guide human beings. In this context, Habib states: "In a profoundest sense, Nietzsche is humanistic: reality, truth, and the world, are constructions, projections of human needs and interests, through the medium of human senses, human faculties, and human language" (508). In the west, now the entire thought process gets secularized and gives a clarion-call that "God

is dead." This realization goes a step further that God is not only dead, but Europeans have killed him with the scientific revolution in the hope that they could rationally understand the world and better the society. Nietzsche does not make a celebration of the death of God, but he is worried, because God is a basic system of the west, which is now getting chaotic and confused. In *Twilight of the Idols*, he warns: "When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet....Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole."

Nietzsche is very fearful that the concept of the death of God will generate two outlooks. First, a new golden horizon is going to be dawned. All the crippled and sick moral values and old systems are going to be replaced by new systems, heralding a bright future based on reason. Second, a very dangerous and pessimistic outlook will develop which is very risky. Nietzsche believes that the removal of God and the Biblical, system will give rise to void and vacuity in western civilization. People will ask about the meaning of life without God. By the way, if God exists, they will see everything sceptically, quite from a different perspective. Man is not now in the centre of the universe. He is not the best creation of God, but a risen ape through the evolutionary process. Seeing this true world, the western people are left in the lurch and envisage wilderness—a path of despair and meaninglessness. Nietzsche fears that the new reality and understanding of the world would lead to pessimism, nihilism, and "a will to nothingness." In *The Will to Power*, he feels that our whole European culture has been moving towards a catastrophe.

In this connection, many scholars believe that Nietzsche talks about the actual or literal death of God, but he intends to demonstrate the decline and loss in the belief of religion, spirituality, and Christianity. He wants to say that we can no longer blame God for our values, judgments, and behaviours. He challenges humanity to take responsibility for creating its values and in doing so a better version of society. Nietzsche offers a prescription to get rid of the state of nihilism and go beyond it first by accepting it in our everyday life and then creating new values. Although Nietzsche may have been considered a nihilist by definition, he was critical of it and warned that accepting nihilism would be dangerous. From such critique, Nietzsche turns to a new philosophy that celebrates

the present and demands that individuals should create their values, impose their own will to power on the world.

Master-Slave Morality

Keeping in view the detrimental Christian morality, Nietzsche argues that there are two basic types of morality—(1) master morality and (2) slave morality. In his two noted works—*Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche discusses the dichotomy of master-slave morality. He explains the struggle between these two moral structures. He discovers that there are two classes in ancient society—the masters and the slaves. The masters are wilful, powerful, wealthy, and creative. They are free to do what they like. They love themselves and feel good. They value traits like glory, ambition, excellence, and self-actualization, affirming life in its entirety. They are the creators and determiners of morality and reject the dull and routine-bound life and experiment with new life choices suited to their temperament. That is why their morality is called master morality. Master morality makes the primary judgment and declares its way of life good without being concerned with the approval or disapproval of the slaves or the masses. Nietzsche finds the examples of master morality in the ancient Greek heroes, who are strong and grand characters and translate their will into reality at any cost. Aristotle's ethics also pays no heed to the poor and glorify the powerful who live life fully. In short, it is the necessity of master morality to tame and torture the slaves to flourish itself.

The second category of morality is slave morality. The slaves are poor, weak, and resentful. They cannot do what they like, as they are oppressed, controlled, and subjugated by the masters. They approve and respond to master morality. They value kindness, sympathy, and empathy. It originates in the slaves. It is called slave morality. Hence, master morality originates in the strong and slave morality in the weak. Slave morality is the opposite of master morality and is a reaction to oppression. "Slave morality is suited to those who have a slavish, botched, and bungled nature" (Mautner 387). The message of slave morality is humility, pity, charity, and enervate the higher men who are capable of rising above what Nietzsche calls 'herd instincts,' which is "a morality of cows and not for creative human beings" (Solomon and Higgins 108). As such slave morality is characterized by pessimism and cynicism. Barney is quite apt in his remark that "morality was just a

measure of the weak unable to do what the strong do, choose to protect themselves from the actions of the strong by banning them" (82).

In the beginning, the slaves, Nietzsche contends, attribute themselves bad, since they lack those traits and characteristics which are possessed by the masters. However, with time, there occurs "a slave revolt." It was not a physical revolt because the slaves are too weak to oppose the masters. It was, in fact, a moral one. In this revolt, the slaves decide that they can make their sufferings and miseries worth living by redefining the slave morality. They invest the slave morality with a new meaning of goodness and a choice. So, the slaves start praising the meek, the humble, and the oppressed and discredit the traits of master morality—wealth, power, and pride—as evil. The masters now become vicious and oppressive. The slaves become good for being the opposite of the masters. In this act of reversal and transvaluation of morality, the new morality gives psychological strength to the slaves. The slaves become themselves good because they lack pride, arrogance, assertiveness and other characteristics of the masters. Nietzsche appreciates this achievement of slave morality through which the slaves have been able to dominate the western thinking for two thousand years. After this revolt, the slave morality which has been considered evil is made into something good. Slave morality is sour grapes made in the values system. Nietzsche thinks that the purest existing form of slave morality is to be found in Christian morality—an unhealthy and sick morality. It sets a model of an insipid, mediocre, inactive, and uncreative life, exalting man's incapacities as austerity and self-discipline. He also finds slave morality manifested in Buddhism, democracy, socialism, and other mass movements that seek to make everyone equal and encourage dull lives. On the other hand, master morality gives rise to the principle of 'will-to-power,' which is manifested in Nietzsche's concept of the Superman, who will give a new meaning of life and the western civilization after the death of God.

Twin Principles of Apollonian and Dionysian

In the course of the discussion of master-slave morality, Nietzsche strengthens this dialectic argument with the interpretation of the Greek civilization of Apollonian and Dionysian principles in his early work *The Birth of Tragedy*. In Greek mythology, both Apollo and Dionysian are the sons of Zeus. Apollo is the god of the sun, who symbolizes classical

harmony, balance, self-control, and rational thinking. He appeals to logic, order, prudence, purity, and consciousness. Nietzsche associates the Apollonian tendency with the instinct for form, beauty, moderation, symmetry, and serenity, best expressed in Greek sculpture and painting. On the other hand, Dionysus is the god of wine, who stands for dance, music, irrationality, and chaos. He appeals to emotions, instincts, exuberance, violence found in music and lyrical poetry. This binary, often compared to classicism and romanticism, is introduced in the western critical and creative works. This dichotomy of Apollonian and Dionysian may be the Freudian *id* and *ego*.

In this twin principles of Apollonian and Dionysian, Nietzsche contends that Apollonian tendency gives rise to slave morality, in which people behave like a member of a herd (less capable persons). Dionysian tendency gives rise to master morality where people view themselves as free to break conventional ways of thinking by demonstrating their creativity. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche describes that the followers of Dionysus possess the "genius of the heart." These two forces or outlooks are permanent and found everywhere, and inside all human beings which emerge from nature itself, and can be applied to art, culture, psychology, ethics, and politics. Nietzsche has great admiration for the pre-Socratic philosophers who were free and creative. They were famous for the vibrant charming Dionysian way of existence that constantly seeks to affirm life. In *Philosophy in Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche writes: "The Greeks are interesting and quite disproportionately important because they had such a host of great individuals...these men are integral, entire, and self-contained, and hewn out of stone" (79). Nietzsche approves the creative power of the Dionysian, but he never holds that the Apollonian way of life is bad. He wants a fusion of these two forces as seen in the pre-Socratic Greek tragedies. Nietzsche is generally "challenging the usual view of Greek culture" (Baldick 14) in the post-Socratic era, which marks a split between Apollonian and Dionysian. He expresses his deep dissatisfaction at the modern world gripped in rigid rationality following a logical way of Apollonian life devoid of Dionysian impulse. And the complete waning of Dionysian spirit—which is tremendously life-affirming, creative, strong and dynamic culture—deeply disappoints him. Nietzsche calls for the fusion of these two forces. Habib states: "These two forces, Apollonian and the Dionysian, are creative tendencies which developed side by side...."(510).

Doctrine of Will-to-Power

Nietzsche's another central concept, 'will-to-power,' essence of the universe, is a much-debated one. It is one of the most misunderstood ideas. It is generally thought that Nietzsche asks one to master or dominate others, but it is, in fact, an urge to master one's self, rather than exert power over others. It is the power one needs to overcome oneself. It is an essence of life, an inner struggle, a main driving force, a powerful creative self in all individuals, which spurs the human existence to have some achievement or position in life. In Nietzsche's view, the will to power is a huge reservoir of positive energy ingrained in the individual propelling him to move forward and conquering himself to achieve the highest self. The will-to-power is an irrational force, maybe in the form of the Freudian libido, always struggling to perfect and transcend the self through the possession and exercise of creative power. The will-to-power refers to constant self-creation through constant overcoming. The will-to-power motivates one to achieve something great in life to concretize one's own aim. Hence, human action is based on one's will to power, not to some supernatural universal principle. And as such different individuals differently select their course of action according to their aims of life revealed by their will to power. Nietzsche borrows this concept from Schopenhauer's will-to-live and improvises in his way for will-to-power, a power to create self. The will-to-live is to avoid death and procreate, which is simply to survive. On the other hand, the will-to-power is to transform oneself into Superman. Thus, the will-to-power actuates new values and attempts to overcome difficulties and suffering of life, creating one's way of life stimulated by instincts and drives. The aim of Nietzsche's will-to-power is the production of the 'Superman'—the real man who can exhibit his will-to-power to the highest possible degree. In this way, Childs rightly remarks that "a human will to power eclipsed the divine will" (55).

Übermensch

In his much-celebrated work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche introduces the concept of "Übermensch" meaning the "Overman" or the "Superman." It is neither a fiction nor a piece of poetry, but a philosophical parable in which the protagonist is presented as a modernized Zarathustra. He is a saint who comes out of a cave to preach sermons to the entire western world, which has become a patient for the

last two hundred years, suffering from rationalism and the Christian moral principles. He offers some prescription to avoid the feeling of nihilism and inculcates a positive spirit to become Superman. It is to be noted here that the concept of Superman does not mean a man with a biological transformation or superiority, as it is very much misinterpreted by some of the scholars. Nietzsche's intention is quite clear that man can achieve his fruition, his completion, his supreme achievement, and his highest self by rising above himself or by surpassing himself. He remains passionate, free, independent, creative, and full of emotions and enthusiasm. He, subsequently, is hard, strong, and forceful, defying to work under the influence of any existing traditions, institutions, discourses, and value systems. The Superman, therefore, doubts all the systems of the past, which crush the energy, vitality, and creativity of human being. He undertakes his life in the same way as an artist creates his work. The Superman is a new and superior type of creative man, who creates his morality based on human instincts, drive, will, subjective passion and emotion, self-awareness, and conquest of one's adverse circumstances. The Superman "calls for a new conception of humanity" rising "above the common herd mentality and morality prompted by modern liberal states" (Habib 507).

Superman is a person who first of all murders God and then himself becomes Godlike. The God of The Old Testament establishes commandments, which constitute a denial of life. Superman, on the other hand, sets up his moral values and affirms the significance of life in doing so. For him, there is no meaning of the binary of Good and Evil and goes beyond it. The Superman is who seeks to overcome, to achieve, what he is to be "the new, the unique, the incomparable, making laws for ourselves and creating ourselves." Nietzsche neither formulates an idea to become the Superman nor does he assign any specific values to the Superman beyond a general embrace of bravery, love, life, and belief in the potential of humanity. Superman is interested in people and sharing his knowledge but not interested in creating a system for everyman to follow. He considers himself independent and free from all restraints, prejudices, rules, and codes of behaviour imposed by civilization. Quite uninterested in the affairs of politics and social systems, he lives his own life and takes, wants, strives, creates, seeks instinctively and freely to become a better human to save humanity and society. Superman creates the world in his image, by his reason, his will, and his love, brushing

aside all sorts of weakness, physical, mental, and moral. He achieves a tragic grandeur in his tragedy

Superman expresses his repugnance to the mediocre-industrial-scientific society guided by the rule book. Ignited by the spirit of love for this earthly life and this world, he seeks truth himself and in nature. The Superman, brimmed with the spirit of ambition, love and joy, never gets frustrated in the face of horrors and hardships of life and existence. He never allows any feeling of nihilism and pessimism to come in his mind. He affirms the single moment of life that is worth living. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche writes:

Behold, I teach you the Superman. Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let you will say: The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth...and do not believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes! They are poisoners, whether they know or not. They are despisers of life, atrophying and self-poisoned men, of whom the earth is weary: so let them be gone (42).

On the whole, Superman is against idealism, rationalism, theology, and traditional metaphysics, which sap and subjugate the real qualities of man. Superman means an ideal future human and an ultimate goal for humanity. He values struggle and hardship since the road toward Superman is difficult and requires a great deal of sacrifice. In contrast to Superman is the Last Man whose sole desire is his comfort, consumption, security, and risk minimization. The Last man is deeply dissatisfied with and is intensely jealous of the freedom, bravery, and moral purpose of the Superman. He seeks to defeat Superman in the name of equality by breaking down any distinction between the strong and the weak or the superior over the mediocre. Incapable of creating anything beyond self in any form, the Last man is the antithesis of Superman. Though it is very difficult to achieve the state of Superman, yet man can approximate it through his will-to-power.

The Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence

In Nietzsche's concept of the Superman, there is no place of pessimism and inert submission to the miserable plight and predicament of human beings. Sharply reacting against the philosophy of Buddhism and that of Schopenhauer and Wagner, he firmly believes that life is, no doubt, full of sorrows, sufferings, and struggles, but they should not be taken negatively and depressingly. Life is worth living despite its pains and

problems. His conviction is that nothing great can be achieved in life without sufferings because it is sufferings that can enrich human experiences and make a man stronger. He, therefore, rejects Buddhist philosophy of 'Nirvana' and asceticism and Schopenhauer's philosophy of pessimism. Instead of cherishing grudges and lamentation, a man should move forward with courage to taste the quality of life, rather than strive for the peace beyond this world. Nietzsche, therefore, exhorts man to embrace life "in its totality, in its glowing plenitude, and in its guttery twilight, in its, pleasure and in its pains, in its ecstatic joys and in its hideous horrors" (Stavrou 56).

Nietzsche's optimistic and life-affirming belief gets strengthened by his doctrine of 'eternal recurrence,' which is inspiring, bracing, and worth accepting. Like Buddhist philosophy, he believes in the circular structure of life—the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. But he goes one step further. The eternal recurrence is not a closed circle. Since nothing is predetermined and the recurrence is not mechanical, and the repetition is not stereotyped and the repetition may be spiral, not cyclical. Man is born over and over infinitely, but he shall be born in each new existence on the level of which he died in the preceding one. This doctrine claims that time is cyclic and all human actions and events repeat again and again forever. In *The Gay Science*, he evaluates human life from this perspective. If one is living a good life, one would be happy to repeat over and over infinitely. The doctrine of 'eternal recurrence' creates a pedestal for a more positive way of life than the Christian world view with its linear end—either in hell or heaven after death. Nietzsche poses the possibility that all events and actions in a man's life will happen again and again eternally. Therefore, every moment in man's life is very important. And no moment is more important than the present in which man can act according to his own will and choice that will influence the character of the whole. Nietzsche's Superman also faces this possibility and imbibes the spirit of this doctrine. He has the strength of will to take responsibility for every moment in his life to be repeated and live a delightful life.

Conclusion

To conclude the paper, Nietzsche has influenced the twentieth century thought more than perhaps any other thinker has. He violently shakes the entire European intellectual complacency, confidence, and conviction

to shock it with his rhetorical prowess and provocation. For him, all is not right and wrapped with a sunny spirit, but doubts and disorientation, and naivety and nihilism prevail everywhere in religion, metaphysics, Christianity, philosophy, culture, morality and society. He prophesies that "the whole of our European morality" is destined for "collapse," to mourn deeply because it is psychologically damaging, baseless, and pernicious. Making a ruthless investigation in all values and systems, he dismantles and then reconstructs them in a new form, stripping off the veneer of unquestionable authority. Nietzsche's negative wide-ranging critique aims to undermine not only religious faith or philosophical moral theory but also many central aspects of ordinary moral consciousness. Also highly critical to altruistic concern—the guilt of wrongdoing, moral responsibility, the value of compassion, the demand for equality and so on—he brushes aside all these things. He offers new values to promote cultural renewal and improve social and psychological life, exposing the false consciousness which has infected people's received ideas for the last two thousand years.

Nietzsche has been an inspiration to almost every new movement, and his critiques and methodology are the need of his time. He becomes one of the foremost philosophers who criticize those principles on which Christian and the western philosophical tradition are founded. His framework of thought is original and shocking because, for the first time, it offers the critique of some institutions, philosophical traditions, and epistemological concepts. His ideas leave a tremendous impact on recent history, literature, psychology, and religious thought. He achieves a high position in the grand tradition of western thought and his reputation spreads like wildfire. He makes a marked departure from the epistemological approach and starts a fundamental phenomenon—"Existence"—his new interpretation of existence. Nietzsche's philosophical thoughts create an upsurge of emotions, leading to various interpretations, misunderstandings, confusions and provocations. Charges have been levelled on him whether he has any positive values to offer. If all values are created false or rest on lies, the question arises as to how Nietzsche's values judgments are correct. However, his philosophy is bound to appeal to intellectuals and artists who sees his philosophical ramblings as a means to liberate man's inner energy—his philosophy is a philosophy of liberation. He says that the old philosophizing has come to an end and new philosophizing is beginning. Thus, Nietzsche's

philosophy, with all its admiration and adverse criticism, undoubtedly, leaves a tremendous and lasting effect on the metaphysical and cultural tradition of Europe. Creating a spirit of the cultural break with the past, he paves ground for the very complex and confusing but momentous multinational movement—Modernism.

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5

The Bleeding Bodies, the Burdened Minds and the Barefooted Women on Move: A Gender Lens towards Migration in India

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Abstract

This paper aims to look at the gender perspective of migration in India during Covid-19 pandemic putting every world order into pieces dismantling all the established socio-economic system. Novel coronavirus forced our age-old lifestyle, the health care system and livelihood into Ventilator. This virus is not only super spreading in terms of disease and death, but also growing unemployment anxiety and fear. It hurled on everyone, making no distinction of age, caste, gender, class or religion but its impact is dis-proportionately different on different class and gender. The migrants in India faced dismaying consequences from this crisis as loss of income, food Shortages and uncertainty about their future unnerved them. Not only the heap of dead bodies, flooded hospitals, empty streets, masked people but the migrants walking barefoot hundreds of miles with hungry children, women and outside with carrying babies both inside empty stomach on the empty roads will be the indelible images of this pandemic.

Key words: Women, Migrants, Gender, Gender inequality, Pandemic

This pandemic opens up many a crack-line in our society. There is no shelter for those who are making a shelter for us, the migrant workers. They are facing unspeakable torture in the hand of unplanned and sudden Lockdown. The lockdown and shutdowns might have proved to put the Coronavirus curve to downwards, but it accelerates the surge of migrant workers especially women in the hand of the pandemic, finance but above all hunger. "If not the virus, we will die of hunger" – is the general outcry of majority migrant workers. Though the whole of the human race is facing the same Corona pandemic, its effect is different for

different gender and class. The poor and the downtrodden migrants are the ones who suffered the most in the face of this pandemic. But women in general and women migrants in particular face double discrimination in terms of pandemic and society. The recent declaration of world Health Organisation (WHO) about the increasing surge in the case of domestic violence, sexual abuse against women around the globe, making the issue clear and loud that gender discrimination is very much there in our society. It raises the most important question that why the women migrants are the worst sufferer of this pandemic, Is it due to because of the nature of the work or because of the gender or for both. Why gender inequality is still there despite the slogan of women empowerment? This pandemic bares open all the existing social inequality and vulnerability that trigger women suffering all the more unbearable in this gloomy time.

The Covid-19 disease may be neutral, but its impact is not gender-neutral. Though the Pandemic starts as a major health crisis it is spreading over all other order and aspects of human existence, disrupting almost everything. Right from economy to social it erupted its surgical strike on every domain of human race. And strangely it affects male and female differently and disproportionately. The spike in sexual, physical and domestic violence and exploitation is adding more physical and mental pressure on women. And female migrants face major risks of sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence.

Women, who are not safe in their homes, how can they be safe at roads? As half of the migrants are women and girls, it's a major concern to look after their safety. Displaced from home, they are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation on roads where they lack the support of law and order. Sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence are the major threat to female migrants. Harassment and verbal abuse are common in these scenarios, burdening them mentally, with physical exertion from walking for a long distance, the fear of sexual harassment, trafficking and violence heaves high on them mentally.

When it comes to the case of women and girls, the issue of pregnancy, child care and other health problem (including menstruation and related problem) comes along. Pregnant women carrying children back home walking and giving birth roadside without any medical support are some of the horrible things we have seen. women and girls walking in their

menstruation suffer immensely from this sudden lockdown imposition. Apart from the shortage of food and water these women migrant with additional gender-specific issues and challenges which left unheard and unattended.

There is the problem of sanitisation for women who are on roads. No toilet or bathroom for women and girls the major concerns who are walking, resting and, sleeping on highways, travelling on foot to back home. Moreover, there is a shortage of sanitary napkins which is not even listed in essential items in the list. This situation shows the vital gaps present in the current scenario to address gender-based differential health Care system, resources, security and support system that are doubly marginalised mainly because of being women as well as migrants.

The gender perspective of migration in India during Covid-19 pandemic exposed all the major cracks in social, political-administrative, economic and policymaking systems of our country. The plight of migrant workers suddenly appearing on roads bare open our ignorance towards them. There are many govt. initiatives on them, still it all shorts fall to address their issues and challenges, particularly of female migrants.

These unspeakable horrors of female migrants in this pandemic force us to ask some basic questions on gender and gender discrimination towards women. why still in twenty-first century we have to think of gender inequality. Why still women are treated as inferior than men? Why gender differences still exist in society?

Gender inequality does exist in society but it becomes crystal clearly visible in the dark hour of this pandemic Women have long been the worst sufferer in the hand of the patriarchal society in terms of gender inequality. The secondary status of women in society becomes normalised through institutionalisation. The patriarchal domination to subordinate women makes their lives miserable and vulnerable.

One is not born but rather becomes, woman. No biological psychic or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society: it is civilisation as a whole that elaborates this intermediary Product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine. Only the mediation or another can constitute as individual as another. (Beauvoir, 330)

Marginalised woman as 'Other' belittle their status in society, make them think inferior in terms of their social standing. All the socio-cultural, political, economic, religious and literal factors are collectively contributed towards the downtrodden status of women in Society. The institutionalised marginalisation of women in form of cultural norms is so pre-occupied in the mind of people, that they follow it with complete awareness of equality and liberty.

Although Official cultural norms uphold the values of equality and tolerance, cultures continued to transmit camouflaged messages of the inferiority of historically subordinated Social groups through stereotypes and other imagery. These deeply ingrained schemes commonly structure attitudes, perception and judgment despite the individual's conscious goodwill. (qtd. A.N. Prasad and S.K. Paul 7)

Gender inequality can be perceived as a process that rationalizes the domination of men over women in all areas of private and public life. This cultural construction involves roles, performances, prospects and representations and sometimes fixes values and beliefs that are distinctly different for men and women. This discrimination subordinates women to men and constricts women only to domestic space, denying her social, economic educational and human rights.

A girl child is unwelcomed at the time of birth and sometimes they are killed from the mother's womb itself. The female child has been treated inferior to a male child and this is intensely inscribed in the mind of a female Child. This makes the female child to think herself as inferior and to realise her second-class status. It is almost difficult and insulting for a female child to face and sense unprivileged life of being a girl or a daughter. This discrimination is deeply grounded from family to society in different strata of life present as different forms.

Women's general subordination was essential at the stage because it was only then that the mechanism of control upon women's sexuality could become effective. Both in terms of economic autonomy through a denial of control over productive resources and automatically in law, women are made appendages of men. Indeed, women themselves were the property, both in terms of their reproductive and their reproductive and their productive labour of men. Even of the performance of the major domestic rituals, women did not have autonomy – they were part of the domestic rituals but could not perform rituals by themselves or for themselves. Only fasts for the benefit of their husbands, sons or brothers

were to be undertaken by them on their own. The general subordination of women was thus the bars of the specific controls that the patriarchal structure placed on them. (Chakravati 73)

Right from the Childhood days a girl is being trained to be gentle, pleasant and submissive, to learn all the chores work of the household, to be treated as a showpiece to be selected by the groom party for marriage, always to be compromising and depended on other. And she is made to believe that she is a slave everywhere and always needs a master to control and guide herself at different stages of life. As Manu puts it is *Manu Samhita*: "In Childhood a woman should be under her father's control, in youth her husband's control, and when the husband is dead, under her sons! She should not have independence" (qtd. in N.K. Jain 12).

From the very beginning, patriarchy is used as a tool for the complete subversion of women taking away their identity, space and rights. They have been reduced to an almost subhuman status. In the name of femininity, strategically they have been excluded from all aspects of human existence limiting their scope space and identity.

The success of any system may be seen in the subtle working of its ideology and in that sense; the pativrata concept can be regarded as a masterstroke of the genius of Hindu normative order as expressed in its cultural values of women. It was one of the most successful ideologies constructed by any patriarchal system, one at which women as themselves controlled their sexuality and believed that they gained power and respect through the codes they adopted. Pativrata may be regarded as the ideological 'purdah' of the Hindu woman as Chastity and wifely fidelity came to be regarded as the means to salvation; it was also how the iniquitous and hierarchal Structure was reproduced with the complicity of women. The actual mechanism and institutions of control over women's sexuality and the general subordination of women were thus completely masked: patriarchy could then be more firmly established as an ideology since it comes to be naturalized. (Chakravati 74)

And this naturalisation of patriarchy never puts this system in question, hence making lives of women miserable, deprived them as young girls in nourishment, care attention and education, dependence in marriage, and no scope for independence any kind. Institutionalised motherhood and childcare further shattered their scope of academic or career pursuits. They are more into unpaid jobs, forced to the burden on never appreciated household works in which they are within the four

walls for generations. Though in recent times the scenario is changing and now women are getting the opportunity to education, career and jobs, but the mindset never changes. Despite best efforts, despite proving their self-worth and talent in every field, they are still not treated as equal. The hierarchy in gender is still prevalent clearly. Sexual harassment both in-home and workplace exposes the power game of gender and how women still lack the basic human right, the right to equality of gender.

The unimaginable plight of female migrant facing the brunt of the pandemic and hunger must bell the ring in everyone's ear loud and clear that gender inequality is right here and we need to fix it. The lack of proper Strategy, policy, schemes might have the reason for their suffering, but the real root of their gender-based suffering is gender inequality which is still dominant in our society. It's not only in the hands of policymakers or administration, but it is the responsibility of the entire society to think and act for social equality of sexes. It should start right from the family itself, making Children believe in gender equality both in theory and practice. The awareness of gender equality must be fully executed through education, and then only it will be reflected through their behaviour in the wider society.

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6

Mutually Exclusive Materialism and Humanism: A Study of H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*

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Abstract

Humanism aims at human values and needs and it creates the human-centric world. All human share compassion, love, affection to one another. They do not harm, wound and hurt each other because humanity doesn't make an unpleasant environment. In contrast, post-humanism and materialism own the same features that villainous thoughts, inhuman, selfish, cunning and greed. The state of being materialistic leads to post-humanism. A post-human not only ruins his own life but also the people around him. H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* examines how science destroys humanism and how materialistic mind turns a normal man into post-human. He emphasis science owns duality that destroyer and protector which have to handle carefully. Griffin, the protagonist and author's mouthpiece, uses invisibility as the weapon to abolish people. His materialistic desires convert him as a wild figure which also devastates his life completely. The paper furthermore elucidates the evil side of science and materialistic man. It also analyses how humanism is being eradicated by post-human.

Keywords: Materialism, Humanism, Post-Humanism, Invisibility and Terror

H.G. Wells is a distinguished nineteenth-century writer whose main focus is on science and time travel. The best among his work is *The Invisible Man* which examines how science ruins humanism and how people are captivated by materialism. Wells presents Griffin as an incredibly talented scientist in his novel and also elucidates how he destroys by using the very same talent. He emphasis science as a monster to the people who own a materialistic mind and as a mother to the people who wish to help each other.

The term 'Humanism' pays attention to the human-centric world and implies the attributes of caring, serving and helping. In reverse, the term Post-Humanism is based on the conception that humankind can go beyond the limitations of the physical human form. This concept originates in the fields of science fiction, futurology, contemporary art, and philosophy that means a person or exists in a state beyond being human.

Materialistic mindset weakens the humanism and strengthens the wild behaviour. Being detached from moral, virtue and goodness is the symptom of materialist mind. The peak of materialism is post-humanism. The desire towards worldly things kills kindness, tenderness and meekness. In the case of Griffin, extrinsic goals turn down his compassion and he is developed as an evil figure. He steals money from his father which leads Griffin's Father's suicide, but his death doesn't affect Griffin. He says "I robbed the old man – robbed my father. The money was not his, and he shot himself" (140).

Griffin's super focus is on money and expects invisibility is the perfect way to making money. He does numerous theft and murders many. His money-making mind transforms him into post-human. He is not able to control his emotions and temper on the spot and he develops his cunning and human behaviours. In *Crime Psychology*, R.B. Verma says the character is built up through their behaviour.

Character is the moral part of the personality that regulates daily behaviours. If a person has defects in their character such as aggressiveness, cunning or brutality, he will find it difficult to rationalize between right and wrong in moments of emotional upset and will not be able to exercise self – control. (5)

The invisible power hides his rational thinking and makes him a brutal creature.

The people of Iping give numerous epithet as his identity like "piebald" (40), "a harmless lunatic" (42), "the supernatural" (41), and "Bogey Man" (42). They are not aware of his background, native, and family. Griffin has experienced the uncertainty of his identity and is reluctant to express her true name. He hesitates to expose his real name and admits his true name only to Dr. Kemp. His invisibility becomes his identity and people name him as Invisible Man. The scientific

transformation mutes his true identity and doesn't let him reveal his authentic nature.

Mankind employs science to invent new thing and tries to change the world. The world is getting transformed from independent to dependent due to the growth of science. The discovery makes people idle, selfless and unkind. Wells strangely figures out that science itself depends on humankind. The Invisible Man Griffin finds that being invisible is not easy as he thought and he expects a helpline throughout the day. He hires Marvel as his assistant and depends on him for every second. Through this, Wells shows that though the invention develops mankind as a dependent one, it cannot survive without human helpline.

Invisibility covers disability. Griffin, an Invisible Man, has albino illness when he was pursuing his degree in college. The disease turns his skin and hair colour into white and even his eyelashes get changed into white colour. He has been bullied several times for his white complexion. He wishes to get out from being bullied so he gets engaged with the theory of invisible. Invisibility will hide his illness is his belief. The transformation is not only to hide his identity but also lock up his disability.

Happiness and materialism are mutually exclusive. People can't have both at the same time. If society wishes to be happy and fulfilled, it has to get rid of materialistic tendencies. Materialists are aimed at becoming rich, seeking power over others, and polishing public image. It makes the people so miserable. Griffin is obsessed with money and likes to rule the village people which result in his dissatisfied life. Though he gets costly things, he is out of happiness. Roy T. Bennett's *The Light in the Heart* says "Time, Happiness, Inner peace, Integrity, Love, Character, Manner's, Health, Respect, Morals, Trust, Patience, Class, Common Sense, Dignity" (119) are top Fifteen things money can't buy.

Betrayal is the outcome of disbelief and desire towards worldly pleasure. Judas, Jesus' disciple, reveals Jesus identity to the people who come to arrest Jesus for the sake of money. Similarly, Marvel, a homeless man, steals Griffin's invisible theory books for the sake of earning money and fame. Marvel says "All I want to do is to help you just tell me what I got to do (Lord!) whatever you want done, that I'm most Willing to do" (81) when he meets Griffin but he pretends to be nice. Griffin, the Invisible Man, believes Marvel blindly and shares his demerits of being

invisible to him alone. On the other side, Marvel gives esteem to banknotes, not to human feelings and emotion.

The term escapism describes being disconnected from unpleasant activities in life. All find peace in escapism, though it is a temporary pleasure it provides an everlasting memory. Television, books, fitness, music and smartphone are the significant ways to escape from reality. This strangely happens with Griffin, he prefers invisibility as a tool to escape from isolation and loneliness. He doesn't have many friends, and siblings so he spends ample time with separation and loneliness. At one point, he immerses into the theory of invisibility and soon after he is succeeded. He escapes loneliness by the help of invisibility. The irony is, he is not happy even after the success of invisibility theory and remains with the same trouble. The below lines from Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* show that escapism is a temporary pleasure.

Closing your eyes isn't going to change anything. Nothing's going to disappear just because you can't see what's going on. In fact, things will even be worse the next time you open your eyes. That's the kind of world we live in. Keep your eyes wide open. Only a coward closes his eyes. Closing your eyes and plugging up your ears won't make time stand still. (154)

Griffin's invisibility helps him to escape from isolation and separation for a while but it ruins his entire life.

One of the best attributes from God is having humanity. The Bible says "And the second, like it, is this: 'you shall love neighbour as thyself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31), serving and helping each other are the impeccable characteristics of humanism. Wells portrays Mrs. Hall's character as the symbol of humanity because she provides shelter, eatables and outfits to a stranger Griffin. She says "Can I take your hat and coat, sir," she said, "and give them a good dry in the kitchen?" (22). Her unconditional love doesn't demand him anything except a tender conversation. Frequently she is humiliated by Griffin's action but doesn't have the thought of depart him. Similarly, Dr Kemp is also a replica of humanity. Even after knowing the cruel side of Griffin, he still wants him to help. He suggests Griffin publish his finding and gain support from others, but Griffin doesn't pay attention to his words rather knocks him down.

The post-human Griffin utilizes human beings' fear as his weapon and begins to frighten them. He owns Iping by his terrific action and even he executes the plan "Reign of Terror" (97) to earn money. He murders a shop owner, witnesses Griffin's invisibility at first, and takes away all his requirement. After this, People of Iping lock up themselves and remain inside four walls, so Invisible Man is started using this anxiety. The wild creature again murders Mr. Wicksteed, strewed to Lord. He cleverly uses their fear to rule the place.

The advancement in science descends human beings' true qualities. Because of the invention, mankind is ready to betray their fellowmen. The fundamental quality of human being is helping others but this gets destroyed due to the development of science. Dr. Kemp seeks the helpline of his neighbour Mr. Heelas when he is attacked by the Invisible Man, but Mr. Heelas shuts his door and becomes muted to Dr. Kemp's pleading. Not only Mr. Heelas but also the entire village people forget their humanity and they let Dr. Kemp in the hands of Invisible Man.

Science owns duality, they are protector and destroyer. Though the invisibility protects Griffin from the village people to some extent, it destroys his life and puts him into death. Griffin is being ruined by invisibility because he can't take food, can't go in rain, snow, fog due to the fear of his body imprint. As his expectation, he gets money by using invisibility but the power abolishes his normal way of living. The following line expresses the injustice role of invisibility "No doubt invisibility made it possible to get them, but it made it impossible to enjoy them when they are got" (88).

Money is essential for survival but it is not the prime thing for life. Griffin believes invisibility is the only way to earn money and hides his finding from fellow scientists to become rich. This attitude leads his downfall and puts an end card for the invisibility formula. Chuck Palahniuk writes in his work *Fight Club* that "The things you own end up owning you. It's only after you lose everything that you're free to do anything." (182).

Griffin goes mad with the power of being invisible. He becomes selfish and refuses to share his knowledge of invisibility with other scientists. His materialistic thought process evolves his as post-human and develops him to create the Reign of Terror in Iping. Wells describes that science succeeds in the discovery of invisibility but it fails to make

people happy. Fyodor Dostoevsky says in his *The Brothers Karamazov* "They have succeeded in accumulating a greater mass of objects, but the joy in the world has grown less." (117). Science, betrayal, disability becomes the cause of Griffin's downfall. His materialistic mindset eradicates humanity, love and compassion. Therefore, materialism and humanism are mutually exclusive in human life.

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7

COVID 19 and the Politics of Prostitution

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Abstract

Criminalization of prostitution has always been an inhuman trend existing in society. If we look at the history of Pandemics, we observe marginalization and stigmatization of the sex-workers by the dominant society. The gaze of so-called 'cultured' society has always produced patriarchal and capitalistic discourses. This paper attempts to deconstruct the binarization between prostitutes and sex workers and tries to focus on the inseparability of the traumatized sex workers during the COVID19 pandemic. Despite several pro-rights movements, the sex-workers are still economically, socially, culturally ghettoized. Now, as they are forced into following strict social distancing under the gaze of a Repressive State Apparatus, it is getting very hard for them to make both ends meet. The term "social-distancing" is now under question as within a narrow space of their residence issues of health and hygiene are challenged. Impacted by the outbreak, they have become invisible as their human rights are at stake. Many of them have failed to access government relief funds because of the lack of documentation. This paper sheds light on how do these sex workers destabilize the fixity of bourgeois morality, distort bourgeois economics, and also vote for the decriminalization of their profession.

Keywords: Ghettoization, Stigmatization, Gaze, Prostitution, Capitalism

Part of the rhetoric of the new "normal" has been several new critical terms like "Janata Curfew", "Lockdown", "Social Distancing", "Sanitization" etc. These words are given a certain kind of social and political sanctity on 22nd March 2020 when the Prime Minister of India declared Janata Curfew for India. Since then these terms have shaped, transformed, and affected frightfully the lives of the individuals, especially the socially invisible, demonized ghettos like the workers of red light area. COVID 19 pandemic has brought into light the forgotten

narratives of the marginal section of the society and revisited the intensified discriminatory prejudices within the privileged centre regarding its peripheral "other" during the hard times of pandemics like HIV-AIDS(1990), SARS(2003), EBOLA(2014) and others. Uncertainty and repercussions of lockdown have discomposed the economic stability and unmasked the asymmetrical class relations that have directly jeopardized the positionality of the sex-workers within the patriarchal (hetero) normative society.

Since the beginning of human civilization, the status of sex-workers or prostitutes have always been posited under smearing questions and solidified the existing stigma associated with the term "prostitute" through repetitive socio-cultural practices. But this scenario was not always the same. In ancient civilization, prostitutes were worshipped as deities. It was not seen as a deviant sexual practice. One of the ancient goddesses named Inanna was a prostitute. In Mesopotamian civilization, there were several temples of prostitution for the appeasement of the goddess (Sanders, O'Neill, Pitcher 12). In ancient Indian civilization, sex workers were held in high status. The ancient roots of prostitution can be found in some ancient texts like Mahabharata, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Vedas, *Puranas*, and in Buddhist literature as well. Devadasis were treated as slaves of God. In ancient, medieval, and even in colonial-era the profession of sex workers was not seen as a deviant work rather given a certain kind of stability to their status. Things started getting transformed into the 1850s. Strict Victorianism took a hazardous way to criminalize prostitution as an evil to the morality of society. They were commodified as a mere object of pleasure. Thus, the brothel system was inaugurated. As time rolls on, society starts getting much more patriarchal and imposing discriminatory norms upon prostitutes and setting forth the process of criminalization of the profession of prostitution. Outbreaks of pandemics have manifested harshly how the process of criminalization and stigmatization of prostitution has placed the sex-workers under the gaze of social policing, weaponized their genitals, and deprived them of their human rights.

Systematic stigmatization of prostitution can lead to a broader dimension of power politics. Power is the agency of an individual or a group that vouchsafes an authoritarian legitimacy in the social structure. According to French and Raven, "power must be distinguished from influence in the following way: power is that state of affairs which holds

in a given relationship, A-B, such that a given influence attempt by A over B makes A's desired change in B more likely" (Wikipedia 2020). In the Marxist thinking, Antonio Gramsci enunciates the politics of cultural hegemony and italicizes "ideology" as a weapon to perpetuate hegemonic hierarchical structure through coercion with consent within the matrix of capitalist society. Michel Foucault calls attention to the phrases "regime of truth" and "power/knowledge" to indicate that power is invested in and the truth is manufactured by the accepted legitimized norms of knowledge. The legitimized knowledge and manufactured "truth" systematize or naturalize victimization of sex workers and devise a privileged discourse of bourgeois morality which determines sex workers as an indecent, lowly, source of contagion and fabricates a "whore-image" inculcating pure/impure binary. This binary essentializes gender discriminatory norms and constructs a perception about their own "self". This politicization of prostitute-bodies is crushing implacably under its wheel, the lives sex-workers in COVID19 pandemic. The age-old nomenclature "nishiddhopolli" (a forbidden area or red light area) is thwarting a privileged group of so-called cultured society to donate necessary needs in these difficult hours. Such deliberate codification of a certain area with negative implications perpetuates suspicion and orchestrates a prejudiced methodology of a privileged group of society to treat its peripheral group. Language plays the most efficacious role in standardizing, categorizing, labelling specific codes, and conduct. This heinous way of abusing sex workers with such negative connotation can inflict an irremediable psychological wound to the sex workers. But unfortunately, the prevalent suspicion of the hetero-normative gaze is, still, intensifying the existing stigma within the society and projecting a "bad-girl" image as a contrast to the representation of the image of an ideal-woman and excluding them, even, from the relief funds provided by different organization in this topsy-turvy situation. Still, some Non-Government Organizations are working to alleviate the socially, culturally, economically marginalized sex-workers from the wounds of a pandemic by providing survival ingredients.

The Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC)—translated as Unstoppable Women's Collective Committee, which today comprises 60,000 female, male and transgender members—is working as much as their resources allow them to procure dry ration including rice, oil, pulses, and essential vegetables like potatoes and onions for the sex

workers of Sonagachi daily. The list also includes masks and sanitisers, but that is simply not enough in numbers. (Banerjee)

The government also has taken some initiative to uplift the condition of the sex-workers. In this context, Sohini Ghosh, a renowned essayist on popular culture and a documentary filmmaker reflect:

The West Bengal government has pledged free rations for 3 months to the working class which would include the sex-workers but only those who have ration cards will benefit. Sadly, a majority of sex workers don't have ration cards because they cannot provide proof of residence...The sex worker is therefore confronted with multiple discrimination and difficulties. Right now, the very existence of sex-workers is under threat.(Banerjee)

In the mainstream media, there is almost no reporting on the deplorable condition of the workers. In an interview, Sudha a sex worker from Delhi raises some grave concerns. She says to a reporter, "We are getting ration here. But there are other expenses like vegetables, gas cylinder, etc. We also need to send some money back to our families. My father has no source of income. Earlier he used to work on farms, now he stays at home. The house is run on whatever money I send him." (Agarwal). Like Sudha, there are almost three thousand sex workers in the red light area, GB Road, Delhi are being economically devastated because of the aftermath of lockdown and they are left with no livelihood to support their family. Many of them left for their hometowns to secure jobs and some of them stayed.

Across Indian cities, migrant sex workers are joining the exodus back to their home towns. In Delhi alone, 60% of sex workers have left the city, estimates the All India Network of Sex Workers (AINSW). Some were driven out by their landlords when they couldn't pay rent, others struggled to afford food and medicines. (Khandekar).

But the irony of fate is that, according to Sudha, the address becomes the only hurdle in securing jobs: 'From GB Road? Sorry, No Job' (Agarwal). This complex situation is harshly pointing out the exclusionary policies of the mainstream society during the pandemic and unravelling the existing hierarchical social structure within the so-called liberal society where the definition of "normal", or "natural", or "just" is conclusively contingent on the exclusion of the powerless by the upper echelons of society. Even, lack of proper documentation is hindering their

way of getting relief from the government as previously espoused by Sohini Ghosh. Sudha ruefully expresses:

Who would give me a job based on an Aadhaar card address that shows GB Road? The moment they see our Aadhaar card, people say you are from 'there' ('red-light' area). We can't show our Aadhaar card anywhere. Even when we go to buy a train ticket, they look at us differently. I am thinking of going back home and working as a labourer on farms. (Agarwal).

Politics of shame and exclusion is very much deepened by continuous policing of the Repressive State Apparatus. Criminalizing sex workers through surveillance or policing, law enforcement is not a new phenomenon. In colonial India, between 1864 to 1869 Contagious Disease Acts were implemented for the protection of the army from venereal diseases. New regulatory norms and acts were channelized and sex workers were registered forcefully by the government for regular medical checkups. Judith Walkowitz (1980) writes:

Working-class prostitutes were subject to a police and medical registration system established under the Contagious Diseases Acts (passed to stem the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in garrison towns and ports). If the woman refused, then she could be imprisoned for three months with hard labour... These 'nation-state' concerns about the strength of the military were used to justify the criminalization of women through medical incarceration in Lock hospitals. (Sanders, O'Neill, Pitcher 113)

As a response to these acts, many movements were eventuated. Especially, feminists started questioning these inhuman laws and forming groups to repeal these acts. Finally, as an outcome of incessant movements, these acts were repealed by the government in 1883. In the post-colonial era, Government of India implemented the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act in 1956. In several sections of this Act, instances of criminalization of the profession of sex workers were evident. In section seven, prostitution in public spaces is made punishable to secure the morality of the so-called cultured society. Other regulations like – prostitute who seduces shall be prosecuted, living on prostitute's money shall be punishable, etc are in the same vein destabilizing their status. These laws are systematically instrumentalized to subjugate sex workers as impure or immoral and ostracize them to the margin. Finally, in 2012 Supreme Court legalized prostitution. Despite of the legalization, there

are certain sections where the position of the sex workers in the society is still shrouded in vagueness. Recently in 2018, Supreme Court has approved Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill but still, the sections regarding basic Human Rights of the sex workers are under question. As a result of the obscurity, indeterminacy, lack of specificity in-laws regarding sex workers they are, still, seen as "other" and especially in pandemics the binary of us/them becomes very much real.

During the HIV/AIDS pandemics, sex workers' plight had been suppressed by law enforcement. Their plight remains unheard. Illiberal attitude and ruthless stigmatization have erased the documentation of psychological, physical violence. UNAIDS is requesting people:

to act with kindness, not stigma and discrimination—people affected by COVID-19 are part of the solution and must be supported. Governments must respect the human rights and dignity of people affected by COVID-19. The experiences learned from the HIV epidemic can be applied to the fight against COVID-19...Key populations must not bear the brunt of increased stigma and discrimination as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. (UNAIDS)

Application of administrative laws criminalizing HIV averted sex workers from seeking judiciary help for justice against psychological or physical violence as they fear of being prosecuted by the state. In the COVID19 pandemic, they are being targeted in the same way. This is an instance of criminalization which is problematizing not only their interaction with law enforcement but also with the service providers during the pandemic. They are being treated like prisoners under vicious panoptic surveillance. French philosopher Michel Foucault elucidates the phrase "panoptic surveillance" as authoritative surveillance or as a weapon of state to monitor everything to maintain discipline. This concept is derived from the concept of panopticism propounded by Jeremy Bentham, an English philosopher, and social theorist. Foucault navigated the functionality of this concept into the power relation of hierarchical capitalist society. He envisaged that this concept exposes the relationship between people and the administration of a state and at the same time metaphorically between power and knowledge. In COVID19 pandemic sex workers are confronting stern challenges under the panoptic monitoring by Repressive State Apparatus. Rigorous surveillance as well as stern regulations to maintain social distancing is

resisting clients and other social workers to ameliorate the dicey state of sex workers. Sudha says:

Some old customers do call us. Those who used to come 3-4 times a week, do come to meet us. But the police trouble us a lot. If any client comes to meet us downstairs, outside the building, the police beat them up. We tell our old clients that we are in trouble and ask for help. Sometimes they give Rs 1,000-2,000; they also give us food. But the police often gets hold of them and beats them unnecessarily."(Agarwal).

Another sex worker named Rashmi(name changed) shared her experience of being monitored by police to India Today. Rashmi said:

We cannot even go down to buy groceries or medicines. Many of us are sick but now we have no means to even reach a doctor or call for help, let alone wearing masks. The police do not listen to us. We anyway have little money left. We do not know when this lockdown will get over. I wonder if all of us will survive this. (Pandey).

The dearth of clients is hampering their source of income and as a result of it they are now in a state of losing their residence. Even, some reports have confirmed that there is a considerable rise in the number of mental health issues among sex workers.

After the outbreak of COVID19 pandemic, strict administrative policies are implemented in the Red Light Areas to maintain "Social Distancing" to check the possibility of transmission of the virus. From the previously mentioned historical analysis of prostitution it is very much explicit that, though the phrase "social distancing" in this COVID19 pandemic has taken a sudden rise in the frequency of its circulation, it is indispensable to bespeak that the society has always distanced itself from the sex workers. Distinctly, this pandemic has widened the gulf between the mainstream society and the sex workers living in the margins. Different state agencies, government and non-government organizations, social media are promulgating the tag line –"Stay Home, Stay Safe". But, regrettably this cannot be applicable within residential space of sex workers. Dr. Jana observes:

How does one practice social distancing when 40-50 per cent of a state, in any case, belongs to slums? How different is a regular slum from a red-light district? We are however sensitising the sex workers to wash hands with clean water and soap as many times as possible and to not touch their faces. Future efforts might include sensitising them to demand that clients wash their hands as well. (Banerjee)

Regulations on social distancing are not questioned but its execution in red light areas is unfeasible. Politics of space is reinforcing the inequalities. The special environment of the sex workers is not hygienic enough to prevent infection. Reports have shown that red light areas are much more susceptible to virus transmission. Dr Abhishek Pandey, Yale University, co-author of the study titled 'Modelling the Effect of Continued Closure of Red-Light Areas on COVID-19 Transmission in India' said:

It is impossible to practice social distancing during sex. Residents of red-light areas including sex workers, pimps, and brothel managers are at higher risk of infection. By keeping red light areas closed till there is an effective preventive measure, thousands of deaths among residents of red-light areas can be averted. (Nair)

This study argues in favour of closing red light areas. They claim, "shutting down red-light districts in Mumbai, New Delhi, Nagpur, Kolkata and Pune can reduce the number of new COVID-19 cases by 72% and deaths by 63% and should, therefore, be closed indefinitely"(Nair). Some striking figures have come:

In Pune's Budhwar Peth, 4,795 cumulative cases, 688 hospitalisations, and 162 deaths. In Mumbai's Red-Light Area of Kamathipura, Grant Road, and Faulkland Road, 3,494 cases, 486 hospitalisations, and 114 deaths. In Nagpur, Itwari Chowk can face 1,667 cases, 236 hospitalisations, and 56 deaths. In the capital city of New Delhi, the GB Road Red Light Area could experience 2,774 cases, 386 hospitalisations, and 91 deaths.(EH News Bureau)

Within narrow residential space the concept of social distancing, sanitization is under question. In most of the brothels, one room is supposed to be shared with more than one or two sex workers. The local area where they live consist of narrow lanes where social distancing is a myth. "Can you imagine 50 people using one public bathroom? Often there is no water," (Tatke)said 23-year-old Sandhya Nair, the daughter of a sex worker who grew up in Kamathipura.

This lockdown has derailed their way of survival and jostled them into dubiety. Split between private and public life initiated by the state can hardly secure the safety of the sex workers from disease and starvation.

Crisis of the sex workers is rooted in a larger social, cultural, economic, political context. Premeditated systematized stigmatization of the profession of the sex workers is not a new phenomenon. Particularly in pandemics, institutionalized patriarchal discourse precipitates the process of segregation and marginalization of the sex workers and reinforces the class, caste discrimination. Many critics have claimed that the patriarchal capitalist structure is the progenitor of the system of prostitution. The dominant group has always objectified and commodified sex workers by suppressing their agency. In a capitalist society, sex workers have been "othered" by the privileged discourse of morality and have always been doubly marginalized – as subjects of exploitation by the employer and oppression by the clients. Amidst the COVID19 pandemic perplexities that are being encountered by sex workers cannot be alleviated by the invention of the vaccine. Government policies must proceed to promote the health and wellbeing of sex workers and also must set motion towards decriminalization of prostitution with proper perceptible law enforcements to erase the existing stigma associated with sex workers. The World Health Organization guidelines state: "All countries should work toward decriminalization of sex work and elimination of the unjust application of non-criminal laws and regulations against sex workers." (WHO 8). Decriminalization can put an end to the exploitation of sex workers and also rescue sex workers from getting vulnerable to violence. The Global Network of Sex Work Projects has urged governments of different countries to go for the decriminalization of prostitution as it is the only way to secure the human rights of the sex workers.

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Representation of Gender Stereotype Roles in Elementary School Text Books

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Abstract

The representation of gender stereotype roles in the primary school language textbooks as a part of the curriculum is obvious and palpable across the education system in the world. This pedagogical process of instilling gender discrimination among the young and tender minds is causing irreparable damage to the fabric and character of family in particular and society in general. The child just about five years old is being subjected to gender-biased and gender disparity images, gender insensitive and non-inclusive language through his/her language text books at the primary school level. At such a tender age, the child is constantly being exposed to images, literature and language which don't include any representation of female gender in many realms and domains within the society. This may impress upon the male child that female gender is physically weak and low in terms of intellectual faculty. Further, the female child may absorb these gender-biased images and develop diffidence and nervousness, which in turn may affect her performance negatively. This paper argues on the representation of gender stereotypes in elementary language textbooks, with samples and illustrations borrowed from textbooks prescribed for primary teaching across the world like India, Italy, Pakistan, Nigeria and Japan. The paper also deals with different aspects in pedagogy like curriculum, syllabus, and evaluation methods that carry a non-inclusive approach to teach a child the basics of social life. A few suggestions also have been given, on what measures can be taken up in the future to amend the curriculum and make it more inclusive.

Keywords: gender bias, gender sensitization, gender stereotyping, gender disparity

"Gender bias in the textbooks is an important, near-universal, remarkably uniform, quite persistent but virtually invisible obstacle on the road to gender equality in education—an obstacle camouflaged by taken-for-granted stereotypes about gender roles." – Ree Lesser Blumberg

Introduction

Gender sensitization is raising the awareness and responsiveness on the critical notions like gender parity and gender equality within the societies. The cultural and social norms defined and designed by patriarchal societies are biased and partial towards the male gender thereby positioning the males on the highest pedestal of hierarchy, power and hegemony. The divide between the male and female gender is too deep and the chasm so created is hard to fill. The perception that the male is superior in terms of physical, intellectual and cultural capacities is widely and deeply indoctrinated and conditioned by the male-dominated societies. Empathy and sensitivity towards the female gender are almost absent within the societies, where the cultural sanctions of male domination are manifested.

The cultural conditioning that a female is inferior to a male is apparent and visible as female is looked down upon as a second class citizen. She is pushed to the margins in every realm possible. She is represented as gentle, soft, intellectually incapable and physically weak in opposition to her male counterpart, who is characterized by features like machismo, aggression, intellectual superiority and physical strength. This normalization of female representation as second sex has done irreparable damage to the fabric of the society. The insensitivity towards the female gender is palpable in the fields of education, workplace, sports arenas, economy, and cultural spaces. It has seeped into many other micro and macro areas at different levels.

The root cause of this disparity and inequities lies within the society, at homes and educational institutions. Gender awareness and sensitization should begin early at home and the elementary school level. In India, many undergraduate students are offered 'Gender Sensitization' as a mandatory subject. This is a welcome change in the curriculum, which is being offered along with other compulsory subjects such as 'Environmental Studies'.

This paper argues that 'Gender Sensitization' should be included at the elementary level though not as a special subject, but through the language textbooks in the form of images and pictures that promote gender parity and equality. Unfortunately, the child, at an impressionable age is being constantly exposed to and is being fed with images of gender disparity and inequity in the form of pictures in his/her elementary textbooks. During the child's formative years these images are etched in his/ her mind leading to a distorted and twisted perspective about the female gender. The damage is already done at the elementary school level, and undoing the damage at the undergraduate level doesn't serve the purpose.

To educate a child towards gender sensitization at the elementary level, the curriculum needs to undergo a 360 degrees shift. The change in the perception is the need of the hour. The orientation and awareness towards gender sensitization is the responsibility of the policymakers, curriculum developers, media personnel and, of course, the adults. Gender bias in the school curriculum operates at multi-levels. The major components that need to undergo overhauling are:

- *Curriculum*: learning material, learning methodology, assessment.
- *Educational material*: content, language, images/ pictures/ illustrations.
- *Classroom interaction*: learner-teacher interaction.
- *Evaluation*: evaluation /examination/ assessment.
- *School organisation*: management/ teachers.

Most clandestinely, the problem of gender bias, gender discrimination and gender stereotyping is operating at multi-levels in most of the elementary textbooks through:

- Gender biased language
- The invisibility of female spaces/ partial visibility / or females subsumed by males
- Illustrations displaying gender stereotype roles

The interaction and dialogue with the educational tools (textbooks) occupy maximum space within the pedagogy. When such tools portray gender discriminatory practices, norms, language and illustrations, the

healthy fabric of the society is affected negatively. The male students might take unwarranted privileges, as the seeds of patriarchal domination are being sown through school education at the elementary level. Unfortunately, for the female students, this gender disparity is forcing them to seek the available limited space or no space within the corrugated social and cultural system.

According to Catherine Ree: "Unfortunately, however, measured – in lines of text, proportions of named characters, mentions in titles, citations in indexes – girls and women are under-represented in textbooks and curricula. When school textbooks show very narrow expectations about what boys and girls should be, then school children are socialized into that."

A few samples of, subject material and content from English language textbooks which demonstrate gender bias.

Sample 1:

This is Mr. Wisnu. He is an office employee.

This is Mrs. Rianti. She is a housewife.

Sample 2: On Sunday, Rima was helping her mother cooking in the kitchen.

She was so happy to help her mother in the kitchen.

The above samples are clear markers of gender discrimination and bias being exhibited through gender stereotyping of roles. The first sample says that the occupation of the woman is a housewife and that of the male is an office employee. The second sample shows that the girl helps her mother in the kitchen on Sundays. This sample speaks of how women's spaces are confined to domestic domains performing mundane jobs like cleaning and cooking whereas the males go out to do physical and intellectually demanding work.

Another sample of Reading activity from an English language textbook:

Sample 1. Farmers must know the weather conditions so that their crops can be planted at the right time.

Sample 2. The housewife, too, must know the weather for the day to be able to decide her daily activities, for example, laundry work.

Yet again, another example of gender discrimination that is rife in the content, subject material of the textbooks. In sample 1, while the farmers should vary in weather conditions for the cultivation practises, sample 2 says that a housewife should know the weather to do her laundry.

This sample establishes the roles of gender by stereotyping and assigning the work they are supposed to do, thereby wedging a deep gulf between the two genders. Lauren Camera, a Senior Education Writer says in her article, 'How Children Around the World Learn to Be Sexist':

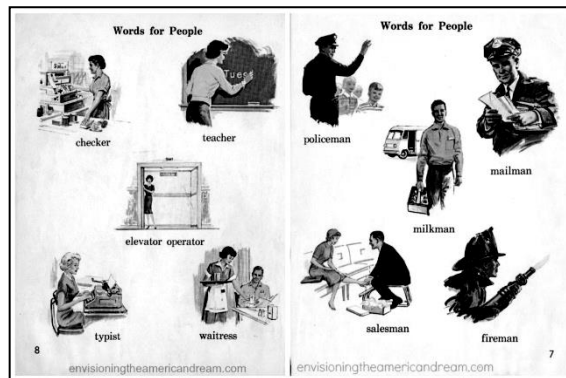
"Women were portrayed as accommodating, nurturing household workers and girls as passive conformists, while boys and men were engaged in almost all the impressive, noble, exciting and fun things,"

A few samples of Illustrations from elementary English textbooks which demonstrate gender bias:

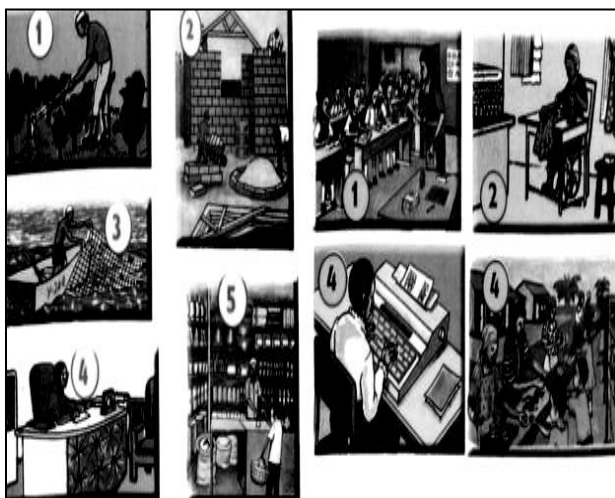
Sample 1:



Sample 2



Sample 3



The above illustrations depict how gender roles are established and stereotyped through the work division between male and female gender. In all the three samples, the men are shown as taking up hard, physical, challenging, intellectually uncompromising roles like that of a doctor, fireman, pharmacist, policeman, etc. The female roles are bill checker, nurse, typist and teacher which are routine, ordinary, not so intellectually exciting jobs. Women's representation in such stereotypical roles may severely impact the psyche of the girls and could have an ill effect on their performance, achievements and accomplishments.

The illustrations are more gender-biased than the language. Gender bias in visual content can be observed in sample 1. There are 6 people, out of which 4 are male and two are female. By understanding the ratio of men and women in this image as well as the roles these characters play, it is clear that stereotyping of gender roles and underrepresentation of women in the workforce is evident in the elementary textbooks.

According to the research conducted by Catherine Ree – “In India, on average, more than half the illustrations in primary English, Hindi, mathematics, science and social studies textbooks depicted only males, while only 6% showed just females. In the six mathematics books used in primary schools, men dominated activities representing commercial,

occupational and marketing situations, with not a single woman depicted as an executive, engineer, shopkeeper or merchant”

A few samples of assignments and evaluation from elementary English textbooks which demonstrate gender bias:

Sample 1:

Activity 3

Put the verbs in brackets in the simple present or in the present progressive.


What are the Thompsons doing today ?

Mr Thompson is in the garage now. He **(to wash)**..... his car. Mrs Thompson is in the kitchen. She **(to prepare)**..... lunch. She **(to like)** cooking very much. Her daughter Nancy sometimes **(to help)**..... her but now she is in her room. She **(to do)** her homework.

Sample 2

4 An Evening with Saikat's Family

A Look at the pictures and say what each person is doing.



A1 Read the following passage.

Saikat lives with his parents in an apartment in Bogra. His father, Mr. Islam, is a banker. In his free time, Mr. Islam writes stories. He loves listening to music of old times, too. Saikat's mother, Maleka Begum is a housewife. She loves sewing in her free time. She makes dresses. She often gets orders from her friends and neighbours. Saikat reads in class five. He is a good student. He wants to improve his English. So he watches cartoons on TV and reads English story books everyday.

The above samples from worksheets and assignment activities reflect the gender-biased language and gender stereotypical roles. In sample 1, to teach simple present or present progressive tense, stereotypical gender roles have resurfaced. Mr Thomson is washing his car in the garage; Mrs Thomson is cooking lunch in the kitchen. The space for the man is the garage and he is in his car, whereas Mrs Thomson's designated space is

the kitchen. It is also important to note that the identity of the woman is not given by her name but by referring to her as Mrs Thomson.

In sample 2. A family is introduced to the students to look at the pictures and say what each person is doing. The man is represented as a banker who is seen sitting at his study table writing stories, doing some creative work during his free time. But, the woman is represented as a housewife, who likes to stitch clothes in her free time. Rea Lesser Blumberg who has done extensive research on Gender Bias in Textbooks says: "Such illustrations of men's and women's roles have implications in social life. She rightly argues that textbooks occupy 80% of the classroom time, and therefore, have a significant impact on the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, she also argues that gender bias in textbooks can contribute towards low achievement by girls."

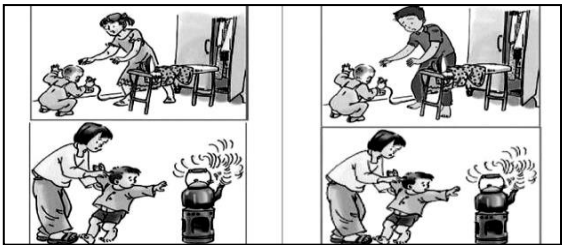
Classroom interaction: learner-teacher interaction

Women's invisibility or partial visibility in the textbooks is prevalent all the world over. It is a huge obstacle and a gap in the education system. The gender imbalance should be rectified and the curriculum needs a revamping and restructuring. But, before such a leap is taken up and imbalance sorted, what role can the teachers play in stalling further damage. The teachers’ role is crucial, and this fact cannot be ignored.

Sample 1



Sample 2



The above visuals can bring in some balance in gender stereotyping of roles. In sample 1, panel 1 shows a young boy representing promise, the element of curiosity and observation with a lens in his hand. But, with a small correction, the second panel shows a girl joining the boy to share her curiosity and observation along with the boy.

In sample 2, the first panel shows the woman as the nurturer and protector of the child; in the second panel, the man is shown as sharing the household chores and also is seen as a responsible parent. This egalitarian approach is laudable and welcome, as it helps in breaking the gender stereotype roles and also in shifting the perceptive of the children during their crucial formative years.

The teachers can also innovatively use the given visuals and use them differently to bring in gender sensitization among the young kids. The teachers may show gender-biased visuals and gender stereotypical roles and gender-biased language and pictures and ask the students to identify the bias and imbalance and also encourage them to discuss the dangers and ill effects of gender discrimination. Catherine Jere says – "Some Indian and Malawian textbooks challenge students to identify gender bias in accompanying illustrations and urge them to discuss these stereotypes with their peers,"

Conclusion

Gender sensitization and awareness on this subject has increased in the past few years. This subject is made mandatory for undergraduate students in some universities. UGC is also arranging and encouraging teachers at the UG level to attend orientation programmes, workshops and seminars related to this theme. This is a good sign and needs to be upheld. On the same breath, the curricula developers and policymakers at the higher levels should comprehend the extensive sweep of the problem of gender disparity and gender stereotyping being passed in the cloak of primary education from one generation to the other. If gender equity, gender parity content, visuals, and assignments are presented to the young minds, they will automatically absorb the positive content and become gender-sensitive. This, in turn, helps in repairing the damaged cultural and social fabric in terms of gender discrimination in the society at all levels

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Elements of Transgression in *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi*: A Critical Study

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Abstract

Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi by Pratibha Ray is an exemplary revisionist mythic narrative. The book, originally written in Odia, was translated in English by Pradip Bhattacharya in 1995. As the title of the text suggests, Yajnaseni is the other name of Draupadi. She was born out of the altar of the sacrificial fire of a *yajna*, thus, she is known as Yajnaseni. The purpose of her birth was to eradicate *adharma* and establish *dharma*. One who was born to establish *dharma* had fallen victim to drastic *adharma* and suffered excruciatingly almost throughout her life. Pratibha Ray in her text depicts Draupadi's character from multiple dimensions. Her text stands out as a classic example of revisionist mythmaking as she assimilates all the three major components of the genre in the text – revisualization, reinterpretation and reimagination. Further, she also attempts at re-imaging Draupadi in her narrative. Draupadi's character stands out as an independent figure. Draupadi caters to be a mouthpiece of the epic female characters who have remained marginalised for ages. She challenges the androcentric cultural definition of women. The text is a potential, yet the subtle narrative of transgression. Despite abiding by all the societal norms and demands, Draupadi continuously kept questioning about what is right and what is wrong. The present research paper aims at a close textual analysis of the transgressive elements present in *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi*. The paper attempts to explore Ray's depiction of Draupadi's introspective mind, her attempt to seek justice for the subjugated ones, and her acts of resilience and resistance.

Keywords: transgression, revision, resistance, exploration, narrative

Introduction

Ray has employed an interesting epistolary narrative technique in *Yajnaseni*. The novel seems to appear as a letter, one single letter written to Krishna, by Krishnaa (Draupadi in this text has mostly been referred to as Krishnaa and Yajnaseni). Draupadi writes the letter before her death, while she was on the way to *Mahaprasthana*. However, a close look at the narrative technique exhibits an intriguing facet. The narrative begins with the term "Finis", and ends with the term "Beginning", whereas ideally, it should have been the reverse. Draupadi's first-person narration is her contemplation on her whole life which is captured in between the 'finish' and the 'beginning'. She admits that although she has finished writing her letter, much has remained unwritten, and subsequently she pours her heart out to Krishna, her dearest friend, her *Sakha*. Thereafter, the whole novel captures Draupadi's recollection of the turns of events of the great epic from her perspective, in which she is the narrator and Krishna is the narratee. Ray seems to be at play with the temporality of the narrative time and the narration takes place as a flashback. Towards the end of her retrospection, Draupadi questions Krishna about the true nature of *dharma*, about the purpose of war, and the value of a woman in the society. A novel written in the context of Mahabharata becomes so very contemporary because of the questions it raises, the questions which indeed pose a potential challenge to the norms and practices of the patriarchy.

"Transgression has become a critical and cultural icon of radical nonconformity, an unvoiced insistence that the proper role of the intellectual is resistance; to work tirelessly against the oppressive boundaries which act to stifle a hitherto hidden human potential that will shine forth when the mechanisms of the systems of oppression are overcome" (Tauchert 2).

Ray reinterprets the grand text, Mahabharata from a feminist perspective. Her text poses a grave challenge to the popular notion that the epic was all about brave and strong men. It is through her characterization that Draupadi occupies the central space. Ray has transgressed and subverted the age-old notions of the great epic. The text emerges as literary produce through which both the author and the protagonist appear to be non-conformists, subtly though. Like the intriguing narrative form, Ray's text has an equally interesting and enthralling content which is substantially subversive. The depiction of

the grand epic through the lens of a female character alters the dimension of the Mahabharata text that reigns over the collective consciousness of the Indians. Draupadi's psychological retrospection in the text itself emerges as a medium of resilience. Draupadi, in this text, has the agency to transgress the patriarchal values and ideals that she had to constantly fight against. The plot of the novel revolves around Draupadi, Krishna and Arjun, keeping the other characters like Kunti, the rest of the Pandavas, and the Kauravas in the background.

Critical Analysis of Transgression in *Yajnaseni*

"Women in Indian myths have been constructs of culture oscillating between challenges of identity and suffering for family and state" (Das 66).

Ray subverts this predominant patriarchal cultural tendency by representing Mahabharata through Draupadi's lens. *Yajnaseni* traces Draupadi's life from her birth to death, her perception of the situations she has been through, her sacrifice, her marriage to the five Pandavas, the humiliation she suffered at the royal court of Hastinapur, and finally the instrumental role that she played in the happening of the great war. The text narrates the story of her extraordinary journey through tremendous suffering, which offers a re-imaging of Draupadi. The plot deviates much from the popular narrative of the Mahabharata in depicting the relationship between Krishna and Draupadi (Krishnaa). In Ray's narrative, Draupadi was initially deeply in love with Krishna, and only after she was convinced by him that Arjun too was a part of Krishna, she agreed to marry Arjun. Eventually, as the tale progresses, the author demonstrates a novel perspective regarding the complex relationship between Draupadi and her five husbands. With extreme subtlety, Ray questions the righteousness of Kunti's words which forced Draupadi to be polyandrous. Draupadi's attitude towards Karna too calls for some attention. In this text, she appears to be thoroughly sympathetic with Karna. Irawati Karve, in *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch*, comments that there is no mention of Draupadi's affinity towards Karna in Mahabharata. This view emerged from a later Jain Purana (Karve 86).

"The Draupadi of the Mahabharata stormed and raged, but to the last moment she remained a faithful wife" (Karve 86).

However, the dimension of Draupadi's concern for Karna becomes significant in the context of Ray's narrative as Draupadi's empathy

towards him is also a manifestation of her inner strength and her individuality.

The term, 'transgression' commonly refers to a crossing-over of moral or social boundaries. According to this dominant understanding of the term, whether *Yajnaseni* can at all be referred to as a transgressive text, certainly becomes a matter of debate since the book does not exhibit any shocking sign of transgression. Julian Wolfreys suggests in his book, *Transgression: Identity, Space, Time*, that transgression need not always have a vehement manifestation. "The transgressive text is not the one that shocks. Not necessarily. It is not a play, film, novel, work of art or fiction that represents violent or excessive acts" (Wolfreys 12). Wolfreys further elucidates that a demonstration of shocking textual elements might sometime make it a cliché and predictable narrative. Any text can emerge as a transgressive one once it becomes a point of departure from the predominant ideologies, and conventions. According to him, transgression also refers to a foregrounding of the marginalised elements of a narrative. In this context, it can be claimed that transgression thoroughly permeates the narrative of *Yajnaseni*. It becomes a reference point for reviewing and re-interpreting Mahabharata. The narrative form also subverts the 'great tradition' of epic narrative. Vyasa's authoritative, yet objective, voice is displaced and substituted by Draupadi's personal, emotional, and psychological, and invariably, an informal account of suffering and resilience. More so, *Yajnaseni* broadens the scope for intertextuality as well. It offers a point of departure to a thorough revisionist analysis of the place of women in the domain of Indian epics. This gets reflected when Draupadi refers to Sita's plight, "Sita had to become the medium for the destruction of Lanka and the establishment of Ram's rule.....But ultimately what did Sita get? The sentence of exile from Ram! Public test of chastity?" (Ray 8). and questions the androcentric ideology of exploiting women for man's benefit. Her query challenges the universal image of a woman that patriarchy has established. She defies the notion that a woman should always remain submitted to man's advantage and then be denied of a dignified life again subjugating to the patriarchal societal norms. Ray's text thoroughly addresses issues regarding the oppression of women in the patriarchal structure of the society, the significance of marriage, the bonding of marriage and its ideal and actual state, and the way society still treats

woman as an object. These social issues are analysed through Draupadi's lens which makes the text highly contemporary as well.

Yajnaseni exhibits a constant oscillation woven in the narrative. On one hand, Draupadi is of a sacred birth, the princess of the kingdom of Panchal, King Drupad's daughter, stunningly beautiful, learned in the scriptures and well-groomed in every sense, on the other, the moment she narrates her life post marriage, it becomes much complicated, and it seems that she loses all her comfort entangled in the web of polyandry. At the beginning of the text itself, Draupadi questions the purpose of marriage and its consequences, "Affection, love, sacrifice and surrender! If man suffers the consequences of his own deed, then offering myself at the feet of the five husbands for the sake of preserving Yudhishtir's dharma, why did I have to bear the burden of the whole world's mockery, sneers, innuendos, abuse, scorn and slander?" (Ray 3).

This helpless query of a helpless woman at once raises many questions, the primary of which is, what *dharma* is actually about! In a swayamvar, Draupadi had chosen her husband based on the fulfilment of a particular condition laid down by King Drupad. Fulfilling the condition demanded extreme skill in archery. Only Arjun could achieve that, although in the disguise of a mendicant brahmin, still, he rightfully had the right to marry Draupadi. Then how could it be Yudhishtir's *dharma* to tell Kunti that they had brought a "priceless thing", and not refer to Draupadi as the one meant to marry Arjun. Draupadi could not suppress her anger and anguish at this attitude of Yudhishtir's attitude, "Disgust was welling up in my heart for the elder brother." (Ray 56).

She could realise that she would be subjected to endless insult, and limitless shame, if she accepted all the five brothers as her husband. But the five brave warrior brothers conveniently ignored her plight and tension. The four, Yudhishtir, Bhim, Nakul and Sahadev were simply immersed in the lust to enjoy Draupadi as their wife. And poor Draupadi became a mere object of enjoyment. Her character becomes massively transgressive when she questions Yudhishtir's intention, "It seemed to me that the elder brother had deliberately uttered such equivocating sentences to convey the news of my arrival to Mother.....The other brothers would also have been attracted to me. Therefore, why would they let such an opportunity slip from their grasp?" (Ray 58-59). This statement of Draupadi's strips the Pandavas of all their nobility.

Transgression lies in the fact that Draupadi figured out the lustful nature that they truly possessed. She was extremely disappointed at Arjun's attitude as well. She had chosen Arjun as her groom, she and Arjun had fallen in love with each other, still Arjun maintained silence at the hour of crisis when Draupadi needed his support the most. "I was furious with my husband. Was this the same heroic warrior? Why did he not rebel hearing that his wife was to be turned into an object of enjoyment for his elder and younger brothers?" (Ray 56). asked Draupadi to herself. With this statement, Draupadi stands out as a strong woman of independent thought. She makes it clear, that although under the pressure of the circumstances she had to accept Arjun's brothers as her husbands, still within herself she was empowered enough to call Arjun a coward. Arjun's bravado and prowess were at stake. Only being a great warrior in the war front does not make a man a hero. A hero should have other finer senses as well. Arjun was incapable of protecting his wife, thus Draupadi had every right to question his bravery.

The other more disturbing fact that comes out of this entire episode of sharing one woman by the five brothers is that the society has always looked down upon women as a mere object of enjoyment. Ray has depicted the tremendous complexity that Draupadi faced in satisfying all the brothers simultaneously, in an excellent way. "It was easy to get married one by one to five husbands. But how complicated it was to live a married life successfully with them!" (Ray 91). While Yudhishtir wanted to have Draupadi's company for scholarly discussion, Bhim needed her to fulfil his physical needs, Arjun again wanted her as the beloved woman, while the younger brothers Nakul and Sahadev desired her to satisfy their immature playful needs. Draupadi was torn between these people, and nobody cared for what she wanted.

Treating Draupadi as a mere object did not remain restricted only to force her to marry the five Pandava brothers. It got manifested in the ugliest way in the Kuru royal court when she was used as a stake in the game of dice by Yudhishtir, and even more when she was brought to the court treated as a slave, to treat her as a mere sexual object. Staking Draupadi in the game of dice, Yudhishtir had staked his *dharma*. "Full of anguish and anger I was thinking: was woman merely man's movable or immovable property? Was I a part of Yudhishtir's movable and immovable property, male and female slaves, horses and elephants?" (Ray 235). This exhibits patriarchy's attitude towards woman. Yudhishtir

did not hesitate to stake his wife because he did not consider her as a fellow human being who had her own choice and emotions. She was degraded to an object, which he could have made use of in any way he wanted. And then there were the Kaurava princes who wanted to strip her naked in the public, only to gratify their sexual desire. At that instance, all the glory of Dharmaraj Yudhishtir had disappeared! He was completely unglorified in Draupadi's view. And so were the other Pandavas, who failed to raise their voice against this severe atrocity on their wife. " "Ramchandra invited grief by running after the golden deer. But Yudhishtir ran blindly after the dice – it was this that became the root of all my sorrows" (Ray 248), said Draupadi to herself.

Ray has created her Draupadi as a woman not only with emotion, love, care, warmth, and affection, but also a woman with a critically analytical mind. Thus, in her text, Draupadi subverts many popular notions which have remained dominant in the consciousness of the Indian mind. Comparing the Kaurava princes with Ravan, she found Ravan was better than them, "Ravan abducted Sita but did not rape her. Despite finding her alone he did not misbehave with her. Despite being moved by his perverted lust, he did not touch her body in the Ashok forest. He only kept begging her for love." (Ray 241). Ravan, the archetypal villain is being in a way praised by Draupadi, that a man with all his darkness fell short to the ruthlessness of the Kuru princes. Her thought about Karna too had a touch of deep thoughtfulness and emotion. She could never accept that a man could be put down only for the reason of being low born. Ray portrays that Karna was insulted in the *swayamvar* of Draupadi by her brother Dhrishtadyumna, and that Draupadi never approved of that. "My heart melted with sympathy for this cursed hero.... Oh! Why was he not a Kshatriya! Why was he not son of Kunti? If he was, then, whether he had won me or not, in any such *swayamvar*-hall he would surely not have been insulted.... Insult is more painful than failure. I determined – if I ever got the chance I would beg forgiveness from this noble youth for that day's insult. What was the sense of my being learned and scholarly if I do not honour the valiant appropriately?" (Ray 109). Unfortunately, this thoughtful mind of Draupadi was never recognised neither appreciated. Her identity remained limited in the corporeal image of a woman.

In *Yajnaseni*, Draupadi appears as the representative of all the other female characters who had also been subjected to humiliation, abuse,

insult, atrocity, and ill-fame. "The voice of a woman in almost all cultures, down history, has been silenced and rendered passive" (Das 66). Draupadi defends these marginalised women. Be it Satyawati, who was always taunted by the people of Hastinapur as a fisher-woman, or the childless widows of Vichitravirya, Ambika and Ambalika, who were forced to be united to Vyasa to give birth to the Kuru princes, for which they had earned ill-fame. Amba, the more unfortunate one had her life ruined because of Bhishma and died a pathetic death. Gandhari had to submit to her fate to accept a blind man as her husband, and then voluntarily accepted to remain blindfolded for the rest of her life. Kunti was subjected to utter disrespect throughout her life for having given birth to sons who were not Pandu's. She got them through the process of *niyoga* from different gods. The grand epic Mahabharata remains to be a narrative of brave men. These women characters and their part of the narrative often remain outside the canonical discourse. Ray attempts in *Yajnaseni* to render some justice to these characters through Draupadi's voice.

Michel Foucault writes in "Preface To Transgression", "Transgression opens onto a scintillating and constantly affirmed world, a world without shadow or twilight, without that serpentine "no" that bites into fruits and lodges their contradictions at their core. It is the solar inversion of satanic Denial" (Foucault 37). The conclusion of Ray's text resonates this idea. Towards the end of her long retrospection, Draupadi finally affirms every woman's position in the androcentric world. She subverts all patriarchal norms and lays down rules for the benefit of women which would give them the rights and dignity that they have been long denied. More so, it does not remain restricted to issues only concerning women. Her argument transcends the boundary of race and gender. She appeals to Krishna to bestow on the world better human values, "Therefore I request that because of race, religion, language and colour let no country split into parts like Hastinapur and Indraprasth. Inequality is Your creation. Let not the integrity, unity and purity of any country be destroyed." (Ray 396).

The novel ends with the conclusion of the epic war. At this stage, Draupadi seems to be in her most matured state of mind. She realizes that revenge does not bring happiness in the end. She demands some changes in the societal norms, for the well-being of the world, which states that – no woman should ever be married to many men, no mother

should grieve for her sons, a man should be born free of lust and that no land should get fragmented and devastated based on race, religion, language and colour. Her final realization is, "Today I think that if I had vowed from the beginning to establish peace then innocent men and women of Aryavart could have lived on" (Ray 397). Draupadi, the courageous, emancipated woman stoically takes the onus of the destruction caused on her. Draupadi appears almost as a visionary at the end of the novel, and her vision makes renders to the ancient epic Mahabharata a contemporary colour.

Conclusion

"She [Ray]acknowledges Draupadi's strength of mind, unrelenting courage, and spirit of protest, while also viewing her through a prism of love and compassion for the psychological pain she had to suffer throughout her life" (Luthra 148). Draupadi's character, in *Yajnaseni: The Story of Draupadi*, is multi-layered and multidimensional. She protests the social norms uphold the idea of justice for women, challenges the hypocrisies of patriarchy, and subverts the patriarchal ideology and convention. This research paper has attempted to present a critical textual analysis of *Yajnaseni*, evaluating it as a transgressive text. It has explored Draupadi's characterisation as a medium of transgression. The present paper examines how *Yajnaseni* operates on the margins and gives centrality to one strong female epic character who represents the marginalised and seeks justice for them. Ray has attempted to create a humane character, demystifying the epic grandeur which perhaps is transgressive more than anything else. The paper has analysed the multidimensional perception of the idea of transgression, which has been used in this paper as a context to analyse *Yajnaseni*. The paper has aimed to underscore how, with profound intricacy, towards the conclusion of her novel, Ray has demonstrated that Draupadi's actual intension was to establish the *dharma* of humanity more than anything else. That Draupadi was indeed, "*vadhunam hi visista me tvamdharmaparama sati.*"

For you are distinguished of women, virtuous, an emblem of dharma
[II.64.27]" (McGrath 167)

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Finding Nature in the Cities: An Ecocritical Study of Sarah Ladipo Manyika's *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun*

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Abstract

Ecocritics attempt to examine the relationship of human beings with nature. By bringing nature into focus of discussion, ecocritics try to analyse how nature is represented in the literatures that come up from the contemporary society. Sarah Ladipo Manyika is a Nigerian-British writer writing mostly about the diasporic Africans in the western countries. *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* is her second novel which is about the life of a retired professor Morayo Da Silva living at San Francisco. While putting light on the different aspects of her life, Manyika also shows the surrounding environment at San Francisco and people's treatment of that environment. She shows how people in cities exploit nature and cause harm to themselves. By employing the theories propounded by Greg Gerrard, Alan Liu and Hayden Washington, this paper makes an ecocritical observation into the text and traces how nature and human beings affect each other and how the concept of 'nature' is constructed socially in the cities like San Francisco.

Keywords: urban settings, dependence, exploitation, nature, Sarah Ladipo Manyika

Introduction

It has been long since ecocritics have been trying to examine and establish the relationship between human and nature as being presented in works of literature and literary studies. An ecocritic, according to Richard Kerridge, "seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis." (5) Traditionally the writers of nature were celebratory in tone; sometimes

they lamented the loss of balance in nature by human intervention. Most of the times the settings were either any country side or the woods or a village with exotic natural beauty. But with the widening of perspectives and scopes in the field of ecocritical studies, writers are now concentrating upon portraying the relationship of human and nature against urban background. In the words of Robert M. Myers, "More recently, literary ecocritics have also begun to engage with the city" (189). So the effects of human behavior, driven by culture, upon the surrounding environment are getting more and more attention in the domain of ecocritical studies.

Keeping this in mind, the present study has chosen *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* by Sarah LadipoManyika, for the analysis of human-nature relationship in a place where human dominates and exploits nature randomly. The whole plot is set at the city of San Francisco and shows how, though overpopulated with buildings and vehicles, nature continues to affect the physical and mental health of people living there. We, in this paper, have thus tried to bring out the elements of how people respond to nature, exploit it, manipulate it and at last recognizing their dependence, crave for returning to it.

One of the reasons for choosing this novel is that here we find an array of human activities which have a direct connection with their surrounding environment and we get to see how nature exhibits its effects upon the physical and mental health of the characters. *Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* is the story of a woman ageing and becoming old gradually. Separated from her husband, Morayo lives in a small cottage at San Francisco and tries to enjoy her life to the fullest. Being a retired professor, she has created her own world with books and thinks to write fiction of her own. Apart from books another thing that she loves, which draws our attention too, is nature. She loves flowers and thinks to make a tattoo of her favorite flower. She loves to see sky and enjoys the sights of natural landscapes. When alone, she thinks of her childhood days at Nigeria and after that her short stays in other different countries. She recapitulated the mango orchards, clear sky, herds of animals and airs throbbled with bird's song.

This study of the text, however, differs from all other studies since it brings nature from its secondary, marginalized position to the center of focus. In spite of the impossibility to perspectivise all the grandeurs of

nature in a city like San Francisco, this novel presents the dependence of human beings upon nature, in their everyday life. The study thus tries to analyse particularly how the nature is affected by the human activities, how human beings manipulate the nature, and how finally they recognize their dependence upon nature.

In order to explore the nature-human relationship and interaction, this study employs theories of ecocriticism advanced by Greg Garrard, Alan Liu and Haydn Washington among others. Ecocritics strongly disagree that nature, like everything in the world is socially constructed. They say that nature preexisted in the world even before human beings came into existence and it is still an entity which needs no human justification. Nature affects human life and human activities also affect nature, sometimes fatally. Garrard, by referring to the introductory chapter of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* mentions that it is not any single exceptional incident, but human behavior is continuously exploiting nature, in different parts of the world, causing serious threats to ecosystem.

In his book *Ecocriticism*, Garrard defines two kinds of human attitudes towards nature – cornucopian and the environmentalist. Cornucopians are those who consider the environmental problems as “exaggerated” and “illusory” (Gerrard, 16). They are sometimes backed by anti-environmentalists and are most hazardous for the environment. Environmentalists, on the other hand, are those “who are concerned about environmental issues such as global warming and pollution, but who wish to maintain or improve their standard of living as conventionally defined, and who would not welcome radical social change” (Gerrard, 18). These two kinds of people are mostly found in the urban areas and therefore our study will focus on the cornucopian and environmentalist attitudes of the characters in the novel.

American theorist Alan Liu, however, is particularly critical about how we use the term “nature”. In his book *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* he argues that declaring something natural or “simply given” may sometimes be meant to cover the underlying politics in the society. In his opinion, injustice and inequalities are often “naturalized” by showing it to be normal, inevitable and unavoidable. He says, “Nature is the name under which we use the non-human to validate the human, to interpose a mediation able to make humanity more easy with itself”. (38).

So it is also necessary for us to analyse how different layers of meanings lay hid under the natural events or thoughts as found in social discourses.

We cannot deny the fact that it is we who need nature more than nature needs us. And when we are so dependent upon nature we must take its care too. In the words of Haydn Washington, "Humanity is dependent on Nature to survive, yet our society largely acts as if this is not the case" (i). Thus the objectives of our study requires to include the investigation of how people, even residing in the cities are dependent upon nature, and returns to nature whenever needed.

Human-Nature Interaction

Brian Chikwava observes, "*Like a Mule Bringing Ice Cream to the Sun* is a delightful multi-helical reading experience that speaks to our times in insightful and pleasantly understated way". While reading the novel we get to see the life of professor Morayo so closely that sometimes it feels like she is one of us, representing our everyday life. There are several characters with different personalities and bents of mind, yet all of them converge in to a single point – they all have been influenced by their surrounding environment. Though living in cities full of social and artificial engagements, they could not ignore the contribution of nature and it gets reflected in their life narratives also. Thus it is necessary for us to bring nature from its marginal position to the center of our study and examine how it plays role in the lives of the city dwellers.

Human Exploiting Nature

Since the inception of civilization humans have been exploiting nature for their own purposes. The greatest manifestation of this damage and exploitation are the cities and metropolis with their roads, malls, high rise buildings, vehicles, industries and also pollutions and health hazards. In the words of Shah and Kumari:

Nature and human beings are closely linked to each other and it is impossible for human beings to separate themselves from its influence. Since ages, man has been exploiting nature for his personal profits and pleasures without giving a single thought to the damage and destruction he is causing to natural environment. (4)

Our present novel also contains a good number of examples in which we see the characters to exploit nature without even thinking of its

consequences. Thus when Morayo at the beginning of her narrative recapitulates her days at Lagos, she says that the noise and pollution which are the results of environmental degradations made her sick – “I know that I’m not likely to feel at home in such a crowded city.... Those days of being able to deal with the daily headaches of Lagos life are gone” (Manyika, 5). Similarly, when she goes back to the memories of her childhood days at Jos, she mentions how human interventions have made the roads dirty and full of bumps. The city Sacramento also carries marks of environmental plunder resulting in its loss of natural characteristics – “Sacramento was such a disappointing capital city. So lacking in character. No hills or mountains; just like a flat plate” (Manyika, 8). The lifelessness of the city hurts Morayo. However, the consumerist nature of city dwellers comes to fore when Morayo herself, without having any reason picks up two brunches of tulips and brings it home.

Environmentalists, according to Gerrard, are those who are concerned about the damages in the ecosystem but are reluctant to sacrifice their pleasures and luxuries for the sake of the nature. In line with this, while people and animals are supposed to co-exist on the earth, the consumerist human activities drive others away from the places where both could stay. This attitude gets reflected as Morayo, being disturbed with the street pigeons, mentions in one of her comments:

It’s bad enough that the street pigeons feel free to waddle in through the cafe door and that the bird lovers won’t shoo them out, even when they keep returning, greedily waddling back for seconds with their heads jerking to a cocky hip-hop beat. So that’s bad enough, but this business of bringing birds into a restaurant on your arm or shoulder, well I really can’t be dealing with that. (Manyika, 21)

Likewise Raggie also exhibits his materialistic concerns as he prefers a tennis court to the flower beds – “Looking across at the flower beds I wonder why they didn’t build a tennis court or, at the very least, install a table-tennis table in place of all the flowers” (Manyika, 56). Thus, although the educated urban populations are aware of the loss of the balance in the environment, they lack the spirit to face it.

Social ecologist Murray Bookchin, in his book *The Ecology of Freedom* opines, “The domination of nature by man stems from the real domination of human by human” (1). Therefore, while tracing the reason

for such ruthlessness of human behaviors we come across its seed lying in human race itself – the enmity and dominating attitude among themselves. That's why the homeless girl Sage thinks to "dump" her "crazy ass boyfriend" in order to have a better life and the black skinned guy Reggie gets abused by a white man in the hospital for no reason. However, this is not a case in the developed countries only, but people from even the underdeveloped countries like Nigeria also face these kinds of rivalry:

people fled in terror, climbing trees to get away. People ought to have been safe up in the mango trees behind the thick canopy of green leaves where we used to hide as children. But no, according to this Jocelyn, these mad people had chased them even there, before smoking them out – some burning, as they fell from the branches (Manyika, 49).

Greed and desire to get more have made humans mechanical and self-centered. With the increasing population and demand, nature is being plundered more and more, paving the way for a catastrophic end. The characters portrayed in the novel are the representatives of those cruel human beings who are exploiting the nature every day for their own mundane interests.

Human Manipulating the 'Nature'

Like social ecologists, eco Marxists also say that the environmental degradation is not only caused by our anthropocentric approach, but there is a deep reason that dominates human beings over other human beings. Critics like Alan Liu are particularly concerned about how we perceive the word 'nature'. In their opinion, our perception of nature depends upon the culture we belong and it is this culture which defines how our attitude towards nature will be. Liu argues that in everyday discourse many a time we consider some event to be very natural and don't hesitate to accept it, but what we miss is the hidden politics in that 'natural'. Society through its culture often believes us something to be very natural or moral so that the injustice and inequalities can be hidden. Thus Divya Anand mentions:

The politics of our relationship with nature evidenced through literature emerges through a dialectical polemics between the individual experience and the collective social conditioning of nature. The social meanings attached to nature realised through discursivity, determines

the perception of the personal, individual experience, consequently mirrored in the discourses concerning them, including literature (96).

For this reason, when Morayo, at the hospital, expresses her wish to get a tattoo on her body, Sunshine becomes surprised and says, "You mean that while I've been trying to convince Zach that tattoos aren't cool, you, his honorary grandmother, are about to get one?" (Manyika, 69) Similarly, Toussaint, the cook at the hospital, when found Morayo with her bra straps exposed, he was also very surprised. In his words, "Her right sleeve has slipped a little from her shoulder as she grooves to the right, showing a slim hot pink bra strap. I raised my eyebrows surprised that someone her age would wear such a thing" (Manyika, 97). All these things suggest that it is not 'natural' for somebody of Morayo's age to have tattoos or fashions thereby restricting their consumption socially. The underlying politics here is to make opportunities of consumption for the productive section of the society that is the youths, by cutting down the consumption of the apparently non-productive section which comprises of senior citizens, handicapped and the retired persons. Thus it is expected from a senior citizen to sacrifice all their desires and stay passionless. Our process of socialization confirms it that nobody is excluded from this web of politics and in order to justify this, nothing is as good as declaring it to be natural. Its depth in the human mind gets reflected when a rational being like Morayo also succumbs to this practice – "I'm still trying to be mature and wise one because that is what I'm supposed to be at this age" (Manyika, 78).

Dependence upon Nature

The fact that we cannot deny is that we shall always remain dependent upon nature, even though we get so many artificial life supports. The most necessary thing that keeps us alive is nature and its elements. In Washington's words, "Does humanity live by bread alone? There are a whole range of non-material values we derive from Nature, and they can be categorized in different ways. Nature has social, cultural, educational and recreational values to humanity..." (55). Thus, in contrast to the people who destroy the natural resources, this novel also contains a number of protagonists who love nature and express their dependence upon nature. Morayo, for example, at the beginning of the text discloses her reason for living in that particular apartment. She says, "When you

stand at the kitchen sink you can see... the eucalyptus and pine forests of the Presidio that stretch across to the bay where, on a clear day, the water shimmer azure blue. So I have no intention of moving" (Manyika, 2). She loves nature so much that she, on her every birthday compulsorily buys tulips to make herself happy. Her love for living amid nature gets reflected when she recapitulates her days at Chanakyapuri as, "This was my favorite of all ambassadorial residences with its modern design and tropical gardens that always reminded me of Lagos" (Manyika, 80). Even she likes to decorate her home with flowers – "I'm busy casting an expert eye over the floral arrangements of orchids and birds of paradise" (Manyika, 81). Not only Morayo, but the cook Toussaint also depends upon nature to decide which foods will be best suitable for the people there – "And then I also like to think about the weather and create food that matches that too" (Manyika, 98). So nature's contribution upon human life is immeasurable. It is interesting to note that the reference to flower comes again and again in this novel, which suggests that flower is not only beautiful to see but it also has a soothing effect in our heart and mind.

However, as presented in the novel, nature is not just refreshment to us, but it is also a preserver of life. In Morayo's description of Nigeria, poor people depend upon mangoes to live on them. In her words, "Mangoes were free in Nigeria – anyone could pluck them off the trees, so much so that father would pay someone, during mango season, to collect the fruit so it wouldn't fall and rot" (Manyika, 6). Nature acts as identifiers for places and memories too. Thus when thinking of the Lagos markets she says, "smell of Lagos markets still buried in the cotton – diesel fumes, hot palm oil, burning fire wood" (Manyika, 4). And for India, she keeps cardamom and cumin with her to call upon the memories of the place. Similarly, the smell of boiling potatoes reminds her of childhood days – "It was only from boarding school then that I remembered the smell of boiling potatoes" (Manyika, 46). Nature exerts its effects in every sphere of life.

It is noteworthy to mention that Pearl's condition is symbolic to her attitude towards nature. Shah and Kumari think, "Ecocriticism also focuses that destruction of nature leads to the serious health effects". (4) And the attitude of Pearl towards nature is expressed in her husband's words, "Pearl preferred tennis to gardening, which was why our garden was always a practical one, filled with vegetables and herbs for cooking,

rather than flowers" (Manyika, 56). On the contrary, in case of Morayo, any second thing if she loved other than books was flower and nature. Thus she manages to herself refreshed, cheerful and young by heart. That's why Onder Cetin remarks, "Although there is an ongoing dichotomy between nature and culture, works of literature often make use of nature to depict certain aspects of human condition and reveal what is hidden..." (56).

But as mentioned by Shah and Kumari, "When man goes on exploiting nature ruthlessly, nature sometimes too becomes violent. Nature shows its power through natural calamities like cyclones, famine, drought, flood, earthquakes etc." (4) In this novel Morayo, for example, fears the uncertain nature of earthquakes – "But who knows when the earth finally decides that it's tired of fidgeting and needs a proper stretch" (Manyika, 1). The novel also contains description of floods in Lagos city, which cause utter misery to the people there.

In spite of everything, we must return to nature in order to survive. The protagonists in the novel also return to nature, consciously or unconsciously, for some relief. That's why Morayo says that the only thing which impresses her most is the tired spring lilac. To her, after visiting so many places in the world, San Francisco is no more a city of joy or opportunity, but it is the "city with its bright morning sun and brilliant blue skies. I love the way the fog rolls in late in the day, tumbling over Sutro Forest, to cloak my part of the city in soft white mist" (Manyika, 17). The nurse who took care of Morayo, also, being tired of the city life, decides to return to the lap of nature, at her own country where she can get old peacefully. And even the most materialist kind of people like Reggie, comes to nature to find solace – "I sit in the garden while they give Pearl her bath" (Manyika, 55).

Conclusion

There is no way to deny the fact that the balance in the ecosystem can only be attained if we restrict our behaviors and manage some time to think whether we are doing any unnecessary harm to the nature. The environment must be saved if we have to live. Sarah Manyika, through this novel has tried to convey the message that a city is not an alien place with bricks and dust only, but nature also exists here and is affected by human activities as well. The novel reveals that exploitation does not occur through large scale activities only, but our trivial everyday activity

can also affect the environment. People living in cities need environment as much as people living in the jungles. This study has tried to come up with the results of how nature is destroyed by our careless activities and how this, in long run, can affect our own mental and physical health fatally. The novel is thus an important ecocritical document of our contemporary time, capturing the ecological conditions of the cities in the developed countries.

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The Spiritual and Global Literature as Antidote to our Catastrophe Ridden Planet

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Abstract

The pandemic has made us all stop and think. The catastrophe striking us is multifaceted; it is climatic and social. In spite of being all connected into one technoscape, as pointed out by Arjun Appadurai, we still have areas built painstakingly over centuries by human beings but which are being bombarded by other human beings. This means that we have not learnt about 'mending walls' and living peacefully like mature adults. However as long as the human race has not reached the stage when 'breath becomes air', there is still time to attempt at a redress. In this paper, I propose a recall of the spiritual as a remedy to our planet which is under climatic threat of various types in its different parts and whose men are still behaving like children ready to destroy their friends' castles on a playground. I draw from Ramanuja the 11th century Indian theologian. During the lockdown period people have turned to self-reflexivity, so this could mean that there is some spirituality residing in all of us. This spirituality must be tapped; I am taking spirituality as being above religion and as a way of life. I refer to the Yajur Veda and the Bhagavad Gita and also bring forward Amitav Ghosh to support my proposed use of literature as a recall of spirituality.

Keywords: Spirituality; global literature, Ramanuja, Bhagavad Gita, Amitav Ghosh.

"Without reverence there can be no ecology, and without spirituality there can be no sustainability" Satish Kumar (2010, 213)

Introduction

Pankaj Mishra in his book *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (2018) says:

"The sense of a world spinning out of control is aggravated by the reality of climate change, which makes the planet itself seem under siege from ourselves." (p.10)

Yet I believe that spirituality, in the form of wisdom and human values, which are universal, can be picked up from the canvas of a global literature and total chaos can be averted.

I propose we trust the Great Anthropocene to mitigate the damage caused to the planet Earth so far. This strategy has been put forward by John Asafu-Adajaye et al in *An Ecomodernist Manifesto* (2015) and taken up by critics. Human beings have conquered space and turned the Earth into a global village yet it is a revival of the spiritual that is required to infuse a feeling of well-being among its citizens and to equip them to face the climate crisis. The 'pursuit of happiness' appears to be "the final and greatest quest of mankind" in the opinion of Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul (Mishra 15). Happiness seems to be in terms of latest technology and most recent scientific discoveries. Regarding climate change, Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement* (2016) declares that future generations:

"will certainly blame the leaders and politicians of the time for their failure to address the climate crisis. But they may well hold artists and writers equally culpable" (p181).

He adds that there are "signs of hope" as a "growing involvement of religious groups and leaders"(213) can be discerned. My point is that one should differentiate between religion and spirituality. Too many wars have been launched in the name of religion and its link with power has been often decried. Ghosh does acknowledge that:

"it is impossible to see any other way out of this crisis without an acceptance of limits and limitations, and this in turn, is, I think, intimately related to the idea of the sacred, however one may wish to conceive of it" (p215).

I affirm that "this idea of the sacred" can be the spiritual which transcends religion and which unites and does not divide.

A Brief Overview of the Spiritual in Literature

As far as the West is concerned Lynn White, Jr. in his essay *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis* (2015) takes up the idea that with the advent of Christianity animism and worship of nature through a plethora of gods and goddesses were replaced by the idea that man should exploit nature

for his benefit. During the Renaissance some texts, for example Shakespeare's comedies depict nature as restorative. In the 18th and 19th centuries some writers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau and William Wordsworth, bring forth the idea that nature is the best teacher. Wordsworth revived the idea that there is a spirit in nature when he wrote in his poem *The Prelude*:

"Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That gives tot forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion," (p 499).

The return to nature continues. White, Jr also thinks that in the 20th century the beatniks' interest in Zen Buddhism, which was closely linked to Asian thoughts, became potential in the West. (2015).

The Indian epics are both literature and sacred books because of the presence of the spiritual elements. One of the main characteristics of the Bhakti movement is spirituality. For a further specific explanation I include reference to an article that elaborates on the difference between religion and spirituality.¹

A fragmented, walled and gated global village.

Our world today is more fraught and divided than ever. Naipaul (1932-2018) refers to the "pursuit of happiness" as a characteristic of the American society in the second half of twentieth century (Mishra,p15). To my mind it is this pursuit that makes people become greedy and paranoiac; instead of being free citizens of planet Earth, they turn into full time unpaid security guards on duty 24 by 7 hours.

I recall the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) saying in "A Letter to a young Poet":

"our deepest fears are like dragons guarding our deepest treasure" (p. 40)

So the compounds are walled in and gated. This feeling of angst is at the individual as well as at the national levels. This double meaning can be seen in the poem *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost (1875-1963) in which we see a neighbour:

"Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed." (p279)

The greed of the anthropocene people is egged on relentlessly by their ego and they rush hubristically into the golden net spread out by the consumer society. Global literature, because it projects the life experience of people from heterogenous origins and from various adopted host countries, becomes one of the richest reading material for mutual understanding and trust.

The Spiritual

However the anthropocene can be rescued if people take up the spiritual path. A warning seems to have been given by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) in his well-known poem, *The World is Too much With Us* (p25).

The spiritual path can be the path of wisdom, one recommended by Death in the Katha Upanishad. (p131). Actually, in the Katha Upanishad, Death says to Nachiketa:

“he that has knowledge and is mindful, pure always, reaches that goal whence he is not born again.” (p251).

It may be deduced that knowledge and purity of purpose can lead to the spiritual.

Indeed spirituality, once not confined by religious institutions, is accessible to all and can become part of everyday life. Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), the Indian philosopher dissolved ‘The Order of the Star in the East’, set up by the Theosophical Society. He, himself, had headed that section for about 17 years. When he came out of it, he found that people still craved for an ideal or an ideology but he could offer them only:

“Friendship, conversation and dialogue, to explore the nature of reality”(Kumar, p104).

I believe these are some of the elements found in fiction because literature reflects life and society and it also includes the wisdom one has in the spiritual.

I foreground that global literature can minimise ignorance – which is the root cause of conflicts – and can spread the spiritual in the form of wisdom and human values. It can lead us towards xenophilia and make us accept plurality of beliefs and cosmopolitanism. So the spiritual is not associated with religion; it is above it. Besides, on the one hand it has been found that religion often divides but the spiritual unites. On the

other hand, Namita Gokhale, the writer and co-director of Jaipur Literature Festival, has recently declared:

“Borders change; cultures suffer amnesia; food and language divide; but literature unites” (17 Feb 2020).

As the two elements that unit people are spirituality and literature, efforts should be made to capitalise on the positivity that these elements embody. Through global literature and spirituality our global village can become a reality and not remain in the realm of mythology of the 21st century.

There is a parallel between reading literary texts and spiritual unfoldment. Literary texts, be it prose, drama or poetry must be read slowly word by word. They demand intensive reading. Meanings inscribed in between lines and layers must be patiently picked up, gathered and synthesized. An application of Discourse Analysis which holds that language is not neutral, is often done unconsciously by the reader. The description of spiritual unfoldment given by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami fits perfectly with what takes place while reading a literary work (824). In both there is a gradual widening of understanding and consciousness and a process that is imperceptible. For example from reading a novel a whole world comes up and in reading a poem, it might be said that it is the conception of a moment's thought that emerges.

Reading comes close to meditation and spirituality. Sri M, head of the Satsang foundation in his book *Apprenticed to a Himalayan Master: A Yogi's Autobiography* (2010) says: “spiritual evolution is individual and cannot be a mass phenomenon” (319). Regarding climate crisis also, it is the individual's effort that is called upon. Reading a literary fiction can be a form of meditation. Reading word by word requires solitude which, in turn, provides silence, stillness, a calm and restful attitude and a fair degree of concentration. All these form the necessary conditions for meditation. Satish Kumar quotes Krishnamurti's words which underline the parallel between reading and meditation. We can read:

“Silence and attention provide the ground for meditation. Meditation is a process of healing the wounds of fragmentation. In meditation, divisions end and wholeness emerges. Then there is no longer a division between ‘I’ and ‘you’, between ‘us’ and ‘them’, between ‘good’ and ‘evil’.

When there is no ego, no vanity, no fear, no isolation, no insecurity, no ignorance, then there is healing, and wholeness.” (Kumar 106-7).

I affirm that a global literature, made accessible to the world through translations, and supported by cross intellectual pollination, can make the global village a reality and wake up one and all to the environmental crisis. Kumar refers to Mahatma Gandhi's "idea of integrating individual spirituality with social spirituality". It is a fact that climate change is a global phenomenon yet it has been tackled individually and locally too.

Spirituality in Hinduism

Stevenson et al state that according to *Brihadarany Upanishads* (2.3.1) brahman has two forms: the formless, – which is ethereal and unchanging – and the one which appears in concrete form – which is solid and transitory.(Stevenson et al, 2013, p38). So brahman can be nothing or it can be what we see and experience. These are two perspectives. It can be said that brahman is inexpressible, yet it can also be said that brahman is with everything that we experience. Hence we have interconnectedness in brahman. We do not see the unified and infinite brahman that is the formless. We confine ourselves to the one with forms because we experience it.

Adi Shankara

Adi Shankara (788-820) believed in the unity of the unified, infinite and fixed brahman that is the formless one. It is *nirgun*, that is, without qualities. It is held that since it is desire that led to the creation of diversity and multiplicity, so desire must be eliminated through renunciation. He founded order of sannayasis and dashanamis who perform their own funeral rites and move on to a life of celibacy and meditation.

Ramanuja (1017–1137) CE

I draw from Stevenson et al (2013) and aim at pointing out the way Ramanuja(1017-1137), the theologian and interpreter of Vedanta led to the spiritual in literature. He was in opposition to Shankara's views. I foreground the global aspect for both the spiritual and literature, are beyond boundaries and transcend religious conflicts.

Ramanuja's philosophy favours both unity and diversity or multiplicity. For him It is brahman with *saguna*, that is, with qualities. But knowledge depends on differentiated objects, – it is similar to the idea of binary opposite highlighted by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure

(Barry p41). Some preachers hold that we can relate to the formless only if we can perceive the concrete one.

Ramanuja implies that the creative process that comes with multiplicity can be taken as God's creativity. He also takes *maya*, that is attachment to worldly matters, as creative power not as illusion. For him *maya* is the capacity of creating wonderful effects. Hence Ramanuja's concept is a positive one. For him the soul is eternal and real. Literature too is about the eternal in human beings and about the real.

Stevenson et al argue that the individual soul enters into brahman and separates from it. It is held that knowledge is given by the grace of the supreme power when it is pleased by our performances carried out not for reward but with the aim of propitiating it.

Here Ramanuja's views are linked with the karma yoga of Bhagavad Gita. We read:

*karmanyevadhikaraste
ma phalesukadacana
ma karma-phalesu-heturbhur
ma tesnago 'stvakarmani* (Bhagavad Gita 2.47)

The meaning is as follows: You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty. (Swami Prabhupada (1986 p 134).

Swami Prabhupada lecturing on this verse in New York in 1966 added:

*"That is the way of working on the spiritual platform"(Prabhupada
Bhagavad Gita as it is with explanations 1984 p106).*

Ramanuja insists that in line with the Bhagavad Gita:

*"one should engage in the action that comes to one according to one's
own life situation."*

His advice is:

*"to surrender completely to God, for only then are we free to enjoy the
marvellous show that is the world".* (Stevenson et al p51)

Stevenson et al conclude saying:

"Where as Shankara renounces the world, Ramanuja demonstrate how to live in it freely." (Stevenson et al p51)

Shashi Tharoor emphasizes that:

"Ramanuja's innovation prefigured the popularisation of Hinduism in the Bhakti movement which through prayer and songs brought the esoterica of Hindu Philosophy in simple language to the ears and hearts of common people" (p106).

Tharoor refers to Kabir, the poet-saint as a major poet of the Bhakti movement(1440-1510). He also quotes a well-known Mira hymn, starting:

"Paggungroo band Meera nache re,..."

which he translates as:

"Tying the anklets upon her feet, Mira dances in ecstasy" (107).

In the Bhakti movement, the spiritual and the romantic merge or are inter posed.

I urge that in literature the spiritual is part of the creativity of the power that provides us with free light, water, air, food and so many items necessary for human life. However in our pursuit of happiness and in our search for modernity even in our appreciation of literary art, we might have classified the spiritual as old fashion or the *déjà vu*, that is, the familiar.

In today's age of anger and serious threat to the survival our planet, focus on the spiritual can be a route to remedial behaviour.

The Spiritual in Creativity of Writers

One of the basic aims of writers is to share ideas; this sharing helps to foster deeper analysis of one's thoughts and also to avoid loneliness and parochialism through creativity. A parallel can be perceived in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* creation myth (1.4.6). According to this myth, at the beginning of the world there was only brahman. From Sri Aurobindo's *The Upanishads: Texts, Translations and Commentaries* (1972), we learn that Brahman is:

"The idea of transcendental Unity, Oneness, and stability behind all the flux and variety of phenomenal life [it] is the basal idea of the Upanishads: this is the pivot of all Indian metaphysics, the sum and goal of our spiritual experience". (Aurobindo,1972,p 1)

Brahman feeling lonely and having the desire of company,(an idea clearly explained by the narrator in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* written in 1818) it divided itself into male and female and created, through sexual interaction, a world of diverse and multiple forms. The creation becomes a spiritual action. Hence writers' desires to share also transform into spiritual elements.

The Spiritual in Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019)

In the Yajur Veda we read:

*"Vidyamcavidyam ca yasta due do bhayamsaha
Avidyammrtyamvidyayamrtamasnute."*

The meaning runs thus:

"But he who pursues worldly knowledge and the spiritual one side by side, overcomes death by worldly knowledge and gains immortality through the spiritual one." (Vol 111, ch40 verse14).

A similarity between the above quote from the Yajur Veda and the earlier quote Katha Upanishad is striking. As mentioned earlier Ghosh suggests that the sacred may be a way of tackling the climate crisis. He also concludes wishing that writers of future generations would:

"rediscover their kinship with other beings and that this vision, at once new and ancient, will find expression in a transformed and renewed art and literature". (Ghosh 2016,p215-17).

In *Gun Island* (2019) Ghosh has answered his own call and has provided the global village with a literary fiction in which respect for other beings is the main theme. The consequences of non-respect to wild life and its representative in a legend are clearly and aesthetically spelt out.

John S Dunne (1929-2013), Professor of theology, is of the opinion that:

"passing over and coming back, it seems is the spiritual adventure of our time."² (Dunne 1972,1986, p8).

Dunne refers to those who pass over from one faith to another and come back to the original; I say that it is the same for those who want to engage in spirituality. Often when we find that all roads lead to Rome, we come back. This is the adventure of the 21st century human being wandering in a diasporic and cosmopolitan world. The spiritual in a

global literature can nurture a xenophilia and share responsibility regarding the climate crisis.

Ghosh's narrator in *Gun Island* (2019) indeed would have passed over but he comes back to undertake a spiritual journey and shares his adventure with the readers. I passed over Sylvia Plath's poetry, focussing on her feminist views but coming back I note her moments of spirituality. Referring to the poppies in her garden she wrote:

A gift, a love gift
Utterly unasked for
By a sky Poppies in October (Staying Alive, p48)

A spiritual note, in a global literary text, to exhort us to save our earth, our sky and our brahman, the universe.

Notes

1. Spirituality is all about the individual. It is about the realization of the supreme self within you. The realization of the innate power within you to combat all situations in life is the goal of spirituality. Spirituality aims at building strength of the mind and the spirit. It speaks about the real truth of life. Spirituality aims at making you strong by mind. It aims at the elimination of what are all untrue. Spirituality is a mind-building concept. It shapes the mind of the individual. It is individual oriented in content.

Source of No1. www.differencebetween.com/difference-between-religion-and-spirituality/

2. This quote found in the preface of *The Way of all the Earth: Experiments in Truth and Religion*. Pub by University of Notre Dame Press in 1986, 1st ed 1972. page 8 of the preface.

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Unlocking the Riddle of the Mind Game and Survival: A Matrix of Religions and Health Systems

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Abstract

This study focuses on the sources that create mental make-ups of different sets of people. It explores the interface between their religious/ethical beliefs and health problems. Three groups of people have been identified: a) those who govern themselves by the literal interpretation of the scriptures and try to adhere to it at the cost of their lives b) those who interpret the text by going beyond the literal meaning of the text to take advantage of the latest knowledge in the field of medicines c) those who do not allow any scriptural knowledge to interfere in their ways of life and thinking. The third group tries to out manoeuvre the other two by adopting various pressure tactics and showing little respect for their freedom of faith/religion, right to self-determination, human rights and free-will. Such persons get perplexed during the times of crisis when the science/technology does not offer any solution. How to derive hope and live happily as during the days of epidemics and pandemics becomes problematic for them. The Hindus have had a traditional holistic life but in the modern nation-state that India is the Hindus are under tremendous pressure to change their ways in the name of rationality and science. (203 words)

Keywords: Ayurveda, Charak, Christian, Disease, Health, Hindu, COVID-19, Law, Medicine, Religion, Religious Freedom, Sushrut, Treatment.

Introduction

One's normative life-style is generally shaped and decided by the religio-philosophical system that shape one's thoughts, beliefs and actions. Most

of us inherit our beliefs and belief-systems from our parents and environs and a large number of people live with them peacefully without ever questioning them. In some cases people are not allowed to question their belief-systems; any questioning, aberration, contrary opinion or behaviour is dealt with severely and various sorts of punishments are inflicted by (administrative) machinery controlled by the individuals, and the social, the political and the religious groups (with a strong soteriological background) by framing various kinds of codes, rules and laws. Those who acquire their beliefs (say from some books) keep on changing their life-style according to their newly acquired knowledge. In the process a chasm is created between the life styles of those who conform to their inherited beliefs and those who acquire them. Many a times a conflict leading to a power struggle between these two groups too starts. This is how societies across the world have emerged over a period of time. Medical systems too are a by-product of the societal organization and do not remain untouched by their places of origin and the surroundings. An insight into the belief systems will enable a psychologist to understand why some people survive even without taking medicines and some die even when best medical facilities are provided. Therefore, for a health worker in the area of Health Promotion it is imperative to look into various belief-systems. Owing to the limitation of time and space I intend to ruminate on the matrix of religions and health systems in the Western hemisphere which has largely been organised on the basis of Judeo-Christian-Islamic wisdom and India which is largely organised on Upanishadic wisdom. A religion and a health system intersect at the following three points: a) why does a body suffer from some illness? b) what can be done to bring an ill body to its normal state? and c) how to live with illness. The study in the coming paragraphs will be confined to these three issues only.

Method

The study is a theoretical analysis of the data related to the human beings suffering from various kinds of ailments related to their physical and mental well-being. The data is largely drawn from the reported cases in various public domains like the books, journals, newspapers and social media. The study is basically designed to understand the choices of the treatments adopted by persons suffering from different ailments. A correlation between the sufferers' mental make-ups based on their

religious background and the adopted ways and methods is being explored. A comparative and analytical approach is followed to understand various involved issues and arrive at the correlation and the conclusion. The limitation of the study is that only the data from the secondary sources has been taken into account. However, the findings are not likely to change with the corrections in the data at micro-level.

The Study: Judeo-Christian-Islamic Beliefs

In the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, sickness is defined as a curse and the cause of one's sickness is told to be the sin committed by Adam: "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." (Romans 5:12) and the subsequent sins committed by an individual: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." (James 5:16); "There is no health in my bones because of my sin." (Psalm 38:3) and "I will bring such distress on all people that they will grope about like those who are blind, because they have sinned against the LORD. Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like dung." (Zephaniah 1:17) In the terminology of modern science it can be described as Genetic disorder or deformity. *The Bible* talks about three major curses, one each upon serpent, woman, and man but none of these curses is about illness or pestilences. The curse on the serpent is being ignored here as the paper deals with the health systems for human beings only. Woman/Eve was cursed with "pains in childbearing, painful labour, a desire for husband and his rule over her." (Genesis 3:16) None of these is about suffering due to physical ill-health or sickness. Similarly, man/ Adam was cursed with "painful toil" (Genesis 3:17, 5:29); again there is no reference to suffering owing to sickness. Adam and Eve supposedly enjoyed perfect health before they transgressed God's commandment. In the Old Testament the blessings for obedience to the Lord and the curses for disobedience have been listed and described. These curses include both the physical and mental ailments like weakness, fever, inflammation, infection, cuts (from a sword), boils, tumours, eczema, scabies, madness, all types of the diseases in a country (Egypt in this case) and every kind of sickness and plague, blindness, confusion of mind, great and long-lasting afflictions and severe, enduring illnesses. However, there is hardly any cure if a body suffers on account of some Genetic disorder in the medical sciences as they stand today; some of the associated signs and symptoms can just be managed.

The argument made by the believers in this tradition is very simple: if nothing on the earth happens without God's permissive Will a person neither gets sick without His will nor can s/he be cured without it (His permission). Again, if any kind of sickness is a curse from God only God should be able to cure it. *The Bible* records instances where God uses illness (or even death) as a means of punishment in His judgment. For example, a death penalty has been suggested for making a sacrifice to a god other than Yahweh (Exodus 22:20) and for indulging in premarital intercourse (Deuteronomy 22:13–21); "The Lord sent a pestilence on Israel from that morning until the appointed time; and seventy thousand of the people died" (2 Samuel 24:15) In other words, it can be said that sickness is a result of the failure to connect with the Lord or the absence of "right thinking" that could have led to the connection. In such a situation prayer is the best solution and perhaps the easiest way to seek pardon, to fall in line and to cure the suffering person. An assurance to this effect has also been given in the Old Testament: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." (Exodus 15:26) Similarly, Exodus (23:25) says that sickness will be taken away if one served the Lord and Deuteronomy (7:12, 15) says that sickness will be taken away as a result of obeying the Lord and James (5:16) extols the power of confession and prayers in getting healed. In the *Bible*, there are several verses and instances that celebrate the power of faith: faith can move mountains; "It is faithful, not foolish, to believe God can heal physically today. Jesus loves the whole person, soul and body," writes Nick Charalambous. (newspring.cc/)

Christian Faith and Miracles

"The diseases of the Middle Ages, so far as we can get vague and unsatisfactory glimpses of them, were predominantly hunger, languor, and poverty of blood, the emaciation men admire in medieval sculpture. The blood was thin as water, and scrofulous complaints were bound to be all but universal. With the exception of Arab or Jewish physicians, hired at great cost by the rich, medical treatment was unknown,—the people could only crowd to the church doors for aspersion with holy water. On Sundays, after Mass, the sick came in scores, crying for help,—and words were all they got: "You have sinned, and God is afflicting you. Thank

him; you will suffer so much the less torment in the life to come. Endure, suffer, die. Has not the Church its prayers for the dead?" (Michelet np)

If administering some pain alleviating treatment to Christian women suffering from labour pain is a violation of God's commandment and is to be considered an interference in His plan has been a point of debate amongst Christians. (Pfeiffer 41) During the Medieval period many a healer-women who helped pregnant women by giving some medicinal-herbs for relieving pain during child birth were declared witches by the Inquisition and were subsequently punished severely. (Climo, imss.org/2019/12/18/, Ehrenreich and English marxists.org/subject/women, Kingsley, and Clement 3045-3067, Ostling 179-201)

The simple solution for curing patients in the *Bible* is based on faith: "...call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over [the patient], anointing [the patient] with oil in the name of the Lord." Healing the sick without any medicines was one of the major activities of Jesus. He is said to have cured people suffering from both from mental and physical sickness and physical deformities since birth and also those which were acquired later¹. Reading these stories of the *Bible* and meditating on them is a part and parcel of the Christian believers in the weekly Sabbath day prayers and activities.

The miracles in the Christian tradition are attributed not only to Jesus but also to the (fe)male saints and those who are to be canonized as saints² even today. There are reports of such miracles being performed by the "Saints in waiting" and their acts are also monitored by the Church. In this connection Tara Isabella Burton writes: "Within the Catholic tradition, the idea that saints can intercede to God on one's behalf makes saints particularly important and the object of folkloric veneration in their own right." (vox.com) The miracles are mostly associated with interceding on behalf of the sick persons and curing them.

The reports of getting cured by having faith in a particular person or in a sect and saying prayers to them in a particular way are available not only in the ancient or the medieval sources but also in the current ones. Getting cured by having faith in a particular person or a sect and offering prayers to them is a belief prevalent in the days of Post-modernism and Post-Truth as well. To exemplify the point the case of Oscar Romero (1917–1980), the Salvadoran archbishop associated with social justice and progressive theology, who was beatified as a martyr in 2015 and later

canonized in 2018 may be cited. In Romero's case, the miracle was the healing of Salvadoran woman Cecilia Marabel Flores, whose husband prayed for Romero's intercession when Cecilia had life-threatening complications from a caesarean section in 2015. (voanews.com, apnews.com, osvnews.com) Similar is the story of Mariam Thresia (1876–1926) an Indian Syro-Malabar Catholic, the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Family, who was beatified on 9 April 2000 and canonized on 13 October 2019. The miracle before beatification involved curing of Mathew D. Pellissery, born with congenital club feet in 1956. He was doubly healed as his both right and left feet were straightened during sleep on the night of 21 August 1970 and 28 August 1971 respectively after several days of fasting and prayer by the whole family, invoking the help of Mariam Thresia. Her second miracle (needed to become a saint) was again related to the cure of an infant called Christopher who recovered from acute respiratory distress syndrome after his family prayed for Mariam Thresia's intercession by placing her relic near the baby in 2009. The act of healing received approval from the medical board in Rome in March 2018 and theologians later confirmed it in October 2018. (Times of India) The practice of canonization is not limited only to Roman Catholics but extends to other denominations like Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Anglican Church and Lutheran Church. The common characteristic in the process of canonization among all the above referred to churches is to find some miracles attributable to the venerable candidate. The miracle is generally there in the form of healing a sick man in the likeness of Jesus. One should not presume that healing by faith is a practiced only by the saints or those venerated to be saints. Rather it is practiced in other denominations as well and is increasingly becoming popular. Healing with the help of the Holy Spirit has traditionally been a pivotal theme in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches throughout the world.

Data Classification & Analysis

Western Hemisphere

There is a lot of debate on the issue of seeking the help of the doctors among various religious groups including those amongst the Christians. The ailing individual's exclusive dependence on a venerated soul for getting healed and his/her going to some venerated person alongside taking medical help for a cure are two different attitudes depending on

the intensity of faith of the sufferer. On the basis of their faith and beliefs the people can broadly be divided into two groups: those who are believers and those who are non-believers or atheists. The believers have two categories. Thus, in all there are three groups viz. two of the believers and one of the non-believers:

Group 1): The Perfect Believers Who Shun a Doctor

The first group consists of those persons who have complete faith and are dependent on prayers alone; such people shun doctors altogether as they believe that medical care is not needed by them. Tennyson echoes their sentiments very well: "More things are wrought by prayer/ Than this world dreams of." (Tennyson, ll. 247-48) In their mental process accepting medical treatment will show a lack of faith in God and His sovereignty over healing. In other words the word of God (as comes through the Church/ Bible) is more important for them than the word of a doctor. This practice has been continuing perhaps since the emergence of Christianity itself. There are several modern churches (collectively called Neo-charismatic or Third-wave charismatic or Hypercharismatic Movement)³ that discourage or forbid members from seeing the doctors (see *infra*). Many Christians refuse to see doctors, thinking that their religious faith through prayer or other rituals will stimulate a divine presence and divine energy to heal the sufferer. For example, it has been reported in the Guardian on 13th April 2016 that the parents of the sect called *The Followers of Christ* refuse to take medical help for their children in the name of Christ despite alarming child mortality rates among these groups. (The Guardian) Similarly, Martin Lindhardt in his book has recorded the testimonies of several such persons who instead of taking medicines are dependent exclusively on faith and prayers. It shall not be out of place to reproduce one such testimony from Lindhardt's book: "Why would I go to see a 'worldly' doctor? The Lord created us, he saved us, he knows us better than anyone, and he will cure us. I don't like the doctors. He [Jesus] died for my sake! So who could cure me better than him?" (Lindhardt 87) This person went for a spiritual surgery instead of bodily surgery and was cured. Similarly, the Global Medical Research Institute (GMRI) has been documenting "evidenced-based testimonies from various ministries applying rigorous methods of research to show the effects of proximal intercessory prayer (PIP) in the resolution of conditions that would typically have a poor prognosis otherwise." (globalmri.org/) One of their documented stories has been reported in a

peer-reviewed journal (*Explore*) under the title: “Case report of instantaneous resolution of juvenile macular degeneration blindness after proximal intercessory prayer”. (j.explore.2020.02.011) It is about an 18-year-old female who suddenly developed bilateral vision loss and was diagnosed with juvenile macular degeneration and had been blind for twelve years. She was instantaneously healed after her husband prayed for her. Her eyesight has remained 20/40 or better for over forty years since the proximal intercessory prayer (PIP) event. Similarly, the followers of the denominations like the Word of Faith Movement (WOFM) and Christian Science (CS) often do not wish to consult a doctor as it shall be construed as a display of the lack of faith (see *supra*). The followers of these Churches hold that doubting the grace of God acts as a barrier to using the spiritual energy given to them to heal themselves (CS) and prevents God from healing the sick (WOFM). In medical terms it may be explained as the mind has a control over body and not the vice-versa. Thus by increasing their mental strength they believe to cure a sick body. A large number of Yoga practitioners like B.K.S. Iyengar, David Frawley, Ina Stephens, John Scott, Naveen Varshneya, Phulgenda Sinha and Samprasad Vinod also claim to cure so many diseases only by sustained meditation.

In terms of numbers it is a very large chunk of people. Claudia Kalb reports that according to a 2004 Newsweek poll, 72 percent of Americans believed that praying to God can cure someone, even if science says the person has an incurable disease. (Kalb 44-50, 53-4, 56) During these days of democracy even science cannot afford to be dictatorial in its attitude. Therefore, it is at times guided by the numbers which is a sort of empirical evidence. Candy Gunther Brown who has studied PIP meetings for healing in economically backward rural Mozambique, justifies her research-stand saying: “If empirical research continues to indicate that PIP may be therapeutically beneficial, then – whether or not the mechanisms are adequately understood – there are ethical and nonpartisan public policy reasons to encourage further related research. ... It is a primary privilege and responsibility of medical science to pursue a better understanding of therapeutic inventions that may advance global health, especially in contexts where conventional medical treatments are inadequate or unavailable.” (eurekalert.org, Brown 864-9)

The sudden rise of faith healers or divine healers and rapid growth of the believers in the gospel in the modern age has led to certain doubts

too. Their unusual expansion is attributed to some extraneous considerations like costly medical treatment and fear of side-effects as well as is clear from the following opinion: “[Faith Healing] is a deceptively easy trap to fall into. Medical help is expensive. Injuries and deaths caused by malpractice are tragic enough to become scintillating topics of discussion. It’s tempting to feed a fear of doctors, and trust in warm thoughts that Jesus will heal.” (compellingtruth.org) Some others may be afraid of the side effects of the medicines, particularly in allopathic system. [personal interaction with certain persons] Some others know that drugs are constantly being developed and they may involuntarily be used as guinea pigs for the drug-trials. [personal interaction with certain persons] So they shy away from them. Many of the allopathic and homeopathic medicines have their origins in various animals which vegans and vegetarians do not take. [personal interaction with certain persons] This group also faces various kinds of criticisms that I shall be discussing in the later sections of this paper.

Group 2: The Believers Who Approach A Doctor

In this group fall those who have faith in worshipping the Lord but are not dependent on prayers alone; such people also go to the doctors and follow their advice partly or fully depending on certain interpretations of the Biblical/ canonical verses. “In a statement, Bethel said its church community believes in God’s ability to heal supernaturally, but ‘we also deeply value and access medical professionals’.” (qtd. by Boorstein) A doctor treats, God heals – is the slogan of the people in this group. “I am a Christian and believe that God gave us Medicine. Prayer works in ALL situations. I also believe that God can heal. The two-work hand in hand,” opines Suzanne. (pbs.org/wnet/) Another person, Eunice, holds almost a similar opinion:

“[S]eeking a medical doctor isn’t bad...nothing will happen. Praying that everything goes well with treatment is better than praying with no treatment, however, that doesn’t mean that i [sic] don’t believe that children can still be healed by the touch of G-d [sic], He still can, but children or anyone for that matter shouldn’t be put at risk, they should still seek medical help.” (pbs.org/wnet/)

At times even the timing to consult a doctor is decided by the religious head as is clear from the following observation:

"Mostly, I first consult my pastor on my health issues before taking it to the hospital upon his recommendation. I do so for the purpose of ascertaining the origin of the sickness, it be natural or spiritually-motivated. At times some diseases are not natural but originate from various external sources such as witchcraft, ancestors and curse which need to be tackled through spiritual means. Also, he [healer] is the leader who is leading us in diverse ways, including both physical and spiritual, therefore consulting faith first is the right thing to do. Also, I have faith that I will be healed by God through him. If he says I should seek formal healthcare then I go, if he says I would be healed through faith, I believe so." [Prince Peprah's "Religion and Health: exploration of attitudes and health perceptions of faith healing users in urban Ghana", BMC Public Health. 2018; 18: 1358, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6288884/>]

This group believes that the Bible is not against one's taking the help of doctors or medicines to cure oneself. The fact that the physicians are called Joseph's "servants" (Genesis 50:2); God describes Himself as a "healer" (Exodus 15:26), a word that also describes a physician; and the verse "A merry heart does good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22) indicates that in the *Bible* a healer (doctor) and medicines are presented in a positive light. In other examples, Gilead approves of physicians (Jeremiah 8:22), equates the lack of medicine with a lack of healing (Jeremiah 30:13) and medicine is told to be the means of healing Babylon (Jeremiah 51:8). This group of people takes inspiration from Luke, who was a physician (Colossians 4:14) and one of the writers of the gospels. All the above discussion indicates that healers and medicines have been approved of in the *Bible*. The only point of debate between the first group and this one is if God Himself is the healer why human intervention should be sought at all. Seeking help from a human agency is viewed by the faith holders as not showing complete and unfledged faith in God/Jesus/Lord. However, this group of believers hold that God wants human intelligence to be used. They controvert the opponents by advancing the following argument: God created Adam as an intelligent being; as he did not use his intelligence with care he fell prey to the Devil's temptations but Jesus used it with love, care and caution to overcome temptations. The intelligence and knowledge of a doctor are the gifts of God and are to be used carefully. It can very well be assumed that God has given the doctor the required intelligence and

ability to create medicines for repairing human/animal bodies as a sign of His love and compassion.

This group further maintains that Christ has nowhere disapproved of medicines or physicians. On the contrary he gave legitimacy to the medicines and the doctors when he said: "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick" (Luke 5:31). Jesus also quoted from the proverb, "Physician, heal yourself!" (Luke 4:23) There are many verses in the *Bible* that suggest that medicinal tools are an important part of God's purpose. These verses speak of using "medical treatments" such as applying bandages (Ezekiel 34:16), a poultice for boil (2 Kings 20:7), oil and wine (Luke 10:34), various kinds of tree leaves (Revelation 22:2), the tree of healing in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1-5) and "balm of Gilead" (Jeremiah 46:11). In the Genesis (17:10-14) the Lord commands the procedure of circumcision to Abraham. On the basis of the above cited and such other verses people/ Churches in this group are convinced that there is nothing against the medicines, the doctors and the hospitals in the *Bible* rather a medical treatment has been viewed favourably in the text. Various Churches/ Congregations run a large number of popular hospitals and well-known medical colleges. Unless they sincerely believe that healing comes from God, that medical science is a gift from God and that doctors' skill is a blessing that God has bestowed on us for our good, they cannot run the hospitals and the medical colleges. Despite the fact that medical knowledge is praised as a gift from God for the benefit of people a caution of "not to depend on men alone" is given: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord." (Jeremiah 17:5) The medicines, therefore, should only be treated as other physical gifts like air, water and food for human sustenance, hold the people in this group.

It may be argued that if sickness is to be cured only by doctors there should be no need for any prayers. This argument is controverted by this group on the basis of the following two Biblical verses: "You do not have because you do not ask God." (James 4:2) and "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray." (James 5:13) From these verses it is clear that a man is supposed to seek God's intervention in any physical difficulty though it is not promised that God will answer the way one wants. However, God being gracious, compassionate and rich in love one has the assurance that one's best interest will be protected. As indicated

above the doctors' intelligence and medicines are to be viewed as God's compassionate gifts to bring healing and recovery to humanity. No wonder the hospitals run by Christian Missionaries all over the world are rated very highly. No wonder, a large number of Christians advocate the use of both prayers and medicines simultaneously. For example, Abby H. Abildness in her *Healing Prayer and Medical Care* writes: "Having been in healthcare and 'God-care' for the past for the past 30 years, I value healthcare and God care and want to see a responsible balance so that the way of treating the body, mind, and spirit would bring healing to the whole person and their family life." (Preface, np) Similarly, Rich Deem in his "Prayer and Faith vs. Doctors and Medicine" argues that "Christians should not rely solely upon prayer to treat diseases that are reliably treated through modern medicine." (godandscience.org) This group, therefore, logically believes that all healing comes from God and He often uses medicine to accomplish His healing. Hence, they justify the use of prayer along with medicines.

As indicated above, the people of this group follow the doctor's advice while sticking to their faith. However, one should not presume that this group is a very homogeneous group and all of them pray and abide by a doctor's advice completely. The followers of Jehovah's Witnesses, who have their presence in about 250 countries, for example, take the restrictions on "eating blood" (Genesis 9:4, Deuteronomy 12:23, Acts 15: 20) so seriously that they refuse to accept a doctors' advice on blood transfusions because of which even operations have to be averted sometimes. (brewminate.com) A Catholic patient seeks anointing and confession before an operation even if (s)he deteriorates. (new theological movement) Fasting for religious reasons and practising sacred customs (e.g. Latter-day Saints hold regular fast days, usually on the first Sunday of each month during which neither food nor drink is taken) are observed against the advice of doctors (e.g. monitored diet to manage insulin). Voluntary patients of Christian Scientists accept conventional, though minimal medical treatment while the involuntary patients wish to be free of conventional medical treatments and be transferred to a place where they can be looked after accordingly to their own religious convictions. Christian Scientists would not normally wish to receive or donate organs. Some independent churches reject medicine because of the connection between Greek medical terms and pagan gods and myths. (compellingtruth.org) The fact however remains that the scripture

nowhere commands Christians to avoid doctors or medicine, to refuse blood transfusions, inoculations and surgery; also to look for them in an ancient text, when all these modern medical procedures were non-existent, is nothing less than absurd.

From the base of health and religion research, Levin has derived the seven principles of theosomatic medicine (2001, *God, Faith, and Health: Exploring the Spirituality-Healing Connection*. By Jeff Levin. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001.). He states that "theosomatic medicine" is literally a model or view of the determinants of health based on the apparent connection between God, or spirit, and the body. The principles are based on the findings of hundreds of studies about God, faith, and health. Levin's seven principles of theosomatic medicines are as follows:

1. Religious affiliation and membership benefit health by promoting healthy behaviour and lifestyles.
2. Regular religious fellowship benefits health by offering support that buffers the effects of stress and isolation.
3. Participation in worship and prayer benefits health through the physiologic effects of positive emotions.
4. Religious beliefs benefit health by their similarity to health-promoting beliefs and personality styles.
5. Simple faith benefits health by leading to thoughts of hope, optimism, and positive expectation.
6. Mystical experiences benefit health by activating a healing bioenergy or life force or altered state of consciousness.
7. Absent prayer for others is capable of healing by paranormal means or by divine intervention. (pp.13, 14),

Group 3: Science Matters More

This group consists of those who draw a line between religious faith and science as they believe that there is no common intersection between these two spheres of life. They go by the doctors' advice without any interference from the religious texts/leaders. When such people ignore their religious line/life they behave like either atheists or seculars. Such people do not allow their religious faith to influence/meddle in their scientific ways of medical treatment. Such people are quite large in

numbers in the present-day academia; they are influential opinion makers and they hold key positions in the society. They disregard the existence and opinions of the earlier two groups (see supra). They take pride in describing the present age as scientific age. This attitude indicates their vanity, haughtiness and arrogance. Justice R A Jahagirdar is very cautious about such attitude and tries to pre-empt any criticism by writing: "... it is a mistake to call this age or for that matter any age as a scientific age. Nor is a particular society entitled to be called a scientific society to the exclusion of others. As archaeology, ethnology, history and sociology have demonstrated, man in every society has a certain amount of scientific knowledge." (Jahagirdar 3).

Eastern Hemisphere

The Case of India

The matrix of religion and medicine becomes all the more complicated in a country like India which boasts of living and marching forward with an inheritance of the most ancient civilization, believed to be at least 5000 year old. Though India is a land that has patronised various sects and faiths I shall be discussing only about those that are indigenous to this land. Such people call themselves Hindus. *The Constitution of India*, Article 51 A(h), enjoins upon the Indian citizens to have a sense of scientific temper⁴. The Indian Constitution does not define of the term "Hindu". As the word "Hindu" is largely considered to be an exonym and an umbrella term, the Hindus prefer the term *Sanatana Dharma* ("the eternal way") to describe their way of life. It defies all the narrow traditional features of any religion or creed. It has been accepted as the oldest surviving religion in the world, which unlike Abrahamic faith systems, has multiple books, prophets (*avatar*), gods, prayers and prayer rituals, rites or performances, images (*vigraha*) for worship and reverence, philosophical concepts, paths to liberation (*Moksha*) and the like. The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly observed: "When we think of the Hindu religion, we find it difficult, if not impossible, to define Hindu religion or even adequately describe it. ... It may broadly be described as a way of life and nothing more." (1966 AIR 1119, 1976 (Sup) SCR 478, 1995 AIR 2089, 1996 AIR 1113) The best description of a Hindu's way of life is: "a constant engagement to shed one's ignorance and pettiness" ("*हीनदुष्यतिहिन्दू*" *Hinamdushyatiitihindu Sabdakalpadruma*: 537). Mahatma Gandhi adds some more dimensions to its meaning: "Hinduism ... has

no official creed. ... If I were asked to define the Hindu creed I should simply say: search after Truth through non-violent means.... Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth Of course, therefore, Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions. Its creed is all-embracing." (Gandhi 1) Hindus do not subscribe to inherent sinful nature of man nor do they consider (wo)men to under some curse/ punishment. On the contrary they consider themselves (irrespective of gender) to be "brahma": *Aham Brahmasmi* ("I am Brahma/ Divine" or "I'm the eternal part of the Supreme" (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.10 of the *Yajur Veda*). The human beings do not have any special place in Hindu cosmology/ world view; they are as (un)important creatures and parts of the entire Consciousness as any other creature is. Since there is wide chasm between the above concept of a Hindu and a modernised Hindu who has come under the influence of Macaulay's education⁵ I shall strictly be going by the Hindu religious texts.

The Indians have a very well developed indigenous system of health science because Hindus attach the same value to a living human body as a scientist attaches to his equipments. The study/ science of human body and its relation with entire cosmology is popularly known as Ayurveda. It is regarded as a sub-veda (*Upaveda*) of *Atharva Veda*. It is also called *Panchama Veda* (5th Veda). Maharishi Charak defines Ayurveda as follows: something that bestows the knowledge about *ayu* is *ayurveda* (*tadaayurvedayateetyaayurvedah*, *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutra Sthan* 30: 23). At another place it is defined as the treatise which describes *Hita ayu* (favourable to life), *Ahit ayu* (adverse to life), *Sukh ayu* (healthy life) and *dukh ayu* (diseased state) (*Hitahitamsukhamdukhamayustasyahithitam*. *Manam cha tachchayatraoktamayurvedahsauchiyate* // *Charaka Samhita*, *Sutra Sthan* 1:41) Ayurveda deals with good, bad, blissful and sorrowful life and what is wholesome and unwholesome for it, longevity and about what *ayu* (life) is in itself. The word Ayurveda consists of two morphemes viz. *ayu* and *veda*. According to *Charak Samhita* the union of body (*Shareera*), sense organs (*Indriya*), mind (*Sattva*) and soul (*Atma*) is called *Ayu* (*śarīrendriyasatvātmāsamyogo*, *Charak Samhita*, *Sutra Sthana*1: 42) and the word 'Veda' means knowledge. Hence, *Ayurveda* means the knowledge of the union of body, sense organs, mind and soul. Ayurveda consists of the following eight branches of knowledge: General Medicine (*Kayachikitsa*), Diseases of eye, ear, nose and throat (*Shalakya*), Surgery (*Shalyatantra*), Toxicology (*Agadatantra/ Visha Chikitsa*), Paranormal

Science / Psychotherapy (*Bhoot vidya*), Obstetrics, Gynaecology & Paediatrics (*Kaumarbhritya*), Rejuvenation/ Anti-ageing treatment (*Rasayana*) and Reproductive sciences or sexual vitality (*Vajikarana*). (*Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana* 30: 28, *Ashtang Hridayam, Sutra Sthana* 1:5-6)⁶ This branch of Indian knowledge is patronised by the government and people along with modern systems of medical knowledge like Allopathy and Homeopathy.

Karma

What binds different denominations (like Shaivism, Shaktism, Smartism, Vaishnavism, Saurism and others) of Hindus and the different sects of Indian origin (like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Arya Samaj, Mahima Dharma, Prarthana Samaj and others) together is the acceptance and belief in the following three doctrines: the doctrines of i) action (*Karma*) ii) rebirth (*punarjanm*) and iii) liberation (*Moksha*). To my mind these are also the necessary and sufficient conditions to call and identify a Hindu. There are three parameters to decide the worthiness of an act (*Karma*). The first one has been suggested by Gandhi very succinctly as: “a relentless pursuit after truth” (Gandhi: 1). Secondly, the Hindus believe that every human being is indebted to five sources for his/her survival. Therefore, s/he should contribute to one’s fulfilling the aspirations expressed in terms of five ethical and spiritual debts (*Shatpath Brahmana*: 1.7.2.1-6) that a person should strive to repay in one’s life-time. So each action of a person should be directed towards an effort to repay at least one of the following five debts: indebtedness to the sages (*rishi rin*), indebtedness to the ancestors (*pitrarin*), indebtedness to the deities (*deva rin*), indebtedness to humanity (*manushyarin*) and indebtedness to the objects of nature like plants and animals (*bhutarin*). The third parameter to judge the value and validity of an action is that it should be performed for the fulfilment of at least one of the four proper goals/aims (*purushārtha*) of life: righteousness/ moral values (*Dharma*), prosperity/ economic values, passion/ love/ psychological values and happiness/ spiritual value. All these four values are independent as well as inter-dependent.

Karmaphala and Sickness

Hindus believe that “There is no one who can remain without performing an action (*karma*) even for a moment. Indeed, all beings are compelled to act by their qualities born of material nature (the three *guṇas*).” (*Bhagavadgita* 3: 5) The action (*karma*) includes movement of our

(physical) bodies as well as the (mental/ metaphysical) movement of our thoughts. The word *karma* (action) refers to the results of past actions, present actions, and actions that one will perform in the future. The *karmas* of the past, present and future are called *Sanchita Karma* (the accumulated past actions, genetic coding to use modern terminology), *Prarabdha* (the effect of a past action in the present time) and *Kriyamana Karma* (that which is being done; current action) and *Agami* (आगामीकर्म the future actions that result from one's present actions). Thus, there are four types of actions (*karma*). The effect of an action is also *Karma*, because every effect becomes a cause in itself. While *Sanchita Karma* and *Agami Karma* are latent (*suksma*), *Prarabdha* and *Kriyamana Karmas* are gross (*sthula*). The effect of an action is also *Karma*, because every effect becomes a cause in itself. *Karma* is one of the six causative factors (along with *Samanya*, *Vishesh*, *Dravya*, *Guna* and *SamavayaKaranas*) for the whole universe. (*Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana 1: 52*)⁷ Ayurveda, the Hindu science of health, says that the health of a body is governed by all these four types of *karma*. For example, having a good or bad diet (*Kriyamana Karma*) affects a body positively or negatively; a new born baby's weak health⁸ (*sanchita karma*) because of the poor diet of his/her mother is his/her *prarabdha*. Similarly, if proper medication is done the health of the child may improve (*Agami karma*). *Ashtanga Samgraha* classifies diseases as Primary diseases (*Anubandhya*) and Secondary diseases (*Anubandhas*). *Anubandh* diseases (Primary diseases) are further classified as i) diseases due to bad act of previous life (*Purvaj*) and ii) complications (*Upadravaj*). Diseases caused by the present acts (*pratiuttapan/ Kriyamanakarma*) of this human body (*sharira*) are known as *pratiuttapanakarmaj* while those caused by the effect of the bad acts (*karma*) of the past life are known as *Purvakarmaj*. *Hinayoga*, *Mithyayoga* and *Atiyoga* of *Karma* are the root causes of vitiation of *Dosha*. (see Rogbhedhiya Adhyay, *Sutrasthana* chapter 22, *Ashtanga Samgraha*, Vol I).

There is no action/deed performed in the previous life/past time which does not lead to the corresponding results. Hindus, thus, believe that a disease is a result of one's *karma*, not somebody else's sin. Diseases arising out of such actions/deeds are not amenable to any therapeutic measures⁹. Crawford writes that Charaka "allows room for human efforts to curtail the effects of ordinary non-moral actions by the use of intelligence, wisdom, balanced conduct, and recourse to medicine. Only the fruits of immensely good or bad moral actions cannot be averted by

these means.” (Crawford: 111) Therefore, a Hindu is not averse to taking medicines and improving one’s condition and life-style though he considers sickness to be a punishment (*karma danda कर्मदंड*) for his *karma* which is the net result (*karma phal कर्मफल*) of his *karma* from which there is no escape. The Hindus thus believe that a disease is a result of one’s own *karma*, not somebody else’s sin. This also explains as to why one person is affected by a virus and the other is not. In terms of modern science one has developed immunity while others have not because of a combination of various *karmas*. Therefore, if one falls ill despite following the regimens of diet and season the illness could be attributed to *karmas* of the previous life¹⁰. Therefore, one, who is desirous of one’s wellbeing in the present life and life after birth, should suppress urges of impulsive action of *Kaya*, *Vak* and *Manas*.¹¹

Different societies may prescribe different punishments for the same kind of illegality/ sinfulness according to their backgrounds and different points of view. For example, a crime/ sin like homicide attracts different punishments in different countries. As indicated earlier, the Hindus consider a disease to be a kind of punishment for an undesirable act/ sin in this or in past life. The Hindus do not consider/treat/deal with a body/ disease in isolation. Rather, one’s present body is considered to be reflecting the *samskars* of the past lives as well. Because of this unique thought a peculiar way of punishment too has been spelled out for what is considered to be bad/sin/sinful. A detailed discussion about them is found mainly in *Shatatapa Samhita*, *Manusmriti* and *Garuda Purana*. For example, it is written in *Shatatapa Samhita*:

“A sin, committed in a previous birth, assails people in the shape of a disease after the termination of the sufferings in a hell. It is dissipated by recitation etc., (5) Leprosy, consumption, gonorrhoea, diarrhoea, obstruction in urination, stone, cough, dysentery, fistula, obstinate ulcers, inflammation of the glands, paralysis, loss of eyes, these diseases, says the *Smriti* originate from the perpetration of heinous crimes. (6-7) Dropsy, liver, spleen, colic, ulcer, short-breathing, dyspepsia, fever, cold, forgetfulness, distraction of the senses, *Galagraha* (a kind of disease), bloody tumour, dry spreading itch, are the diseases begotten of minor sins; convulsive fits, appearance of circular figures of various sizes on the body, trembling of the body, itches, elephantiasis [*sic*], *Poondarika* (a kind of leprosy), and other diseases, originate from *Unupata*-sins. The diseases of mankind, heard by [the name of] piles, originate from *Atipapa* (heinous crimes). (8-10) Various other diseases originate from the

combination of sins. Their symptoms and penitentiary rites should be spoken of in due order. (11)" (Dutt 459-460)

Some of the above ideas are also a part of the *Ayurveda*. For example, Mahrishi Charaka holds that the cause of dermatosis (like Leucoderma) lies not only in having incompatible foods but also in untruthfulness, ungratefulness, having no respect for the gods, insulting peers like brahmin / guru and other respected personal, sinful acts, and misdeeds of past life. (*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsasthana*, 7: 8, 7:177)¹² Similarly, epidemics are caused by vitiated factors like air, water and land because of people's sins of the present life or the misdeeds of the past life, intellectual error (*prajnaparadha*), unrighteousness (*Adharma*) and the curses of the sages (*Charaka Samhita, Vimana Sthana*, 3: 19-23).

Hindus consider *Moksha* to be the ultimate purpose of human life and the efforts for attaining *moksha* can be made only in human life. Therefore, *karmaphala* is not limited to suffering from certain diseases only even a re-birth in any other form (*yoni*) is a result of sin. Taking birth in any other *yoni* is a greater suffering or the worse form of disease. *Ushna Samhita* mentions: "Those twice-borns, who take meals at a *S'rddha*, if they, without spending a night, hold sexual congress or make gifts, are, forsooth, born in the species of crows. (30)" (p. 229) Similarly, in Goswami Tulsidas's *Shriramcharitmanas*, a Hindu religio-literary epic, there is a conversation between Kaag Bhushund and Garuda (*Uttarkand, Doha* 120 ff). In it the readers are being advised to shun criticizing and talking ill of others unnecessarily. In the process *karma* (action/ sin) and its *Karmaphala* (result) are mentioned: "those who criticise their teacher will be reborn as frogs"; "those who criticise saints are reborn as owls"; and the "foolish people who criticize and talk ill about everyone shall be reborn as bats." (*Uttarkand*, 120: 12-14) Tulsidas also mentions the causes of various diseases: "The root of all diseases is attachment, infatuation and ignorance"; "The *Kama* is *Vata*, greed is immense phlegm and anger is *Pitta* which is the reason for burning in the chest"; "If these three brothers viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* unite, painful diseases can occur". (*Uttarkand*, 120: 15) It also suggests a way out to attain *samadhi* (peace) in this condition: "Adopt a routine, *dharma*, ethics (best practices), penance, knowledge, sacrifice, chanting, charity and many more; medicines are there but they are not able to cure the diseases. By the grace of Lord Rama, if this coincidence remains, then all these diseases will be destroyed. Believe the words of the *Vaidya* (doctor) as well as those of a

Sadguru (a good/virtuous teacher).” (*Uttarkand*, 121: 3) In real life nobody considers Tulsidas to be doctor but metaphorically speaking every saint is a doctor. So is the case with a large number of other Hindu (non-medico) texts that mention *karmas/sins* and their specific consequences in terms of diseases or otherwise in this life or later. One may refer to P V Kane’s *History of Dharmashastra*, for details on this issue.

The Hindus also believe that one can also expiate one’s sins and mitigate one’s *karmaphala* by undertaking penance (*tapa*तप) and atonement (*Prāyaścitta* प्रायश्चित्त). Suffering on account of a disease is seen as a process of mitigation of *karmaphala* of some sinful karma for there are some diseases that cannot be cured by adopting any therapeutic measure. They are cured only after the effects of past actions/deeds are exhausted i.e. fully enjoyed/undertaken (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sharira Sthana* 1: 117)¹³ Some persons (particularly *Hath Yogis* and some adherents of Jain sect), therefore, avoid taking medicines so that their suffering, a sort of purifying and cleansing process, becomes intense. They regard the suffering on account of the disease as an opportunity for undertaking atonement (*prayishchitta*) and penance. In this way they avoid making their sin and its punishment (*karmaphala*) a part of the *sanchita karma* in the lives to come. Some Hindus (*bhakti margis* भक्ति-मार्गी) also undertake chanting (*japa*) as purifying and cleansing measures to overcome their past bad *karma* (*sanchita karma*) though in the traditional, practical and average Hindu wisdom one is supposed to take medicines: “knowledge is a friend in foreign lands, wife is a friend at home / medicine is a friend to the ill, and dharma is a friend to the deceased person.” (*Chankya Niti*5:15)¹⁴

It is also necessary to point out here that Hindus value immortal soul more than their mortal/destroyable body (useful only as a functional tool/means) for they believe: “The soul is neither born, nor does it ever die; nor having once existed, does it ever cease to be. The soul is without birth, eternal, immortal, and ageless. It is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.” (*Bhagavad Gita* 2: 20) “As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.” (*Bhagavadgita*2: 22) They regard this life as i) a transition between the previous and the next birth on account of reincarnation (*punarjanm*) and they consider this life to be (ii) an opportunity to prepare themselves to be absorbed in Brahma (*Brahmaleen; Moksha*) after death. Hindus try to improve their lives by trying to get rid

of their sins (*sanchit karma*) in their preparation to get *Moksha* (release from the cycle of birth and death), which is the ultimate goal of human life. Therefore, a devotee after having said his prayers sits in the temple premises and prays for an easy death¹⁵. Many Hindus keep on chanting *Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra*¹⁶ to overcome death dispassionately as a matter of faithful practice. Hindus believe that life-span of each body is pre-determined and therefore every single day is to be lived as if it is the last one. Hindus wish for a good death (*su-mrtyu*) in old age, at the right astrological time, and in the right place (on the banks of the sacred Ganges). Whenever they consider that the body has outlived its utility they readily give it up voluntarily by adopting some means according to their beliefs.

There has been a tradition of voluntary death (the sacrifice of the self) in the Hindu community, “linked to a specific purpose” of obtaining heaven or liberation. For example, both the ascetics and the house holders gradually reduce the intake of food and liquids in their fasting to death (for a good cause), called *Santhara* (by the Jains) and *Prayopavesa* (by the Hindus). Sanatani Hindus used to throng to Prayagraj to end their lives by jumping into the river Yamuna from a tree called *Akshayavat* (identified by Alexander Cunningham). The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) mentions that the tree was surrounded with the human bones during his visit. The story of Kalanos, who entered into fire to end himself without a second thought after falling ill while accompanying Alexander the Great to Athens, is well known. The examples of death by fire abound in the form of Sati. Some Hindus stand in the Ganges in Varanasi for days together without any food and water. An enlightened person like Bhishma or Dronacharya may choose the time and place of his death. Death in Kedar Khand of Varanasi is considered good for attaining liberation, *moksha* (*काश्याममरणात्मुक्तिः Kashyam Maranat Mukti*); There are several *Ashramas* where people come to stay before breathing their last. Among them Mumukshu Bhawan (1920) and Kshilabh Mukti Bhawan (1958) are quite well known. One should not presume that Hinduism encourages suicides rather it prepares one to accept death playfully and willingly. Hindus believe that an individual passes through a long cycle of existence/ bodies experiencing several births and deaths before getting a human body as a God’s gift after a lot of good karma. Therefore, while a man is alive it his utmost duty to

maintain this body, to keep it clean and healthy as it is an opportunity to get liberation by breaking the cycle of birth and death.

Discussion and Analysis

Scientific approach demands analysis of data and evidence collected with five senses. This in turn means that evidence is tested on the basis of reason and data are logically analysed; this approach leaves very little scope for faith in the unseen and the unrealized. However, any reasonably groomed scientific person also talks about the limitations of his research in terms of observations and data collection and therefore does not refute the wisdom in Hamlet's famous lines: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy" (*Hamlet* 1.5.167-8) which hints that there is always some scope for the unknown. It will be quite pertinent to point out here that despite all scientific inventions and techniques all secrets of a human body have not been unlocked to anyone however reasonable that person may claim himself to be. It shall, therefore, not be an exaggeration to say that a human body has largely remained a mystery to the scientists. Those persons who have converted science into a dogma have scant respect for the traditional wisdom and have little faith in God and religion. They, therefore, come into conflict with the people in the earlier two groups very easily. So the meeting point of the three groups is "faith" which is held by the first two groups and which is attacked by the third one. This sort of conflict has also been visualised by Justice R A Jahagirdar, an adherent of scientific temper:

"Scientific temper cannot ... go hand in hand with theology or religion, especially a theology or religion which has incorporated in it miracles. Almost all religions are based upon alleged revelations, beliefs in supernatural beings and in after-life and have fossilized rules of conduct called morality having no relevance to the secular, present day needs of mankind. Belief in supernatural beings capable of affecting human destiny is wholly dangerous to a rational living. It may lead to a lack of interest in present life and to a concern for an imaginary salvation in the other world. It also inculcates a feeling of guilt in the man for sins imagined or otherwise and prevents him from realising his potentiality as a human being. Belief in a book as the inspired word of God is inimical to secular search for knowledge." (Jahagirdar 7)

Theoretically speaking, the people in this group follow a trained doctor's advice and advocate all scientific systems like Allopathic,

Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Greek systems of medicine but they are largely seen advocating only Allopathic system of medicine. Nay, they ruthlessly and unjustifiably criticize the other systems which they do not follow and about which they are largely ignorant because of their limitations. Therefore, other people sometimes become suspicious of their intentions, motives and activities, and they (the third group) are branded as agents of Multinational drug industry/mafia.

A scientific study goes only by evidence traceable with sensory perceptions. No scientist can claim to know the universal truth as all science deals with temporal truths based on facts as they stand today, new evidence in the form of a new sensory perception (with the help of new tools/ equipments) is never ruled out. No one can claim that the modern/ancient health science has a cure for every sick human body in the world for there are many matrices between the human body and its environment that remain unsolved riddles. Besides, some new challenges are always thrown by nature and environment for example, a pandemic like COVID-19 has created a panic all over the world and no scientific remedy in the form of a vaccine or medicine is in sight at the moment. A large number of deaths have been reported even from scientifically advanced countries that used to claim the best medical care for their citizens. Similarly, the viral strain that drove the Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2014-2016) killed up to 90% of the people it infected, making it the most lethal member of the Ebola family. Likewise, more than 80% persons suffering from Marburg virus died in the virus outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2000) though only small outbreaks among lab workers in Germany were reported in 1967 because of this virus. Developing a defence against the virus depends on how it behaves and on how human bodies react to it. All these cases are being cited to prove the suddenness, urgency and contingency that is created by nature for which science has no immediate solution.

The fact also remains that so far no vaccine has been found for even simple/serious looking diseases like Chagas disease, Chikungunya, Dengue, Cytomegalovirus, HIV/AIDS, Hookworm infection, Leishmaniasis, Malaria and Zika virus to name just a few at random even after several years' of effort. Historically speaking, success has eluded scientists in developing vaccines against RNA viruses because mutation of these viruses renders antigen/vaccine efforts useless. Some vaccines have been rendered ineffective for new strains and mutations of viruses

have come into existence. In recent decades, several deadly viruses, as mentioned earlier, have affected the human beings and have claimed thousands of lives. This is purely a matter between one human body and the virus. If the immunity of the body is high it remains unaffected by the virus; if the immunity is low the virus overpowers the body. The scientist/doctor has only a very limited role to play in it.

Those who advocate a scientific approach as a creed have no way out to meet the challenges during the period between the disease outbreak and its solution. In their haughtiness and over enthusiasm for science they forget the limitations of human mind and scientists' knowledge at any given point of time. Human beings, however, survive during this period according to their traditional wisdom and faith to the chagrin of this group. For example, lock-down and social/physical distancing were suggested as measures to contain COVID-19 by the World Health Organisation. In the name of drug the already banned Hydroxychloroquine is being used in some countries including the USA despite resistance from certain quarters. The issue is not very simple to understand as various lobbies/ interest-groups are at play. The news of various conspiracy theories, corrupt Big Pharma and the elite, global totalitarianism and slavery has further complicated the situation and the issue. Baxter Dmitry reports that the Germans are rising up against Bill Gates, demanding humanity to wake up and reject the self-styled "world health dictator"(newspunch.com). The British author David Icke has been talking of a global agenda being pursued by a few powerful business families in the form of the Origination, History, Symbolism, Secret Societies, Big Brother Surveillance, Manipulation of Wars, Politics, Business, Banking, Media and Mind Control, Religion etc. (exopoliticshongkong.com) Icke holds that they use — Problem-Reaction-Solution technique in most of the cases to exercise their control. He has come out with a conspiracy theory even in case of KOVID-19 according to which this is a strategy to render people helpless and make them more and more dependent on the government so that they may be exploited more and more. "[Icke] also said that Bill Gates invented 5G to 'depopulate' the world". (financial express) YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms have closed his accounts and removed his videos on the pretext of stopping mis-information to spread. (financial express) One fictional account of this interplay has been presented in Sinclair Lewis's prophetic *Arrowsmith* (1925). The book derides the medical

culture that allows belief and profits to distort science. "The novel predicted many of the successes and problems affecting today's medical profession, such as the competing needs and goals of clinicians and medical scientists; commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies developing new medications and vaccines versus the need to seek for scientific truth; political and social difficulties in developing programs for protecting a community's public health; and the doctor's evolving role in American society." (Fangerau 82–87) One can easily find the resonances of the current climate and an interplay of various matrices that Icke has been talking about in the fictional books like Albert Camus' *The Plague* (1947), Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* (1969), Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978), Dean Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness* (1981), Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* (2014), Josh Malerman's *Bird Box* (2014) and Katie M. Flynn's *In The Companion* (2020) and the journalistic account like Molly Caldwell Crosby's *The American Plague: The Untold Story of Yellow Fever, The Epidemic That Shaped Our History* (2006).

Analysis

The adherents of scientific approach come down heavily on those who display their faith by "exposing them in public eyes" and "persecuting them in the court-rooms". These are just two of the many tricks that they adopt to silence the others and interfering in their ways of life; censorship is another as has been hinted above. These are their survival strategies among many. They do this for their own survival as has also been referred to by Justice Jahagirdar while explaining the causes of this anti-pathology:

"Why to object to such innocuous beliefs? An irrational practice indulged in repeatedly by an individual or a society debilitates that individual and that society. They present a grave threat to the rational basis of human society. A great hazard lies in the erosion of reasoning capacity of human beings, being an impediment to social and human progress. Another danger is that repetitive acceptance of superstitions requires some guru or priest to interpret them. This is putting the clock back." (Jahagirdar 15)

Justice Jhagirdar himself uses a word from the religious vocabulary, "sin", to make his point: "The most serious aspect of the supernatural is not the so-called revelations, but the miracles, the myths and guesses and the injunction that all this must be taken on faith; not to do so is forbidden, it is a sin." (Jahagirdar 17) It is a sort of hypocrisy that one

resorts to using the same lexical items one was arguing against. The issues of inherent and inalienable human rights and human free-will that every man is born with also need to be evoked at this stage – who will decide how and with which faith an individual has to live with?

The people who go by their faith are described as charlatans, superstitious and pseudoscientific by the people claiming to have scientific temper. However, postmodernism has made us sensitive to various kinds of realities. Here, is a testimony from a believer (who calls himself Jamie) who is using scientific techniques/gadgets too:

“I believe with all of my heart that God can heal sick children. However, with the same thought in mind, I also believe that Satan would love to take my son out!! I am careful to MONITOR my son’s diagnosis of Juvenile Diabetes. I know that God has healed his. It is only a matter of time before it is physically manifested. Each time I take his glucose, and it is “normal” I thank God for the healing. The numbers only serve as confirmation that he is healed, and not validation. Satan does not want anyone to hear his adult testimony (that he is healed completely) so in my neglect...he will TRY to kill him. God will not let Alex fall! Our government and mankind are the ones that do not believe. I have complete faith, and with each reading...it is only getting stronger! I would be insane not to take him to the doctor. I know that Jesus is the great physician...also I share this testimony with neighbours...and as usual they believe that he never had the disease after they are aware that his reading was 388 to 450 for 3 months at least. He is responding so well (to my faith). Please don’t believe that God will punish you or your child if they seek medical attention. I pray that God blesses all of the children and parents that pursue faith healing. I would be broken hearted if I lost either of my children [sic]!!” (Jamie in pbs.org/wnet)

On the basis of poor language/style the above case may be branded to be one of the persons with low and careless education and brushed aside and dismissed saying that the testimony is not to be relied on. One should realize that faith has nothing to do with one’s educational qualifications. For a person with scientific temper the above case is a fit case to be dragged into a court of law.

Another such self-appointed investigator is a former magician James Randi who investigates paranormal, occult, and supernatural claims. In 1996 he founded ‘The James Randi Educational Foundation’ (JREF) “to help people defend themselves from paranormal and pseudoscientific claims” (randi.org); the Foundation

“works to inspire an investigative spirit in a new generation of critical thinkers”. The JREF used to offer a million-dollar reward for anyone who can produce evidence of paranormal abilities under controlled conditions which stands “terminated” now (randi.org). James Randi’s *The Faith Healers* is a polemical book as it was prompted against a person who was running for “the presidency of the United States” (Randin.p.). It is a damning indictment of the faith-healing practices of the leading televangelists and others who claim divine healing powers. According to the author himself it is an angry man’s book which “is rambling, anecdotal, crotchety, and ecumenically offensive.” He may be excused for all this as he confesses that he is not an academician but the question remains if an angry man’s tirade can be taken seriously. Similarly, in an entry *An Encyclopaedia of Claims, Frauds, and Hoaxes of the Occult and Supernatural* (1995), Randi tries to discredit homeopathy by observing the following:

“Homeopathy

This claimed healing modus is included here because it is an excellent example of an attempt to make sympathetic magic work. Its founder, Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann (1775?-1843), believed that all illnesses develop from only three sources: syphilis, venereal warts, and what he called “the itch.”

The motto of homeopathy is “*Similia similibuscurantur*” (“Like cures like”). It claims that doses of substances that produce certain symptoms will relieve those symptoms; however, the “doses” are extremely attenuated solutions or mixtures, so attenuated that not a single molecule of the original substance remains. In fact, the homeopathic corrective is actually pure water, nothing more. The theory is that the vibrations or “effect” of the diluted-out substance are still present and work on the patient. Currently, researchers in homeopathy are examining a new notion that water can be magnetized and can transmit its medicinal powers by means of a copper wire. Really. The royal family of England adopted homeopathy at its very beginning and have retained a homeopathic physician on staff ever since.

The only concern of homeopaths is to treat the symptoms of disease, rather than the basic causes, which they do not recognize. Thus, homeopathy correctly falls into the category of magic. And quackery.” (Randin.p.)

Randy does not take into consideration the fact that an atom is more powerful than a molecule and that a nano-particle is more powerful than an atom. He remains unimpressed by the large number of people who claim to have been cured by homeopathy and hence ignores their testimony.

The above case has been cited to prove that the issue at stake is not to arrive at some truth but to make a sort of power-display. As hinted earlier there is sort of war between the two groups: the religious group and the atheists. Both the parties claim that they know the truth and are at least very near it. While the first group claims its authority banking on the mysterious the other wants to claim it by debunking the mysterious. However, it is doubtful if the mysterious can be understood with the help of five senses only. Both the groups wish to strengthen their camps; books and strategies are produced accordingly. For example, Peter G. Boghossian wants to create atheists (and not truth seekers). He has published *Manual for Creating Atheists* (Pitchstone Press, 2013), a handbook for equipping atheists with “treatments” to cure religious believers of the “faith virus.” He is described as an “atheist tactician” by Tom Gilson who advances his arguments in order to counter him in his pamphlet: “Peter Boghossian, Atheist Tactician: “What He Gets Right, (Some of) What He Gets Wrong, and How Christians Must Respond”. Health problems/issues are being used just as tools in this power politics. No system can claim to be fool-proof and perfect. Sharon A rightly throws the following observation in the face of the science-fanatics: “Thousands of children die every year under medical treatment. ... You have only to look at the records of medical mis-diagnosis, wrong treatment, and prescription drug related deaths to know that there must be a better way.” (pbs.org/wnet) Similarly, cherisesimms [sic] rightly points out: “The assumption that children treated medically live while those treated prayerfully die is disingenuous in the face of the facts.” (pbs.org/wnet) Robert Mendelsohn, the Orthodox Jewish paediatrician, in his books (*Confessions of a Medical Heretic* and *Male Practice: How Doctors Manipulate Women*) charges that all is not well with the official medical system. A formerly practicing doctor, Larry also highlights how the Government has appropriated a particular medical healing system to prosecute the others:

“I am a Christian and formerly practicing medical doctor. The medical system is a government religion. All churches which unquestioningly

accept medicine are government churches. Here in Des Moines we have Lutheran, Methodist and Catholic hospitals. ... I lost medical privileges at Lutheran Hospital for advocating fasting as prayer-they would only recognize fasting as unproven medical therapy and would not consider the spiritual aspects. Some believe Juvenile Diabetes is post-viral autoimmune disease. I believe that fasting can activate bodies own stem cells to form new pancreatic insulin producing cells. Giving these children insulin guarantees this will never happen. Christian Science probably claims to have cases available claiming healing through prayer of this malady. I consider CS to be government church also with its lawyers and tax breaks. ... I know of at least two children who have died of juvenile diabetes in teens with good medical care. One was son of former NBC president Michael Gartner. They would never be put on trial. The medical aphorism would apply – The operation (mainstream medical/religious government approach) was a success, but the patient died. ... It is a tragedy that Kara died and it was unnecessary. It is possible she could have been healed by Jesus/faith/prayer today. ... Government doctors would prefer to treat us all as patients rather than citizens with rights.” (pbs.org/wnet)

The latest researches (Nobel Laureate Japanese cell biologist Yoshinori Ohsumi’s research, 2016) in this field indicate that during starvation/ fasting¹⁷, cells break down proteins and other cell components and use them for energy. Fasting activates autophagy (recycling of cells and renewing their content), which helps in slowing down the aging process and has a positive impact on cell renewal. During autophagy, cells destroy viruses and bacteria and get rid of damaged structures. It’s a process that is critical for cell health, renewal, and survival. (bluezones) Thus, Larry’s approach to fasting is not without a scientific basis but he was persecuted because his approach was not to the liking of a particular group in power.

Since in the modern world political power largely lies in the hands in the atheists and secularists they use it to impose their views on “the others”. Prosecuting “the other” in the court of law is a “seemingly just” and soft option to display one’s power. In the process Science/reason is relegated to the back seat and the display of authority and power occupies the driver’s seat. The issues like who has got a control on one’s body and how that living body has to deal with it while it is sick have been the points of contestation in the courts of law. One example will suffice here: “The U.S. Supreme Court has found that the right of self-

determination, which includes the right to refuse medical care, is inherent in the liberty interests protected by the federal constitution. But the highest Court in our land hasn't indicated that this is a guaranteed privacy right, but rather is better considered a right of liberty." (journalslww) In this context it is clear that any intervention of a doctor may be termed as Satanic act and both the doctor and the patient may be punished for interfering in the ways of God by the designated authority. During the days of Inquisition in Europe and elsewhere this was one of main issues. Providing medical help to those who were suffering was one of the serious charges against scorers and witches before the inquisitors to ponder over. There are several studies on the issue. In one study For example, Timothy D Walker after examining the records of 442 Inquisition dossiers writes, "Men were arrested in surprisingly large numbers, not only for such crimes as conducting acts of simple sorcery and divining the future, but also for curing illness." (Walker 346) The conflict also has another dimension i.e. a conflict in the majority/Govt view and the minority view. In the process some religious institutions become cohorts to the state machinery and the rights to those who do not toe the official line have to bear the brunt of the system. Though the rights of the minority groups are generally protected by a broad rubric of laws like the ones on freedom to life, personal freedom, religious practice, human dignity and human rights they have to contest a long-drawn legal battle for exercising their choices/ rights.

Such groups/ individuals are sometimes drawn into legal battle for various reasons. For example, doubts are raised about the genuine exercise of the patient's free-will in refusing the treatment in the light of the implicit or explicit influence/ pressure of a third party. In one such case Judge Donaldson observed:

"Does the patient really mean what he says or is he merely saying it for a quiet life, to satisfy someone else or because the advice and persuasion to which he has been subjected is such that he can no longer think and decide for himself? In other words, is it a decision expressed in form only, not in reality?" (Donaldson 389)

Another reason is a sort of arrogance of the members of civil societies or the local governments. They believe that their thinking and ways are more important/ scientific/ enduring/ sustainable and therefore need to be thrust upon others. The following observation of

the attorney John Kasprak hints at the conflict between the two attitudes:

"Many cases in which courts have been asked to order medical treatment have involved patients who refused to give consent based upon religious beliefs. Some of the most common involve those whose religious beliefs forbid transfusions or any blood products or by-products. When faced with patients in need of surgery requiring blood, doctors have turned to the courts to try and overcome a patient's refusal to consent to a transfusion. How the courts decide such cases depends on factors such as whether the patient is an adult or minor, competent or incapacitated, or the chief provider for minor dependents. (see Fay Rozovsky, *Consent to Treatment: A Practical Guide*, p. 440)." (cga.ct.gov)

The assumption of the local governments and their supporters is: theirs is the perfect system that guarantees perfect health and therefore it needs to be thrust upon others. This attitude is an example of one-upmanship so a kind of power-struggle is always on. No wonder, the matter has been contested in the courts of law. Two examples, of this sort of litigation in American courts are being mentioned below:

... [the] courts in Wisconsin and Oregon recently decided two cases involving faith healing that resulted in the death of a child. In Wisconsin, [the] parents who had relied on spiritual healing to treat their diabetic 11-year-old daughter were found guilty of second-degree reckless homicide. In Oregon, [the] parents were acquitted of manslaughter charges in the death of their 15-month-old daughter, but the girl's father ultimately was convicted of a lesser charge of criminal mistreatment. (pew forum)

The following are the three logical voices of ordinary Christian resentment against this sort of legal action:

Opinion 1: "The assumption that children treated medically live while those treated prayerfully die is disingenuous in the face of the facts. Children die in hospitals every day in every state of this nation. If a child dies under medical care should we prosecute the parents? Should we shut down hospitals and clinics when a child dies? Obviously this issue is not about children living or dying because if it were modern medicine has a paltry record. I believe the parents should be prosecuted if there has been no treatment or evidence of care. But until the medical establishment can show that children do not die under its care how can you force a parent to place their child with no guarantees it will be healed? How can you prosecute a parent for doing what they believe is

best for their child when the option of the medical model has so many child deaths associated with it?" (pewforum)

Opinion 2: "I notice that Swan's child died under medical treatment. She can say she took the child too late but what about the millions of children that are taken immediately and die anyway?

We need more options to health care not less. Until the perfect system is found where nobody dies, we should not be so arrogant as to call one system better than another and then prosecute one when it fails and not the other." (pewforum)

Opinion 3: "Thousands of children die every year under medical treatment. Are parents prosecuted for those deaths? Wouldn't we feel it to be a violation of those parents freedom of religion if they were prosecuted for NOT praying and seeking a spiritual solution? Why do we assume that medical solutions are the best and almost the only remedies? You have only to look at the records of medical mis-diagnosis, wrong treatment, and prescription drug related deaths to know that there must be a better way." (pbs.org)

Those who are familiar with the stories of scientists like Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) and Galileo di Vincenzo Bonaiuti de Galilei (1564–1642) realize that the relationship of scientists and church has been very volatile particularly in the 16th and 17th century Europe. During most of the 16th and 17th centuries, fear of heretics spreading teachings and opinions that contradicted the Bible dominated. The Catholic Church used to persecute scientists whose theories were deemed to be heretical; their books were forbidden by placing them on the Index of Prohibited Books. All those early scientists whose findings were not congenial to Church were punished severely by the church. (see Draper, Dickson) Things improved and the scientists could work freely only when the royal patronage was granted to the scientists. For example, The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge was founded on 28 November 1660, with a royal charter by King Charles II and Académie des sciences (The French Academy of Sciences) was founded in 1666 by Louis XIV at the suggestion of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, to encourage and protect the spirit of French scientific research. Germany followed suit. With the passage of time and because of misplaced enthusiasm science too craves to occupy the place of a religion. However, things as they stand today are much different from those in the 17th-18th century. Roman Catholics have been

trying to improve their image by reconciling themselves to the scientific theories and are indulging in a face-lift exercise. Today Roman Catholic Church considers itself to be a patron of sciences. It has been prolific in the foundation and funding of schools, universities, and hospitals, and many clergy have been active in the sciences. Historian Lawrence M. Principe writes: "it is clear from the historical record that the Catholic church has been probably the largest single and longest-term patron of science in history, that many contributors to the Scientific Revolution were themselves Catholic, and that several Catholic institutions and perspectives were key influences upon the rise of modern science." (Principe 102)].

Conclusion

People look for happiness; looking for a viable solution for their health problems is a part of such a quest. People need something to fall back on during the times of crises and on the basis of their mental makes-ups, religious sensibilities and education they try to find some solutions. Time-tested religious beliefs usually help them a great deal in facing and braving the tough times. Physical diseases are just a minor issue in comparison to daily encounters with the moments of crises. In such moments of crises emotional/ psychological health of a person plays a very vital role. The best sustenance for such health comes from one's religious attitudes which one can afford almost at zero cost. Realizing its importance even the World Health Organisation has started the process to revise its existing definition of health ("a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being") by including the spiritual dimension in it. The modern medical science, particularly allopathic system, is incomplete as it is not able to provide solutions to all the physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. Therefore, its promulgation and propagation in the name of scientific creed is not desirable. People should have a larger choice to exercise their options according to their time-tested belief systems. Any religious or atheistic dogma should not be imposed on the people unless there is a full guarantee to give a complete and perfect solution to the ailing persons. People have a right and a duty to raise their children according to their belief systems. Any interference in them will be deemed to be regimentation that needs to be resented in a democratic society. The democratically elected governments should take care of the people's welfare in keeping with their beliefs and they should not become a party to different kinds of lobbies that try to restrain people

and exploit them monetarily. Similarly, the courts of law should exercise restraint while delivering judgments and should not unnecessarily assume the role of being the master guardians of the civilizational progress. The Hindus had developed a holistic life pattern of life in which even managing a sick body was the responsibility of the individual with least support from the outside world. This system (Ayurveda) being affordable, sustainable and environment friendly gratifies and empowers all; it is fit to be adopted by all not only during the normal days but also during the crisis-torn period of KOVID-19. The system can be studied and explored further. In fact, the rules to keep a body healthy are so simple that even an animal knows/practices them. Most of the things to maintain one's good health are available freely and almost free of cost. This approach of keeping healthy is good for an individual and a society but bad for those who care for the health of economy in terms of GDP and measure human index in terms of expenditure incurred on medicines. Therefore, a relook at some the prevalent parameters to measure growth (like GDP and GNP) is also necessary. The UNO has rightfully started working and exploring GNH but a lot of work in this direction is yet to be undertaken and completed.

Notes and References

1. The diseases and the specific persons who were cured by Jesus have been mentioned in the *New Testament*. Jesus is said to have cured a deadly fever in the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54), a fever in Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-41), a few paralysed persons (Matthew 9:1-8), cleansed some lepers (Matthew 10:8), healed a man of dropsy (Luke 14:1-6), opened the eyes of some blind men (Matthew 20:29-34), cured a few persons who was plagued by a demon (Mark 3:11), healed an invalid man (John 5:1-17), loosened the tongue of a man who could not speak (Matthew 9:32-33), cured a deaf and dumb man (Mark 7:31-37), restored the ear of the high priest's servant (Luke 22:50-51), restored a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6) and cured a woman of an issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34). He is also said to have raised a few from amongst the dead later (Luke 7:11-17) and later he himself resurrected (Mark 16: 1-6). All these are just the examples of faith healing as Jesus was not using any medicines.
2. The official process for canonization (revised by the Roman Catholic Church several times since its institution in 1234 AD, the last being on February 7, 1983), requires a testimony for performing at least one miracle in the form of interceding before beatification and one after beatification for the declaration

of sainthood. Before 1234 AD martyrs and those recognized as holy were usually declared saints by the Church at the time of their deaths.

3. Like Apostolic Faith Church, Bethlehem Healing Temple-Faith, CSI St. Peter's Church, Faith Healing & Deliverance, Faith Healing Anointing Temple, Faith Healing Bible Church Toronto, Faithcity Church, FOLJ Church, Global Faith Healing Ministries Church, Greater Faith Ministries, Healing The Nations Faith Ministries, Hope & Faith Church, Houston Faith Church, Latter-day Saints, Miracle Healing Centre, Mount Zion Assembly Healing Temple of the Apostolic Faith, Pentecostals, United Apostolic Church & Faith Healing Ministry, Word of Faith Healing Ministry).
4. "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India – To develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform." (*The Constitution of India*, Article 51 A(h)) The duties were not a part of the original form of the Constitution and were inserted later vide Forty-second Amendment Act, 1976, which came into force with effect from 3rd January 1977 on the recommendation of Swaran Singh Committee when the leftists were riding the back of Congress, the ruling party, and the opposition in the country had put behind the bars.
5. "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully. ... The effect of this education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindoo who has received an English education ever continues to be sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy. But many profess themselves pure Deists, and some embrace Christianity. ... The Hindu religion is so extravagantly absurd that it is impossible to teach a boy astronomy, geography, natural history, without completely destroying the hold which that religion has on his mind. ... It is my firm belief that, if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytise, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection." Macaulay Thomas Babington to Zachary Macaulay, 12 October 1836, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*. Ed. Trevelyan, George Otto, Sir, 1838-1928. 1876, pp. 454-56, <https://archive.org/details/lifelettersoflor01trevuoft>.
6. *Kaayabaalagrahaurdhvaangashalyadamshtrajavarshan
Ashtauangaanitasyaahuhchikitsayeshusamshrita."*
(*Ashtang Hridayam*, Sutra Sthana 1:5-6)
7. संयोगेचविभागेचकारणंद्रव्यमाश्रितम्, कर्तव्यस्यक्रियाकर्मकर्मनान्यदपेक्षते
*samyoge cha vibhage cha karanamdravyamashritam,
kartavyasya kriya karmkarmnanyadpekshate.*

The causative factor in conjunction and disjunction is located in dravya and performance of the activities to be done (as intended by the doer) is karma (action). Karma does not depend on any other factor (to produce the activities). (*Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthan 1: 52*)

8. (a) निर्दिष्टदैवशब्देनकर्मयत्यौर्वदेहिकम्, हेतुस्तदपिकालेनरोगाणामुपलभ्यते

Nirdhistamdaivashabden karma yatpaurvadehikam, hetustadapikalenroghanamuplabhayte.

The deeds performed in the previous life or past time [known as *daiva* (fate)] are also the causative factors for the manifestation of certain diseases (*karmajaroga*). (*Charaka Samhita, Sharira Sthana 1: 116*)

- (b) कर्मजस्तुमतोजन्तुः कर्मजास्तस्यवामयाः। नह्यृतेकर्मणो जन्मरोगाणां पुरुषस्यवा।। १९।।

karmajastumatojantuhkarmajastasyacamayah |

nahyruitekarmānojanmaroganampurushasyava | 19 |

Human beings, as well as the diseases, originate from the deeds performed in past life. Without karma (past action or deeds) neither human beings nor their diseases could have been created. (*Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana 25:19*)

9. नहिकर्ममहत्किञ्चित्कलंयस्यनभुज्यते, क्रियाग्नाःकर्मजारोगाःप्रशमंयान्ति तत्क्षयात्

Na hi karma mahatki nchitphalamasyanabhujyate, kriyaghnahk armjarogahprash amamyantitatk shyat (*Charaka Samhita, Sharira Sthana 1: 117*)

10. परिहार्याण्यपथ्यानिसदापरिहरत्ररः। भवत्यनृणतांप्राप्तःसाधूनामिहपण्डितः।। ४३।।

yaturogasamutthanamashakyamihakenacit | परिहर्तुनतत्प्राप्यशोचितव्यमनीषिभिः।। ४४।।

pariharyanyapathyanisadapariharannarah |

bhavatyanrunatampraptahsadhunamihapanditah | 43 |

yatturogasamutthanamashakyamihakenacit |

parihartumna tat prapyashocitavyammanishibhih | 44 |

One should always avoid unwholesome food. If one gets afflicted with a disease despite leading a healthy lifestyle, then he is not at fault as it could be the effect of previous birth. (*Charaka Samhita, Sutra Sthana 28: 43-44*)

11. इमांस्तुधारयेद्वेगाहितार्थंप्रित्यचेहच, साहसानामशस्तानांमनोवाक्कायकर्मणाम्।। २६।।

imamstudharyedveganhitarthipretyacheh cha,

sahasanamshastanammanovakkayakarmanam.

A person willing for his own well-being, in this life and after (death), should suppress the urges to engage in adventures, and extreme activities of psyche, speech and body. [26]

लोभशोकभयक्रोधमानवेगान्विधारयेत्, नैर्लज्जेष्यातिरागणामभिध्यायाश्चबुद्धिमान्।। २७।।

lobh-shoka-bhaya-krodh-manve gvanvidharyet,

nairlajjyeshyatiiraganambhidhyayashchabuddhiman.

An intelligent person should control greed, grief, fear, anger, egoism, shamelessness (impudence), jealousy, excessive affliction (in anything), and desire to acquire someone else's wealth. [27]

परुषस्यातिमात्रस्यसूचकस्यानृतस्यच, वाक्यस्याकालयुक्तस्यधारयेद्वेगमुत्थितम् । २८ ।

*parushsyatimatrisyasuchaksyanriasya cha,
vakasyakalyuktasyadharyedvegamutthitam.*

Harsh talks, excessive talking, that which intends to harm others or backbiting, lying and untimely speech (improper words at improper time) are to be restrained during speaking. [28]

देहप्रवृत्तिर्याकचिद्विद्यतेपरपीडया, स्त्रीभोगस्तेयहिंसाद्यातस्यावेगान्विधारयेत् । २९ ।

dehpravrittiriyakachidvidyateparpeedya, streebhogsteyhimsadyatasyaveganvidharyet

Physical actions intended to trouble others, excessive indulgence in sex, stealing, violence (persecution), etc. should be restrained. [29]

पुण्यशब्दोविपापत्वात्मनोवाक्कायकर्मणाम्, धर्मार्थकामान्पुरुषःसुखीभुङ्क्तेचिनोतिच । ३० ।

*punyashabdovipapatvanmanovakkayakarmanam,
dharmarthakamanpurushahsukhibhunktechinoti cha*

The virtuous one, who is free from all evil deeds of mind, speech and body, is indeed happy and enjoys the fruits of dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), and kama (desires).[30] (*Charaka Samhita, sutra sthana 7: 26-30*)

12. विप्रान्गुरुन्धर्षयतांपापकर्मचकुर्वताम् । ८ ।

viprangurundharshayatampapam karma cha kurvatam । 8 ।

insulting peers like brahmin / guru and other respectable persons and indulging in sinful acts are the etiologiical and risk factors of kushtha. । 8 ।

(*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, 7: 8*)

वचांस्यतथ्यानिकृतघ्नभावोनिन्दासुराणां । १ । गुरुधर्षणं च,

पापक्रियापूर्वकृतंकर्महेतुः किलासस्यविरोधिचान्नम् । १७७ ।

vachamsyatathyanikrutaghnavonindasuranam [1]

*gurudharshanam cha, papakriyapurvakrutam cha karma
hetuhkilasasyavirodhichannam* । 177 ।

Untruthfulness, ungratefulness, no respect for the gods, disrespect for the peers (guru), sinful acts, and misdeeds of past life and intake of mutually contradictory food are the causes for *śvitrā*. (*Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, 7: 177*). Similarly, the cause of insanity due to psychic possession (*Exogenous Unmada*) is attributed to negative *karmas* in the previous lives (*Charaka Samhita, Nidanasthana, 7:10, 7:19-20*)

यस्तुदोषनिमित्तेभ्यः उन्मादेभ्यः समुत्थानपूर्वरूपलिङ्गवेदनोपशयविशेषसमन्वितोभवत्युन्मादस्तमागन्तुकमाचक्षते
केचित्पुनः पूर्वकृतंकर्मप्रशस्तमिच्छन्ति तस्य निमित्तम् ।

तस्य च हेतुः प्रज्ञापराध एवेति भगवान्युनर्वसुरात्रेयः ।

प्रज्ञापराधाद्भयं देवर्षिपितृगन्धर्वयक्षराक्षसपिशाचगुरुवृद्धसिद्धाचार्यपूज्यानवमत्याहितान्याचरति,

अन्यद्वाकिञ्चिदेव विधंकर्मप्रशस्तमारभते; तमात्मनाहतमुपगन्तो देवादयः कुर्वन्त्युन्मतम् । १० ।

*yastudoshanimittebhya hunmadaebhya samutthanpurvarupalingavedanopasayavishe
sasamanvitobhavatyunmadaastamagantukamachakshatekechitpunahpurovaktitkar
maprashastamicchantitasyanimittam*

tasya cha hetuhpraj~japaradhaevetibhagavanpunarvasuratreyah ।

*praj-japaradhaddhyayamdevarshipitrugandharvayaksharakshasapishachaguruvrudh
asiddhacharyapujyanavamatyahitanyacharati,
anyadvaki-jchidevamvidhamkarmaprashastamarabhate;
tamatmanahatamupaghnantodevadayahkurvantyunmattam || 10 ||*

Charaka Samhita, Nidanasthana, 7:10,

The type of unmada having etiology, premonitory symptoms, signs and symptoms, pain and favorable therapeutics (upashaya) different from those of the types of unmada caused by the vitiation of doshas are known to be of exogenous type. Some scholars hold the view that this type of unmada is caused by the effect of the activities of the past life. Lord Atreya considers intellectual errors as the causative factor of this condition. Due to intellectual errors, the patient disregards the Gods, ascetics, ancestors, gandharvas, yakshas, rakshasas, pishachas, preceptors, elders, teachers and the other respectable ones. He also resorts to undesirable and inauspicious (or blasphemous) activities. The gods etc. cause unmada in him because of his own inauspicious activities. [10] *Charaka Samhita, Nidanasthana 7:10,*

नैवदेवानगन्धर्वनपिशाचानराक्षसाः, नचान्येस्वयमक्लिष्टमुपक्लिश्रन्तिमानवम् || १९ ||

*naiva deva nagandharvanapishachanarakshasah,
nachanyesvayamaklishtamupaklishnantimanavam || 19 ||*

Neither gods, nor gandharvas, nor pishachas nor rakshasas afflict a person who himself is free from misdeeds. The primary cause of unmada in an individual is the consequences of his own misdeeds and not other agents like the gods etc. [19]

येत्वेनमनुवर्तन्तेक्लिश्यमानंस्वकर्मणा, नसतद्धेतुकःक्लेशोनह्यस्ति कृतकृत्यता || २० ||

*ye toenamamanuvartanteklishyamanamsvakarmana,
nasataddhetukahkleshonahyastikritakrityata || 20 ||*

If the primary cause of unmada is misdeeds of the individual, then how could the causation of these exogenous unmada be attributed to divinities? Misdeeds committed already cannot be undone, but good deeds can pacify or neutralize the effects of these exogenous factors. [20] *Charaka Samhita, Nidanasthana, 7:19-20.* Even, difficulties in pregnancy and birth of multiple pregnancies twins etc. and the differentiations in twins are due to previous karmas (*Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, 2: 14, 16*

भिनत्ति यावद्बहुधाप्रपन्नः शुक्रार्तववायुरतिप्रवृद्धः । तावन्त्यपत्यानियथाविभागं कर्मात्मिका न्यस्ववशात्प्रसूते || १४ ||

*bhinattiyavadbahudhaprapannahshukrartavavyuratipravruddhah |
tavantyapatyanyathavibhagamkarmatmakanyasvavashatprasute || 14 ||*

The excessively aggravated vayu afflicting the union of sperm and ovum splits the zygote in various ways which results in multiple pregnancy. It is attributed to the effect of past deeds or destiny [14]

*कर्मात्मकत्वादिषमांशभेदाच्चुक्रासुजोर्वृद्धिमुपैतिकुक्षौ
एकोऽधिकोन्यूनतरोद्वितीयएवंयमेऽप्यभ्यधिकोविशेषः || १६ ||*

*karmatmakatvadvishamamshabhedacchukrasrujorvruddhimupaitikukshau |
eko~adhikonyunatarodvitiyaevamyame~apyabhyadhikovisheshah ||16||*

Due to past deeds and uneven division of the union of sperm and ovum, one among the twins is having better development in the womb while the other one is poorly developed. Thus, there is difference in the twins also. [16] (*Charaka Samhita, Sharirasthana, 2: 14,16*)

13. *नहिकर्ममहत्किञ्चित्फलंयस्यनभुज्यते, क्रियाघ्नाःकर्मजारोगाःप्रशमंयान्तितत्क्षयात्*

*Na hi karma mahatkinchitphalamyasyanabhujyate,
kriyaghnahkarmjarogahprashamamyantitatkshyat*

There is no such major action/deed (performed in the previous life/past time) which does not lead to the corresponding results. Diseases arising out of such actions/deeds are not amenable to any therapeutic measures. They are cured only after the effects of past actions/deeds are exhausted i.e. fully enjoyed. (*Charaka Samhita, Sharira Sthana 1: 117*)

14. *विद्यामित्रंप्रवासेषुभार्यामित्रंगृहेषुच।व्याधितस्यौषधमित्रंधर्मोमित्रंमृतस्यच॥*

*vidya mitrampravaseshubharyamitramgriheshu cha.
vyadhitasyaushadhammitramdharmomitrammrityasyacha. (Chankya Niti:5:15)*

15. *अनायासेनमरणविनादैर्न्येनजीवनम्॥ देहान्तेतवसायुज्यमदेहिमेपरमेश्वर।*

*lanayasenamaranamvinaadainyenaajivanam ||
dehantetavasayujyamdehi me parameshvara ||*

Oh Supreme Lord! Kindly grant me an easy death without any pain or illness, a non-miserable life to enable me to merge into You to attain liberation at the end of my life.

16. *ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् । उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ।*

*Aum Tryambakamyajamahasugandhimpushtivardhanam ||
Urvaarukamivabandhanaan-mrityormuksheeyamaamritaat ||*

We worship the three-eyed One (Tryambaka), who is fragrant (as the Spiritual Essence) and who nourishes all. Like the fruit (cucumber tied to its creeper) falls off from the bondage of the stem (creepers/samsara), may we be liberated from death, from mortality (attachment to perishable things)!

17. For a biological system like a human body there is no difference between fasting and starvation but for a thinking entity there is a difference as fasting has religious connotation while starvation is human/ Govt failure.

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BOOK REVIEWS

1

A Review of Susheel Kumar Sharma's Poetry Collection *Unwinding Self* – A Collection of Contemporary Spotlights

P.V. Laxmiprasad

Poet, Writer and Critic

Review: Kumar Susheel. *Unwinding Self: A Collection of Poems*. Cuttack: Vishwantha Kaviraja Institute, 2020.

The poetry collection entitled *Unwinding Self* under review is composed by Susheel Kumar Sharma. It is published by Vishvanatha Kaviraja Institute, Cuttack, India in 2020. The poet has gratefully dedicated the collection to his teachers who inculcated the love of poetry in him. The title of the collection is really captivating as it captures my attention in the very first glance. It is a collection of forty-two poems in which the poet unravels the beauties of the world in a gripping yet arresting narration. Imagery is as usual natural, serene and flowing. As one reads the poems, one gets the feeling that the poet is indeed taking a break from usual and routine life which showcases his restless journey. He takes recluse and gets rid of those tensions and anxieties. As a reader, I am particularly impressed by the poems like "Durga Puja in 2013", "The Destitute", "Chasing A Dream on the Ganges", "Kabir's Chadar", "The Kerala Flood", "Sahibs, Snobs,, Sinners", "Renewed Hope", "Akshaya Tritya", "Lost Childhood", "A Family by the Road", "Ram Setu", "Connaught Place", and "Stories from the Mahabharata". I get the feeling that the poet has presented his first-hand experiences in poems that mark his caliber and observation. A keen observer, the poet penetrates into those painful and blissful experiences of the world. He exhibits consummate skill as a poet and his perception of the present world and

its glaring realities is really evident of his artistic skill. The poet touches up on a wide range of issues and inner struggles in a realistic portrayal. I look up on the collection as something that caters to the contemporary taste by synthesizing between the worldliness and existence. However, the simplicity of language is the evidence of his mastery of poetic craftsmanship.

A Professor by vocation, Susheel Sharma possesses a heart filled with emotions, feelings and sentiments. His devotion to teaching has perhaps made him compose poetry. His passion for knowledge and poetic excellence has manifested itself in his poetry. He has revealed his love for divinity in a religious poem "Durga Puja". It isn't just a poem of spirituality but a projection of how and what Goddess Durga does every year. He longs to wait for her return as usual during the month of Ashvayuj, the month of Puja and Chanting of Bhajans. The poem begins with a question and ends with a question. The year was precisely 2013. The Phailan Cyclone devastated the arrangements and celebrations of Durga Puja in 2013. The mighty Nature forcibly took away the celebrations. The poet was deeply hurt and his sentiments reflected the typical literary protest. The poet recollects the *pandal* construction for *Ma* for four days. He laments that the Goddess is poorly maintained and sometimes the devotees pay a very poor attention. He questions and bemoans the losing values and devotional spirit. One finds the post – modern elements in the poem. It is a *Navaratri* festival in India. Poet appears traditional and blends the tradition with modernity in terms of celebrations. In yet another poem, "Destitute", is a chronicler of events that led the poet to live in the aftermath of globalization. To be honest, globalization has ruined the lives of people across the world. In another dimension, the poem is a cultural clash between native and alien cultures. Different projections come out of the poem in the end. Lines like "In lieu of a few doses of medicines / that turn me a slave forever" add to his woes in contemporary times. The poem "The World in Words in 2015" satirizes the world in manifold lifestyles. "We have five-star facilities / we arrange the best tours". And "what is petrol? / What good is it? / What worth is it?" In such a world, words carry new meanings. Though the poem is sarcastic in tone and spirit, it is here and there praising some things which we see them in everyday life. The poet is at his innovative best in the poem. Next, I am impressed by a poem "Kabir's Chadar". Though religious in structure and theme, it has immense

symbolic importance. The two Chadars mentioned in the poem makes a contrastive analysis between virtue and simplicity. At other side, it marks a typical world between complexity and hypocrisy. Susheel Sharma, as I see, must have presented his first hand experiences in the poem. "How Could Kabir / afford to return his chadars / As he had obtained it?" Poem like "Akshaya Tritya" stands for some new venture or business on this day which according to the age – old beliefs would bring in wealth. It is the most auspicious day for launching new business. The poet succinctly presents a few lively examples to substantiate his arguments in favor of "Akshaya Tritya". Common people are his poetic devices in the poem. In a contemporary scenario, he presents the importance of theme and application. In yet another prominent poem, the poet focuses on the money minded approaches of people in "Buy Books Not Diamonds". It is a poem of introspection. Again, it is a poem of message for world to live in. More thrust is given to preserve books than to procure diamonds. Diamonds, as the image suggests, may make one richer but accumulation of books would augur well for the world to live in eternal knowledge. The need of the hour is knowledge preservation than losing money on diamonds. In fact, diamonds don't put an end to the starvations. Bookish knowledge would pave the way for the world to find lasting solutions. The poet is highly didactic and philosophical. The poem "Lost childhood" is full of compassion for poor children who were thrown out in the streets. "The one who is disowned by a father" / Has a heavenly father; / The one who is abandoned/ by a mother on the footpath / Needs a Daniel for Judgment". This is where Susheel Sharma excels in bringing out the burning issues of contemporary society. We witness such episodes in which people abandoned the new –born babies in the bushes beyond recognition. Some parents kill the new-born babies. The scenario is truly contemporary and it is unending yet. Nostalgic moments were cherished when the poet recollects his dreams on the Ganges in "Chasing a dream on the Ganges". Alakananda, Bhagirathi, Avantika Temple, Mansa Devi, Chandi Devi, Parmath Ashram, Swarga Ashram and Laxman Jhula Ghat figured prominently in the poem. If rivers symbolize ancient civilization in India, temples and ashrams make their way in the poem. Haridwar was how the poet described in the lines as "To perform a penance / I looked for solitude / On the Ganga Ghats / In Haridwar/ But the honking of / trucks and whizzing / of cars and speeding buses distracted me from / My mantra". He uses a figure of speech 'paradox' to

express the plight of devotees when they go to offer rituals. It is a scene in which Sharma was disturbed by the vehicles. A sort of distraction took away his meditative prayer through the chanting of mantras. Usually, people get disturbed when they sit down for a silent prayer. Temples and rivers symbolize a life of utter contemplations. This distraction led the poet to end with a question for which there is no immediate answer. He asks that "what is the use of / For penance / if one does not wish to lose life?" This amply substantiates the poet's experiences at Haridwar as a distracted devotee. At the end, this amounts to something one distraction followed by another distraction. His wanderings to accomplish the rituals ended in futility. Sharma resented the Nature's fury when Kerala, God's own country in South India, was frequently attacked by floods in three successive years. The poet refers to the mayhem of 2018 floods when Idukki dam gates were opened. The low-lying areas were inundated. The flood waters wrecked havoc and the people were homeless. The poet refers to Gandhi, Amartya Sen and financial aid that came from UAE. It is a clash between material gains and ideological wars. In the end, the innocent people became victims of Indian politics. Pride and prejudices hold the key to natural disasters. It is a poem of elegance and beauty in live sarcastic comments. Poets should protest the wrong-doings and Sharma did it exactly as a reformer. Next, a poem "A Family by the Road" is a genuine portrayal of poet's longing for natural world. The projection of thoughts together with natural world make a good but interesting read in the end. "Who is it pushing me into a house / what harm have I done? / Let me enjoy my freedom / I am proud of my poverty / I am proud of my ignorance/ I am proud of my dirt / I have a home because of these/ I am proud of my home". The punches are clearly understood from the tone and setting of the poem. In the poem, "Rechristening City", the poet looks at the fragmented names of the cities and states. It is a modern fashion to change the age-old names of those cities and states. Sometimes, it is mythically done and sometimes, it is deliberately done. Fragmented walls create the new names in face of old ones. "Crowded Locals" is another poem chiefly known for his experiences as a visitor in Mumbai in metro trains. Strangeness is the key to the poet's observation that runs throughout the poem. It is familiarity versus unfamiliarity yet they move as if they were close people but in reality, they maintain strange relations. "I sometimes wonder / who is not a friend here – / All faces are so familiar, / all have dreams in their eyes / All exhausted from

day's work / all on the move to their destination". The wonders of time in timeless saga of world are finely described in a poem, "Saying Goodbye". The poet takes the readers on the shores of magic spell of time. One can never be off from the time which is both the killer and preserver of life. Many inferences can be drawn from the poem. As the poet pens the verse "How is the moment un-enveloped / When the Curfew tolls the knell of the parting day / The sleeping man asks for euthanasia / where does this moment lie?". The poet substitutes the word 'death' with 'euthanasia'. Euthanasia is a Greek word to end life by a person on his own in order to relieve pain and suffering. The poet has meticulously used a Greek allusion to signify death. Goodbye is in fact to bid a farewell to someone whom we lose him or her. Among the poems that impressed me most is "Endless Wait". It is a poem of books and book readers. Though humorous in style, it is a biting satire on those who procure books from e-shopping markets such as Flipcart and Amazon but they never care to give them a read. They invest hard-earned money on the purchase of books. A few of them have not opened the wrappers. Really, the books are the treasure troves of immense knowledge. It is for the poet an endless wait in the sense of acquiring more books than one can read them in his lifetime. I love reading the poem again and again for its inner meaning and outer beauties about books and their acquisition. If nature's wondrous objects dominate this collection, it is equally Sharma's adroit skill in beautifying them with a life force. Nature, realistic world, philosophy and spiritual saga of life and above all, images occupy the collection. To conclude, Susheel Kumar Sharma is a poet of robust thinking and profound observations. All the forty two poems bear the mark of time, relevance and sustenance. They are really spotlights on contemporary society.

2

Beyond Fears and Hates: Reading Molly Joseph's *Water Sings over the Stones*

Queen Sarkar

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Review: Joseph Molly. *Water Sings Over the Stones*, Authorspress: New Delhi, 2020. Pp. 227.

No sooner than I started reading *Water Sings Over the Stones*, Molly Joseph's recent collection of poetry, did I want to read it out loud to the nearest person who would listen. The intensity, depth, and the broth of imagery in the poems wrapped with clear conscience provide a fascinating insight into the human psyche. Meticulously divided into seven sections, there are ninety-eight poems in this collection, and each poem bursts with resounding voices of introspection, rage, fleeting memories, and hope. The shades of light and dark are balanced in this collection which in turn evoke the spirit of the age, celebrate democracy, and also capture the frivolous whims often shrouded in mystery.

From the uncertainty of the contemporary time of pandemic crisis, when we are reeling with massive cultural and psychological shifts, captured through distorted reflections, green sensitivities, planetary crisis, and landslides, to going "*Beyond Fears and Hates*", the collection explores the relations between nature, human emotions, real and imagined journeys – oscillating between topographical description, political discourse, and democratic system. Joseph crafts poems that mirror the society we live in. The blend of certainty and uncertainty, voice and verse, emotions and moods, encapsulate the journeys of the real and imagined characters, their fragmented voices, and a wide geographical arc. To quote a poem titled 'Isn't the World Large Enough?' (36-39):

there stands the
old woman

on road
people call hag
in motley,
laughing,
crying
into the air
shouting out
vague things...

Much like flash photography, the poems in this collection present life's experiences. The visionary power is further enhanced by the melange of lyrical and romantic moments, evocative lines, and simple yet striking raw images. Joseph creates unexpected metrical moments and fills them with the interstices of lives. While the themes are local in their setting, their concern is global. Poems like 'Solemn Shores', 'Waiting', 'Serenity' take us to a world where hope reverberates in the sky, the music of the night enriches the soul, and the instances of violence, molestation and death rhetorically constitute subjectivity. The collection demands absolute submission and shines throughout with an intent that is pure, serene, and raw.

The first section titled 'The Contemporary' is instilled with sensibility. At first glance, the titles of the poems seem rudimentary but as soon as you start reading the poems from this section, an audacious expressivity, unsettling sensation and a blood rush of urgency start running through the veins.

After all,
how can we live on
in a world
where two innocent
daughters of yours
are molested
in front of your eyes?
(Stifled Cries... who Cares... p. 56-57)

The next section takes you inside the tenebrous spiral world of pandemic crisis, of coronavirus, which has invaded the entire world like a dark shadow and continues to ravage countries across the world. Morbid, stirring, and disturbing images of death, distress, and agony burst into pages, leaving us cluttered. This is a very smart and complex section: where the images of life and death, hope and hopelessness, love and hate, keep the readers onside and engrossed. The sheer terror of

experiencing death, and communicating human emotions are captured painstakingly in this section. To quote a poem titled 'Accidental' (126-127):

how it devours life
the fragile gossamer thread...
how quick an epidemic can
paralyse the life around...
It falls, it falls,
with the random flash of a touch, or breath...

Molly Joseph's true worth as a good poet is revealed in her ability to capture the multiple chords of love – love for life, people, flora and fauna, home, festivals, journeys, dreams, and friends. For every individual, Joseph has written something. The poems in this section hold several unadorned confessions, reminding us to treasure what we have. In this section "love flows", "love dwells", and love "rises". Like the finely spun thread, the various strands of emotions and relationships run throughout this section. As Joseph writes in the first poem of this section titled 'Love Never Ends' (133):

love splashes, abrupt
the flicker out of veneers
that kept it hiding...
...
love flows, unconditional,
unbothered, about getting
back what you gave
...
love dwells with a
charming assurance
a safe deposit
invested in a heart

One of the most remarkable sections of *Water Sings Over the Stones* is 'Navras' which strings together the nine rasas of life. The metaphorical representations of Navras – the nine emotions is unique in its appeal. The lyricism and eclectic imagery in this section give solace to many. The poetic persona here evolves as a wanderer, who is soul-searching with her nine companions – 'Love', 'Laughter', 'Compassion', 'Anger', 'Courage', 'Fear', 'Disgust', 'Surprise' and 'Peace'.

Let us turn out, to be the supporting staff
to lean on each, sharing
shoulders,
to carry on the climb...
the climb that thrills
while it taxes.
(Compassion, p.175)

The world we inhabit is the recurring theme of the fifth section of this collection. This section titled 'Nature' conjures different forms of planetary crisis – climate, nature, and pollution. The confluence of the murkier realms of society, along with the sense of "being here, on earth" captures our deepest fears and anxieties. In this time of triple planetary crisis, deaths, anxiety, and terror, the poems emerge as a metonym for the fecund celebration of diversity and interconnectedness. This section also makes us visualise our innocence and wonder for the world and also reconnects us with our long lost memories. As Joseph expresses in 'Nature, my Teacher' (187):

My family tree sustained, soulful with grandkids...
my life mate hale and hearty, still my support,
yet, time fleets...
loving faces of friends, their smiles cheering...
time fleets...

If you love to travel, then the sixth section of *Water Sings Over the Stones* is going to give you wings. The first poem of this section titled 'Gandhi Jayanti at KISS Bhubaneswar' will take you to the world's first and only university exclusively for tribal students – Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. Amidst the enchanting natural beauty of the campus, one could hear Mahatma Gandhi's favorite bhajan "Vaishnavo Janto..." pulsating through the white space. After K.I.S.S Bhubaneswar, Joseph gives you a ticket to enjoy the pilgrim town famous for its golden beaches – Puri. The sun-kissed beaches wet your feet and amaze its visitors (readers). The stretch of fine golden sands, roar of the water from the Bay of Bengal allures the readers. And when you are in Odisha, how can you miss the pinnacle of Odisha temple architecture and a UNESCO world heritage site – The Sun Temple at Konark! Built in the 13th Century, the Sun temple at Konark is a monumental representation of the sun god Surya's chariot.

OH! KONARK!

Magnificent monument
of Kalinga architecture!
how well you showcase
art that is immortal.

Joseph writes with such lucidity and unwavering realism that her poems become truly compelling. The final section titled, 'Religious' suits the overriding theme of spiritual search with a little irony. Joseph shares her metaphysical vision through these poems. The beautiful selection of phrases, faithful representation of desires, metaphorical description of longings amidst "distress", "tears", and "darkness" give a bitter-sweet intensity to this section.

The linguistic variation, inventing strands of emotions, imaginative escape into the past, intimate domestic scenes, and the symbolic representation of reality showcases Joseph's talent for adapting to various forms and voices. Rather than focusing on the externalities, Joseph's poems are more of an exploration of the human psyche. One of the highlights of this collection are the series of images wrapped with startling visual imagination. *Water Sings Over the Stones* presents a twisted but amusing poetic tale and makes you experience everything that defines a life: love, memories, journeys, emotions, disappointment, forgiveness, anxiety, and hope.

3

Flood of Fire: A Seismic Introduction to the *Age of Kali*

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**Review: Amitav Ghosh. *Flood of Fire*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2015.
Pp.618**

Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's final book of the Ibis Trilogy is *Flood of Fire*. This epic novel deals with what presages the first Opium War, and the war itself. The British waged war of 1839 against the Chinese, had involved many Indian soldiers who were transported to China, and changed the future of both nations. While destitution and horror brought on the Indians by the opium trade is narrated memorably, Ghosh also reports the immense wealth and power that was conferred and concentrated by opium trade to some British and American merchants. Their moral turpitude in maintaining and expanding this trade-to the destruction of the Chinese – is related in this novel until the end. Ghosh, in the denouement of the novel parallels the moral failure of the Western powers, their unjust war, and the collapse of China's right to defend its people from the evils of opium consumption, to the inauspicious Age of Kali as it is described in Hindu mythology. This paper shows how powerful an introduction to the Age of Kali is *Flood of Fire*! The development of the protagonists, and the geopolitical scene that leads to the Opium War is almost a preparation to usher in that dark age.

Keywords: Opium, China, *Age of Kali*, India, *Nemesis*,

Flood of Fire is the long awaited last book of Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy. Published in May 2015, *Flood of Fire* is the final output from the voluminous research work and the many travels that were undertaken by Ghosh in the previous decade: enabling him to narrate the tumultuous history of the West's opium trade with China culminating in the first

Opium War of 1839. The events leading to the Opium War is premised to be the precursor of the Age of Kali. By the help of three hefty tomes, Ghosh presents this history within arresting fictional narratives peopled by many characters; and *Flood of Fire* – this last one confirms the reader that in all three books of the Ibis Trilogy he succeeds consummately as a storyteller. In each book the overarching issue that is explored, often in vivid details as the stories unfold, happens to be the pivotal role that colonized India played in the opium trade. In the early 1800s, India – shackled by the British colonial power, its rural agriculture at the mercy of their avaricious and vicious commercial interests, and its rural peasantry under the grip of abject poverty – had been tragically led to a role of complicity: bringing forth enormous financial success, political power and military influence for the British led West in China and other parts of Asia, and completely decimating China's trade superiority over the West. In the denouement of *Flood of Fire* the reader is a witness to the cataclysmic events that ultimately collapse all the efforts of the Chinese Imperial government to stave off the all-consuming fire that this evil commodity – opium – engulfs their nation in. But before reaching that stage of the novel we are introduced to new protagonists, and reacquainted with the ones who are featured in the previous volumes, and through these lives we almost live the times and places narrated in *Flood of Fire*. We meet Havildar Kesri Singh on the first page of the novel who is a new protagonist who stays with us until the end of the novel. Weary of battles and uncertainties, Kesri Singh at first demurs from taking this opportunity. But as fate would have it, he eventually finds himself part of the force that lays a siege on Canton, and plays decisive roles in crushing the Chinese military resistance as the British go to war in order to force the unwilling Chinese government to accept their terms of doing international trade – the so called 'free trade.' This meant that despite the untold social and economic harm that the opium trade was doing to China, the Chinese would have to lift all the impediments that hampered the unrestricted opium trade that was carried out by the British, American and other European merchants in China. The moral compass with which the West viewed this trade was absurdly self-serving and subservient only to their narrow commercial interests. The principles proffered by the British in favour of the Opium Trade, and the war mongering which resulted from these subverted principles are developed in complicated detail by Ghosh as the narrative in *Flood of Fire*

progresses from India to China, and its principal characters – Kesri Singh, Mr. Burnham, Mrs Burnham, Commissioner Lin, Neel, Baboo Nob Kissin and Zachary Reid – go through various dramatic vicissitudes of their lives that ultimately converge to bring the novel to its apocalyptic close. Ghosh has a penchant for details, and as the central idea of the story develops and proceeds through the pages of the novel, we are treated to a number of stories full of well-developed plots and intricate details that coalesce around each protagonist. A few of these stories can be traced back to the earlier books of the Ibis Trilogy, but they are complete enough to be enjoyed within the covers of this particular novel, thanks to Ghosh's virtuoso story telling skills, and sense of detail. The main character in whose voice, and through whose notes and diaries the final events leading to the 1839 opium war is depicted is Neel Rattan Halder, the Raja of Raskhali: a fallen aristocrat from British Bengal, and an escaped convict from India who ends up working for the Chinese officials in Canton when the opium trade related conflict with the Chinese authority – personified in the character Commissioner Lin – starts with the European merchants. In Canton, Neel worked for a printer and translator named Compton, and it was through Compton that Neel became acquainted with the higher echelon of the Imperial Chinese administration entrusted to deal with the foreign merchants who had to be stopped from continuing to import opium from India, and in the process destroy the people and economy of mainland China. While minute details of Neel's personal quests for joining a vocation which should give him peace of mind and his discovery of a sense of purpose in life by assisting the Chinese – a colonized trying to stop another great nation from becoming colonized – make the story of Neel an intriguing one, it is his discovery of the wickedly indifferent regard of the Western powers for Chinese lives, and its laws that address the key theme of the novel – the way in which the Western powers changed the world order in Asia. As tensions mount and repeated peaceful attempts by Commissioner Lin fail to stop the foreign merchants of Canton to refrain from smuggling in opium, we are given an interesting account through Neel's diary which enables us to appreciate the moral superiority of the Chinese, and the good natured rationality with which they try to rein in the British and other foreign opium traders. The 16th December 1839 entry in Neel's diary informs us that on this day Commissioner Lin visits a number of American merchants and a group of British sailors in order

to inform them the opium ban policy that the Chinese government had now adopted.

He also wished to persuade them to see why it is an imperative that opium trade should be abandoned. Commissioner Lin resorts to legal documents and publications of European origin to weigh-in and prove to the foreigners why they should stop importing opium if they expect harmonious trade relations with China. He wants to make the Europeans see reason on their own terms. Thus in touching language Commissioner Lin elucidates how dispute could be avoided trusting that Englishmen also believed in reason, and acted reasonably. As a bystander, Neel's entry however expresses concern as he finds how futile Lin's proceedings had been:

Unfortunately, the rest of the proceedings offered little of interest. It appears that Commissioner Lin had sought the meeting because he wanted to persuade the Englishmen of the justice of his cause. To this end he had brought along several books and pamphlets on the subject of opium and the harm it is doing to China (some of these had been brought to his attention by none other than Compton and myself). On the Commissioner's instructions a passage was read out from the European treatise on international law to show that banning of the opium trade was perfectly compatible with universally recognized legal principles.

The Englishmen listened politely but seemed puzzled that the Commissioner should appeal to them: after all it is not as if they are the kind of men who have their hands on the helm of Empire." (Ghosh 219-220)

From this point onward *Flood of Fire* describes in great detail, and via many detours, the beginning of the end for Chinese resistance. Evil triumphs, and the adage 'might is right' becomes the law as British warships stage a blockade against the Chinese under the command of Commodore Bremer. All-out war ensues, and the war junks of the Chinese naval forces prove shamefully inadequate and weak as they capsize under heavy battery from modern British warships, particularly the *Nemesis*: the first ocean going iron warship of the British. The *Nemesis* ushers in a new age of naval warfare unprecedented in the region! In the final denouement of the novel, we see that perversion of justice and evil has prevailed over what was just and right. With military support from the British, the greedy merchants of Canton force their way

to win total and complete victory over the Chinese and eventually succeed in gaining unremitted access to sell opium to the Chinese. Thus began a dark chapter of history in Asia. In the last chapter of Flood of Fire, Ghosh defines this victory as the beginning of the 'Kali-Yuga' – "the age of vice in Hindu cosmology" (Hannan). According to the Hindu ancient scriptures (religious and literary) there are four stages or cycle of the world: Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga and Kali Yuga. The most honorable, just and truthful age is the Satya Yuga – the age of truth. The last, and the worst of these cycles is the Kali Yuga – the age of sin and debauchery when Dharma – the Sanskrit word for religion – is destroyed, greed, ill behavior and merciless situations persist in the world (New Indian Xpress). According to scriptures citizens inhabiting in kingdoms or nations of the *Kali Yuga* are driven only by money, and their ultimate goal is to get rich! Only the richest have power and prestige, and people without wealth or resources are enslaved to the powerful and their policies. The leaders of the state no longer protect the people but plunder their citizens through excessive taxation. Farmers abandon living close to nature. They become unskilled labourers in congested cities. Poverty in its gory details become visible as the unemployed poor – hapless people dressed in rags – are seen everywhere and sleep on the streets (Madhavan). These terrible and foreboding details, unfortunately, became true for the India we know in the late 19th and 20th century under the British colonial rule. This scene is what came to pass in large Indian cities: millions of dispossessed sleeping rough on the streets, and begging for food (Roy 1-47). Whether Ghosh was deliberately invoking the concept of *Kali Yuga* – an idea ubiquitous in the Indian subcontinent, and certainly part of the belief system of all practicing adherents of the Hindu religion – so as to hint at the economic destitution of the rural poor that was eventually brought about by the 'free-trade' of the British owing to their agricultural, industrial and foreign trade practices formed in the 19th century, maybe explored further. It seems very likely. Tirthankar Roy, a scholar from London School of Economics in his thesis "Inequality in Colonial India" says that "Openness transformed India from an exporter of manufactures (like textiles) into an exporter of agricultural goods. The government empowered land-owners and invested in canals and railways to ensure that landholders were encouraged to produce more for the market" (3). Of course this 'openness' refers and includes the free international trade of opium –

grown under compulsion by Indian farmers, and also processed and packaged for Chinese consumption in India – to China for which they had waged the first Opium War in the 1830s. The destitution and plight of the village peasants, and them being scattered in all sorts of menial and unusual profession (like soldiering in the case of Havildar Kesri Singh) all over the colonial landscape resonates as a fact in the scholarly work that Roy had done:

The peasants ought to have gained from agricultural export but did not because they lacked capital or tenurial security to resist the exploitation of landlords and moneylenders. And the number of agricultural labourers – the poorest occupational class – increased because many artisans and peasants joined their rank. The British ruined India's village economy.. destroyed the Indian artisan.. broke down whatever beginnings there were of an indigenous industrial development and promoted.. sharks of all descriptions. The modern version of the historiography follows this classical statement with more focus on inequality. (Roy 7)

Thus, we see that some of the key actors who would define the avarice laden people of the *Kali Yuga* are already present in the real scene of colonial India according to the research of Tirthankar Roy. The presence of “sharks of all descriptions” – presumably meaning loan sharks, and agents who recruits indentured labours (as in Amitav Ghosh's narrative). The exploitation and totalitarian rule of landlords helped by the British bring forth a nightmarish existence for the poor farmers who must cultivate opium to their own ruin: during the historic setting of the novel (*Flood of Fire*) poppy was harvested by some 1.3 million peasant households in northern India (Biswas). According to a BBC investigative reportage done on opium cultivation and trade carried out in the 19th century by the British, “Local landowners forced their landless tenants to grow poppy; and peasants were also kidnapped, arrested and threatened with destruction of crops, criminal prosecution and jail if they refused to grow the crop” (Biswas). So, opium cultivation, its processing, and export by sea to the Chinese market, in a sense, unleashed an age of severe financial ruin, subjection to cruel rulers, and overall plight for the poor farmers of India. They were being squeezed on all sides by agents of avarice and exploitation in their own land, and of course internationally. The shipping industry of the British immensely benefited from opium trade, and it helped financed their growth and technological development. The trade routes plied between Bombay and

Canton (that is India and China) by British shipping companies like and P & O were hugely profitable. Opium was considered an ideal cargo, as it was very low in volume and high in value, and carrying it in early steamships to China brought landfall profits to P & O and other British shipping companies (Harcourt 56). It is safe to assert that these early steam ships led the way to the development of warships like the *Nemesis*. Indeed, in a book published by Historic England titled “*Introductions to Heritage Assets*” it is mentioned that during the 1830s to 1840s the colonial expansion, and seafaring trade that was growing, “was felt in the maritime world, particularly in relation to the Pax Britannica” (1-30). The wooden ships, and sail based ships were replaced in this era by paddle propulsion steamships which had iron hulls (1-30). These advantages were directly a result of trade route expansions and tonnage increases to the advantage of the British. The 18th century seafaring scenes, and the naval warfare in the first Opium War, that so memorably engage the reader of the novel *Flood of Fire* are indeed staged by Ghosh to provide the reader almost with a physical sense of the arrival of the *Kali Yuga* as the protagonists of the novel witness mayhem, destruction, fire and blood, as disaster and defeat for the Chinese, and the reversal of moral right to protect their nation from the harm of Opium, is completely wrought by the actions of the *Nemesis*.

In the final scene we find Baboo Nob Kissin witnessing the dawn of the age of Kali (or *Kali-Yuga*) as he proudly beholds the worldly success of Zachary Reid – the freed American slave whom Nob Kissin had supported over the years. Zachary’s development from an innocent sailor to a money grabbing, consummate adulterer and opium merchant parallels the development of the story in the *Ibis* trilogy – how opium cultivation and trade changes the complacent lives and histories of two nations, and gradually the entire world. In the novel the battleship HMS *Nemesis* is a physical symbol of the age of Kali, and Zachary Reid a human symbol. *Flood of Fire* is a befitting and epic story which in complex detail and remarkable historical accuracy recounts the year which witnesses the apocalypse that the first Opium War had been. Zachary and his fellow merchants had been the high-priests who presided over the beginning of that age – the Age of Kali. Amitav Ghosh paints through this novel an eerie and vicious picture of the agents of evil and destruction that parallels the descriptions we find in the Hindu Mythology *Kalki Purana*. According to the story of *Kalki Purana* Kali – the

evil – is to be found (allegorically) in inauspicious places like the playgrounds of ghosts, foxes and jackals. The men in these places are controlled by women and lust, meaning they are completely under the demanding sway of gratifying their senses and destitute of any moral foundation (Muthaliff and Rahman). Indeed, in this dawn of the Age of Kali, and what happens before that in *Flood of Fire*, we find so many protagonists in the grip of power, lust and greed for money. Inauspicious haunts of evil such as barracks of soldiers, war theatres and boudoirs of rich women where illicit lust can find full play as did Zachary Reed's.

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