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From the Editor's desk

Literary Oracle and the Department of English, Berhampur University wish all a safe passage through these difficult times. While human beings have lost their mythic grandeur, suffering and struggling against the invisible virus, literature, art, music and creativity have been the respite. In spite of lockdowns and the stress of online teaching we have been able to bring out this issue of Literary Oracle. I owe my gratitude to Deepshikha Routray, alumnus of the Department and one of our associate editors, and to the members of the editorial board who have both suffered from Covid 19 and have also lost their dear ones. Authors Press lost some of their valuable employees to the pandemic. We express our deep sympathies to the bereaved families.

During these trying times Prof. Sharbani Banerjee (Associate Editor LO), Dr Balabhadra Tripathy, Prof S.P. Das, Prof. M.E. Veda Sharan and our publisher Sudarshan Kcherry have been my pillars of strength. All the members of the Editorial board have been very kind and diligent in evaluating the papers received for this journal. After two rounds of blind peer review and rigorous editorial work 14 papers were accepted and the journal was ready to be published. Disease and pandemic are the catch words of human conversation today. As expected loss, pain, trauma, displacement and conflict have yet again given birth to an entire body of excellent literature reminding us time and again that ‚The poetry of the earth is never dead'. Keats believed and was ‚certain of nothing but the holiness of the hearts affections, and the truth of imagination'. He died young of the incurable tuberculosis on the 23rd of February 1821, two hundred years ago. Literary Oracle salutes this ever young poet, who in spite of being in the clutches of the dreadful disease, which was killing him little by little, has produced the most incredible romantic poetry. The special article of this volume is a tribute to John Keats. Professor Laxmisree Banerjee has meticulously analysed and beautifully brought forth Keats's anxious preoccupation with time in his poetry and his Letters. Prof. Jaydeep Sarangi in his review of Poet Bibhu Padhi's book *A Friendship with Time* furthers Padhi's poetic concerns of philosophical

time. His argument convincingly places Padhi in the great tradition of Keats. Sarangi posits that in Padhi's poetry the reader will find the ,movement between sublime portrayals of the beauty of life's flow of continuance and the changing habits of objects' which he says places Bibhu Padhi in the Great Tradition of the sensuous mystic John Keats.

The scholarly papers of the thirteen other contributors, with their keen critical acumen have enriched this issue of Literary Oracle. The papers are interdisciplinary and address current socio-cultural and literary concerns. Apart from inspiring scholars and researchers these scholarly articles are a definite contribution to the pool of knowledge in their respective areas.

Shruti Das

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BOOK REVIEWS

1

The Apotheosis of John Keats: From the Pagan to the Christian Concepts of Time.

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Abstract

This Paper is based on Humanity's perennial engagement with the concept, theme and living experiences of Time across temporal and geo-spatial realms, in all disciplines of Higher Learning, Writing and Thinking. John Keats's anxious preoccupation with Time in both its positive and negative aspects, is traceable throughout his Poetry and Letters. This Study renders us a deep vision of his evolution as a Poet of the Senses, in his lyrical effusions about the rhapsodic Time of the Moment to the Transcendental Philosopher-Poet, who finally arrives, in his later poems, as a deified Seer who embraces the Eternality of Time. The Pagan and Christian concepts are generic but have been applied in this Paper with particular accent on the Keatsian progression from the Poet of sensuous Beauty in a minuscular time-frame to an oracular Poet of Truth that he envisages in ceaseless perpetuity, with emphasis on his final poems, viz. Hyperion and Fall of Hyperion.

Keywords: Time, pagan, Christian, paradox, momentary, infinite, transcendental

The appropriation of John Keats' poetry in the context of his developing consciousness of Time as a primordial human experience, is at once a difficult and an interesting mission. Time is the only existential dimension, which is all-pervasive, both in its finite and infinite aspects. It

is the only plane through which Man lives, experiences reality and is destined to die. Hence, the vision and concept of Time is as old as creative literature and its thematic investigation, a predominant literary, scientific and religious concern through the ages. Time has been a recurrent theme in literary writings much before the age of Keats and the Romantics; it has found more crystallised expression in the ages succeeding him, till in recent years, every part and genre of literature reflects this deep-seated anguish and obsession of Time-ridden Man. This essay is a modest attempt to rediscover the relevance and success of Keats' poetry against the backdrop of this fundamental theme of Time. The study of his poetry becomes significant while examining the growth of his poetic mind in the light of his complex temporal experiences and his crucial responses constituting his oeuvre. It is precisely in this element of his work, in Keats' contribution to the philosophical and poetic unravelling of one of the major problematic truths of life, that an appreciation of his status as a great poet can be made.

It is imperative to explore the religious base of the pagan and Christian concepts of Time, in order to appreciate the evolution of Keats' poetic self from the epicurean finitude of *Endymion* to the transcendental deification of Apollo in *Hyperion* and the transmutation of the poet into an immortal sage and a god in the *Fall of Hyperion*. The overwhelming consciousness of Time and its depredations has resulted in Man's urgent and age-old quest for security from its menace within the shade of religion and/or mysticism. It has been characterised in two distinctive ways by Pagan and Christian religious thought. In ancient Egyptian, Graeco-Roman, Persian and Indian culture, Time was treated as cyclic, whereby the Past could be perpetuated and Death abnegated through rebirth, re-incarnation, annual ritual purifications and practices. Later on, with the coming of Christianity, Time was looked upon as a linear progression towards the revelation of Providence or Divine Purpose or as a straight line from the mortal to the immortal sphere. The Fertility cults in ancient Greece observed the death and rebirth of the goddess of the underworld in harmony with the arrival of Spring and Winter. The classical myth of Persephone or Proserpine going into Hades for half the year and subsequently of being resuscitated on Earth, is in synchrony with the cyclic order of Time in the regular transitions of day and night and of the various seasons of the year. This Hellenistic and Oriental view of Time, moving in cycles, informs the earlier poetic compositions of

Keats. With the advent of Christianity, the conception of Time is fully altered. History is now seen as Teleology, proceeding, not in repetitive cycles but as a linear process in accordance with an atemporal design. Time is now seen as extending from the Genesis of the World to the Final Day of Judgement, when the soul is relegated to either eternal bliss or eternal damnation. The whole course of Time now becomes an irrevocable line from Creation to Annihilation, or from Birth to Salvation. It is this Keatsian advancement from the paganism of *Endymion* to the poetic apotheosis in the birth of Apollo in *Hyperion* and the latent, sacrificial Christian aura in The *Fall of Hyperion*, that this essay seeks to encapsulate.

The preoccupation with Time and the Romantic predilection for its transcendence, weaves a natural pattern of ambivalence and duality in Keats' poetry. From the initial absorption in momentary Time in which the instant of sensuous exhilaration becomes complete in itself, to Keats' final immersion in Time as an endless continuum, is in itself a journey towards faith. This movement from sense-based temporality to the surging of the immortalised, sublimated Romantic self in the later poems, is a submerged process, more latent than evident in Keats' poetry. Endymion, the mortal lover of the moon goddess, is a poetic incarnation of Keats, in love with the ephemeral world of natural joys and sensations, limited within the cyclic frame of Time. Apollo, on the contrary, epitomizes the Higher, consecrated self of the poet, soaked in the Timeless realms of imaginative beatitude and Christian salvation. It needs to be stated that these are scholarly inferences drawn from the intermingled fabric of Keats' metaphors, images and symbols, used in his Poems and Letters as subtle indications rather than any overt pronouncements, which would intercept the rich fluidity of Keats' poetry. The Time-theme in Keats' poetry manifests itself in several different approaches. In the gradual evolution of his aesthetic norms, we have his early poetry centered around the intensification of a single moment in Time, which he strives to arrest but cannot. Later on, with maturity, his outlook changes to discover that Time is a continuous process and an endless dimension, which opens up fresh avenues every time a meaning is looked for. In *Sleep and Poetry* and in most of the earlier lyrics and the great Odes, Time is treated as cyclic. During this phase, the pagan poet absorbs himself in the multifarious delights of nature and its process through alternate phases of light and darkness, of growth and decay.

Gradually, with the progress of his art, the Christian realisation penetrates his understanding of Time in the most unobtrusive manner. In *Hyperion* and in *The Fall of Hyperion* we can detect a straight path from the regime of evil and darkness to that of beauty and goodness, inspired by an ineffable belief in Providence or Divine beneficence. Needless to state that this progression is not intercepted by any skeptical fluctuations, diversions or repetitions. As we go through his Poems and Letters, it becomes increasingly clear that Keats' developing Time-sense helps him to stand up against the human predicament with a growing spiritual fortitude, a sharpened sensibility and a deepening faith.

Keats' treatment of Time, in its twin aspects of Change and Permanence, is integrally connected with his graduation from an impassioned aesthete to a faithful philosopher. A keen awareness of the paradoxes of Time as the stuff of human experience is characteristic of Keats' early poetry, in which the central and unifying theme is that of temporal love. Time, during this phase, is experienced as fleeting, non-continuous and a part of the natural flux and tragic process. This inevitable Temporal order is portrayed as running through the human and natural world, its varied rhythms being translated into the beautiful forms of life and then swiftly turning towards the bleak side of extinction and urging the poet to reach out to some kind of an artistic or spiritual eternalisation. An index to his earlier poetry, which evolves around the Time of the Moment is found in a letter to Bailey: 'However, it may be, O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts <.. nothing startles me beyond the moment <. If a sparrow were before my window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel'. [1] In the Odes, in passages of *Sleep and Poetry* and in *Endymion*, Keats dwells upon the instant of throbbing sensation, which he knows will vanish within the twinkling of an eye but which he wilfully surrenders to. This is the pulsating point in which instantaneously Time touches Eternity or Passion Permanence. During this infinitesimal speck of Time, Keats feels immortalised by the touch of the deity Phoebe in the same way as he feels reawakened and revitalised by the Nightingale's song into a deathless, elevated consciousness, though he has to return very soon to the mortal sphere:

> Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
> To cease upon the midnight with no pain<<.
> Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self.[2]

The Nightingale's song is a temporary experience of the timeless plane, which the poet is unable to sustain for long. This momentary glimpse into the transcendental is profiled in poem after poem. A similar experience is outlined in the sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* in which the poet feels like some sky-watcher when a new planet swims into his ken and in *The Eve of St. Agnes* in which the protagonist Porphyro experiences a nameless feeling for the sleeping Madeline:

> Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose
> Flushing his brow and in his pained heart
> Made purple riot<<[3]

The feeling is as luscious, colourful and short-lived as the full-blown rose and is, in this early stage of Keats' poetry, very much related to the gradations of his 'Pleasure Thermometer'[4]. It is that 'touch ethereal'[5], that immortality of passion which is kindled in flashes to induce the young Endymion to search for the moon-goddess or that 'one warm, flushed moment'[6] in *Lamia* in which Hermes finds his beloved nymph. Such evanescent moments of enlightenment are called 'life' by Henry Vaughan in his famous poem *Quickness*: '<.. life is what none can express / A quickness which my God hath kiss'd'[7].

The essence of joy concentrated within a single time-particle gradually gives way to a mature perspective in which Keats sees Time extending eternally to be conjoined with Beauty and Truth while Time-bound passion develops into a deep-seated conviction about Timelessness. Keats himself assesses this growth in awareness through a specific metaphor: 'I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments. The first we step into we call the Infant or Thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think <.. at length we are imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us. We no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-thought, then we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere <.. sharpening ones vision into the heart and nature of man <.. whereby this chamber of Maiden-thought becomes gradually darkened and we feel the burden of the mystery'[8]. During his period in the 'thoughtless chamber' Keats tries to extract every drop of thrill and sensation from one single, transitory experience. In this context we may initiate ourselves into that temporal dimension of

paganism, in which Endymion gratifies his earthly passion for Phoebe, knowing full well that the intense moment will not last:

> <.. madly did I kiss
> The wooing arms which held me
> <.. to count and count
> The moments-----
> <.. that each might be redeemed
> And plundered of its load of blessedness.[9]

In the world of his early poems he is the epicurean masquerader who 'can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine'[10], knowing full well that this joy will be transient. Hence, most of his early lyrics and his Odes are composed with a fine admixture of pain and pleasure, of melancholy and happiness. The image of the bee-mouth sipping honey which immediately turns to baneful poison, is the most appropriate description of the evanescent aspect of Time which afflicts the poet during this period. Keats realises that Melancholy dwells with Beauty:

> Beauty that must die
> And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
> Bidding adieu; and aching pleasure nigh,
> Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips.[11]

Graham Hough observes: 'To Keats the visible world meant the world of nature, not nature with all the mystical and moral overtones that Wordsworth found in it, but simply the unanalysed delightfulness of living and growing things'.[12] However, this is primarily true of the earlier poems in which the multihued beauties and images of nature enrapture the poet while making him think how limited they are in the face of deeper realities. It is equally true that his later poems and letters reflect a mystical, almost Christian faith in the redemptive and deathless plane of Time, which is absent earlier. We are reminded of those oft quoted verbal pictures of 'fast fading violets', 'the coming musk-rose full of dewy wine' and 'the murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves' in the *Nightingale Ode* which focus upon the sensuous perceptions of Nature through segregated moments in Time. Another poem written in the wake of such adolescent passion, emphasising the fragile, impermanent and most delectable elements of Nature and Time, dwells on:

> Light feet, dark violet eyes and parted hair,
> Soft dimpled hands, white neck and creamy breast,
> Are things on which the dazzled senses rest

Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare <..
<<< when I hear
A lay that once I saw her hand awake
Her form seems floating palpable and near <<[13]

The handling of momentary Time may be attributed to the influence of Spenser on the young poet. A recurrent motif in these early poems is that of the 'bower'[14], reminiscent of Spenser's 'bower of bliss' in his *Faerie Queene*, epitomizing a refuge of hedonistic heedlessness and a world of desire and instinctual life. In *Sleep and Poetry* we may equate this with the realm of Flora and Old Pan and other Hellenic symbols which highlight sensual pleasures that can neither endure nor suffice. Yet, the ambivalence of Keatsian philosophy is unfolded in the most succinct manner in the opening line of *Endymion*: 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever', juxtaposing the concepts of temporality and eternality. The poet, despite his admission of joy as being limited within a dream world of insubstantial fabric, always leads us on to the visualisation and perception of a more lasting world of ideality. The picture of Cupid and Psyche 'couched side by side / In deepest grass / <. at the tender eye-dawn of aurorean love'[15] blends very easily the transitory and everlasting components.

Keats' poetry acquires a firm basis of dialectic with gradual maturity ----- a dialectic which issues from his varied belief in the static, cyclic and continuous process of Time stretching from a miniscular instant to a ceaseless dimension. During the latter part of his poetic career, his notion of Time is deepened by the influences of Shakespearean Tragedies and by Wordsworth's account of the various stages of human growth, especially his belief that there is adequate recompense for the loss of the temporary pleasures and pastimes of childhood:

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live.
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive <..
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.[16]

Keats' later awareness of Time as growth, continuity and an avenue towards immortality, is somewhat impacted and coloured by this Wordsworthian pietism.

Paul de Man in an interesting essay on Keats and Friedrich Holderlin has struck upon a novel comparison between the poet and the novelist ----- a comparison which underlines the occultism and metaphysical propensity evident in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion*. At the beginning of Holderlin's novel, there is a passage which may be aligned with Keats' later belief that all Time is one and that implicitly Process leads to Providence. Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece writes to Bellarmin: 'Often, lost in the wild blue, I look up into the ether and down into the sacred sea, and I feel as if a kindred spirit were opening up its arms to me, as if the pain were dissolved in the life of the Divinity <.. To be one with all <.. this is the Life Divine'.[17] This echoes the super-consciousness of Time as we find it in Keats' crucial lines: 'Fellowship divine / A fellowship with essence till we shine / Full alchemized and free of space'[18], a prelude to the eternal domed monument, the lofty sacrificial fire and the immortal steps of *TheFall of Hyperion*. This idea is conceived as early as in *Endymion* and gradually takes shape in the Odes and is fully crystallised in *Hyperion* and *The Fall of Hyperion.* Keats' adolescent productions, hence, may be studied as sincere efforts to grapple with the real world of Time and Change as well as a purgatorial journey towards salvation, which is ultimately envisaged as the illimitable line of Time in perpetuity.

Keats' tour of the Scottish Highlands with Brown in July and August of 1818 marks an important turning point in his mental and spiritual life. Now the poet gives up not only the illusory warmth and momentous luxury of his Spenserian bowers but also hopes to refine his sensual vision into a sort of North Star which can never cease to be steadfast. As manifest in *The Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns' Country*, the poet has now learnt to yield to the anchor-pull of reality and temporal vicissitudes with a consciousness of something beyond this sphere, which is constant and perennial. The poem *To Ailsa Rock,* composed during this period, reveals a symbolism of protracted and immeasurable Time. This Rock, like Keats' 'Bright Star', seems to be poised 'in an eternal stasis without any definable beginning or end'.[19] The life of the rock is not punctuated with any significant time-divisions but vibrates within a ceaseless duration of 'two eternities / The last in the air, the former in the deep'. In the *Bright Star* sonnet Time assumes a similar kind of an unruffled stability within the timeless dimension:

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art ----
<.. yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel forever its soft fall and swell <..

The word 'steadfast' suggesting a sanctified changelessness and eternal repose is interestingly allied with the theme of the 'ripening breast' evoking sensuality and growth. This typically Keatsian mode of ‚suspended animation` testifies to his progressive and paradoxical view of Time.

Hyperion marks a definite and conscious advance in Keats' attitude towards Time. With his brother Tom dying at his side, Keats could now look on the face of death with stoical fortitude and cross the threshold of romance to embrace the vast stretch of Time as an endless succession to Eternity. At this stage 'Keats, like his Titans, had passed beyond the realm of Flora and Pan'[20] Keats' source-material for this poem is Cooke's translation of Hesiod's *Theogany*[21], which provides account of successive generations of gods conquering and replacing their immediate predecessors. This confirmed the naturalistic concept of Time which was taking shape in Keats' mind as a process of progressive evolution. To the ignorant and unawakened Thea, this irreversible onsurge of Time is unacceptable, offering a bleak prospect of utter weariness:

O aching Time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth
And press it so upon our weary griefs <. [22]

It is as though Thea embodies the former self of the poet, shattered and baffled at the fact of disintegration and ineluctable Time. But gradually, there is an oscillation from painful doubt to a positive enlightenment with the appearance of the sage Oceanus on the scene and the laws of Time contemplated with serenity. To remain acquiescent with the unavoidable, becomes the only secret of everlasting happiness:

To bear all naked truths
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty.[23]

The evolutionary principle of 'ripe progress'[24], moving from the meaner to the higher forms of life and consciousness, forms the crux of Keats' ultimate conception of Time and his unformulated Christian faith in Eternity. 'Beauty is regarded as the criterion of progress and is equated

with increasing awareness, with the radiance that is projected by the mind's power of comprehension'.[25] Salvation of the race and the individual is achieved through this successful advancement of Time from generation to generation towards the ideal of perfection and equanimity. 'The ripe hour' which Oceanus mentions is the decisive moment of illumination in the eternal fields of Time:

> One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
> Through which I wandered to eternal truth<.
> So on our heels a fresh perfection treads
> A power more strong in beauty, born of us
> And fated to excel us, as we pass
> In glory that old Darkness<.[26]

While viewing Time as a continuous process, Keats envisages it as moving in regular and balanced phases of inception and destruction, of joy and sorrow. This cyclic view of Time, with its twofold belief in the tragedy and redemption of the mortal state, is somehow akin to the dichotomous Nietzcheian philosophy. ' <.. Dionysus versus the Crucified One: there you have a contrast. The God on the cross is a curse on life, a pointer to seek redemption from it; Dionysus cut to pieces is a promise of life: it is eternally reborn and comes back from destruction'.[27] In Keats' poetry we have a smooth and subtle fusion of Dionysus and Christ, the pagan and cyclic with the Christian and teleological aspects of Time. The immutable figure of Christ, putting an end to the repetitive cycles of history in a zone of complete Divine purpose, emerges in the Keatsian world, more articulately, at a much later stage. Most of his Odes and some of his Sonnets are primarily based upon the Nietzcheian or cyclic principle of life. In the sonnet *To Homer* the dual process is delineated in clear and vivid terms:

> Aye on the shores of darkness there is light
> And precipices show untrodden green,
> There is a budding morrow in midnight
> There is a triple sight on blindness keen.[28]

In the other two sonnets of this period, namely *To Spenser* and *The Human Seasons*, the poet stresses that the natural cycle is relevant to the mortal situation, since it perpetually renews itself. If there is a destructive winter, there is also the prospect of a redemptive summer; if there is death, there is bound to be rejuvenation. In this movement one is inclined to believe that Keats is progressively moving from the agonising

obsession with Time in the pagan framework to the conviction of a devout Christian that Time leads to some kind of a consummate infinitude.

With the reading of Shakespeare's Tragedies and with his increased absorption in *King Lear*, Keats seems to prepare for a reorientation of his poetry from the realm of pure romance to that of a philosophised actuality: a poetry that could express the whole gamut of human experiences with a fruitful sternness and a sense of purpose. In a letter to his brothers, Keats instances the *Lear* sonnet as evidence of a marked change in his temperament. 'Nothing is finer', he says, 'for the purpose of great productions than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers'.[29] In this sonnet he explores the 'deep eternal theme' of Time and the central lines are impregnated with grave spiritual implications: '< once again the fierce dispute / Betwixt damnation and impassioned clay / Must I burn through'. This sonnet contains a buried reference to Lear's great 'wheel of fire', which may be considered as a variation on the theme of Time and a latent implication of the Christian idea of penitential suffering, retribution and release thereafter into a limitless beatitude. Thus, in this sonnet we have the distinct polarisations of pain and peace, of death and life. The 'phoenix' symbol is particularly appropriate in conveying the restorative concept of Time.

The *Ode on Melancholy* and *To Autumn* are productions which reveal the poet's paradoxical, often antithetical interpretations of Time. The world has already been accepted by him as the vale of soul-making, which has alternate periods of grief and fulfillment in consonance with the natural order of the seasons. In a letter to his brother George, he writes: 'This is the world <.. circumstances are like clouds, continually gathering and bursting; while we are laughing, it sprouts, it grows and suddenly bears a poisonous fruit which we must pluck'.[30] The *Ode on Melancholy* affirms this ambivalence in the world of process; the 'morning rose', the 'globed peonies', 'the rainbow of the salt sand wave' and 'the rich anger' of the mistress are all images of consummation. But from this peak of gratification follows a cycle of swift decline that can never be arrested. The morning rose will inevitably fall off ----- and as Keats writes, in a letter to Reynolds in May 1818, 'suppose a rose to have sensations <.. it blooms on a beautiful morning, it enjoys itself <.. but there comes a cold wind, a hot sun <..'. In accepting this periodical

nature of Time, Keats uses Melancholy as an archetype of the continually rotating cycles of Time:

> Ay, in the very temple of delight
> Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine.[31]

In *To Autumn* the treatment of Time is impersonal and objective. The season is meaningfully delineated as a transient phase couched between the warm fruition of summer and the barren waste of winter. The rich harvest of the year is garnered and yet 'death is recognised as something in woven in the course of things',[32] as the twilight aftermath of glory and fertility. Autumn, 'a season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is also a spectacle of forthcoming annihilation, of 'the last oozings hours by hours'. Here the moments of intense life and growth cannot be disentangled from those of decay. The pleasure-pain paradox remains an intrinsic property of the Keatsian Time-scale. Keats writes of birds warbling with mellifluous joy and sorrow, of bees who know there is richest juice in poison flowers. In this last of the Great Odes, we have a clear and definite celebration of the fertility cults of ancient Greece, the welcoming of the new year with regrets for the passage of the old. Hellenistic stoicism as well as hedonism are meaningfully blended in re-invoking life from the cradle of death:

> Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
> Think not of them thou hast thy music too <..
> While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day
> And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue.[33]

Prospects of revival are integrated within the very texture of autumnal death. In the context of an evolving poetic universe with the serene affirmation of the Shakespearean concept of 'Ripeness is all', as in *Lear*, the manifold drama of Time is completed.

Towards the end of Keats' brief life, while in the grip of disease and fatality, we notice a remarkable change in his attitude to Time and the Universe and a growing belief in the rationale of a Christian scheme of things. Though there are no direct or specific statements with regard to this emerging Christian Consciousness of human distress as a meaningful prelude to Eternal bliss, this inner assurance, nevertheless, permeates his compositions in this later stage. We notice this change reflected in a crucial letter to Brown:--- 'Time seems to press <.. Death is the great divorcer forever. Is there another life? There must be, we cannot

be created only for this sort of suffering ⪦.'[34]. Here the concept of 'forever' entails a positive visualisation of an endless world of salvation and spiritual radiance superseding Time-bound existence. The agnostic, sensuous poet, has now, clearly become the devout Christian who is sure of 'another life' of unbroken glory. While writing *Hyperion* and *The Fall*, this idea, though not articulated in definite terms, had nevertheless seeped in and was taking gradual shape in Keats' mind.

In *Hyperion* Apollo's birth into godhood constitutes the transcendence of the mortal soul into the domain of everlasting joy. Apollo has undergone excruciating suffering and the erratic changes of Time, like the poet himself. He has finally become immortal through reading on the face of Mnemosyne the history of universal existence, the rise and fall of human dynasties and civilisations and perceiving on his superhuman pulse both 'Creations and Destroyings' and the fundamental truths of life. His attainment of divinity and 'dying into life' is reminiscent of the Final Day of Judgement, in which the extinct soul of man is resurrected with the coming of Christ:

> Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
> All the immortal fairness of his limbs,
> Most like the struggle at the gate of death;
> Or liker still to one who should take leave of pale
> Immortal death and ⪦.
> Die into life.[35]

These lines are an undeniable romanticisation of deep spiritual faith and of the unification of the Apollonian and the Christian ideals of godhood and permanence. *The Fall of Hyperion* also embodies this new direction in Keats' poetry. In this poem, the bafflement at the strange mutations of Time and Destiny has been overcome in the wake of a poignantly underplayed religious conviction and of a new poetic faith. Historical Time leads on to Teleological Time, an avenue for the completion of Divine purpose. The journey of the poet has been cast in the framework of a dream-vision analogous to the purgatorial mysticism in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The narrative features a trance-like state of Being much like that of the Christian soul's ascension to the celestial state. The temporal experiences of the poet seem to gain meaning and a stasis beneath the 'eternal domed Monument'[36] with an ensuing purification-ritual in line with the Christian theological system:

And coming nearer, saw beside the shrine
One minist'ring; and there arose a flame <..
Even so that lofty sacrificial fire
Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
And clouded all the altar with soft smoke <..[37]

This extraordinary Christian atmosphere comes to life with the attending paraphernalia of such operative images as chains and holy jewelries, an old sanctuary with august roof, a marble balustrade, an altar and the lofty sacrificial fire, all of which contribute to the birth and effulgence of a new poetic consciousness. Here we find Time merging with the plane of Eternity and affording a prospect of never-ending bliss. The poet's mounting up the 'immortal steps' of the temple is a sequel to the deification of Apollo in the first *Hyperion*. His mystic vision of the countenance of Moneta epitomizes the splendid canonization of the Keatsian self in its travail through Time into spiritual glorification:

Then saw I swan face
Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright blanch'd
By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To know death was that visage <..[38]

The prospect of death is unquestionably 'happy' because it is the gateway to an Immutable Life of stainless purity and peace. In this context the whiteness of Moneta's visage is an appropriate symbol of such Christian sanctity and may be likened to that of the Rider in the *Book of Revelation*, leading on to the zone of the Ultimate. 'This blank splendour', says Talbot, 'can be looked upon as the benignant light of Christ taking upon Himself the suffering and sins of the world, dying perpetually upon the Cross yet immortally alive, which is for a Christian, the ultimate union of every Truth and every Beauty, of Life and Art, of Man and God <.'[39] The final transfiguration is attained through the poet's 'Knowledge enormous making a God of me'[40] in *Hyperion* to his Christian Self, feeling 'the giant agony of the world <.. and the power within (him) of enormous ken / To see as a God sees <.'[41] in *The Fall*. These final poems are examples of a great Romantic Pieta projecting in poetry the gradual evolution of Keats' perception of Time as a connecting line between the Pagan and the Christian. Above all, his creative writings

ratify the growth and change of John Keats from a pagan poet to a reverent Mystic (Christian) in his final poetic compositions.

Notes

1. Letter to Bailey, 22nd Nov 1817, Gittings, *Letters,* OUP, 1970, Pg. 37-38.

2. 'Ode to a Nightingale', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 208-209, Stz. VI & VIII.

3. Ibid, 'The Eve of St. Agnes', Pg. 199, Stz, XVI.

4. Letter to Taylor, 30th Jan 1818, Gittings *Letters*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 60

5. 'Endymion', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 62, Line 298.

6. Ibid, 'Lamia', Pg. 168, Line. 298.

7. Helen Gardner, *The Metaphysical Poets*, Penguin, 1957, Pg. 283.

8. Letter to Reynolds, May 1818, Gittings, *Letters*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 95.

9. 'Endymion', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 71, Lines 653-660.

10. Ibid, 'Ode on Melancholy', Pg. 220, Stz. III.

11. Ibid,

12. Graham Hough, *The Romantic Poets*, OUP, 1957, Pg. 159.

13. 'Woman! When I behold thee', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 22.

14. Morris Dickstein, *Keats and his Poetry*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971, Ch. II.

15. 'Ode to Psyche', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 211, Line 20.

16. Wordsworth, 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality', *Golden Treasury*, Mac Millan, 1965, Pg. 205.

17. Paul de Man, 'Keats and Holderlin', *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 8, 1956, Pg. 29-38.

18. 'Endymion', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 74, Lines 777-780.

19. Bhabatosh Chatterjee, *John Keats: His Mind and Work*, Orient Longman, 1971, Pg. 313.

20. Morris Dickstein, *Keats and his Poetry*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1971, Ch. IV.

21. Finney, *The Evolution of Keats' Poetry*, Vol. II, Cambridge, Mass., 1963, Pg. 495.

22. 'Hyperion', Bk. I, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 222, Lines 64-66.

23. Ibid, Pg. 235, Lines 203-205.

24. Ibid, Pg. 224, Lines 121-125.

25. Bhabatosh Chatterjee, *John Keats: His Mind and Work*, Orient Longman, 1971, Ch. XVIII.

26. 'Hyperion', Bk. II, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 234-235, Lines 186-215.

27. Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzche*, Viking, 1954, Pg. 459.

28. 'To Homer', Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 366.

29. Letter to George, 24th Jan, 1818, Gittings, *Letters*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 57.

30. Ibid, Pg. 228.

31. 'Ode on Melancholy', Stz. III, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 220.

32. David Perkins, 'The Affirmation of Process', *Quest for Permanence*, Harvard Univ. Press, 1959, Ch. IX.

33. 'To Autumn', Stz. III, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 219.

34. Letter to Brown, Sept. 1820, Gittings, *Letters*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 393-394.

35. 'Hyperion', Bk. III, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 242, Lines 124-130.

36. 'The Fall of Hyperion', Canto I, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 404, Line 71.

37. Ibid, Pg. 405, Lines 95-105.

38. Ibid, Pg. 409, Lines 256-262.

39. Norman Talbot, 'The Fall of Hyperion', *The Major Poems of John Keats*, Sydney Univ. Press, 1968.

40. 'Hyperion', Bk. III, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 242, Line 113.

41. 'The Fall of Hyperion', Canto I, Garrod, *Works*, OUP, 1970, Pg. 410, Lines 302-304.

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2

Hul Tales: A Study of the Nineteenth Century Santali Oral Narratives

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Abstract

The present research is an analytical study of the nineteenth century Santali tales. Discussing in brief the general characteristics of Santali folktales, the paper focuses on the circumstances leading to the emergence of the nineteenth century Santali tales. There are certain differences between the Santali folktales of the past and the tales in question. The paper tries to elaborate on the differences between the two. The nineteenth century tales opens a new area of study which have remained unexplored so far. The historical event of Hul of 1855 is the first major historical event of the Santal to be registered in the history of freedom struggles. On the community level, the event tries to re-direct the creative imagination of the Santal thus, resulting in a whole new brand of narrative. The research paper is an attempt to construct an argument as to why these brand narratives should be categorised as Hul tales and not folktales.

Keyword: Santal, folktales, Hul, Hul tales.

Introduction

In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2007), folktale is defined as ‚a traditional narrative, author unknown, whose form and content are transmitted in prose, primarily through copied or printed collections, and whose sequences and details vary according to the demands of the teller and audience.‘ (Herman, Jahn & Ryan 179). The definition gives a very compact understanding of the folktale in general. But when we look into the particularity of the same depending upon the region, culture, community and religion of its origin, we find it to be a representative of

the thoughts, ideas, psychology, traditions, customs and even wit and wisdom of the people. Apart from the entertainment value, they provide an insight into the past and present history of the region from which it originates. Citing the aforesaid qualities of folktale, it can be said that Santali folktales fits into the framework of qualities of folktale. Tales about the natural happenings, religious beliefs and social customs have been handed down orally from generation to generation in the Santal society since time immemorial. Whatever beliefs prevail among them is the outcome of their oral tradition.

Santali folktale can be divided into the following thematic categories:

1. *Social tales*: under social tales the recurrent motifs are origin stories, rituals, festivals and social customs, etc.

2. *Domestic tales*: the recurrent motif is cruel stepmother, cruel sister-in-law, darling sister, clever wife/daughter, victorious son, etc.

3. *Humorous tales*: these tales are usually narrated for fun. Such tales contains series of dialogues between characters, the one being witty and the other being fool. Such tales often show the usage of pun and riddles.

4. *Animal tales*: under this category the recurrent motifs are animals performing the task of humans, trickster, secret heard by an animal/bird, animal being grateful to rescuers, animal winning human wife, etc.

5. *Religious tales*: these tales deal in with life after death, deities etc.

The above-mentioned classification shows the function the tales serves in the Santal community of either resolving a social or personal problem (Lwin 3). The narratives of Santali folktales have certain basic structure. The tales begin with lines like *Sedae jug reak' katha[1]*, *Sedae do kathai[2]*, *Sedaejokhonkathai[3]*, and usually ends with the saying *Ado cabayenakatha do[4]*. The tales uses the performative and personal interaction between the story-teller and the listener such as *ado[5]*, *ado saregi[6]*, *khange[7]*. These words are typically a Santal way of expressing excitement or curiosity while talking. These words are usually used to connect one sentence with another or one incident with another. The story-teller uses these expressions in order to ensure the attentiveness and participation of all the people concerned. While narrating the story, the narrator continuously uses the gestures to

explain something or an action. In the middle of the story, the narrator often stops and confirms if the listener understands the story or not. This action can be detected from the usage of the expressions like *bujhao?*[8], *badae?*[9]. Sometimes, in the middle of the story, the narrator also uses songs in order to express a feeling of sorrow or misery. These characteristics are typical of the Santali folktales which are set in unknown time and space. These are the folktales that have been passed down, orally, from generations to generation which might or might not be the living experience of the people.

However, when we look into the nineteenth century oral narratives of the Santal, we find a new class of narratives emerging which are very much situated in the present time and space.

Hul[10] Tales

CharlottTrinquet says, ‚As products of socio-historical circumstances folktales reflect the social concerns, politics and ideologies informing the lives of a certain people at a specific time‘ (887). Trinquet refers to the specificity of folktales, thus situating it in a tangible space and time in contrast to the intangible space and time in which folktales usually takes its course. It is this tangibility that the nineteenth century Santali folktales often deals with. That is to say, it is located in the specific time and deals with contemporary social concerns specific to the Santal history. The Santal Hul of 1855, of which N. Kaviraj says, ‚assumed the colour of the ethnic war, a war of nationality. Santal<threw themselves into the vortex of the struggle‘ (111), was the first historical encounter between the Santal and the world (Carrin&TambsLyche 97) and it serves as the content and context of the nineteenth century tales. There are only few examples of the nineteenth century Santali folktales which had been collected by the Scandinavian Christian missionary, P.O. Bodding.

The tales like ‚The Man Who was in Debt with the Moneylender ‘ (Andersen, Carrin & Soren 348-351), ‚The Backwards and Forwards Dance‘ (Bompas 350-351), ‚The Moneylender and His Debtor‘ (Bodding 262-274) have the same narrative with certain variations. The story is about a Santal who has taken some amount of loan from a non-Santal moneylender. He would avoid meeting the moneylender whenever the latter visited his house in order to extract the amount of loan. On enquiring the family members of the Santal would always reply that the latter has gone for the backward and forward dance. The moneylender, being unable to hold back his curiosity, wants to learn this new dance

form as he has never heard of such a dance form before. When the Santal hears that the money-lender is interested in learning the dance form, he plans a way to trick the moneylender in order to get rid of all his debts. He agrees to teach the money-lender the new dance form on the condition that the latter agrees to clear all the debts of the former. Since the moneylender was so interested in the dance form he easily falls into the trap and agrees to clear all the debts of the Santal. Later, the moneylender realises that he has been tricked by the Santal as there is no such dance form. Everything was planned by the Santal in order to get rid of his debts. Since, the moneylender has given his word to the Santal he could not do anything even when he realises he has been tricked. Also, there were witnesses to the agreement made between the Santal and the moneylender, who gave judgement in favor of the Santal. In another tale, ‚The Fight Between the Moneylender and the Tenants‛ (Andersen, Carrin & Soren, 153-167), the moneylender and the Santal tenants are engaged in a fight over land dispute. The moneylender files a case against them and the tenants are arrested. However, it is through the wit of the *Manjhi*[11] that all the villagers are released from the jail.

The above-mentioned tales show that the Santal and non-Santal captures the particular phase of the Santal history, especially the colonial phase. The non-Santal figure who frequently appears in the tales is the money lender referred as *diku* and sometimes a British official referred as *Saheb.* The tales about the non-Santal serves as an explicit reference to the economic situation, exploitation and living experience of the Santal during the colonial period. It also talks about the opinions of the Santal regarding the non-Santal. As said, in the Hul tales we often come across the term *diku*. The term *diku* has several connotations prevalent till date. A *diku*can be defined as someone who is ‘un-Santal’, that is, he does not share the experience of a Santal linguistically, racially or historically. He stands outside the perimeter of the understanding of the term ‘Santal’ and did not share a symbiotic relationship with the Santal during colonialism (Sarkar 124-130). Mahapatra defines *diku* as, ‚the outsider, the alien, the one who is non-conversant with the≺ cultural ethos of the community. At the abstract psychological and sociological level, he is an outsider≺ from the beginning, lying outside the broad circle of the ritualistic framework of the community≺‛ (Mahapatra 11). The moneylender in these tales is addressed as *diku*and the Santals address themselves as *hor.* The explicit demarcation in the understanding of the

hor[12] and *diku* directs towards the conceptualisation of the 'self' and the 'other' in the psychology of the Santal community since the time of colonisation.

The moneylender, portrayed as the 'other', is symbolic of oppression, greed, exploitation, treachery etc. Whereas, *hor*, portrayed as the 'self', is symbolic of oppressed, suffering, economically unstable etc. The recurrent motif of these tales is debt, land, witness and these were the issues/problems that the Santal of the nineteenth century were suffering from. One of the important points to notice in these tales is the stress on the necessity of a witness. The narrator is trying to convey a message to his/her listener that having a witness in the case of economic transaction is very important. The motif of witness refers to the situations of the time where the Santals failed to produce any evidence or proof in favor of the debts paid. All he could produce ,was a knotted string, in which the knots represented the number of rupees he had received and the space between them the years which had elapsed since he took the loan` (Malley 46). Malley further says,  ,The Santal, ignorant and timid, felt that it was a hopeless task for him to obtain redress against a wealthy oppressor` (46). However, a complete subverted image of the wealthy oppressor and the poor oppressed is portrayed in these tales. The real-life oppressor is turned into the victim and the oppressed is turned into a trickster oppressing his real-life oppressor through his wits. On the psychological level, these tales convey the message of wish fulfillment. The trauma of the exploitation, economic crisis they have had been suffering is subverted in order to provide certain measure of relief through creative imagination. Through these tales the narrator seems to say that no matter in what situation a Santal is, he will be able to come out of it through one's intelligence. Such tales of outwitting a class which exploited them economically, physically, psychologically can be studied as part of defense mechanism to tackle with the situation and forget one's sorrow for a while. The idea behind these tales is that the oppressor 's wit can be dismantled provided the wit is utilised in new or unconventional way. The wit that the Santal utilises in these tales is the presence of witness in order to trap the oppressor. Thus, the idea conveyed is that in order to defeat a *Diku* one has to become a *diku*, that is, witty.

As said earlier, these tales capture a particular phase in the history of the Santal and this phase in many ways also introduces the consciousness of class and resistance among the Santal. Another tale, ,The Fight Between the Moneylender and Tenants` (Andersen, Carrin & Soren 352-

367), talks about class and resistance. Unlike the earlier tales mentioned, where trickery is the main weapon of opposing the oppressor, the present tale deals with the resistance and rejection of the supremacy of the upper class as means of opposition. The idea expressed in the present tale is that it is only through fighting boldly for one's right that one can overpower the oppressor.

The other two tales, ‚The time Before the Santal Rebellion' (Andersen, Carrin & Soren 146-171) and ‚The Story of Santal Rebellion' (172-187) talks by the history before Hul, history of Hul and reasons leading to the failure of Hul. These tales depict that Hul was inspired by the idea of creating Santal Raj in which the world dominated by the exploiters is replaced by a world based on the power of the working class; a raj which would be free from all sorts of exploitation and oppression. It would be a world where there would be no intervention of the non-Santal and the Santal would lead their life in seclusion like before their peace was invaded by the usurers (Kaviraj 113). Unfortunately, their dream went unfulfilled and they were left with nothing but a world of tales where they could take recourse to, from their failure, regret and anger. The Hul influenced not only the tales of the time but also the songs that gave rise to Hul songs like,

> *CedakSiduhormo re mayam do? CedakKanhu tire tam sarkapi do?*
> *Disomlagithormo re mayam do, Jatilagit tire ting sarkapi do.*[13]

Since these tales revolves around the historical event of the Santal Hul, the tales of the time can, briefly, be referred to as the Hul tales. Structurally speaking, we find slight departure from the traditional narrative style mentioned earlier. For example, the Hul tales do not have the traditional folktale beginning as *Sedae jug reak' kath* or *Sedae do kathai.* The narrative directly jumps into the narrative. For example, the tale, ‚The Fight Between the Moneylender and Tenants' starts,

> Now I am telling what I have seen with my own eyes. This is the story about the people of Sonkhpur and deals with the time when they broke the terms of lease. Among other people, there was a Kurumbi moneylender who was their only king. He was the man who took all the land from the people on one side of the village (Andersen, Carrin & Soren 353).

The tale ends with the narrator saying, ‚Here the story ends. This is the story of the recent years, and not of the olden ages' (367). The starting lines and the ending lines of the tale clearly shows a shift from time

unknown to time known and un-named space to an identified space. This is one significant characteristic of the Hul tales. The world of the animals is no longer depicted. Rather, we now get to see the non-Santal entering the world of the Santal narratives. Another significant characteristic which we find in the Hul tales is bilingualism.

[14]Since these tales deal with the Santal and non-Santal interaction, the use of more than one language, that is, one the language of the oppressor and other one the language of the oppressed, shows a movement. On the one hand, the language of the oppressor signifies/symbolises the invasion of the personal and peaceful space of the Santal by its oppressor. On the other hand, it signifies the anxiety and anger a Santal goes through while communicating in the language of its oppressor. On the lighter note, the language of the oppressor is also used to provide humorous flavor to the tale. For example, in the tale, Mohajonarkhatok (Bodding 263-274), the moneylender and the Santal woman are communicating in their respective language and are arguing over the term sim. It is to be noted that in Santali sim means 'hen' whereas in Bengali the same word means 'bean'. The Santal woman is worried that the moneylender, in the absence of her husband, has come to take away the hens whereas, actually the moneylender is asking for beans. On the one level the incident is humorous as the inability to understand one-another's language results in misunderstanding and miscommunication. However, when we critically analyse it, we will find the tension going around the situation. The fear that the moneylender will take away her hens prompts the Santal woman to act strong and chase the former out of her house.

Conclusion

We have seen how the content and context of the Santali folktales is making a shift depending of the lives of the Santal. The unknown past is replaced by the known present, the intangible experience of the ancestors is replaced by the shared experience of the contemporary Santal, the traditional narrative style is replaced by the informative narrative style etc. Therefore, the nineteenth century Santali tales can be called as Hul tales and not folktales because it is the beginning of the literary history and criticism in leading to the emergence of Santali literature in written form. These tales introduce some of prevalent binary opposites during colonialism such as self-other, *hor-diku*, oppressor-oppressed, insider-outsider, debtor-creditor, rich-poor. These tales depict the Santal

community in transition and poses a challenge to all the historical documentation of the same by non-Santal intelligentsia. Merely defining these tales within the prescriptive boundaries of folktale would limit its scope and its contribution towards the historiography of Santali literature. Hul tales is a bridge between the past and the present.

Notes

1. An old story
2. In the olden days, it is said
3. Once upon a time
4. And so, the story ends here
5. so
6. So truly
7. then
8. Did you understand?
9. Do you know?
10. Hul of 1855, which literally means revolution, was an insurrection carried out by the Santal against the local administrators and moneylenders in the present Santhal Pargana and parts of West Bengal. The grievance of the Santal that the moneylender levied heavy rate of interest of loan, and on being unable to pay back the loans the moneylender took all of their properties and also took the Santal as slaves. Though the Santal were defeated by the British army, a new district, the present day Santhal Pargana, was created for them in order to provide them protection against colonial exploitation.
11. Headman
12. Son of man
13. Why is your body smeared with blood Sidhu? Why are you holding sword and sickle Kanhu?

    For my country my body is smeared with blood, for my community I am holding sword and sickle.
14. This is indeed an important characteristic of Santali literature at large. Ever since introduction of written form literature among the Santal, it is found that the Santali writers often use more than more language in their writings.

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3

Nature, Culture and Literature: An Eco-Critical Contestation in Rivera"s *The Vortex*

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Abstract

The natural world and human culture have remained in confrontation with each other for the time immemorial. The nature culture relationship was harmonious for many centuries of human civilisations, however, since the industrialisation process brought revolution in manufacturing and consuming, the relationship started to deteriorate and such deteriorations began to be portrayed in literature too. Jose Eustasio Rivera's novel The Vortex dramatizes this nature culture confrontation that was energized by the boom in western rubber industries. In this essay, I am making an argument that the novelist is giving a warning to humanity: unless human culture stops its inflicting activities to the natural world, the day of apocalypse becomes inevitable and unavoidable, when mankind will do nothing expect regretting their past actions.

Keywords: nature, culture, eco-criticism, confrontation, conflict, contestation, humanity, exploitation, subjugation

Introduction

The world has been experiencing the cases of ecocide for a few centuries now. Although early human activities like hunting, foraging, agriculture and mining made impacts on the natural world, the relation between human culture and nature remained in balance until a few centuries back. However, the balance began to deteriorate from the beginning of globalisation in the early16th century and reached the apex after the technological and industrial breakthroughs of the 18th and nineteenth

centuries (steam power, i-c engine and electricity and industrial revolution). The technological development contributed to the consumer culture and people in the developed parts of the world started a culture of consuming more than it was necessary. Ironically, technological development exacerbated the conflict between human culture and the natural world: the more the consumption the harsher impacts on the natural world. This kind of conflict between nature and culture has been depicted in nineteenth and twentieth century European and American literature, and Colombian poet and novelist Jose Eustasio Rivera's the only novel *The Vortex* is one of the best instances to depict the conflict between human culture and natural world.

The Vortex (1924) is set in Colombian llanos of Casanare and in the Amazon rain forest describing the activities of rubber collection in the first quarter of the 20th century, popularly known as the Amazon rubber boom. The events that happen in the novel correspond the events that happened in the Amazon rain forest in the first quarter of the 20th century. The protagonist and the central narrator of the novel, Arturo Cova travels deep into the rain forest where he finds thousands of rubber tappers in pathetic condition of illness, despair, disaster and death. The Amazon rain forest abounds in rubber trees, which attracted different levels of people to the region towards the end of 19th century with the longing of earning more money in short time. Bradford L Barham and Oliver T. Coomes speak of the region, ,The promise of wealth created by the boom attracted the investors, traders, adventurers, travelers, and prospective rubber workers from all over the world` (1). The presence of investors and traders and the workers at one place not only creates the ground for class struggle but also invites a contestation between natural world and human culture, the culture that evolved in the Americas from European capitalism, as William Glade claims that ,Capitalism was enthroned in Latin America with the arrival of Spaniards and Portuguese` (51). The Capitalistic and patriarchal mode of production gradually took institutionalised form in the new world and came to its full swing in the time of rubber boom that became pretext for the poets and the writes.

The form of the novel is in kaleidoscope style, in which the main story narrated by a Colombian poet Arturo Cova is enclosed between the prologue, a letter written by Colombian Consul from Manaus, Brazil to the minister of Foreign Affairs in Colombia and the epilogue, a telegram

written by the same Consul to the same minister. The three-chapter sandwiched text presents the Amazon jungle as the live vortex of human destiny. The novelist presents the issues of the novel in the prologue, ‚I believe that this book should not be published without independent confirmation of its denunciations concerning the conditions suffered by Colombian rubber tappers in the Amazonian territories of neighboring republics' (xvii). The novelist proudly claims that the events described in the novel are true to reality.

The territories of neighboring republics, as referred by the novelist above, are the territories of Peru, Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil, the vast vegetation of the Amazon rain forest, which looks like no man's land because there is no state control from any country. This place, according to Brian Gollnick, is ‚inhabited by a rapacious cast of international figures intent on getting rich and leaving' (47). The culture of hoarding resources and getting rich, nurtured by European consumer capitalism, circulates through the veins of every rubber collector in the rain forest. These bovine Indians leading primitive lifestyle in the Amazonian hinterland are easily enslaved by the traders and they cannot make any kind of resistance against their own enslavement. Interestingly, although the natives do not provide any resistance, the natural world does. A new scene emerges in the novel: the humans trying to appropriate the natural world and the jungle trying resist human activities. Rivera describes a contestation between the human endeavor and the natural world true to what scholars explained as ‚ecocriticism' in literature in Western academia much later after the publication of *The Vortex*.

In simple words, the interpretation of literature from environmental or ecological perspective is ecocriticism. Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism, ‚Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of relationship between literature and physical environment' (xviii). The exploitation of the natural resources in the vast Amazonian rain forest by human beings has wider significance for the eco-critics to discuss. Rivera had eco-critical consciousness long before the coinage of the word and the germination of the concept of ecocriticism. Rivera has chosen a character to speak as the plaintiff of the natural world so as to give geo-centric message in the novel. Rivera's this choice resembles with Hochman, who explains that the animals, plants and elements cannot lodge complaints in the court themselves and human begins must speak as their plaintiffs. (190). This character Clemente Silva makes in-depth discussion why and

how the natural world resists human attacks and tries the reverse the situation. The novel, in a sense, is a document that manifests eco-critical contestation between natural world and human culture by dramatising struggle between human being and natural forces, plants, animals and elements (PAEs).

The Exploitation of the Natural World in the Americas and the Resistance

The Europeans began plundering the natural and human resources of the pristine land of the Americas as soon as they began their so-called pilgrimage in the new world. They decimated the population of the indigenous Indians within one hundred years of their occupation of the new world. The mass demographic collapse of the indigenous population is recorded by Keen and Haynes as ,with an estimated loss of between 90 to 95 percent of the native population between 1492 and 1575' (57). In spite of the demographic collapse of the indigenous population the thick vegetation of the Amazon rain forest remained intact until the rubber boom of the late nineteenth century. It was in 1924 that Jose Eustasio Rivera, a Colombian national came up with his novel *The Vortex* and made the world internalize the exploitation of the Amazon rain forest in the name of tapping latex.

Rivera aphoristically sums up the environmental encroachment made in the continent in the middle of the novel within one sentence: ,Who can save man from his own remorse?' (105). This sentence translates Rivera's eco-critical consciousness. By ,remorse' Rivera signals towards Western occupation and exploitation of the pristine land for 400 years or more. To explain the exploitation of the natural world and to represent this conflict between man and nature, he creates a myth of Mapiripana, the priestess and guardian of ponds and springs. Mapiripana generates water which flows through ten thousand tributaries of Orinoco and Amazon Rivers. The novelist explains, ,The Indians fear her and she tolerates their activities only when they don't disturb the peace of the forest' (104). The quotation indicates how the Indians had coexisted in harmony with the natural world. The harmony began to deteriorate when ,an evil missionary came to these latitudes, a man wearing an ecclesiastical habit who abused palm wine and Indian girls' (104). Since the arrival of the missionary, Mapiripana was always in conflict with him. The missionary's each effort to destroy Mapiripana was foiled and eventually the missionary was imprisoned by the goddess for

many years. Because of the union of the missionary and Mapiripana an owl and a vampire bat were born, and in turn, these children began to suck their father's blood. The analogy resembles Frankenstein's monster, trying to kill its own creator. The implied meaning is clear that the Europeans' anthropocentric (the best Eurocentric) perception towards natural and human world in the Americas is brought into confrontation and this practice can ultimately devour the creators/architects themselves.

The Europeans entered the new world with two objectives: civilizing and Christianising the barbarians and they tried to rationalise their colonial activities, the exploitation of man and nature with these two objectives in their mind. They built up a clear cut binary of self and other, the European white men as the self and the Indians, blacks, women and the entire PAEs of the Americas as the other. This self-other dichotomy explained by Laurence Coupe is shown in the following diagram.

culture: nature
male: female
master: slave
human: non-human
civilised: primitive
subject: object
self: other (*Green Studies Reader* 119-120)

The whole novel *The Vortex* can be put in the above format of binary oppositions. The human culture is dominant over nature, or humans are dominant over non-human; the slave are dominated by the masters and the women are subordinate to men. The civilised world view (Eurocentric world view) has crushed the primitive (Indian) world view and above all humanity is in subject position or self and the natural world, the PAEs are in the object position or the other. The Europeans (the Spaniards and Portuguese in the South American continent) began to exploit the natives and plunder the entire PAEs keeping themselves in the centre. The animals were killed and their valuable organs were sent to Europe and the easy mines were exhausted in the early days of colonisation. Rivera's novel *The Vortex* provides an early twentieth-century appropriation of the Amason rain forest for economic gain accompanying human degradation and degeneration. This essay will explore the ecological and social issues that are appropriated from anthropo/Eurocentric perspectives and how the natural world creates

obstacles and tries to prevent those activities. In short, it's capitalistic socio-economic culture of the European concept that comes in direct collision with Amazonian nature and the latter tries to resist the cultural appropriation of the natural world.

The myth of Mapiripana symbolically sets the issue in discussion and the novelist chooses a character, Clemente Silva, to expresses the geocentric message in the novel. Silva speaks to Arturo Cova, how man comes in conflict with the nature in the rain forest, ‚The tappers bleed the trees of their rubber sap, and the leeches bleed the tappers. Then the bites get infected, and they never heal. The jungle has its ways of fighting back against the intruders‘ (117). Nature cannot speak human language but it speaks through its forces and in the Amazon, a man has to fight many battles to survive, the battle with the mosquitos, ants and many other small and big wild animals, robbers, diseases like beriberi and above all the unwelcoming tributaries of the Amazon. Despite so many obstacles, men move to jungle driven by their greed of rubber and make confrontation with natural forces. These traders are the product of European capitalist culture of earning more money and enjoying luxurious life. The novelist ridicules this culture through the same character Clemente Silva: ‚The smell of rubber drives men on, beyond the normal limit of endurance. The tappers dream of becoming rich... with money in every pocket, sleeping with white women whenever they want and staying drunk for months‘ (117). On the contrary, the nature in the Amazon does not become welcoming to everyone and most of the tappers lose their life while hunting for money. Silva again adds, ‚Most end up there in the forest, burning with fever, mad as hatters, hugging the tapped trees and licking the latex sap to calm their thirst, until they fall dead and millions of ants swarm over them and pick their bones clean‘ (117). The contestation between culture and nature indicates that nature is not passive other, which can be appropriated by man's culture, but instead, it always tries to take its share with the intruders.

The novelist builds up certain characters to represent abuse and exploitation of human as well as natural resources. Rubber tycoons like Funes, Caynnes, Barrera and Zoraida Ayram are the notorious embodiment of capitalist world of rubber business in the novel. These characters are the real people involved in the rubber business in 1920s. Eduardo Neel-Silva refers to James, an English translator of the novel, who wrote, ‚Funes and El Cayeno, undisguised in this story by any

pseudonym, were figures known and hated throughout the rubber world' (326). Zoraida Aryam, a Turk, was doing business in Brazil. The novelist speaks of her, ,She operates a commercial house in Brazil, at Manaus. And she's cruising all the rivers around here buying rubber and selling imported junk at astronomical prices' (119). The trick of the rubber businessmen in the early 20th century was to lend money to the workers, make them buy imported goods at high prices and put them in arrears lifelong. The novel describes the same situation through Clemente Silva:

> According to law in these parts, they sign up for two years minimum, and in that time they aren't allowed to change owners. Plus, the workers are usually in debt, and they can't quit while they owe the company money. They are in debt because the company advances them food, tools and supplies, at exorbitant prices. Then it buys their buckets of sap at ridiculously low ones They can't ever work off their debts, and when a man dies his son sometimes inherits the debt and has to slave in his father's place. (121)

The capitalists, thus, appropriate the workers' labor and make them collect rubber as much as possible. The workers collect much latex hoping that their debt would be paid off but the debt always remains unpaid and they work as slave their whole life. The novelist's portrayal of the workers in debt is true to Amazonian history of rubber collection. Referring to a report in New York Times, Robert Washerstorm mentions that an English businessman Joseph Woodroffe ,bought the debts 58 Indian men and 14 women and set out to collect *caucho* along the upper Tgre River' (41). This statistics shows that Rivera depended more on reality than imagination.

The novelist depicts the natural world being exploited for the resources, men being exploited for their labor and women being exploited for their body. Though Zoraida Ayram was a successful woman in rubber business, even she used her body to get success. The narrator comments on her care of body, ,she worked hard to beautify her countenance, bedeck her body, and refine her overall pitch. Her glamour was essentially commercial in motivation' (175). The Indian women are portrayed in worse position than their men. Pointing to a group of girls, Clemente Silva talks to Cova, ,These are our masters' concubines. Their parents traded them for merchandise or provisions, or maybe the overseers took them just to impose their authority. They were made

concubines as soon as they reached puberty and they generally become mother while they are still children` (179). The novelist wants to convey a message that Indian women are treated merely as sexual objects.

The overseers, who work for the investors and traders, also exploit the workers by manipulating their account books. Clemente Silva speaks of such cases, ‚And of course, the most systematic abuse is not in the jungle, it's in the account books Boys who inherit enormous debts from fathers, who the company murdered, from their mothers, who the company used as prostitutes – debts that will never be paid` (137-38). Such is the plight of the workers in the rubber forest. These people either die in the company or they are sold by the company to others by receiving the amounts of their debts. The rubber companies prepare a strong workforce to collect latex. The industrialists make the people collect rubber without any kind of resistance. These capitalists have subdued the human force but the natural forces try to make attempts of resistance.

The Amazon jungle is sometimes referred to as ‚the green hell`, from where most people do not return. The region is a fearful place with, as the novelist describes, ‚limitless green dungeon, surrounded by immense rivers on all sides` (148). Amazon River has its tributaries in all four countries depicted in the novel and these rivers take the lives of thousands of people every year. This is such a place, where even the mosquitoes come to one's face like a cloud. The battle with the mosquitoes is summarized by Clemente Silva, ‚This is a death struggle. I torture the tree and the tree tortures me until one of us succumbs` (148). After mosquitoes, Silva describes the army of tambochas, ‚The approach of the tambochas meant that all workers must drop their tools, leave their huts, lay down fire lines and seek refuge. Vomited from hell or who knows, the poisonous, carnivorous ants called tambochas migrate in numberless armies through the jungle` (159). The enslaved workers are in the precarious position. Their owners want latex from them and the natural forces try to stop them from collecting latex but it's humans who usually triumph over the natural forces, but, for the novelist this situation cannot go unchecked forever.

The novelist makes his spokesperson speak in favor of the natural world and through him, the novelist tries to give a message to the reader. Silva speaks of the natural world:

Man is puny, insignificant, and vulnerable in the vastness of the jungle. It would instantly triumph if all natural forces cooperated to wipe us out. But perhaps they can't. Perhaps, it isn't time for that final, cataclysmic struggle, not yet time to invoke cosmic forces and die in a blaze of glory. But the time will come here is rebellion worthy of Satan's leadership. (148-49)

Silva speaks like an eco-critical philosopher and speaks of man's vulnerability and in-significance compared to the vast natural world. The novelist has become prophetic and he means to say that time will come and the natural world will make a great leap to devour its intruders. In response to the millions of blows, the natural world will strike one blow and that will bring cataclysm in a nature-culture relationship.

The novelist concludes the novel with a partial triumph of the natural world and with a warning to humanity. He has given message that man has harbored the cause of his destruction within himself, his greed and avarice. It's the greed of man that entices him to fight with his fellow human being. Cayenne, who had five thousand slaves in the Amazon, is shot dead while he was descending downstream with a load of rubber in his canoe. Cayenne spent years in the Amazon jungle and exploited human and natural resources to the extremes but for nothing. A greedy man is shot dead by the other greedy one. The novelist passes his comments on Cayenne's death through Arturo Cova: ‚Good radiance to a foreign invader who came to enslave my compatriots, cut down our trees, slaughter our Indians, and steal or rubber‘ (213). By showing Cayenne's jungle activities and his unexpected death, the novelist gives a critique of capitalism.

Arturo Cova, the writer of the jungle stories, whom the novelist called ‚a player, skilled in the manly arts of deceitful seduction‘ (ix), finally succumbs in the sea of Amazon jungle. Cova and a few of his people including his newly born son and sick mistress Alicia are lost in the vast sea of Amazon jungle. Cova leaves his book in a jungle shelter with a letter written to Clemente Silva with a message that runs: ‚*Take good care of this book and put it in the Consul's hands*. The story that it tells is our story, the rubber tappers' desolate saga of abuse and suffering.‘ (217). The novelist ends the main story of the novel with the end of the letter, in which the very last sentence reads, ‚God help us‘ (218). It's in the epilogue that the novelist brings denouement of the story with two sentences in italics, ‚*Clemente Silva searched unsuccessfully for five months*

finding no trace whatsoever. The jungle devoured them.` It's the novelist ironic view of human destiny and vulnerability: Arturo Cova, whom the novelist called ‚a player in the jungle`, is ultimately devoured by the jungle.

Conclusion

The novel, thus, deals with the subjugation of the poor by the rich, subjugation of women by men and subjugation of nature by culture, representing the ideas of Marxist criticism, feminist criticism and eco-critical criticism but the last one amalgamates the first two ideas. This trend of subjugation, in fact, started in Greco Roman civilisations, Christianity nurtured it and European colonialism gave institutionalised form, especially in the American continents. The myth of Mapiripana and the missionary is the explanation of European subjugation of nature in the colonial and postcolonial Americas. The orientation of western civilisation, according to Murphy is ‚anthropocentric` and ‚androcentric` (193). The anthropocentric attitude puts human being in the centre and takes plants, animals and elements as the other to be consumed by human being. The novel is a denunciation of anthropocentrism, and rocentrism and class division, and above all, it's denunciation of man's atrocity towards the natural world. The novel gives a prophetic message that if humanity does not change its way of doing politics if it does not decenter from anthropocentrism, the apocalypse of humanity becomes inevitable and unavoidable. The day will come when, like Rivera's aphorism, ‚Who can save man from his own remorse?` the humanity, like Clemente Silva, will only have remorse.

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4

Fidelity and Cultural Translation (With Reference to Translation from Hindi to English)

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Abstract

Transparency and fidelity are two prerequisites for a good translation, and a good translation is the one which restores the sensibility and the feel of the Source Text (ST) and Source Culture (SC) in the Target Text to (ST) or Target Culture (TC). Translating a language (word to word) is not as difficult a task as translate a culture from one to another. A language, of course, is deeply embedded within a culture, and can pose difficulty for a translator, especially the words, terms or phrases in a language which are associated with particularities of the associated culture (SC) which do not have any codification in another culture (TC). Some of these words simply defy any sort of translation. Though this problem can be minimized by making use of several strategies and techniques given by theorists and translators, the question is whether this suffices for a good translation, especially a translation having a huge gap in the cultural aspect of the East and the West, from Hindi to English. This paper discusses above mentioned aspect of translation taking few excerpts from Hindi to English translation of a Hindi novella *Aniketan* (*The Wanderer* in English), dealing deeply with Kumaoni culture from the state of Uttarakhand in the foothills of Himalayas in India.

Keywords: Translation, Source Text, Source Culture, Target Text, Target Culture

Fidelity in translation refers to the adherence or faithfulness shown towards the source text by the translator in order to keep the original message intact and preserving the novelty and intention of the author 's ideas. Distortion of any sort should be avoided without any subtraction or addition in the matter either to weaken or intensify the text. In essence,

the text should be presented and enjoyed by the readers of the target language in the same way as it was presented and enjoyed by the source language readers.

But whether this is possible or not is a debatable issue, especially when it concerns a literary work with abundance of idiomatic expressions, folklores and other cultural peculiarities and expressions relevant to a particular community or region. As various experiences, habits, beliefs and value systems are conditioned by the external environment, and become part of the tradition and culture of a specific region, it becomes extremely difficult for the translator to translate the same for the audience belonging to a totally different environment. For example, habits, experiences, beliefs, attitudes, meanings and values of people living in mountain regions are centred towards various aspects of nature and dealing with the local flora and fauna which they live in close proximity with. These issues pose grave difficulties for the author to translate, and the target language reader to understand, if he or she is from a totally different terrain. Translation thus, is concerned not only with the language issue, but with the cultural as well as topographic aspects of both the source as well as the target.

Culture can be defined as:

The cumulative deposits of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. (*web-stanford.edu*)

Along with the linguistic limits the untranslatability also comes from the barrier of culture which incorporates in itself each and everything one does and the way one comprehends and perceives things different from others in a different language. An American linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir, in his theory, explains the challenge culture poses for translation –

The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached...Each linguistic community has its own perception of the world, which differs from that of other linguistic communities, implies the existence of different worlds determined by language. (Sapir and Whorf)

This difficulty becomes deeper and more complex with the gap in cultures depicted in source text (ST) and target language (TL). For example, translating an Indian literary work into English is a big challenge for the translator, not only because of the differences in the linguistic structure, but also the huge cultural disparity. This untranslatability may arise from any expression, concept, habit, food and attire peculiar to a region or a community for which there is no codification in the English culture. Catford rationalised this theory in his book *Linguistic Theory of Translation* – ,Cultural untranslatability arises when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the source language text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part... For instance, the names of some institutions, clothes, foods and abstract concepts, among others.` (,Cultural Translation`) This cultural gap leads to linguistic gap, as language is an integral part of a culture and derives nourishment from it. The challenge in translation thus is to bridge this gap.

There are several techniques proposed by various theorists and translators to bridge this gap and make untranslatable translatable, at least to a certain extent. Adaptation, borrowing, compensation, compression, reduction etc. are some of these techniques. These techniques however are more effective and successful when the translation has to be focussed on the transfer of message embedded in the source text (ST), or say, the cultural aspect is not so predominantly depicted to make it difficult and complex for the translator to translate it into the target language (TL). But it becomes more challenging for the translator when the embedded message, as well as the cultural aspect of the literal work, is intended to be the integral part of the work by the author. The complexity increases with the gap in the respective cultures to be translated. Indian culture is very rich and diverse as it incorporates multiple states and regions representing their own languages, dialects, cuisines, attires, traditions, practices and various subtle nuances shaped by their environment. Family is central in Indian culture and can be viewed as a network of many people addressed by different names according to their position. Not only close family relatives but even elders and youngsters in society are accosted with respect owing to their age. As a result, certain terms, names, phrases and expressions which are associated with particular regions with deep connotations are very difficult to translate or accommodate in the target culture. (TC)

Some of these complexities and their possible solutions can be illustrated by analysing of the English translation of one of the Hindi literary texts, a novella called *Aniketan* written by Prof. Diwa Bhatt. The title of the story translates as *A Wanderer* in English and conveys the intention of the author which is of high significance in translation.

The story *Aniketan* moves around a soldier Ganga Singh hailing from the Kumaon hills, who is detained and imprisoned by the enemy, and remains away from home for years altogether. He is declared dead by the army and his widow wife avails the pension of her dead husband. He however, rescues himself and manages to return home, full of excitement. He is in great despair when no one recognises him at home or in his village. For all of them he has been dead for years and they have performed his Shraddha (after death rituals in Hinduism) too. He is dead for army, dead for his village, for the place where he was born, dead for his family. His name does not exist anywhere. In fact, he does not exist at all! Where should he go? Who will accept him? The whole story moves around the predicament of the soldier Ganga. Through this story the author gives many messages. She has focussed upon the Indian culture, and Kumaoni culture in particular throughout the novella which makes it difficult to translate it to English where the let it remain as such. Don't change formalities of addressing, manners and complexities in relations are either absent or have very different connotations.

The protagonist thinks about his mother and even in his thoughts calls her Ijaa, the traditional address for a mother in Kumaoni. While this could have been easily translated to mother (as the word mother everywhere carries the same association), if the hero was not so particular about his language. He is annoyed and irritated hearing his nephew calling his mother 'mummy' instead of ijaa. When he hears him calling out his mother as mummy he thinks:

,slkvifjp;** ugh+ं **;g esjkÄjughagìs**ldr**kAeEehdgusokykcǔpk **;gki dk** ughagìs**ldr**kA **;s dkbnwljsyबxg**aA (**4**)

'Such unfamiliarity? No, this can't be my house. A child calling *ijaa*, mummy, cannot be of this house. These are another people.

The author seems to have used the word deliberately not only to show the cultural aspect, but also to depict the rapid social and cultural changes that have affected even the remote mountain communities in Kumaon. So using ijaa instead of mother becomes imperative here to

convey the message of the source text (ST). In the same way 'bhabhi' is another relation which could have been translated to sister-in-law, but the associations with this relation in Indian culture as well as in the story are too deep and integral to be translated to sister-in-law simply. Likewise, the relation of the child with Ganga's widowed wife, and his address to her as Jhedja, that is elder mother or ijaa cannot be replaced by aunty, for aunty in translation is unable to convey the closeness, love and warmth of jhedja towards the child as well as his love towards the widow woman. In the same vein there are other relations called jethji, devarji which are relations and cannot be just translated into brother-in-law. They demand respect and modesty from woman concerned. The suffix 'ji' shows this clearly. Thus, some of these relations must be borrowed as such from the source language to keep intact the cultural sense and the integrity of the story.

But there are exceptions. The word Padhan ji, though carries the suffix 'ji' is not used for depicting a relation, but is a respectful position and can be translated as the 'head of the village'. The suffix 'ji' can be compensated and preserved by the word 'revered' or 'esteemed' to connote the meaning 'ji' in Hindi.

The words like 'saree' and 'mangalsutra' in the source text too cannot be translated as simple words like 'dress' or 'chain' in the target text, as that would not convey the desired meaning. 'Mangalsutra' is a symbol of matrimony in Hindu culture and its absence from a woman connotes widowhood. It's not only a material thing but has grave emotional significance which a chain or a garland cannot reflect. In the same way 'saree' is not 'any dress' that a cultured adult widow woman of a village would wear. However, 'kumkum' and 'pithiyan', both of which are related to Hindu and Kumaoni culture can be rendered in translation as red and yellow vermillion respectively. This is done to reduce complexity and increase comprehensibility and transparency in the target language and audience, as borrowing should be done only when it's essential or indispensible.

Another cultural expression which does not have any codification in English (here the TL) is the word 'shraddha'. This word has deep connotations by its association with religion, culture and society for a long time, and translating it simply as 'annual feast for deceased' or 'death anniversary' do not convey the message in the work. Expression

like "gki ogh ls ljknmBkykukmldkA" (18) does not only deal with a simple ritual, but also a religious and pious ceremony to be started from Haridwar and to be continued later at home. Thus, making it indispensable not to borrow the word 'shraddha'. Similarly, the mere translation of the river Ganga to Ganges does not embody the goddess like and soul cleansing status of the holy river in Hindu culture. Expressions like:

vkjmldhvkjrdlsHkhxaxkLukudjkykukAdNrksIkkU;   feysxkvHkkxhfo/kokdksA   irk   ughafdltue   d ikiysdjbl?   kjevkbfdvkrsghlqgkxdls   [kk   cBhAvkjvcfo/kokglsdjHkh   l/kok   dk   flaxkjdjd? lierhjgrhgSAbldkikiughayxsxkD;k?(18)

The river Ganga and its significance can be rendered in translation by using adjectives like 'pious' or 'sacred', which makes clear the religious connotations. This exemplifies the use of compensation in translation to make it more faithful to the source language and culture (ST/SC) and transparent to the target language and culture (TL/TC).

A huge complexity arises when dealing with pronouns while translating (both formal and dynamic translation) a literary work from Hindi to English. In English there is a lack of variety of pronouns based on the relations in Indian culture. Pronoun 'You' is the only translation available in English for Hindi 'tu', 'tum' or 'aap', the words conveying very different connotations in terms of respect and differentiation between formal and informal language. In the same way 'uska', 'unka' 'unhone' are untranslatable to 'your' or 'yours' in English, depriving the target text of the exact meaning and associations the words carry in Hindi language and culture. This intricacy of language is clearly depicted in Aniketan while describing the thought process of Ganga's wife when asked by Ganga, considered long dead, about intimate details referring to his family members:

;gvkneh t:j mldsLokeh dk cggrutnhdhjgkgksxkAmUgksaisgh bls gekjh lc ckrsacrkbgkxhA---;g t:j tkurkgksxkfdvafre le; e mud lkFkD;kgvkFkk\o dc dgk dllsejs\(19)

This can be translated in English as:

This man must have been very close to my husband. He only must have told him all about us. He must be knowing what might have happened to him in his last moment. How and where did he die.

Any married woman (especially in Kumaoni villages) addresses her husband as 've' 'unhone' 'unka' showing considerable respect. The English translation 'he' for all these terms of respect fails to portray this

very strong cultural aspect of the region where Aniketan is based. In word-to-word translation the same pronoun 'he' is used in reference to the woman's dead husband as well as the stranger who knows all about the family. This is a classical example of transnational discrepancy. The use of 'he' for both the individuals renders the reader incapable of differentiating the deep-rooted respect with which Ganga's widowed wife addresses her dead husband compared to a stranger. In Hindi the distinction between these two men is very clear with the use of pronouns like 'ise' (informal) for the stranger whereas 'unhone' and 'unke' (terms of respect) for the husband. This complexity however, can be reduced at some places by replacing the pronoun with the noun it stands for. Here, the last 'he' in the sentence can be translated as 'my husband' avoiding repetition and making it clear to the reader.

These are some common complexities which one encounters while translation of a literary work from one language to another, here from Hindi to English. In spite of making use of various techniques like replacement, addition, borrowing, compensation and many others, it is debatable if fidelity and transparency could be achieved in translation. One thing however is certain – translation leads to enrichment of the cultures, not only by enhancing and enriching the target culture with new words and concepts, but making it possible for all to become more tolerant and understanding towards the cultures less recognised and known.

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5

Legitimising the Violence in „Dopdi"s tearing" and „Nandini"s screaming": Re-reading Mahasweta Devi"s "Draupadi" and "Mother of 1084"

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Abstract

Not only in the laymen's view but even within the critical domain the notion of violence for a long stretch of time has been demeaned and debunked. Recent studies and investigations have revealed certain unexplored dimensions that unfolded certain other layers as the idea undergoes various stages of evolution. This paper contributes to unpack the popular connotation of violence considering its dynamic and multidimensional nature by providing a suitable theoretical ground with regard to the two major texts of Mahasweta Devi 'Draupadi' and 'Mother of 1084'. The paper not only foregrounds the violence inherent in the statecraft in terms of the state dealing with the subaltern and marginalised classes but simultaneously attempts to revisualise the discourse of violence in a different form from what is prescribed by the Foucauldian analyses of power and relook at it from the ideology of Fanon. The paper thus argues for delivering the agency from an objective centrality of truth to a subjective interpretation of violence. With this the idea gets further problematised with the questioning of the degree of legitimacy of revolutionary violence and thus keeps the debate open.

Keywords: Violence, Nation, Naxalite movement, State-driven Violence.

Introduction

‚It is better to be violent if there is violence in our hearts than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence.' – Mahatma Gandhi

Mahasweta Devi had once remarked, ‚...I believe in anger, in justified violence, and so peel the mask off the face of India which is projected by the government, to expose its naked brutality.‛ (Devi, x) What can appeal to anybody the most regarding violence is the very deceptivity of the term. The entire course of engagement with this particular notion of violence propelled framing of some successive patterns of propositions followed by its consecutive dismantling. The term is not that innocent as it seems to be, rather it involves certain layers and dimensions that this present paper attempts to explore. While contextualising violence in the contemporary world, which is marked by the custom of deconstruction, it is really difficult to assimilate the uni-dimensional, linear narrative of violence which requires a theoretical, political, and moral deconstruction of the concept in the contemporary world. No doubt that with the evolving dynamics of social and cultural dimensions the idea of violence is bound to change. It's form and meaning have changed and so its connotations and implications. History bears testimony to the fact that it is seldom that any great revolution in the world happened without weaponising the entity which we refer as violent. It played a pivotal role not only in mobilising the massive revolutions in Europe but proved quite instrumental in redeeming many of the colonised nations from the coercive rule of the European nations. In this context, the wholesale denouncement of violence needs to be re-examined, problematised followed by an interrogation regarding its existence and usage. And finally, the paper proposes the need to envisage where can violence be situated within the humanistic discourse. In that light Mahasweta Devi's 'Draupadi' and 'Mother of 1084' persuades the readers to discern the urgency of transcending the linear narrative of violence and revise it in a novel manner.

Tracing the origin of Violence

Etymologically the word 'violence' is derived from the Latin term 'violentus' which means vehemence. In Middle English, the word is also applied with reference to heat, sunlight, attributing to their vigorous and powerful nature. This explains the need to trace the origin of violence, its roots in human beings which partly lies in their evolution. One undeniable fact regarding violence is its very innateness in human nature corroborating to first the Darwinian and then the Freudian explanations for it. Where one particular trend of thought vindicates violence as natural and inherent to human nature, it is countered with another line of

thought asserting violence as a product of cultural conditioning. Martin Daly and Wilson Margo have articulated in the article ‚Evolutionary Psychology of Lethal Interpersonal Violence'

> Readiness to resort to violence, for example, is regularly interpreted as ‚primitive' or ‚immature.' However, there is no empirical support for the notion that violence is especially characteristic of ‚primitive' entities and is reduced or absent in more ‚advanced' forms, whether these be cultures, species, or anything else. Thus, the ‚primitive' label is really just a facile disparagement. (Daly and Margo, 569)

Violence and/in Decolonisation

Concerning the instrumentality of violence in the phenomenon of colonisation and its resultant subsequent counter-movements, Frantz Fanon's pioneering work in postcolonial criticism entitled *The Wretched of the Earth* (1969), demands mention. Fanon's ideology juxtaposes the hegemonic and systematic violence imbibed in the phenomenon of colonisation with the violent retaliation that it faced from the colonised. To a certain extent, he regards violence as an inevitable tool in the hands of the colonized which is vindicated by his popular declaration ‚decolonization is always a violent phenomenon' (Fanon 27). In one of the dominant sections of the book ‚Concerning Violence', Fanon has articulated the dynamic and the multifarious fashion in which violence has been strategically employed both by the colonizers and then by the colonised. This certainly validates the assertion of the notion of violence, evolving as more multilayered and multidimensional entity. Fanon's assertion could serve here as a validation for Devi's valorising of violence as a mode of resistance in the postcolonial context.

Centre v/s Margin: Dual Manifestations of Violence in Mahasweta Devi's ‚Draupadi' and ‚Mother of 1084'

Mahasweta Devi once asserted that she has ‚always believed that the real history is made by ordinary people   '(Bardhan 24). In that light, Devi's works can be interpreted as not only the absolute demonstration of state-driven politics aimed towards the exclusion of the tribal communities but also as explorations of the violent militant aggression embodied in her characters. They provide a platform and a vehicle demonstrating the mobilisation of the forces against the State by the tribal groups of Bengal and its adjoining states like Santhals, Lodhas, Mundas, and Shabars. Though they were convinced of being a part of the grandnarrative called

'Nation' but their needs and voices had never been addressed by the 'Great Fathers' who constituted the narrative of 'Nation'. One is required to re-address the reason for designing the concept of 'Nation' as an antidote to fight against the foreign rule. This ideological construction or reconstruction was undertaken primarily to consolidate the notions of 'State' or the 'Nation', the political idea with which the masses and even the marginalised in the country could identify. This was the prime political interest of the age. But as it has been argued by many critics that the 'Nation' simply continued with the model that preceded the colonial regime with most of the power being concentrated in the hands of the Gramscian repressive forces materialised in police and military agents. These are the deceptive state forces that manifest themselves in the figures of Senanayak in 'Draupadi' and Pal in 'Mother of 1084'.

The rise of the Naxalite movement in a particular manner is an interrogation of the self-sufficient nature of the concept of a 'Nation' state. A deeper analysis may reveal that this entire notion of the supremacy of the state over the subjects can be traced from the Hegelian doctrine of the 'State' as propounded by him in his *Philosophy of Right* (1820). Hegel proposed that ‚The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth. It is the embodiment of the rational freedom realising and recognising itself in an objective form‘ (qtd in Russell 669). Criticizing this Hegelian notion, Bertrand Russell in his *History of Western Philosophy* (1945) has remarked that ‚Such is Hegel's Doctrine of State which if accepted, justifies every tyranny and every external aggression that can possibly be imagined‘(Russell, 670).

> 1970s in India was the period when the Naxalite rebels in West Bengal and in many of the adjoining states challenged such tyranny and aggression of the state by claiming their participation in the making of the 'Nation' and demanded an answer for their exclusion. The exclusionary politics to which these tribal communities in Bengal were exposed can be discerned well by locating them within the framework of what Giorgio Agamben termed as the 'homo Sacer' in his book *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. This politics of systematic marginalisation of these people earlier monitored by the colonial power and then sponsored by the local governments of independent India facilitates and legalises the dehumanisation of these people struggling at the bottom of the social pyramid. These communities can be appropriated to what Bauman called the 'wasted lives' in his book *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts.*

This particular species which fails to fit into the socially instituted normative paradigms are either considered prehuman or inhuman who are not subjected to the judicial order of human rights. The tribal societies of Bengal are the 'wasted lives' which are to be dismissed and for which the state is ready to deploy any form of violence for their complete annihilation. It is these subaltern classes that challenge the complacent narrative of civilisation stripping off the mask of the legitimised and organised violence of the state through their violent regression.

Now taking into consideration Devi's ‚Draupadi‘ one needs to evaluate that how the revolutionary zeal embodied in Dopdi contests the tyranny of the state. Mahasweta Devi's 'Draupadi' published in her collection of short stories titled *Agnigarbha* (Womb of Fires, 1978) and translated by Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak in her collection titled *Breast Stories* (2010) narrativizes the violent account of Dopdi, a tribal woman who rebelled and resisted the collaborative conspiracy of government, bureaucrats, feudal masters, at the cost of her honour. Devi's narrative attempts to articulate the inherently planted bureaucratic hypocrisy of the state that attempts to vindicate Dopdi's rape in the police custody.

Dopdi Mejhen and her husband Dulna both participated in the agitation along with the other militants to raise their voice against the oppressive SurjaSahu, the affluent Zamindar of the village. The height of his atrocities of SurjaSahu is reached when he disallowed the villagers to draw water from the two tube wells of the village. Ultimately, he was murdered at the hands of the agitators, who later absconded. Dopdi and Dulna were also included in this group. After the police forces had killed Dulna, Dopdi was lured by the dead body of her husband which was one of the tactics of Senanayak ‚the army officer who captures and degrades Draupadi‘ as Spivak defined him in her Foreword to the translated version. His plan proved successful and Dopdi was captured. Senanayak's instruction to his men ‚Make her. Do the needful‘ (400) legally justified the horror that was inflicted on Dopdi to extract the truth out of her. Throughout the entire night, she has been abused by men. Dopdi's suffering delivers her from the dogmatic notions of bodily shame and she becomes in the words of Spivak, 'a terrifying super object' (Spivak 184). Dopdi's body becomes the site where state-driven violence is inflicted. The horror of the violence is captured in a more scintillating manner, ‚The moon vomits a bit of light and goes to sleep. Only the dark

remains. A compelled spread-eagled still body. Active pistons of flesh rise and fall, rise and fall over it'.

What might interest the readers in this paper is not the mere discussion of the violence in its most explicit forms as incurred upon Dopdi, but also the more complex, implicit, hegemonic operation of the violence that operates inside out of Senanayak, the officer who was delineated with the task of ‚fixing' Dopdi. Anup Beniwal has rightly pointed towards Senanayak's inherently contradictory nature and internal dichotomy as he captures this in the following words, ‚He is triumphant that he could anticipate Dopdi's move and apprehend her. But he is regretful as Dopdi was about to be destroyed. Since in theory, he supported her struggle'. (Beniwal 136). This explicitly shows how the state curbs individual judgments. Spivak in her *Foreward* voices the same opinion, ‚In *theory*, Senanayak can identify with the enemy. But pluralist aesthetes of the First World are, willy-nilly, participants in the production of an exploitative society. Hence in *practice*, Senanayak must destroy the enemy, the menacing other' (1).

The magnitude of violence and torture that Dopdi's body has been subjected reincarnates itself in an altogether different manifestation in terms of Dopdi's retaliation. In the face of extreme violence inflicted upon her by the state machinery, Dopdi showed the audacity to counter this force. The following extract from the text delineates her violent resistance, a violent tool that slapped the patriarchal state force on its face. This is how Devi captures her resistance:

> Where do you want me to go?... Draupadi fixes her eyes on the tent. Says, come I'll go<Draupadi stands up. She pours the water on the ground. Tears her piece of cloth with her teeth. (Devi 401-402) Senanayak is taken aback and is bewildered at the sight of Dopdi, 'Naked walking towards him in the bright sunlight with her head high'. (Devi, 402) She comes closer to the seasoned military expert, laughs, and exclaims. The object of your search, DopdiMajhen. You asked them to make me up. Don't you want to see how they made me? You can strip me but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man? (Devi 402)

Deepti Misri in her essay ‚Are You a Man: Performing Naked Protest in India' analysing ‚Draupadi' focuses on how nakedness is used to question the discourses regarding male violence in a patriarchal society. In a similar vein, Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan in *Real and Imagined Women* opined:

> It is simultaneously a deliberate refusal of a shared sign system (the meanings assigned to nakedness, and rape: shame, fear, loss) and an ironic deployment of the same semiotics to create disconcerting counter effects of shame, confusion, and terror in the enemy. (Rajan 352)

Thus, the counter movement mobilised by Dopdi against the state where her own mutilated body becomes the weapon for retaliation introduces the readers to an altogether different paradigm of the functional dimension of violence.

‚Mother of 1084' shares somewhat a similar context as that of ‚Draupadi'. It projects the vehement suppression of the collective voices of the Naxalite movement pioneered by the disadvantaged youths of both rural and educated youths from the middle or upper-middle-class urban Bengal. The movement produced a great upheaval in the political history of the period. The story of 'Mother of 1084' is centered around Brati a college student who belongs to a well-to-do 'bhadrolok' family of the Bengali society who takes part in the Naxalite movement and sacrifices his life. The pathos of the situation lies in the fact that despite their remarkable roles they are vulnerable to the process of dehumanisation where their individual identity instead of being valorised is reduced to numbers. '1084' is the number with which Sujata has to identify her dead son Brati. Brati's death jerks her out of her claustrophobic world where she was pretending of being unaware of the hypocrisy of the upper-middle class 'bhadrolok' society. Brati's death followed by Sujata's encounter with Nandini, who has been Brati's companion in the struggle persuaded Sujata to confront the reality. Her narration then becomes the only source to reach the truth for Sujata.

It is quite astonishing to witness the agency with which the bureaucratic paraphernalia empowers Inspector Saroj Pal legalising his ghastly torture and inhumane treatment towards Nandini. Nandini's narration is a validation of this as she reveals to Sujata how during interrogations Saroj Pal, ‚bends closer to her, lights a cigarette, presses the lighted cigarette to Nandini's cheek. She screams *<+ He puffs at the cigarette and then presses it again to Nandini's cheek. Nandini screams. The questions and the pattern continue'. (Devi, 2011, p.33)

The vehemence with which Nandini retaliates and confronts Pal turned the tables around. Similar to Dopdi's case Nandini weaponises her anger as a tool in the face of the hypocrite authority materialised in

Inspector Saroj Pal. She too like Dopdi is not the one to succumb so easily to the state repressive force as Chitra Jyathilke articulated in the article 'Rebels and Biopolitics: Mahasweta Devi's Mother of 1084':

> In the course of her narrativisation, Nandini gains authority; her voice denotes objection and power over Pal as explicit through her refusal to speak, despite his forceful efforts to extract information from her '. Her expressions during Pal's questions such as ‚I don't know them', ‚I won't say a thing' and ‚I don't believe you' (32-33) display Nandini as an active subject, not as a passive victim. (34)

Nandini's second scream on-stage is another violent expression of her resistance to the Bengali upper-middle-class complacency and submissiveness of Sujata. Thus in response to Sujata's comment – 'it's all quiet now' Nandini ‚screams' (2011, p.34) loudly, jerking the audience out of their slumber as the pitch of her voice embodied with her authoritative power reaches its peak:

> No. No. No. No! It was never quiet, nothing's quiet. Nothing's changed. Thousands of men rot in the prisons without trial, they are denied the status of political, and yet you say it's all settled down again? Torture continues with greater sophistication and more secrecy, and yet you say it's all quiet? All quiet? What do you need to get it into your heads that nothing's quiet? (Devi, 2011, p.34)

Thus, a minute analysis of Mahasweta Devi's works will reveal the different manifestations of violence. Senanayak in 'Draupadi' and Pal in 'Mother of 1084' are thus the embodiments of state machinery where they had the privilege of using the legal paraphernalia and authority which is seemingly the politically correct one. The violence here is not haphazard and chaotic like Dopdi's tearing off her clothes and Nandini's screaming. There is a dormant irony at operation here in the seemingly executive necessity of the brutal suppression of the Naxalites) in the name of governance by the state authority and labeling the rebellion of the Naxalites for the preservation of their rights against this normative state power as an 'act of terror' when it truly contains the seeds of the revolution and social transformation. In this regard, it can be presumed even from a moral as well as analytical perspective that violence can prove to be instrumental and productive at times and not just ‚not just repressive in a Foucaldian power-analytic sense'. (Munck 4) This helps in galvanising the most pertinent question regarding the concerned argument and that is, what should be the criteria for defining the nature of violence? Should one regard violence as the act of exercising power for

repression or a tool employed to foster social transformation and human freedom?

The interpretation of violence is anchored in material, social and cultural grounds. Within the agnostic dynamics, the choice lies in the hands of the perceiver whether to regard it as ,the exercise of power as repression or its use to foster social transformation and human freedom`. (Munck p.4).In this regard Referring to Foucault's take on the issue, Nancy Fraser has argued that:

> Foucault has no basis for distinguishing, for example, forms of power that involve domination from those that do not Clearly, what Foucault needs, and needs desperately, are normative criteria for distinguishing acceptable from unacceptable forms of power. (Fraser 32-33)

What the discussion demands is the consideration of the acceptable and the non-acceptable forms of violence, but in a liberal democracy who is to differentiate a freedom fighter from a terrorist?

Dwelling upon this violent retaliation against the authority a quick analysis of Gandhi's political philosophy of non-violence can be instrumental. King and Gandhi, two names have come to be synonymous with nonviolence. But it cannot be denied that the movements they mobilised were affiliated to a certain extent of violence, the violence not only inflicted by the state powers but the violence of those who accompanied the efforts of the non-violent leaders which we call the 'garam dal' in our Indian context. Therefore, even these non-violent movements are defined and contextualised by the violence that surrounded them. Whenever a part of the population that has been suppressed for a longer time reacts back against the oppressor, it has particularly two ways to do it, to return the violence in kind or oppose the oppressive power by some other means, such as nonviolent protest. Therefore, it is within the dynamics of these concurrent expressions of violence, that the non-violent movements often become successful.

Conclusion

What the argument in this paper insists upon is, defamiliarising the entire notion of violence and discerning the politics that works in the background resulting in its variegated representations. One needs to do uncover first its political clothing, exploring its true meaning and possibilities, and looking upon it as a force detaching it from its usual

connotations so that this force, this vehemence, and this strength can be employed for social transformation. Annihilation of the culture of violence in the communal, gendered, or political category and the reestablishment of peace is not a very innocent phenomenon. Both violence and peace are politically and structurally constructed. Revolutionary violence itself has rendered its service in the violation of the systematised order harboring hypocrisy, a hegemonic patriarchal order blown away by the Shelleyan winds of revolution which often reminds one of the archetypal framework or design where the Apocalypto is an inevitable event before a new creation.

But now the question that remains to be asked is up to what extent this revolutionary violence can be justified. Fanon's remarks require in this context need to be revisited that ‚violence < frees the native from his inferiority complex and his despair an inaction'. In a similar context, Shah (2018) concerning the Naxalite movement has commented that ‚under certain conditions, revolutionary violence is legitimate' (qtd in Bose, 2014). Taking into consideration the disruption caused in the existing order of the society, Raymond Williams in The Modern Tragedy concludes that Revolution often towards skepticism and nihilism where the possibility of the restoration of the social order ultimately looks forward to some supernatural or magical rescue. These are probably the problematic areas that are still left to be addressed in the backdrop of the celebration of revolutionary zeal.

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6

The Contention over "Image" in Digital Visual Effects

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Abstract

Digital visual effect (vfx) has become an important part of modern visual entertainment, not only in cinema, but several soaps and serials. A technique first used by George Lucas in 1977 for few minutes in the movie, *Star Wars*, has become the greatest show catcher for the audience in the twenty first century. The satisfaction derived by the spectators on viewing the vfx scenes enabled the rapid use of the technology across the world. Even though movies using digital visual effects are loved and eulogised by audience, poststructuralist critics have critically theorised the proliferation of the digital images. One of the major proponents against technological upgradation in the form of digital images has been Jean Baudrillard, who has vehemently advocated the lack of the referent in the formation of a digital image resulting in simulacra and a society of hyperreal. This paper is an attempt to rethink the concept of image in the digital world which according to Baudrillard, ‚has no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum‘ (*Simulacra and Simulation* 6). To substantiate the reality of digital image, which has algorithm as its base, rather than the chemical base of the analogue photograph, a study of the photo indexicality of the cinematic images of the past and present has been done. Such a comparative study brings to light the contested issue of ‚image‘ in the world of digital vfx.

Keywords: Digital image, Movies, Photo indexicality.

Introduction

The Contention over ‚Image‘ in Digital Visual Effects

Jean Baudrillard is one of the foremost poststructuralist critics, whose book, *Simulations* (1981 translated 1983) made a provocative announcement of the reign of ‚simulacra‘ (copy without original) and

‚hyperreal' (in which the imitated object gains superiority over the real) as the governing precepts of a postmodern society. The ‚loss of real' has become so pervasive in its influence through television, computer games and cinema that it has now become hard to distinguish between the real and imagined, the reality from the illusory, resulting in the corrosion of the depth of the images. In the abridged version of his essays, called ‚Simulacra and Simulation', Baudrillard narrates the loss of ‚fullness' of the past era, a time when a sign indicated the existence of reality or an underlying depth. In contrast, the present culture does not produce signs that point towards a reality, but hints at yet another sign, resulting in a system of simulacrum. Today everywhere a person looks around, there is dominance of digital image, be it the photography, the computer games, television or cinema. The analogue photography which guaranteed the existence of the referent has almost been replaced by digital photography, which many a time is a copy of the copy. Selden, Widdowson and Brooker have attempted to summarize Baudrillard's views on the digital image: ‚According to Baudrillard signs no longer correspond to, or mask, their 'real-life' referent but replace it in a world of autonomous 'floating signifiers'; there has been 'an implosion of image and reality'' (211). Baudrillard's criticism is against the images on television and media which thrive on the ‚unreal'. About the Gulf War of 1991, he has commented that the war did not take place, it did not have the symptoms of war; it was only fought on the digital media. From his perspective, the war was a virtual reality where simulated images of the war were used to be in focus on television. His idea on Gulf War was later challenged by Christopher Norris, one of the critics of Baudrillard.

What is Digital Image?

Digital image is an image formed through mathematical representation of the binary code, 0s and 1s, and is viewed as small dots of colour on the screen. The pixels, as they are called, are small grids of colours, by changing which the form of the image can be altered. Because digital images are based on mathematics, they have the capability to create anything, real or imaginative, in other words, it has the capability to produce on screen anything that the human mind can imagine; similar to that of a painting where a painter can paint anything, real as well as imaginative objects. Digital visual effect is a form of computer graphics made by the combination of a number of digital images. It is based on complex algorithms which can put together different types of images like

the live-action and the animated into one, the still and moving images together, the 2D and the 3D, all modelled within the computer space and having their texture detailed with photographs and paintings. Images of the real objects are simulated and fused with the imagined one with the help of digital tools to create something new. This fusion of live-action and digitally created images may either lead to the creation of an entirely new set, as for example the *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, *Iron Man*, *Avengers*, *Avatar* or the recreation of natural setting as in the movie, *Titanic*. The recreation of a new type of image formed by the combination of the real and the imaginative objects (live action and visual effects together) at times makes it different from the perceived world of reality. This lack of coherence between which is viewed on screen and the natural world surrounding the spectator is due to the use of algorithm to create digital image. It also allows for the manipulation of everything including the colour, shape and size of the pictures by the programmer which are then stored in digital files. William J. Mitchell in his book, *The Reconfigured Eye*, writes about the variable features of digital image in comparison to photography, which has a permanent photographic negative:

> There is simply no equivalent of the permanently archived, physically unique photographic negative. Image files are ephemeral, can be copied and transmitted virtually instantly and cannot be examined (as photographic negatives can) for physical evidence of tampering. The only difference between an original file and a copy is the tag recording time and date of creation – and that can easily be changed. Image files therefore leave no trail, and it is often impossible to establish with certainty the provenance of a digital image (51).

While on hand digital image lacks the physical certainty ascertained by analogue photographs, it is also manipulative leading to further changes and variations. Thus, William J. Mitchells declares in the concluding pages of his book: ‚Today, as we enter the post-photographic era, we must face once again the ineradicable fragility of our ontological distinctions between the imaginary and the real‘ (225).

Reality of Image in Classical Movies Reviewed

Cinema germinated from photograph, but it is not merely a transformation from still photograph to photograph in motion; it is a more complicated process, involving a variety of techniques, the most important being the amalgamation of shots, in which the photos of the

live objects, animated scenes and painted background are put together. The requirement for a movie is such that it has to merge different medium together. Noel Carroll said, ‚Film is not one medium, but many media' (8). Carroll pointed to the use of still images as well as the abstract and non-figurative shapes to render a complete form to a movie.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, cinema was all about adding motion to the photographed images. Then gradually stage set-ups were used for various scenes, along with the efficient use of tricks and devices, but all these were kept secret. With the advancement of cinema, it made use of different techniques of close-ups, soft focus pictures, use of negatives, double or multiple exposures, similar to photography and quick and slow motion, lap-dissolve, reversal of time and certain ‚special effects' which are solely applicable to films. In most of the cases these special effects created by adjusting the camera differently were called trick photography and remained hidden from the audience. Norman O. Dawn, the pioneer of glass painting and matte shots and an employee of the Universal Studio for five years, beginning in the 1916, recalled: ‚They considered anything that was a drawing or a glass shot a fake. So they didn't want to let the exhibitors know that this was a cheap picture full of fakes. They kept all that quiet… no matter if it was nothing more than an ordinary double exposure' (Vaz and Barron 42). The practice of secrecy continued through decades until the production of *Star Wars*, when George Lucas brought to light the use of digital visual effects in the leading journals of the day. This idea of making the use of visual effects public was accepted with joy and enthusiasm by everyone. People for the first time came to know about the things happening behind the scenes, how the different scenes were edited and amalgamated, which previously had been considered entirely as a photograph of the real.

The innovative special effects and the mechanical stage set-up used in early movies, gave realism an altogether different form. *The Sea Hawk* (1940) is a movie in which the background was created without the spectators being aware of it. It stared Errol Flynn as Captain Geoffrey Thorpe who has to go on a raid to the Panama Jungle to siege the Spanish treasure. But there is no such place as Panama Jungle and hence, the place was created by the use of fog machine on the tropical plants at the back of the studio. According to the film, after escaping from the jungle, Thorpe and his men set sail towards England. For this they had to cross

the jungle, created at the back of the studio and venture towards the beach, which was shot at Point Mungu, Los Angeles. Rudy Behlmer elucidates the process involved in the creation of the scene, ‚From there to the mock-up of a rowboat placed in a studio rear projection set, and thence to shot in which they clamber aboard a full-scale model of a 135-foot man-of-war in a specially constructed studio maritime soundstage surrounded by a muslin cyclorama painted with a skyscape' (Behlmer 88). The scene from the jungle to the ship is created by editing different shots and in all these scenes the sea, the sky and the painted background are the photographic projections. Robert Boyle, the art director of Hollywood and a frequent collaborator of Alfred Hitchcock, once pointed,

> If we shoot in New York on a street, we would shoot somebody driving up to a building in a cab and the next shot you're in the studio. The front door was built to match the location and be a part of the studio-built interior. What you saw out the windows of the interior were painted or photographic backings. (Brotto 5)

Another important technique used in film is matte painting; a technique in which painted background or scenes are used. Numerous examples of films having made use of matte painting can be cited; a classic Hollywood film, *Gone with the Wind* (1929) could not have been made without the use of painted background. Producer David O. Selznick says, ‚I could not even hope to put the picture on the screen properly without an even more extensive use of special effects than had ever before been attempted in the business' (Haver 249). Approximately 100 matte painting were used in the film as esteemed by Jack Cosgrove, the head of Selznick's special effect department (Silfer 133).

After digitalisation, the technique of matte painting underwent transformation; paint board and paint brush has now been replaced by the computer and digital paint brush and mouse. Though some consider the earlier version of the physical use of paint brush and colours more convenient, most consider the technical ways more compatible, ‚Matching colours between a painting and the live-action plate and hiding the matte lines are always the greatest challenges in a matte painting, but in digital you can pick the exact colour you want from the plate and transfer it into the painting' said matte painter artist, Chris Evans (Vaz 96). Painting on the computer screen was made easier with

the invention of Photoshop by John and Thomas Knoll which was launched in the market by Adobe.

A careful scrutiny of films from the past shows the prevalence of matte painting, glass painting and the creation of background for different scenes for the purpose of the film. When these painted backgrounds got featured in the films, people never considered them unreal, because such features were always kept secret from the public. Later, the advancement of computer graphics replaced these hand-made paintings into computer art, giving rise to the question of reality of the settings.

> BeryGaut warns spectators of their expectations from digital cinema so that the outcome of viewing such a movie is not frustrating or self-defeating. ,Digital cinema has greater powers to achieve realistic-looking images than does traditional film, but when viewers come to know of these powers, they have every reason to be suspicious about whether what they seem to have evidence for happening really did happen` (Gaut 71).

Digital images, to a great extent do not guarantee the reality of all the scenes seen on big screen. Featuring realism on screen is a big issue for digital images, and so in several cases digital images are created in proportion to the size of the referent, that is, the image bears the photo indexicality of the object, but in several instances, there are images which lack photo indexicality; for such cases, Stephen Prince has suggested ,perceptual realism`. Hence, realism through computer graphics needs discussion.

Realism and Indexicality of Digital Images used in Movies

Digital image techniques used in movies constitutes two categories: first the removal of unwanted elements from the scene as done in the movies, *Cliff-hanger* (1994) or *Spiderman* (2002), in which the wires required for the stunt performance were later removed, and the other the creation of graphic models of the animals and the setting in a movie. Classic example of graphic creation of animals is the dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* by Steven Spielberg. These images of the breathing, running, and jumping dinosaurs on screens do not ever have any photographable reality, but still are far better than the miniature models and the stop motion animation seen in earlier films. Examples of unrealistic images which are perceptually real are the Terminator, the Iron-man, the Hulk, and a series of super heroes of the Hollywood movies. These images have impacted

audience hugely, because while watching these films audience are swayed more by thrill and suspense of actions than being judgemental about the image; Stephen Prince refers to such images as ‚perceptual realism.‘ Prince has explained perceptual realism in the article, ‚True Lies: Perceptual Realism, Digital Image, and Film Theory‘ as:

> A perceptually realistic image is one which structurally corresponds to the viewer's audio-visual experience of three-dimensional space. Perceptually realistic images correspond to this experience because film-makers build them to do so. Such images display a nested hierarchy of cues which organise the display of light, color, texture, movement, and sound in ways that correspond with the viewer's own understanding of these phenomena in daily life. Perceptual realism, therefore, designates a relationship between the image or film and the spectator, and it can encompass both unreal images and those which are referentially realis-tic. Because of this, unreal images may be referentially fictional but perceptally realistic. (32)

While some of the films have referentially fictional image, there are others which have referentially realistic images. Some images bear photographic indexicality and iconic homologies with the referents, still, in most of the cases digital effect films are undervalued because of the lack of photographic indexicality.

To substantiate the photographic indexicality of digital image, the character of Richard Parker, the Bengal Tiger, in the film, *Life of Pi* is an apt example. The tiger has been made perpetually real, though it does not have real existence. The reality of the character, its movement are so natural and convincing that this perfection has to be attributed to indexicality created through algorithm, a work of sheer mathematics. Richard Parker is the most important character portrayed by Yann Martel in the novel, but it lacks sufficient description. Lee had to breathe life into this imaginative tiger, and so the visual effect supervisor had to study hundred hours of video and thousands of photographs of the four different kinds of tiger to create Richard Parker. De Boer says,

> Basically, I shot lots of close-ups of the nose for the breathing pattern. Yawning and snarling and hissing and eating, drinking, grooming, marking. Sleeping, pissing. How does a paw change shape when it takes the weight? And how does it change shape when the weight rolls over it for a step? How does the nail protract and retract? Along with regular footage, De Boer stuck a single-lens reflex camera inside the boat and set it to snap away automatically while the tigers ran through their routines, enabling him to get some amazing close-ups without being mauled. (Castelli 144)

In the movie, Ang lee, the director of *Life of Pi*, had made use of both real tigers as well as tigers made with the aid of computer graphics. The need to create graphical tigers even when the shot could be done with real tigers is because in some specific scenes, ‚it was important to make sure the tiger's eye connected to the camera. A real tiger's never going to look at a camera in the same way it looks at a person it's facing off at‛ (Castelli 144). Hence, the need to create digital tiger and for which the visual effect supervisor had to blend the photographs of real tigers and the CGI tigers together to make them look alike.

In all, the digital images objects are quantified and then regenerated, unlike the photograph which is pictured directly from the object. Stephen Prince in *Visual Effects in Cinema* explains the difference between creation of analogue and digital images:

> Cameras record light, not objects. (Three-dimensional scanners record three-dimensional geometry, and motion sensors used in mocap sessions record movement.) Photography in both analog and digital contexts remains a medium of translation. In the analog world, a photograph is the output of the translation of luminous information by camera optics and then by the development bath and fixer. In the digital world, the translators are algorithms, and these need not be false or falsified. (Kindle Locations 2138-2141).

Conclusion

Ever since the dawn of cinema, the goal to transcend reality and give the spectators a view of an entirely new world, where imagination and reality could be clubbed together, has always been the intention of directors and producers. Efforts to extend the boundaries of reality by implementing various effects like glass shots, matte paintings, miniature models, rear and front projections have been in the process through the past century. One of the commonly used techniques in the early film was the Schüfftan process. This process facilitated the combination of live action and miniature models by the use of a mirror placed at 45-degree angle to the camera. The technique had been used in films like *Blackmail* (1929) by Alfred Hitchcock, *Metropolis* (1926) by Fritz Lang, *Alien* (1986) by James Cameron and several others. The effectiveness of this process in the age of digitalisation has been brought to light by Richard Rickitt. He says, ‚Even in the digital age, these techniques still work perfectly, and you can get your shot done in one take without any additional process‛ (115).

Most of the techniques used in modern film have come down from the past, only its form has changed. Things that had to be done physically like painting the background, often on big frames with colours, and paint brush are now done with the help of a computer in a single room and at the end the live-action digital shots and the computer graphic images are merged together. This change of form may have affected a few artists, because the absence of colour, paint brush affected them psychologically, but most of the artists are convenient within the new set-up. This shift from the hand-made paintings used in earlier movies, to the use of computer graphics in the creation of scenes in modern movies, cannot justify Baudrillard's claim of simulation, because in neither case the background is real. When the hand-drawn paintings set as background were photographed along with the human beings, they are the same as visual effect techniques used in blue and green Chroma, in which the background is done later on computers. The reality of the image becomes questionable not only in visual effect movies, but also in movies using matte painting and glass paintings.

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7

Exploring the Repercussions of Greed on the Ecological World of J. R.R. Tolkien"s *Middle-earth*

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Abstract

J. R.R. Tolkien believed that greed is the root of all evil. Evil by definition is destructive and harbinger of ecological desolation. The paper argues that greed is manifested in more than one way. Possessiveness and all-consuming love for material wealth are two of the most common manifestations of greed in human life. In Tolkien's Middle-earth legendarium, the character of Fëanor exhibits the traits of possessiveness while the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm portrays the greed of material wealth. In the process of studying these characters, the paper establishes the devastating ecological repercussions of the actions of Fëanor and the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm. The paper argues that Fëanor's possessive love for the Silmarils not only brought about loss of life in Middle-earth but he also played an important role in the estrangement between the Noldors and the Teleri Elves. Similarly, the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm in their quest to hoard material wealth exploit the earth's resources and the mines. Their unethical usage of land in order to accumulate material wealth led to destruction of the mines of Khaza-dûm and its surrounding land. The paper argues that possessiveness and greed of material wealth can never lead to healthy flourishing of nature and communities.

Keywords: Greed, possessiveness, material wealth, Fëanor, Dwarves of Khaza-dûm

Introduction

J.R.R. Tolkien believed greed to be the root of all evil. Evil according to him, was the absence of good and the inability to maintain moderation

and meaningfully contribute to the well-being and the security of the community. Evil by nature is ecosadist and can only destroy and destabilise the existing harmony. The maxim ‚greed is the root of all evil‘ acts as the foundation on which Tolkien portrays his views about the high importance that he attached to greed. Greed is a sin that is unequivocally present in all the races – Dwarves, Elves, Men and Hobbit. It is not confined to one race only. Tolkien's depiction of the various races unequivocally depicts it to be present in all races. It just varies in degrees. The characters that fall prey to greed not only bring about their downfall but their activities bring considerable harm to the ecological community. Greed alters their personhood, turning virtues to vices. It has been manifested through characters like Fëanor and the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm. It is not only limited to these characters only but for the purpose of the paper actions of Fëanor's and the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm would be analysed highlighting the role that greed played in desolation of the ecological world of the Middle-earth.

Tolkien as an orthodox Roman Catholic viewed evil primarily in ‚Boethian terms as the absence of good‘ (Kieffer 2). St Augustine's doctrines best encapsulate Tolkien's view of Evil. St Augustine described evil as ‚not something real and positive, but rather is something parasitic on what is and is good<. It is a lack of goodness in a thing that is and is good<. Evil is a negation, a lack< *of+ goodness‘ (qtd. in Kieffer 2). Paul H. Kocher aptly notices that Tolkien's personal ‚philosophy of evil focuses on greed<‘ and the ‚human desire to possess/hoard people and things as 'property'<'is at the core of all evil underlying the War of the Rings'‘ (24, 66). Tolkien's legendarium presents greed manifested in multitude ways. Two of the most prominent manifestations of greed we come across in Tolkien's legendarium are over-possessiveness as displayed in Fëanor and material greed exhibiting through acts of hoarding and accumulation of wealth as witnessed in the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm.

Possessiveness: Folly of Fëanor

Tolkien believed that sub-creation has its origin in the physical and spiritual existence of the creative energy of God. Fëanor through his feat of capturing the light of the Two Trees – Telperion and Laurilen, in the three gems, the Silmarils, had been able to achieve the ultimate feat. The Two Trees in Tolkien's mythology represented life. Mircea Eliade points

out ,trees represent weather ritually and concretely, or in mythology and cosmology, or symbolically – *the living cosmos*, endlessly renewing itself` (267). Tolkien establishes a similar understanding of tress through the creation of the Two Trees of Valinor. It can be argued that the Two Trees in the lore represented continuity of ‚life in and of the past‹ (but also) faith in its future` (Curry 56). Hence, it is not surprising that Tolkien describes them as worthy of worship and its light as radiant which when brings understanding and grace to the viewers. Tolkien describes it as the ‚light of art undivorced from reason, that sees things scientifically (or philosophically) and imaginatively (or subcreatively) and says that they are good` (Tolkien *letters* 148). Since the Silmarils created by Fëanor encapsulates the blended light of the Two Trees it is also by extension worthy of worship and transcendental. Like the Two Trees the Silmarils also represented the sacredness of life. The Silmarils are the ultimate work of creation and Fëanor its sub-creator.

However, Fëanor failed in his role as a sub-creator. A sub-creator draws his inspiration and the primary world created by God. His inspiration often transcends their conscious mind and comes as a gift that finds its origin in the All Mighty. Hence, creation is devoid of ownership. It is to be shared and enjoyed by all. However, Tolkien warns that the sub-creator may become possessive, clinging to things made as ‚its own` wishing to be the Lord and God of his private creation. Fëanor fell prey to the vice of possessiveness. Greed and love for his creation corrupted his personality as well as his relation with the community, both the living and non-living. It is highlighted in his ‚twisted attempt to claim [his work as] solely self-sufficient and so not accountable or responsible to anyone or anything` (Colton 31). It leads to the rebellion of Fëanor and his sons.

Fëanor due to his corrupted love for the Silmarils refused the request of the Valars to utilise the Silmaril to release the Blessed Light still present in the Silmarils. It is only the Silmarils that could have healed the hurt of Valinor and revived the Two Trees. However, Fëanor put his well-being and pleasure before that of the community. It highlighted the all-consuming love that Fëanorharbored for the Silmarils. Consequently, when Morgoth stole it, he pursued him in to Middle-earth to reclaim the stolen Silmarils. His possessive love for his creation compelled him to wage unrelenting war against Morgoth during the First Age. In this war he was only controlled by his perverted love for the Silmarils. In the

process, communities were estranged. Gory war was fought between kins. In the midst of the war the ecology of Middle-earth was laid waste. Tolkien provides graphic details of the desolation that visited the land in the Battle of Sudden Flame during the war between the Noldors and Morgoth.

> Morgorth sent forth great rivers of flame that ran down<from Thangorodrim, and poured all over the plain; and the Mountains of Iron belched forth fires of many poisonous hues, and the fume of them stank upon the air, and was deadly. Thus, Ard-galen perished, and fire devoured its grasses; and it became a burned and desolate waste, full of a choking dust, barren and lifeless. (Tolkien *Silmarillion* 151)

During the war, not only Ar-galen was laid to waste but Dorthion and Ossiriand fell into darkness. The evil of Morgoth during the Battle of Sudden Flame turned the northern forested slope of Dorianth a region of dark and evil where healthy life never flourished again. The trees that did grow after the Battle of Sudden Flame were ,black and grim, and their roots were tangled, groping in the dark like claws;` where anybody who ventured either was lost or ,pursued to madness by phantoms of terror` (Tolkien *Silmarillion* 155).

It is evident that though Morgoth was directly responsible for the devastation that was suffered by the ecological world of Middle-earth but it was Fëanor's pride and greedy possessive love for the Silmarils that had set the action rolling. If not for his corrupted love for the Silmarils, Morgorth would not have been provided an opportunity to steal. Over-possessive love had slowly altered him personally, which is reflected in his attitude towards the Silmarils, even before he was asked to make the ultimate sacrifice. His possessiveness filled him with unquenchable rage and anybody who stood in his path he slew them, even if they were his own kins. His possessive love for the Silmarils brought about considerable amount of damage to the ecological world of Middle-earth and divided communities.

Greed for Material Wealth: Fall of Khaza-dûm

Dwarves share an ambiguous relationship with the ecological world. Susan Jaffers opines that the Dwarves shared a utilitarian relationship with the ecological world. Their priority is to the work on their makings more than anything else since they ,intertwine their very identity with their artifacts-in gold, gems and the treasures they construct out of them`

(Brackmann 92). Tolkien mentions that if Dwarves lack ‚gold and precious things‹ all other good things seemed profitless‛ (*Lord of the Rings* App A. 1051). Consequently, Dwarves tend to fall prey to greed for material wealth. More often than not Dwarves lack the ability to stay their hands and continue to exploit the resources of the natural world before it can be replenished. This is manifested in the Dwarves of Khaza-dûm. They continued exploiting the mines for the extraction of Mithril far exceeding their own demands and that of the needs of the Middle-earth.

Dwarves of Khaza-dûm had constructed their identity around Mithril. Mithril is regarded as the most precious metal in the Middle-earth and it was available in plenty in the mines of Khaza-dûm. Dwarves were particularly skilled at mining for Mithril and fashioning treasures and artifacts out of them. Mithril suggested dwarves and vice-versa. It is mentioned that Mithril laid the foundation of the fame and prosperity of Khaza-dûm but eventually it was Mithril that brought about their destruction. Unchecked mining or accumulation of material wealth finds its origin in overconsumption and greed. Greed inevitably brings in Evil that not only ravaged the mines but also the surrounding land of Hollin. In their greed for Mithril they dug too deep and awakened Durin's bane, the Balrog. The fire-wielding monster of the First Age incinerated the Mines and their surrounding land in its wake. Lives of Dwarves and the Elves of Hollin was lost. Land and life were the ultimate victim of the greed of the Dwarves.

Susan Jeffers argues that the exploitative impulse of the Dwarves' uncontrolled mining of Mithril finds its origin in their need to establish their need to elevate their position in Middle-earth. They constructed their identity around their creation and particularly their talent in metallurgy and mining. Moreover, they often fell victim to gold-lust which makes them want to hoard wealth unnecessarily. They measured their self-worth in context to their art and mining is also a form of art. This resulted in the gradual transformation of Mithril from mere metal to a cultural symbol of excellence, which they wanted to accumulate as much as possible. The metal that had the possibility of being a source of positive improvement in the lives of the dwellers of Middle-earth instead brought about untold misery. It awoke the fire monster Balrog who demolished the entire ecology.

Tolkien provides vivid description of the attack of the Balrog. The description is provided in terms of environmental elements. It can be argued that the Balrog represented the destructive nature of fire. The Balrog ,raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils' (Tolkien *Lord of the Rings* 331). The dark destructive fire of the Balrog engulfed and destroyed the once beautiful mountain kingdom. The desolation of the neighboring land can be witnessed. The narrator provides a bleak description of the lowlands surrounding the Dwarf-kingdom.

> ,[I]n places there were ruined works of stone beside the path, and mounds of green' (*LotR* 334) and singed holly trees. They came across fallen rocks and stones across the dry land between the cliff and the lake. The gate stream Sirannon had an unhealthy gloomy look, which had transformed from a once noisy swift flowing stream to an almost dried stream with hardly any water. The air around the stream was ,bleak and dry' and the barren country of red stones did not support any life not even birds flew in the sky. Frodo describes the water as dark and unclean. The dammed water formed a shallow pool, which was threaded with weed over the greasy stone bed. The entire water body had an unwholesome feel. The lake was green and slimy. Further, along the route the Fellowship comes across stumps of holly trees and boughs, which were rotting in the shallows. It appeared to be the ,remains of old thickets, or of a hedge that had once lined the road across the drowned valley' (*LotR* 303).

The description of the lands around Khaza-dûm looked similar to that of the disserted mines of Wales. It successfully paints the environmental desolation that lands suffer due to unsustainable mining practices. The first Balrog attack happened in the Second Age but even in the Third Age the ravaged land had not recovered.

The desolation of the Dwarf-kingdom and Hollin, the land of the Elves was due to the greed and selfishness. Tolkien highlights through the rise and fall of Khaza-dûm how quickly mining industry can indulge in exploitative behavior that pollutes the air, water and leaves the land surrounding barren. The Fellowship while passing through the mines describes the air as stuffy and suffocating. The once brightly lit mines are now dark and desolate and completely in ruins. The only reason is the Dwarves insatiable greed for Mithril. If only the Dwarves had practiced sustainable mining Khaza-dûm would have thrived and so would have the land around.

Conclusion

In Tolkien's universe the problem of Evil exists as ,created beings misuse their free will, and it is transmitted as those beings deceive others into misusing theirs` (Alberto 76). This Evil is rooted in greed, which encourages beings to misuse their power in order to gain domination or elevate oneself` in the world. However, in the pursuit to achieve this immoral and unethical dream they inflict considerable damage to the ecology. It is depicted in the fall of the mines of Khaza-dûm and the cruel end of Fëanor and his house. Fëanor in order to fulfil his own needs wages multiple wars which scars the Middle-earth permanently. One single individual character flaw of over-possessiveness thrusts Middle-earth in endless wars. The actual victims in these wars were the beings of the land of Middle-earth but they were mostly indifferent to it. In the case of the Dwarves the readers though witness their lamentation at their loss of Homeland but most often it is expressed in terms of the loss of the artifacts they had created and their mining expertise and work with Mithril. Rarely does the reader hear them lament about the loss of the beauty and the nourishing nature that surrounded Khaza-dûm. It appears that the stagnant and slimy water of the Gate-stream, the barren red rock paths and the singed forest covers affect them much. It is their greed for material wealth, which they wanted to accumulate that blindsided them to the evil and desolation they brought on to the land. Evil by nature is ecosadist. Hence, greed too ushers turmoil, conflict and destroys the harmony between nature and humankind. It devastates the natural world in unforeseen ways and these changes are not temporary but permanent.

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8

"With all due respect to Oedipus," a reading of Hitchcock"s „Uncanny" birds in *The Birds*

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Abstract

Following Fredric Jameson's classification of films, SlavojŽižek divides the history of cinema in three phases: realism (1930-40), modernism (1950-1960), and postmodernism (1960 onwards). Alfred Hitchcock's films focus on various themes ranging from the test of love and reunion, traumatised female heroines in the earlier films to voyeurism, and allegory in his later films. In his 1963 film *The Birds*, a small town named Bodega Bay is ravaged by simultaneous attacks of flock of gulls. The male hero of the film is Mitch Brenner whose prospective normal sexual relationship with Melanie Daniel is blocked by the maternal superego. My paper aims to study the horrid images of the birds in the film with reference to Sigmund Freud's concept of 'Uncanny' and also how the avian attacks become the embodiment of the jealous mother figure, Lydia Brenner who is afraid to lose her son to Melanie.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Uncanny, Oedipus Complex, Real, Superego.

Introduction

In 1952, Daphne du Maurier, previously popular for her mystery and wartimenovels, created a dreadful tale of global destruction, namely ‚The Birds` that presents to its readers, a world governing beyond human rationality, in which the British population is put under a great threat from the unexpected, concerted and orchestrated attacks of normally harmless birds. In this story, Nat Hocken and his family try to protect their small cottage against a relentless avian siege. The horror arises from the inability of the British government to protect its citizens from the bird attacks and in some ways, this story projects the more realistic fears of

the Nazi bombings in the minds of its contemporary readers. In 1963, Alfred Hitchcock's loose adaptation of this tale of horror into a film that revolves around the relationship between a widow mother, her middle-aged son and his two lovers, successfully conveys the terror of the murderous avian attacks that was portrayed in the original story. Thus, both the story and Hitchcock's film depict certain visions of an apocalyptic world where nature has turned against humanity.

However, this paper seeks to explore the complex dynamics of the problematic relationship between the authoritarian mother, Lydia Brenner, the fatherless son, Mitch Brenner and his lover Melanie Daniels and also attempts to study and analyse how the images of the birds and house gradually become 'uncanny', as defined by Sigmund Freud in his famous essay, ‚The 'Uncanny',‘ in the light of this mother-child-lover relationship over the course of *The Birds*.

Sigmund Freud's formulation on 'Uncanny'

The meanings and theoretical implications of the word 'uncanny' can be traced in two different ways, as Freud argues in his essay ‚The 'Uncanny'‘: the first, by tracing the etymology of the word itself and secondly, by exemplifying different human experiences that can be called 'uncanny'. Freud defines 'uncanny' as that ‚class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar‘ (Freud 220). In order to be 'uncanny', something needs to be frightening and an object from the past. Therefore, 'uncanny' becomes the return of the traumatic past and refers to those circumstances or objects that were once familiar to us but now has become unfamiliar which comes with a threat.

Freud argues that the definition of 'uncanny' provided by Jentsch before him is incomplete as he had emphasized upon relating 'uncanny' only with the unfamiliar. Freud, however, slightly differs from Jentsch and argues that it is always not necessary that which is unfamiliar must be 'uncanny'. In order to do so, he tries to explore the relationship between the two apparently opposite German words '*heimlich*' and '*unheimlich*'. '*Heimlich*' has 'home' at its very root. From Daniel Sanders' *Wörterbuch der deutschenSprache*, Freud defines '*heimlich*'as ‚belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly‘ (Freud 222). '*Heimlich*' also means something that is kept out of sight, something that is concealed. '*Unheimlich*', according to Schelling, as Freud argues, is

everything that ,ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to life' (225).

Therefore, Freud concludes that these two words '*heimlich*' and '*unheimlich*' have similar connotations too. '*Heimlich*' has two different implications: it is something familiar and is also something that is concealed and kept away from sight. Familiarity and being in sight are correspondent to each other. So, the second meaning of the word is contradictory to the first meaning. On the other hand, '*unheimlich*' also means 'unfamiliar', something that is kept out of sight. Thus, '*unheimlich*', in certain cases, becomes synonymous with '*heimlich*', which is a word with ambiguous connotations and self-contradictory meanings. Therefore, '*unheimlich*' is both 'familiar' and 'unfamiliar' at the same time. So, Freud concludes that 'uncanny' is something that is familiarly unfamiliar and that which comes with a threat.

Birds as 'uncanny' in *The Birds*

Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* can roughly be divided into two parts: the first, from the opening of the film to the point when Annie Hayworth and Melanie Daniels find the dead gull on the floor of Annie's house and subsequently the organised attacks after the event that constitute the second part of the film. From the very beginning, the presence of a large flock of birds brooding over the city of San Francisco can be observed when Melanie Daniels enters Davidson's Pet Shop. She glances inquisitively at those gulls that capture her attention for a while, she enters the shop and asks Mrs. MacGruder, the owner, about the reason for the gathering of the birds. She replies that it must have been because of the presence of a storm that is driving the gulls inland. However, at this point in the narrative, there is nothing strikingly unusual about the presence of the birds flying over the city but this will gradually evolve into a nightmarish experience as the film progresses. This opening scene acts almost like a warning to Melanie and serves as an exposition for the other ravaging avian invasions portrayed later in the film.

Melanie becomes the first victim of the attacks when she is hit by a gull in a boat in the bay when she is about to reach the shore, where Mitch is waiting for her. He says that it seems like the gull attacked her deliberately. No rational explanation is provided for this particularly unfamiliar behaviour of the gull. Later that evening, when Melanie comes to Mitch's house for dinner, we hear Lydia talking over the phone

with Fred Brinkmeyer about how her chickens won't eat the feed that Fred had sold her but they are always hungry. She gets to know that it is the same with Dann Fawcett's chickens, as they won't eat too. Finally, Lydia says to Fred on the phone: ,You don't think there's something going around, do you?' (*The Birds* 34:59), which gradually builds up suspense and prepares the audience for the advent of a menacing force that can put human existence to threat while the motives of this force are beyond comprehension of human rationality. After the dinner, when Melanie leaves and drives her car down the road to the horizon, the image of thousands of birds hoarding and sitting all over the electric cables in the scene is a terrifying one. From now on, the attacks of the birds become more frequent and organised starting with a gull smashing itself against the door in Annie Hayworth's home, where Melanie stays for the night after she returns from Mitch's place. This knocking on the gate can be interpreted as the final warning before the birds begin organised and prolonged attacks which can be interpreted as the ,condensation of exploited nature that finally rises up against man's heedless exploitation' (Žižek 97).

On the next day, during the birthday party of Mitch's sister Cathy, the first coordinated attack by a flock of gulls occurs on the children who are playing in the backyard. At first, a single gull attacks Cathy and then the rest of the flock comes in. The highly unusual nature of these attacks is once again confirmed when hundreds of sparrows attack the Brenner home in the evening. The lovebirds that Melanie had previously gifted Cathy, suddenly start tweeting shrilly and then the sparrows begin to infiltrate the house by entering through the chimney of the fireplace. Despite the two consecutive irrational attacks, just as the audience tries to find a cause for attacks by these passive birds, the investigating officer tries to give a rational explanation of the attacks: lights must have attracted the sparrows or children must have bothered the gulls that had ravaged Cathy's party. These organised, incomprehensible attacks, completely lacking the laws of causality, become repetitive as the film progresses. It seems like that these birds almost follow a pattern in their attacks which can be envisioned as attacks upon the systematic and peaceful universe of man, governed by logic and order on the surface that is shown to be thrown into a world of pure chaos.

The Birds present to us, the abusive and oppressive nature of man who has conquered the planet by subjugating every other species

according to their will. So, the avian attacks can also be interpreted as nature's revenge for the crimes that man had committed against it. Man's oppressive nature is portrayed through certain characters and scenes in the film itself: Mr. Sholes' solution after listening that crows had attacked the children of Bodega Bay School: ‚Get yourselves guns and wipe them off the face of the earth!' (*The Birds* 1:20:39) and ‚Kill 'em all. Get rid of the messy animals' (*The Birds* 1:20:59), the caged lovebirds that Melanie gifts Cathy, the fur coat that she wears throughout the film and finally, the shouted orders for ‚three southern fried chicken' (*The Birds* 1:17:45). The deceitful 'order' of the anthropocentric society is challenged and disrupted by some inenarrable terror, as Žižek has pointed out in *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*:' some traumatic real erupt to disturb the symbolic circuit' (97). The avian attacks become, therefore, the collective return of the 'repressed', man's crimes against nature that come back from the depths of the past to punish. Thus, the image of the horrific birds become 'uncanny' in *The Birds.*

The Space of home as 'Uncanny'

The 'familiar' home of the Brenners, the shelter of love and warmth, immediately becomes 'unfamiliar' when it becomes impregnated with hundreds of sparrows that too were once 'familiar' but are now 'unfamiliar' to them because of the unexplainable, strange behaviour, making them decidedly 'uncanny'. Mitch recognises the threat later and he nails boards across all the doors and windows of the house to protect themselves from the relentless avian attacks. They are unable to leave the protective shelter of the house and they spend a night of terror cowering in corners or lying on the couch. It is on this night when Melanie tries to enter into a room by going upstairs in the house, that she is brutally attacked by a large flock of crows and gulls and is left unconscious on the floor. However, she is rescued by Mitch at the right moment. After gaining her consciousness, she becomes too traumatised to even speak a word. As the morning dawns, when they try to escape from Bodega Bay, the cries of the birds, as well as their sheer domination of the house, its surroundings and the landscape suggests that there is something more ominous still to come. Mitch had failed to secure his 'home' from the avian siege as the birds have been successful to penetrate a room of the house and to assault Melanie when she enters into it. The home associated with love, warmth, and comfort in the first part of the film

now evokes ‚almost primal fears of the dark, fears of impending danger, and fears of being caught in a blind by a menacing threat' (Bishop 139). Although the Brenner house begins the film as a '*heimlich*' place because of its qualities usually associated with an archetypal 'home', after the unexplained avian invasion, it becomes '*unheimlich*'. Also, at the same time, it functions as a '*heimlich*' place where the protagonists are concealed from the birds. But again, after the final attack upon Melanie, even that prospect becomes '*unheimlich*', when all of them are forced to flee from their home and Bodega Bay. Thus, the same 'home' of the Brenners, situated amidst almost an idyllic landscape, as viewed from Melanie's perspective at the beginning of the film, gradually becomes 'uncanny' to her and the residents of it and leaves her traumatised after her final experience of the birds' attack in the house.

The Maternal Superego

When Lydia goes to meet Dan Fawcett in his farm, she finds his corpse on the ground with both of its eyes plucked out, while dead gulls are lying all over the devastated interior and furniture of the room. This sight traumatises her for the moment and immediately she runs away from the place driving away towards her home. She becomes sick after this experience. This depiction is very much reminiscent of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story, ‚The Sandman', that Freud discusses as an example to establish and illustrate the concept of 'uncanny' in his essay. In the story, Olympia the doll's loss of eyes triggers the same childhood fears of losing his eyes in Nathaniel who throws himself into fits of frenzy. He finally goes mad and commits suicide in the end. Just like Nathaniel's Olympia, the very sight of the 'eyeless', 'inanimate' corpse of Mr. Fawcett traumatizes Lydia Brenner since the loss of 'sight' is often associated with physical castration, one of the most horrifying punishments that mankind can have.

Mitch Brenner is a fatherless hero in *The Birds* but he has a possessive mother who tries to control and disturb any 'normal' sexual relationship that he might have had with a woman and this is evident from Annie Hayworth's conversation with Melanie Daniels. Annie says that Lydia is ‚afraid of any woman who would give Mitch the one thing Lydia can't give him: Love' (*The Birds* 44:07). Any woman with whom Mitch can have a relationship becomes a potential threat to the ‚clinging possessive mother' (*The Birds* 43:41). It is only after her relationship with

Mitch is over, Annie becomes a very good friend of Lydia who couldn't even tolerate her existence previously.

In ‚The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience' of his famous book *Écrits*, Lacan states that during mirror stage, a human child between the ages of six and eighteen months, whose ‚visual system is relatively advanced,… can recognise itself in the mirror before attaining control over its bodily movements' (Evans 118). During this stage, the child ‚playfully experiences the relationship between the movements made in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it duplicates' (Lacan 94). Mirror stage helps in the formation of ego in the child through processes of identification, *méconnaissance* (misrecognition) and alienation. The child's primary identification with the 'wholeness' of its image in the mirror that threatens it with fragmentation leads to ‚an essential misrecognition of the selfhood as unified' (Mandal 58). However, this is the méconnaissance that forms the 'I' or the 'ego' in the subject. This mirror stage along with intrusion complex, weaning complex, Oedipus complex and castration complex, as Lacan argues in his 1938 essay ‚*Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*', are the different stages in the psychic development of the child. The *'weaning complex'*, also known as *'separation complex'* is the anxiety that the child feels when it is separated from the mother's breasts and this anxiety contributes to the ‚*gradual disintegration of the mother-child dyad*' (Mandal 59).The *'intrusion complex'* that follows *the 'weaning complex'* is identified with both ‚(a) the child's recognition of itself in the mirror and (b) the child's recognition of its semblances, or doubles, in the form of siblings' (Mandal 59), where both are considered as rivals to the subject and thus, this stage is marked by jealousy that is aroused by these 'doubles' in the self. Oedipus complex, according to Lacan, occurs around four years of age and it consists of mainly three moments or a triad: the first comprises the mother, the child and the 'imaginary phallus', the second comprises the mother, the child and the 'imaginary father' and the last includes the mother, the child and the 'real father'. In the first moment, as argued by Lacan, the child feels itself and the mother to be lacking something and this lack is fulfilled by an imaginary object 'phallus' that the child thinks, will complete itself and the mother. The mother 's desire, in this stage almost becomes the law for the child which it tries to obey to become ‚the sole object of the mother's desire' (Mandal 61). The child shapes its

desires in the desires of the mother, which is the first 'big Other' for it, as Lacan states in his later life that ‚man's desire is the desire of the Other' (Mandal 61). This maternal figure of the 'big Other' perceived by the child as a 'Real Other', as a pervasive presence, the source of all-important, is also a source of deep and unsettling anxiety for the child as she controls and moulds the child's desires in her ways. Thus, the child constructs its ego in this stage with the perceived wants of the first 'big Other' or the (m)Other.

In *The Birds*, any possibility of Mitch to be in a sexual relationship with any woman is destroyed by his mother Lydia which we come to know from Annie's narration to Melanie. For Mitch, to go for another woman other than his mother can be seen as the symbolic attempt of a son trying to break free from the mother-child relationship in the first moment of Oedipus complex which comprises the mother, the child and the 'imaginary phallus'. When the challenge to the raw maternal energy of Lydia's authoritarian influence over Mitch comes from Melanie, the continuous cycles of avian attacks begin upon her, starting with a single gull's attack when she's on her way to Mitch's home and ends with the final attack at the end of the film that leaves her in a traumatic condition. The tension that culminates in Lydia after Melanie's arrival in Bodega Bay can be seen throughout the film through her repetitive interrogations and judgemental commentaries about Melanie's scandals in Rome, her anxiety-ridden face while seeing her son with Melanie during Cathy's birthday party and also through numerous other occasions.

Conclusion

The horrid image of the birds in the film can be seen as the manifestation of a central disorder in the Brenner familial relationships where the father is absent and that paternal absence is filled by the ‚‚irrational' maternal superego, arbitrary, wicked, blocking ‚normal' sexual relationship' (Žižek99). This maternal superego, in a way, is affecting sexual enjoyment: ‚their unconscious impressions of the mother are so overblown and so heavily influenced by aggressive impulses, and the quality of her care is so little attuned to the child's needs, that in the child's fantasies the mother appears as a devouring bird' (Lasch176). Therefore, the birds in the film become 'uncanny' not only due to their unfamiliarly real assaults that put mankind's existence to threat, but also because they become the embodiment of the authority of the jealous

(m) Other who tries to destroy any possibility of her fatherless son's unification with any other woman.

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9

Robert Frost, Dialogue, and Conflict: A Polyphonic Reading of Some of His Select Poems

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Abstract

More than any other American poet, Robert Frost tried to offer some philosophy usually through a dramatic setting, a situation, an event, and sometimes through the exchange of dialogue, as in a drama. Frost's intrinsic penchant for the conversational and the colloquial, coupled with his dialectic vision and his propensity to fiddle with conflict led to the existence of multiple voices in his poems. Using the insights of Bakhtin's concept of ‚polyphony`, this paper tries to offer a polyphonic reading of some of his select poems.

Keywords: Robert Frost, dramatic dialogue, conflict, Bakhtin, polyphony

Introduction

To say anything new about Robert Frost would but appear to be an exercise on a *fait accompli*. While traditional criticism of Frost[i] veered mainly around aesthetic, biographical and cultural issues, the advent of literary theories provided the critics with new lenses to look afresh at his poems. My humble submission in this article is to read some of his major poems in terms of the polyphonic angle proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin. My further claim here is to justify why among so many theoretical angles I have decided to apply the insights of Bakhtin's concept of polyphony to the reading of Robert Frost's poetry. My final submission in this paper is to point out that Frost's love of oral language, and his intrinsic taste for the conversational and the colloquial, coupled with his dialectic vision

and his propensity to fiddle with conflict led to the existence of multiple voices in his poems.

Polyphony in Frost's Poetry

Robert Faggen in his ‚Introduction‛[ii] to *The Cambridge Companion to Robert Frost* has most pertinently observed that Frost's ‚poetry represents a continual dialogue between control and chaos‛, and that his poetry ‚constantly challenges readers with contradictions, ambiguity, and uncertainty‛ (4, 6). If Paul Giles[iii] observed that ‚Frost's work was inevitably engaged in dialogues with the inclinations of modernism‛, it is all the more true of some of his poems which dramatize the intrinsic conflicts and contraries embedded in them through the interplay of multiple voices. The spirit of contrariety in Frost's poems may be exemplified in his own lines taken from ‚West-Running Brook‛:

> Nature within her itself divides
> To trouble men with having to take sides[iv].

Frost's dialectic nature may be revealed in his view on the world expressed to the Associate Press representative, Francis E. Carey in an interesting interview[v]:

> The world<is swaying to the left and to the right. It is a drunken world, going home we know not where, but the important thing to realise is that it is not swaying too far to the left or too far to the right (102).

Richard Gray[vi] has cogently pointed out that Frost's poetry offers us ‚an imaginative resolution of its tensions: the sense that its conflicts and irresolutions have been given appropriate dramatic expression, revelation and equipoise‛ (173-174). Frost's propensity to fiddle with conflicts, contradictions and contraries – or what Richard Poirier[vii] so succinctly called ‚Frost's emphasis on the dramatic and on the contestation of voices in poetry‛ – finds poetic expression particularly in his dramatic poems. Out and out a poet, he often exploited the dramatic trope to objectify the conflicts of his personae of his poems.

If like Wordsworth, Frost had an intrinsic fascination for the common use of daily language, like W.B. Yeats, Frost had an overwhelming penchant for the oral and the conversational form of language. In his recent biography on Frost[viii], Jay Parini records how Reverend William E Walcott had responded favourably to Frost's poem ‚My Butterfly‛ and how he had opined that Frost's ‚poetry was too close

to the speaking voice` (45-46). Parini sums up the anecdote and rightly points out that ,this was the precise moment when Frost first began to understand the connection between poetry and ordinary speech` (46). It is because of this that one is confronted with the prevalence of colloquial language in Frost's poetry.

Frost's filiations with the oral and the conversational are not dehydrated from his concept of language and poetry. In his prefatory article[ix] ,The Figure Poem Makes` to his collected poems in 1919 Frost reflects on his notion of poetry:

> It (Poetry) begins in delight and ends in wisdom*<+It begins in delight, inclines to the impulse, it assumes direction with the first line laid down, it runs a course of lucky events, and ends in a clarification of life – not necessarily a great clarification, such as sects and cults are founded on, but in a momentary stay against confusion(24).

Taking his cue from this reflection, Richard Gray[x] points out that the ,incessant coupling of opposites, the felicitous, serious play that ends in 'a momentary stay against confusion' is what characterises Frost's work` (174). Similarly, Baron Wormser[xi] cogently points out that Frost's ,poems stem from discomfort, the marvelous nettle of the world – be it phoebes or old men or lonely wives or woodchucks – that was continually lodging itself in the integument of his identity. He refuses to pluck the nettle out even as he acknowledges it. Frost prefers to present the situation, which is to say the drama of opposition or indifference. As a contrarian he allows for the other – be it a representative of the human world or the supernatural world or the natural world – to indulge its own presence in his poem` (78).

Frost similarly had reflected on the aesthetics of oral speech in poetry. Having admitted[xii] that a sentence is interesting to him only when it succeeds in conveying ,a meaning by sound`, Frost commented that ,[p]oetry has seized on this sound of speech and carried it to artificial and meaningless thoughts` (7, 8). In one his interviews[xiii] he reflects on what he calls ,visual appeal of poetry`:

> There is the visual appeal of poetry<.Music in poetry is obtained by catching the conversational tones which are the special property of vital utterances<Conversational tones are numerous in dramatic dramatic poetry. As a result, the dramatic is the most intense of all kinds of poetry. It is the most surcharged with significance (25).

Similarly, to Frost[xiv] the living essence of a poem is ‚the intonation entangled somehow in the syntax idiom and meaning of a sentence. It is only there for those who have heard it previously in conversation‘. Frost's notion on language with his intrinsic bent on the oral and the conversational form of language is scattered sporadically in his different letters. A sentence to him was ‚a sound in itself on which other sounds called words may be strung‘[xv]. Reflecting to Sidney Cox[xvi] that ‚Words exist in mouth not in books‘, Frost[xvii] exhorted that ‚An ear and an appetite for these sounds of sense is the first qualification of a writer, be it of prose or verse‘.

Frost's intrinsic inebriating wistfulness for fiddling with conflicts and contraries chiseled his propensity to explore the trope of dramatic on the one hand, while his natural love for the oral and conversational conduced to his indulgence in the dialogic on the other. Together they precipitated a rich harvest of dramatic poems: ‚Mending Wall‘, ‚Home Burial‘, ‚West-Running Brook‘, ‚The Mountain‘, ‚The Code‘, ‚A Hundred Collars‘, ‚The Death of the Hired Man‘, ‚A Servant to a Servant‘, ‚The Witch of Coos‘, to name only a few. But as I have suggested earlier, my purpose in this article is less to bring out the dramatic elements of his poems than to examine their polyphonic nature. These poems become a rich site for the interplay of multiple voices which continually clash and coalesce with each other. A nodding acquaintance of Bakhtin's notion of polyphony therefore becomes absolutely necessary prior to such a theoretical exercise.

It was M.M.Bakhtin who in his illuminating study of Dostoevsky's novels enunciated his concept of what he termed ‚polyphony‘. Bakhtin enunciates his concept of polyphony in his famous study on Dostoevsky's novels, later recorded in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics.* Bakhtin argues that instead of creating a singular, powerful, authoritative voice in his novels, Dostoevsky makes room for the interplay of multiple voices within the same discourse. Thus, Dostoevsky creates multiple 'voices', as distinct from a solitary 'voice', and what is more, allows those voices a full play. Interestingly, each of these multiple voices is independent, autonomous and self-sufficient, and can vie with any of the existing voices within that discourse. Rightly has Roger Fowler[xviii] pointed out that polyphony ‚refers to the co-presence of independent but interconnected voices‘. It is this constant conflict, clash, and collision of multiple voice voices on which the interest of a polyphonic text hinges. In

polyphony neither do we find the privileging of one voice over another, nor does a voice made subservient to another. Similarly, polyphony rules out the possibility of the merging of voices. That is to say, even though this wonderful interplay of multiple voices, all the voices remain 'unmerged', independent, and intact. As Bakhtin[xix] puts it:

> A plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a polyphony of fully valid voices is in fact the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels. What unfolds in his words is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (6)

Significantly, one should note that 'voice' in Bakhtin is not the exchange of dialogues between two persons; voice intrinsically captures the sense of a speaker's ideology and consciousness at a particular moment in a given situation. Broadly speaking, what Bakhtin calls ‚voice', borders on the cultural, or political, or social, or even individual stance of a particular person. Bakhtin's notion of ‚voice' may be traced to his concept of language which, he[xx] believes, ‚is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker 's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process'. And it is this ‚complicated process' by means of which language is translated into what Bakhtin calls ‚voice'.

Although Bakhtin enunciated the concept of polyphony as a typical characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels, the same concept may be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to other genres[xxi] as well, for, as R.B. Kreshner[xxii] has rightly pointed out that ‚Bakhtin admits that poetry, like other genres, is susceptible to *novelisation*, which can also render the poetic world dialogical' (107). Interestingly, talking on ‚dialogised image' in ‚novelistic prose', Bakhtin[xxiii] claimed that ‚[s]uch a diologised image can occur in all the poetic genres as well, even in the lyric ‹' (278).

Significantly enough, polyphony and the dialogic are inextricably related. David Lodge[xxiv] feels that polyphony dialogism and are ‚virtually synonymous' with each other. Sue Vice[xxv], on the other hand, has argued that ‚[p]olyphony refers to the autonomy of the characters' voices. The voices which make up the polyphonic novel are dialogic: they interact dialogically, and the language of which they are composed are dialogic'. Vice[xxvi] goes on to claim that ‚polyphony is a way of realising

heteroglossia in novel, without being identical to heteroglossia. 'Polyphony' means 'multi-voicedness', while 'heteroglossia' means 'multi-languagedness' and this apparently small difference in meaning is very significant. Polyphony refers to the arrangement of heteroglot variety into an aesthetic pattern`. But the focus of my paper lies less on the theory than on its application, for I feel that any theory, in spite of its substantial richness, should be explored more as a means than as an end in itself.

‚After Apple-Picking`, taken from Frost's *North of Boston*, captures the dual voices of the same farmer in terms of his pursuit of ‚the great harvest` he so fervidly desire, and the sense of exhaustion accompanying it. John C. Kemp[xxvii] has most cogently pointed out that the poem ‚maintains that exquisite tension between the lofty power of Romantic vision and the flat, hard reality of New England life, a tension that this poet was uniquely capable of achieving`. The preposition ‚after` in the title suggests the speaker's intense desire to pick all the apples he had cultivated in his expectation of material pursuit. But ironically, the realisation of this desire brings in him, not a sense of joy and fulfillment, but a jaded ennui and exasperation:

> But I am done with apple-picking now. This overwhelming exhaustion leads him to a semi-conscious fantasy, as he gradually drowses off into a reverie in which the vision of the appearance and disappearance of magnifies apples is vividly conjured up before him. The poem continually see-saws between the voices of active self-pitted against that of his sluggish resignation induced by his exhaustion. Similarly, the poem wonderfully dramatises the coexistence of the varied states of the real and the fantastic, the conscious and the sub-conscious, effected through the multiple voices of the speaker.

‚Mending Wall`, one of the finest poems in Frost's oeuvre, apparently dwells on the conflict of two disparate voices engendered by Frost and his stolid, rigid neighbour over the mending of a common wall that separates their two plots of lands. Frost contends that the wall is redundant from the aspect of its utility:

> There where it is we do not need the wall:
> He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
> My apple trees will never get across
> And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

Guided by his traditional disposition, the neighbour does not budge an inch from what he has possibly inherited from his father:

> He will not go behind his father's saying,
> And he likes having thought of it so well
> He says again, ‚Good fences make good neighbors'.

Thus, at the surface level, the poem dramatizes the conflict between the voice of reason embodied in Frost vis-à-vis the voice of tradition endorsed by his neighbour. One must note that both the voices are allowed to develop independently throughout the poem, such that none of the voices is eroded, affected, or eclipsed by an overriding powerful voice. The constant clash between them notwithstanding, both the voices remain ‚unmerged', in a Bakhtinian sense of the term.

But what is missed by most of the readers in ‚Mending Wall' is the internal clash of voices within the two characters[xxviii]. Ironically and interestingly, the same Frost who interrogates the existence of the wall himself takes the initiative of the mending operation (‚I let my neighbor know beyond the hill'), takes a keen interest in it, and, more importantly, relishes the entire process of mending which is ‚just another kind of out-door game' to him. Thus, the apparent voice of Frost tries to go against the existence of the wall which his inner voice so wistfully wishes to mend. On the other hand, the same neighbour who very much wants that the wall should stay between them exhibits a lukewarm, lackadaisical, indifferent attitude to the mending operation, so much so that Frost has to tell him to finish the work before going home:

> ‚Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
> The neighbour, too, seems to be a divided self-engendering two different
> voices – the external in favor of the wall, and the internal against the
> wall – within the same discourse.

‚Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' is a nature poem in which the speaker, also the traveler, luxuriates in the visual bounty of nature filling up the woods with snowfall. Although the outer voice of the speaker wants to exact and extract the maximum deliciousness of the woods steeped in the snowfall, his inner voice is prompted by his sense of responsibility:

> The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
> But I have promises to keep,
> And miles to go before I sleep,
> And miles to go before I sleep.

Thus, one half of the speaker wants to partake in the scenic beauty of nature, while his other half is guided by his sense of dutifulness. These two voices within the same speaker – the aesthetic inner private voice which responds to the call of nature, and his public voice wrought by his commitment, accountability and responsibility to his society – clash internally within him, or what John C. Kemp[xxix] calls ‚the tension between a regional world, with its conventions and responsibilities, and the meditative, seclusive character of the persona`.

‚Birches`, a long poem on the swinging of the birches, combines reality, fantasy, memory, nostalgia and desire. Looking at the ‚birches bend left to right/Across the line of straighter dark trees`, Frost gradually slides into his past childhood days. The voice of his raucous present is thus pitted against the voice of his nostalgic past:

> I should prefer to have some boy bend them
> As he went out and in to fetch the cows –
> Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
> Whose only play was what he found himself,
> Summer or winter, and could play alone.
> One by one he subdued his father's trees
> By riding them down and down over again

Significantly, this voice of his past also turns out to be the voice of innocence and freedom which gradually faded along with the passage of time, embodying in him the voice of experience. At this present stage of manhood, when he is particularly ridden with anxieties and worries of the world, he wistfully craves for retaining the lost voice of innocence:

> So was I once myself a swinger of birches
> And so I dream of going back to be.
> It's when I'm weary of considerations,

The final section of the poem again initiates the clash of two disparate and opposite voices of the speaker: his desire to leave the world, and to come back again to start life anew with a new gusto. While his former voice expressing his wistfulness for leaving ‚the earth awhile` illustrates a sense of evasiveness, the next voice expressing an equally strong desire to return to the earth subverts the previous evasive aspect:

> Earth's the right place for love:
> I don't know where it's likely to go better.

The dual voices of the same speaker in terms of getting ‚away from the earth awhile/And then come back to it and begin over‛ accentuate the polyphonic nature of the poem. The poem, as it were, keeps on swinging between these opposite voices, very much like the swinging of the birches.

Frost's ‚Mowing‛, a popular lyric taken from *A Boy's Will*, registers the multiple voices supposed to be whispered by the scythe of the poet-mower when he was working in the field. Referring to his ‚long scythe whispering to the ground‛, the mower enters into a series of conjectural voices, trying to interpret the different possibilities of such whisperings. Exploring these possibilities, he rejects them gradually. Thus, the poem becomes amenable to a polyphonic discourse in which the conjectural voices of selection at random are counterpoised by its opposite movement: the rejection of them at random. For example, he conjectures that it might be whispering about the absolute silence reigning at that moment, or about the sun. Similarly, by suggesting what the scythe had not whispered, the speaker indulges himself into another list of vague voices before registering his final voice of affirmation:

> The fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows Interestingly, the conjectural voices of the speaker may be compared with the voice of imagination, while along with this hard realisation of the reality he retrieves, as it were, the voice of reality from his hitherto fantastic voice.

‚The Road Not Taken‛, yet another wonderful lyric in Frost's entire oeuvre, illustrates how the problem of making a choice induces in oneself the internal spirit of division. Supposed to be based on the indecisiveness of Frost's friend Edward Thomas[xxx], the poem describes the journey of an independent Yankee who comes to a point where the road bifurcates itself. After much dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying he finally takes the ‚less travelled‛ road:

> And that has made all the difference. Yet ironically, he himself could not decide whether it was the ‚less traveled‛, inasmuch as ‚the passing there had worn them really about the same‛. He also admits that both the roads ‚equally lay/In leaves no step had trodden back‛. If this ability to take a road of his choice symbolises the voice of his freedom, this freedom is ironically undercut by the inherent restriction involved in his exercise of freedom: that he had to choose only one out of the two, and that he could not select both. No wonder then, theses two roads being mutually exclusive to each other, his very decision of exercising his freedom by taking one road, thus, intrinsically, restricts his freedom from taking the other at the

same time. In other words, the speaker's voice of freedom is internally rift with its co-existing voice of restriction accompanying it. This internal clash within the speaker is intensified by his unfulfilled desire for the road he had deliberately not taken:

Oh, I kept the first for another day! It is similarly sustained by his desire that ‚I could travel both‛, a desire that register the simultaneous coexistence of both the voices.

One may find a sustained conflict of two disparate voices – this time overtly issuing from two different characters – in Frost's excellent poem ‚West Running Brook‛. Dialogic in form and dramatic in treatment, the poem offers the wonderful clash of two voices endorsed by a husband and his wife regarding their varied responses to a brook running by. Ensconced in a farm near the brook, both engender two distinct and disparate voices about the brook which ultimately turn out to be a philosophy of life itself. While for the emotive wife, the westward running of the brook symbolises their love which has bound them in marriage, the scientific and rational husband explains the westward journey of the brook in scientific terms, as a result of its resistance to rocks. What we get through their clash of voices is a wonderful dramatic conflict of contraries. As the wife reflects:

It must be the brook
Can trust itself to go by contraries.

The husband, too, harps on the same string of contraries:

Speaking of contraries see how the brook
In that white waves run counter to itself.

The husband goes on to philosophise the flux of the brook as being analogous with the flux of life:

Our life runs down in sending up the clock,
The brook runs down in sending up our life.

An excellent philosophy of life itself, the poem, offers the message that their difference of voices notwithstanding, the husband and the wife are united with each other because their differences are harmoniously reconciled and fused together in a unique realisation that life itself intrinsically accommodates and makes room for such contraries.

What is important to note that all the disparate voices in these poems are ‚unmerged‛ and independent in a truly Bakhtinian sense.

That is to say, not a single voice is allowed to predominate over other voices. Similarly, the co-existence of other voices does not affect the existence and efficacy of a given voice. All the voices are allowed their fullest play within the given discourse, and together, they enter into a happy orchestration and co-existence.

Even a small poem like ‚Fire and Ice‘ taken from *Mountain Interval* (1923) exemplifies the coexistence of plurality of voices. The dialectic nature of its title anticipates the existence of two opposite voices. If fire is related to desire, ice carries forward the suggestion of destruction and death, and evokes the chillness of death. Written after World War I the poem smacks of an apocalyptic suggestion of destruction which looms large on the entire poem. The first voice is that of people who believe that the world can be destroyed by fire. The second voice is just the opposite of the first, and belongs to those people who believe that the world can be destroyed by ice. One may note that these two opposite voices belong to two different sets of people, and should not be confused. The third voice is that of the speaker who acquiesces in the first voice, believing that the world can be destroyed by fire – the fire of human desire. The fourth voice belonging to the same speaker states that ice – suggesting the chillness of aversion and abhorrence – can also destroy the world. Interestingly, the speaker engenders two opposite ‚unmerged‘ voices simply because they co-exist within him without affecting each other. Metaphorically speaking, the intense heat of human desire is presented vis-a-vis the chilling coldness of aversion, antipathy and anathema. Paradoxically, both are present in us an. All these voices co-exist in a wonderful polyphonic orchestration.

Conclusion

One may go on extending this study to some others poems of Frost. ‚The axis of Frost's poetry, in other words, rotates on a deliberate strategy of diplopia, or double vision‘, observes Paul Giles[xxxi], and this ‚double vision‘ in turn, leads to the polyphonic nature of most of his poems. Conditioned by such factors as Spinoza's pantheism, Hobbes's materialism, and Descartes's dualism, Frost developed a rich dialectic vision. As Joseph Kau[xxxii] has put it so wonderfully:

> While Eliot assumes a moral stance and Stevens an intellectual one in their attempts to resolve the dichotomy, Frost assumes an ambivalent stance.

Talking on the dramatic quality of Frost's lyrical poems, Victor E.Vogt[xxxiii] argues that ,[h]owever tantalizingly vague Frost's generic claim may be-perhaps because of this-it has never been satisfactorily explored. And nowhere is the provenance of exploration more promising than when it includes the dialogue poems.` Frost's dialectic vision on the one hand, and his love for the conversational and the colloquial chiseled his ambivalent poetic vision which admits, accommodates and accepts the dichotomous, the disparate, the opposites, the contraries, and the plural into a unique harmonious entity. It is because of such a complex poetic vision that most of Frost's poems capture the existence of multiple voices of different personae, as well as of the same persona, attesting to the polyphonic nature of his poems.

Notes

i.   For example, George W. *Nitchie explores the existence of human values in Frost in Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1958, 1960); John C. Kemp has dwelled on Frost's preoccupation with New England in Robert Frost and New England: The Poet as a Regionalist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); in his wonderful study Going By Contraries: Frost's Conflict with Science, Charlottesville & London: University Press of Virginia, 2002) Robert Bernard Hans tries to trace the dichotomous nature of Frost to philosophical roots in order to reinforce his aversion to science; George Monteiro tries to situate Frost within the context of New England Renaissance in Robert Frost and New England Renaissance(Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988.

ii.   Robert Faggen, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Robert Frost,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.1-6.

iii.   Paul Giles, 'From Decadent Aesthetics to Political Fetishism: The ,Oracle Effect` of Robert Frost's Poetry', *American Literary History*, Volume 12, Number 4, Winter 2000, p.714, pp.713-744

iv.   All the citations from Frost's poems are from Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays, eds. Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson, New York: Library of America, 1995.

v.   This interview was taken by the Associate Press representative, Francis E. Carey in Frost's own apartment in Boston at 88 Mount Vernon Street in 1939. Reprinted in Interviews with Robert Frost, ed. Connery Lathem New York, Chicago: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966, pp.101-103.

vi.   Richard Gray, *A Brief History of American Literature,* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

vii.   Richard Poirier, *Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing,* New York: O.U.P., 1977, p.182.

viii. JayParini, *Robert Frost: A Life,* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999.

ix. In Elaine Barry, Robert Frost on Writing, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973.

x. Richard Gray, *A Brief History of American Literature,* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

xi. Baron Wormser, ‚Robert Frost and the Drama of Encounter ‘, *Sewanee Review*, Volume 119, Number 1, Winter 2011, pp. 76-90.

xii. In Edward Connery Lathem, ed., *Interviews with Robert Frost*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. Henceforth all references to this will be cited as Interviews.

xiii. Robert Frost, Interview with Morris P. Tilley, published as ‚Notes from Conversations with Robert Frost‘, in Interviews, pp 22-26.

xiv. In Elaine Barry, *Robert Frost on Writing*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973, pp.18-19. All further references to this book have been referred to as Barry.

xv. Letter to John T.Bartlett, 22 February 1914, Beaconsfield, quoted in Barry, p.63.

xvi. Letter to Sidney Cox, 19 January 1914, Beaconsfield, quoted in Barry, p.62.

xvii. In Elaine Barry, *Robert Frost on Writing*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973, p.19.

xviii. Roger Fowler, 'Polyphony and Problematic in ‚Hard Times'', in Robert Giddings, ed. *The Changing World of Charles Dickens*, Totowa, New Jersey: Vision Press, 1983, p.93.

xix. M.M.Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. & trans. Caryl Emerson, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

xx. M.M.Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, C.Emerson and M.Holquist (trans.), M.Holquist (ed.), Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981.

xxi. One may note that when Aristotle used the word ‚poet‘, he implied any literary artist by the same term.

xxii. See R.B.Kreshner, ‚Yeats/Bakhtin/Orality/Dyslexia‘ in G.R.Taneja, ed., W.B.Yeats: *An Anthology of Recent Criticism*, New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005, pp.106-28.

xxiii. M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, C.Emerson and M.Holquist (trans.), M.Holquist (ed.), Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981.

xxiv. David Lodge, *After Bakhtin*, London: Routledge, 1990 p.86.

xxv. Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997p.112.

xxvi. Ibid., p.113.

xxvii. John C. Kemp, *Robert Frost and New England: The Poet as Regionalist Princeton*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p.126.

xxviii.   For a detailed view of a Bakhtinian reading of this poem, one may go through my article. See, Pradipta Sengupta, 'Robert Frost's ‚Mending Wall`: A Bakhtinian Reading', *The Atlantic Literary Review*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2010, Vol.11, No.1 (January-March 2010):1-8.

xxix.   John C. Kemp, *Robert Frost and New England: The Poet as Regionalist* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979, p.201.

xxx.   For a detailed account of it, see Lawrance Thompson, *Robert Frost: The Years of Triumph*, 1915-1938, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, pp.88-89.

xxxi.   Paul Giles, 'From Decadent Aesthetics to Political Fetishism: The ‚Oracle Effect` of Robert Frost's Poetry', *American Literary History*, Volume 12, Number 4, Winter 2000, p.713, pp.713-744

xxxii.   Joseph Kau, '‚Trust< to go by contraries`: Incarnation and the Paradox of Belief in the Poetry of Robert Frost', in JacTharpe, ed., Frost: Centennial Essays II, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1976, p.99, pp.99-111.

xxxiii.   Victor E. Vogt, ‚Narrative and Drama in the Lyric: Robert Frost's Strategic Withdrawal`, in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Spring, 1979), p.532, pp. 529-551.

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10

Man, Nature, and War: A Post-pastoral Perspective of Easterine Kire"s *Mari*

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Abstract

Man has a close proximity with nature from the very beginning of the creation of the world and from then human being develops their pastoral attitude which later is shattered by anthropocentric notion which gives birth to anti-pastoral attitude in man. Post-pastoral as a new literary concept goes beyond ,the close circuit of pastoral and anti-pastoral to achieve a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human' (Gifford 148). The elements of pastoral, anti-pastoral, and post-pastoral are very explicit in Indigenous culture where human connection with nature is greatly affected by man-made disasters. EasterineKire as one of the recent voices of Northeast Indian indigenous literature represents in her novel *Mari* (2010) the environmental double consciousness of the Angami people, and deliberates on how their social and natural life is affected by the global conflict World War II. Finding out the origins of ,post-pastoral constructions of the human relationship with nature' in both the ,traditions of pastoral and anti-pastoral' (Gifford 150), this paper purports to investigate how post-pastoral elements as ,more mature natural aesthetics' (Buell 32) have been used by Kire in the novel to project its ecocritical value.

Keywords: Anthropocentric, Ecocritical, Post-pastoral, Natural Aesthetics, World War

Introduction

North-East Indian literature as an emerging genre has made its place in the main literary discourse and evolves out of the cultural diversity of various ethnic groups, beautiful landscapes, and political upheavals of

the region. EasterineKire as the recent voice of that region contributes to the repertoire of the literature through her creative faculty as she writes poetry, fiction and nonfiction works which represent the history, myth, politics, and supernatural world of the AngamiNagas along with their natural world. Her remarkable novels are *Naga Village Remembered: A Novel* (2003), *Bitter Wormwood* (2012), *When the River Sleeps* (2014), *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016), and *Don't Run My Love* (2017) etc. She was awarded The Hindu Prize in 2015 for her most acclaimed novel *When the River Sleeps* (2014) which deals with the narrative of the adventure of a lonely hunter Vilie who sets out to get a magical stone from the heart of a river. Another novel *Son of the Thundercloud* (2016) narrates how the combination between nature (thundercloud) and man (the primal woman) gives birth to the Son of the Thundercloud to avenge the murder of his father and seven brothers. In the narratives of her novels, she shows a deep environmentalist thinking as ,the success of all environmentalist effort finally hinges not on 'some highly developed technology, or some arcane new science', but on 'a state of mind': on attitudes, images, feelings, narratives` (Beck and Peyne, as quoted by Buell 1) and narrative as the principal to the state of mind is ,central to the manner in which we come to treat the natural world` (Wilson 477).The treatment of nature as a physical entity is also explicit in her historical novels like *Bitter Wormwood* (2012)*, A Respectable Woman* (2019)*, and Naga Village Remembered: A Novel* (2003)*.

Kire's another historical novel *Mari* (2010) deals with the history of the Battle of Kohima, and negotiates between traditional and modern social relations with nature representing the clash between pastoral attitudes of the native Angani people and anti-pastoral attitudes of the outsiders. EasterineKire moves from the traditional pastoral that the Naga people imbibe in themselves from their indigenous culture and shows how the anti-pastoral attitudes of the outer forces like the Britishers and the Japaneses destroy their ecological environment in the names of modernity, colonialism, and war. This paper attempts to find out how in the novel *Mari* (2010) ,the post-pastoral construction of the human relationship with nature have their origins in aspects of the traditions of pastoral and anti-pastoral` (Gifford 150). At the same time it also purports to investigate how post-pastoral elements as ,mature environmental aesthetics` (Buell 32) have been used in the novel *Mari* (2010) to project its eco-critical value.

Pastoral, Anti-Pastoral, and Post-pastoral

Pastoral is a ‚contested term' (Loughrey 8) and it has distinct ‚historical shift in meaning' (Gifford 17). Paul Alpers reiterates that there is no clear and specific definition of pastoral or ‚whether pastoral is a historically delimited or permanent literary type' (Alpers 8). However, Terry Gifford applies the term in a broader sense to ‚any literature that describes the country with an implicit and explicit contrast to the urban' (Gifford 2). On the contrary, the anti-pastoral as the resentment of urban life denotes its problems as a ‚bleak battle for survival' and is intended to be a ‚corrective in a dialectical relationship with the pastoral' (Gifford 120). However, in the modern age of global capitalism, there is a need of ‚mature environmental aesthetics' (Buell 32) which give more than pastoral and act as a proactive revisionist concept to achieve ‚a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human' going ‚beyond the close circuit of pastoral and anti-pastoral' (Gifford 148). In searching for a term for such concept Terry Gifford invents post-pastoral which refers to ‚literature that is aware of the anti-pastoral and of the conventional illusions upon which *Arcadia* is premised, but which finds a language to outflank those dangers with a vision of accommodated humans' (Gifford 149). Post-pastoral as a challenging reworking of pastoral and anti-pastoral rejects the anthropocentric notion and studies the interconnectedness between man and nature to seek environmental and social justice.

Post-Pastoral Elements in *Mari*

The concept of post-pastoral was originally used in discussion of poetry as Terry Gifford himself exemplified it in respect of the poetry of Ted Hughes, William Blake and Wordsworth, and its application to narrative writings still remains to be tested. However, the writers who have been born and brought up in a natural landscape and bear its memory along with post-war experience, especially the experience of World War II, attempt to incorporate the natural phenomena of a particular place or landscape along with its devastation in the hand of man-made disasters. The representation of the pastoral and anti-pastoral attitudes and values intensifies the possibility of post-pastoral elements in their writings. Thus,

> For the novel there does seem to be an intensification of post-pastoral
> concerns as post-war writers have grappled with ever more complex and

self-conscious techniques in confronting the march of a progressively urbanized culture. (Head 194)

In her novel *Mari* (2010), EasterineKire as a post-war writer of Nagaland shows her post-pastoral concerns which will be exemplified by six fundamental elements of past-pastoral propagated by Gifford.

(i) 'Awe' or Respect for Nature

Terry Gifford identifies six fundamental elements of post-pastoral literature and reiterates that if any one of the elements can be found in any literary text, it can be termed as post-pastoral literature. The first and foremost element of post-pastoral is that there should be respect for nature or ‚awe in attention to the natural world' (Gifford 151-152). In the novel *Mari* (2010), the ecocritical consciousness of EasterineKire is reflected throughout the novel. It is set in Kohima which is adorned with pastoral setting or natural phenomena, succinctly described by Kire in its prologue:

> Kohima. It is dusk now. I can hear the cicada's plaintive cries. The birds have stopped their chirping and there is silence all around. My window overlooks the woods below our house. The orange glow of the setting sun is subdued, the grey of twilight quickly overtaking it. The silhouettes of the hills and the neighbourhood houses are sharp in this half-light. (Kire 1)

The native Angami people show a deep respect for nature as they are born and brought up in the hill area and depend on it to sustain their lives. They think that it is the nature which controls their ways of living and being. In their culture there are so many rituals to appease the nature, like in every February they perform genna day, a no work day. In this particular day they do not perform any household activity but they can work in the fields or woods. In this taboo they show their reverence for nature by lighting ‚a fire in the field so as to prevent draught in the year to come' (Kire 5). They find sublimity in nature and consider nature as a divine kind of thing. This kind of pastoral attitude towards nature is also present in the consciousness of the native Christians who ‚abide by the cultural practices in order to live harmony with the non-Christians' (Kire 5). The Angami people feel for nature strongly even in critical situations like the impeding Battle of Kohima. Before the war, the soldiers sing a song which combines nature and their homeland with their hope and joy:

,Kohima will shine tonight,
Kohima will shine.
When the sun goes down
And the moon comes up,
Kohima will shine'. (Kire 38)

Such kind of 'awe' or respect for nature of the Angami people comes not only from their connection with nature but also ,from a deep sense of the immanence in all natural things' (Gifford 152).

(ii) Nature as Creative-Destructive Force

The second fundamental aspect of post-pastoral is ,the recognition of a creative–destructive universe equally in balance in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth, growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution' (Gifford 153). Kire describes nature as having a remarkable potential of renewal and recovery in accordance with natural laws. Nature becomes quite dry in the month of April which is explicit in the line, ,April was one of the driest months' (Kire 24). But in the month of summer the landscape gets full of ,young paddy and newly green trees' (Kire 118). Even nature has the capacity to heal the wounds made by war. The bombing during the devastating war burns down the plants over the hills and the titular character Mari never thought that their ,land would recover from the toll the war had taken on it' (Kire 106). The post pastoral attitude of projecting nature as a creative-destructive universe is explicitly depicted in the novel:

> But when spring came, the change over the battlefield Kohima had been just a year ago was incredible. The remaining trees sprouted new leaves. Wild flowers bloomed in abundance. In the Garrison Hill area, new grass covered the ground surfaces that had been bombed and left behind shallow craters in the bombed spots...It was as though nature was repairing the damage suffered by the earth in the previous year. (Kire 106)

Kire's description of nature reminds of Buell's remark that there is ,some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given' (Buell 8).

(iii) Interconnectedness between Man and Nature:

In the novel, Kire deliberates on how the Naga people have some kind of affinity with nature which leads to the idea that they perceive their physical presence through the sensorial perception of all natural things. Abram suggests that ,sensorial dimension of experience brings with it a

recuperation of the living landscape in which we are corporeally embedded` (65). The native people in the novel have some kind of urge to feel the nature. That's why during sunset ,almost everyone would stop working and come outside to watch the sun sink below the horizon like a scarlet ball` (Kire 104). Most of the time they get lost in the ecstasy of the chirping sounds of the birds, and the beauty of the flowers like marigold and daisy. Mari's fiancé Victor addresses her as marigold which reflects that his inner self wants to get connected with nature through the physical body of Mari. This interconnectedness between man and nature leads to ,the recognition that the inner is also the workings of the outer, that our inner human nature can be understood in relation to external nature` (Gifford 156) which is the third fundamental post-pastoral element. The inner psyche of the author is also connected to nature as she compares her memories to moths: ,memories crowd in like moths to a flame` (Kire 1). So ,the illumination of human nature by its relationship with external nature` (Head 194) acts as a novelistic strength in the novel.

(iv) Nature as Culture/Culture as Nature

,Human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it` (Glotfelty and Fromm xix). In the culture of the Naga people their physical world plays a pivotal role as they worship nature and their history, myth and daily activities are related to nature. The spritualisation of nature affirms a deep connection between nature and culture. Besides nature acts as the guide, messenger and provider of woods, fruits, flowers, and above all shelter. In the novel, when Mari has been in a difficult situation in the jungle being separated from her fiancé and family, a bee suddenly starts buzzing and humming which makes her realise that something wrong has happened perhaps to her mother or Victor. Later she comes to know that the humming bee indicated the death of her fiancé, Victor. The rivers guide them to go from one hill to another hill. It is shown that they do gardening, cultivate flowers, and gather herbs as in their leisure times. So, nature becomes a part and parcel of their culture which reflects the post-pastoral ,awareness of both nature as culture and of culture as nature` (Gifford 162).

(v) Consciousness and Conscience

Kire sets the novel *Mari* (2010) against the backdrop of World War II and the Battle of Kohima which was fought from 4th April to 22nd June 1944. In the novel, Kire does not escape from her responsibility to represent the

global conflict which created social and environmental damage to the Naga people. Before the war they become victims of colonisation and this event of colonialism created some kind of consciousness which is termed by Nixon as environmental double consciousness. Nixon suggests that postcolonial pastoral ‚refracts an idealized nature through memories of environmental and cultural degradation in the colonies‛ (Nixon 245). On the one hand, because of ecocritical awareness, the Naga people are conscious of pastoral and on the other hand, colonialism in the name of modernity compels them to be conscious about the anthropocentric anti-pastoral attitude of the Westerners. During the time of war, the Britishers create roads through the jungles and damage their physical environment through bombing. The war turns Kohima into a ghost town and it has ‚killed almost every domestic animal in Kohima (Kire 94). So Kire responds to the social crisis created by war by centralising place, landscape, and nature in her novel. Here she is conscious of the fact that how vulgar power of man and aggression through bombing creates ensuing chaos in the social and natural life of the Nagas. Here her consciousness awakens her conscience towards natural and social degradation of the native people. This attitude of Kire represents ‚the fifth post-pastoral quality in literature, that with consciousness comes conscience‛ (Gifford 163).

(vi) Mind-Set of Social Exploitation Causes Environmental Exploitation

The sixth fundamental element of post-pastoral is that environmental exploitation generates from the same mind-set that generates social exploitation (Gifford 165). In the novel it is shown that Battle of Kohima takes place because of the thirst for power and encroachment of land or territory of the Allies (Japanese) and Axis forces (British). In order to sustain their power, they fight with each other and exploit the social and natural environment of the Angami people. In this time of global conflict ‚pastoral peace rapidly gives way to catastrophic destruction‛ (Garrard 1). In order to avoid such social and natural exploitation, there should be a good bonding and generosity between humans as Eckersley suggests, ‚the ecological model of internal relatedness upon which ecocentrism rests applies not only in respect of human-nonhuman relations but also in respect of relations among humans‛ (53). The social, historical, and natural consciousness create a strong ecocentric focus in the novel.

Conclusion

Though throughout the novel Kire describes her natural landscape from her ecocritical consciousness, her commitment to the place is extremely problematic. Now she does not belong to her natural space and is unable to relate herself to her place as she lives in the urban space New York. But she negotiates with her past landscape through memory and lived experience. Devaluating the anthropocentric notion of anti-pastoral, she upholds the past pastoral value of environment that enabled the AngamiNagas to subsist in their physical world. And thus, her success as post-pastoral writer lies in her consciousness to ,celebrate and take some responsibility for nature without false consciousness` (Gifford 148).

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11

Quotidian Nation: A Study of English August: An Indian Story

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Abstract

Examination of the quotidian enables the study of the production and presentation of the nation. The constitution of everyday life occurs through the attire, domestic appliances, and standard practices of the people. Quotidian conventions that present shared body language, everyday rituals and ceremonies are performances that present the 'imagined community' to themselves and others. Objects that are placed and used in set norms broadcast symbols that present the community. For example, certain objects located prominently on the body point to particular communities that form a broader national community's constituent elements. Performances, objects, and landscapes, through their everyday presence, accrue connotations becoming cultural elements that are readily identifiable as units of presentations of an 'imagined community'. In contemporary globalisation, the nation, at the cultural level, is a powerful resource of images that ceaselessly function at the level of the everyday. This paper examines the abstract quality of Indianness that can be located at the quotidian level in the food we eat, in our behaviour, in the commercial organisations, and the occupations to examine the production, performance and presentation in the micro-spaces of habitation within the nation.

Keywords: 'imagined community', Quotidian, performance, presentation

Introduction

A nation is a community of people that occupies a definite social space and obeys the same laws and institutions within a well-demarcated territory with definite boundaries. Most deliberations of the nation agree

that the nation emerges from historical linearity through shared experiences of a human population inhabiting geopolitical borders. For Antony Smith and David Miller, a nation is constituted by sharing historical territory and memories, common myths and public culture (Smith 22) and through mutual belief and distinctive traits of the community members that demarcates it from other communities (Miller 136). Disagreeing with the notion that the nation arose from the pre-modern ethnic groups or shared memories, John Breuilly notes that the nation is a ‚modern political and ideological formation which developed in close conjunction with the emergence of the modern, territorial, sovereign and participatory state‘ (32). It becomes essential to note that all these postulations position the nation in a limited manner within the boundaries of a cartographic and political location. Political and economic thought creates a nation that remains bound within its geographical borders. Discussing the limited aspect of the nation, Robert J. C. Young states that the national borders create a space where the nation's government functions. According to him, a nation is a corporation to which the citizens belong by default, and it ‚becomes an empty space in which all forms of potential identification can be filled‘ (Young 60). As understood through these arguments, the concept of the nation assumes a homogenous community of people with shared values, religion, and language. Benedict Anderson characterises the homogenous community as the 'imagined community' of the nation. Anderson defines the nation as ‚an imagined political community – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign‘ (6).

Indianness at the Quotidian Level

The idea of the nation transforms itself into a belief system of every individual of that nation and provides him/her/them with the sense of an anchor and a sense of one's place on this earth. It is a feeling of oneness with all the other individuals born to a culture. The nation is unobtrusively present in everyday life of the members of the nation. It is present in the lifestyle and quotidian performances of the members of the 'imagined community'. Banal, unremarkable elements with their presence in the ordinary landscape form the vital elements of production, reproduction and presentation of the nation. The flag on a building, food consumed, manner of consumption, music, and ordinary words like 'we', 'us', 'here', which occur in daily conversations or various media, become the key markers in the production, reproduction, and presentation of the

nation. As Billig says, ‚This assemblage of non-consciously registered material and immaterial elements, which imbue both the landscape and semiosphere of a given territory, work as daily reminders of people's national place in a world of nations' (8). Every individual renders the nation into an entity through the course of his/her/their everyday interactions. These interactions substantiate and authenticate the nation to the individuals and others. The reality of the nation and its ongoing perception ‚is partly a product of the ways people invoke ideas of nation and national identity to position themselves in relation to ‚others`, (Thompson 20). As Antonsich Marco notes, ‚<the nation is an intermittent, contingent and contextual phenomenon which upholds through people's social interactions' (Antonsich). The nation operates in the quotidian as a socio-spatial matrix where there are productions of spatial-temporal interactions. Focusing on the micro-level quotidian enables the comprehension of the nation as a multi-spatial entity.

The micro-level quotidian, the focus of this paper to study the production, reproduction and presentation of the nation, is a terrain where ready-made singular meanings are unavailable. The scrutiny area is that aspect that lies hidden under the obvious, apparent sense of daily life. For example, the sight of a national flag flying high atop a building might be a common sight as one might travel to work. Even if the flag is limp, its mere presence is a familiar, reassuring sight that provides the feeling that all is well within the nation. The daily routine of hoisting and unfurling of the flag every morning and the lowering, folding and storing for re-use is a definite production, reproduction and presentation of the nation. Although its daily presence attracts minimum attention, yet when there is a disruption in this routine, it draws the attention of the nation's members. There is a defamiliarisation of the familiar symbol when it is half-mast, completely absent or defaced, giving rise to unease in the nation's members. The national flag also functions as a unifying element for the geographical regions present within the nation's boundaries. The flag's presence in the mofussil, towns, and cities of the nation links these microsites and imbricates them within the nation's matrix. The presence of the flag on government buildings all over the geographical nation also alerts us to the nation-state's presence. There is an inextricable linkage between the nation-state and the nation. National monuments, statues and photographs of nationally relevant persons have nearly similar functions.

Examination of the quotidian enables the study of the production and presentation of the nation. The constitution of everyday life occurs through the attire, domestic appliances, and standard practices of the people. Quotidian conventions and performances which display shared body language, everyday rituals and ceremonies present the 'imagined community' to themselves and others. Objects that are placed and used in set norms also broadcast a symbolism which presents the community. For example, objects located prominently on the body draw attention to particular communities that form a broader national community's constituent elements. Performances, objects, and landscapes, through their everyday presence, accrue connotations becoming cultural elements that are readily identifiable as units of presentations of an 'imagined community'.

In contemporary globalisation, as Kaplan and Ross note, the nation, at the cultural level, ‚provides a powerful resource of images. And these images continually operate at the level of the everyday‘ (83). Observation of the abstract quality of Indianness is possible at the ‚everyday level of cuisine, manners, shops, work, routines, and so on‘ (Kaplan and Ross 83). While comprehending everyday Indianness, we have to be aware that any national culture is never a monoculture. Constant alteration of all national cultures happens through migration of people, political conditions or through colonisation – as in India's case. National cultures absorb, adjust, reject or enliven through exposure to other cultures. The culture that extends beyond the nation-state's boundaries constantly contests and contributes to the existing quotidian national culture. Observation of the everyday performance and production of the amorphous 'nation' is possible by studying the everyday life of the members of the 'imagined community'. One way to study the nation is by analysing the media that ‚tend to reflect and produce constructions of everyday national culture‘ (Kaplan and Ross 85).

The novel is one such medium that conceptualises, produces, and presents a nation. The nation becomes intellectually tangible through the experiences of the characters which inhabit the novelistic world. According to Ian Watts, the novel's primary criterion is being truthful to the individual and is ‚the logical literary vehicle of a culture‘ (13). There is a more social orientation to the characters' experience than personal orientation, and thus, the sense of the individual and the nation coalesce. The novel creates a link between the author, the fictional world, and the

reader. The multiplicity of the readers creates a community that spans the 'imagined community' in the fictional world and the real, temporal world of the readers. The reading community also finds an endorsement of the national space through the landscape of the novel. The reading community's perception and comprehension of the sociological space in the real world are replicated in the fictional community, thereby providing a comparable social region. Thus, there is a fusion of the fictional nation with the perceived nation outside. In his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson links the novel and the nation and states that the ‚idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogenous empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history‘ (26). Anderson makes the novel a formal condition for imagining the nation. In *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*, Timothy Brennan argues, in concurrence with Anderson, that it was the ‚novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one, yet many' of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles‘ (8). The nation, which is a melting pot of languages and styles, finds a suitable spokes-unit in the novel which incorporates forms of speech and discourse.

Arguably, a particular work of fiction might not overtly deal with the nation. However, the novel can present the nation covertly by presenting a particular individual's life embedded in a social universe. The novel, which is a part of the social universe through its mode of production, distribution, and consumption, aids the examination of the macro-space of the nation through its focus on individual life and its trials and tribulations. Examination of the nation is possible by analysing everyday practices and their location in the fictional characters' socio-cultural and political environment in a particular novel.

This study chooses Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August: An Indian Story* published in 1988 to examine the production and presentation of the nation. In this novel, the production and presentation of the nation to the reader is through the eyes and experience of the central character, Agastya, who has completed his academic years and is a trainee for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). His posting is to Madna, a small town far away from his paternal residence in Calcutta and his current

location with his uncle in Delhi. Agastya's hitherto insulated position in urban locales and boarding school enables the observation of the cultural factors that define the 'imagined community' with his dislocation from the earlier milieu. The quotidian enactions which Agastya observes and catalogues present the nation to the readers. The everyday interpersonal interactions and activities of the people of Madna involve the performance of the nation.

The performance and presentation of the nation commence at the outset of the novel. The nation is performed and presented in the dialogue between Agastya and his friend Dhrubo. Their dialogue reveals that Agastya and his friend are from schools where the medium of instruction is English. They belong to the urban elite class of people, which according to Rashmi Sadana, are that ‚class of people (the rich, the upper middle class, and many sectors of the middle classes, who also tend to be upper caste) who are educated from primary school onward with English as their medium of instruction. The rest of India, about eighty percent of Indians have<tended to be educated in<schools that may teach English as a subject but where the medium of instruction is in one of the thirteen official state languages‘ (4). This educational structure has given rise to a young population that is comfortable with code-switching during regular conversations. Agastya and Dhrubo's bilingual, hybrid language is the hallmark of Indian youth. Agastya catalogues this performance and presentation of India while simultaneously becoming a performer and presenter when he says, ‚Amazing mix, the English we speak. <I am sure nowhere else could languages be mixed *and* spoken with such ease‘ (*English August* (henceforth *EA*) 1). After this commentary on the language, Agastya places himself among the young emergent group of educated Indians, unlike the young people of Dhrubo's perception. Dhrubo notes that a typical Indian story is where the Indian youth bides time in education which is only a ‚meaningless accumulation of degrees‘ (*EA* 3) while waiting to join the Administrative Services. Some of them would be likely to leave the country to live ‚somewhere in the First World, comfortably or uncomfortably‘ (*EA* 3). This image of Indian youth points to that micro-group of people whose members are ambitious and are actively involved in fulfilling them. However, they belong to the Indian diaspora and are not the focus of the novel. Agastya's postulation that many people of India would be similar to him ‚with no special aptitude for anything, not even wondering how

to manage, not even really thinking while they try their luck with everything hoping something will click' (*EA* 3) is proved throughout the novel. These are the people living in the country, forming a majority of the nation's members.

The people that Agastya encounters at Madna underscore Agastya's statement. Most of the people Agastya interacts with at Madna are employed in the Indian Administrative Service at various levels but are aimless, unhappy, lackadaisical and have an active aversion to any meaningful work. A suitable illustration of this image of the people is available towards the end of the novel, where we see Agastya at Chipanthi, a tribal settlement in the forest of the Jompanna area. The only source of water for the settlement is a well that is in dire need of cleaning. The repeated complaints of the tribal to the earlier officers have not resulted in solving the water problem. His subordinates resist Agastya's efforts to alleviate the settlement's water problems due to their inclination to avoid work. They provide him with explanations, ‚their laziness hidden by jargon' (*EA*, 257), about the unavailability of water tankers to ship water to the settlement and the lack of suitable labour de-silt the well.

Agastya's familiarisation of the 'imagined community' in Madna is restricted majorly to the micro-group members that the IAS constitutes. However, in a limited manner, he can present the other members belonging to the 'imagined community' through his interactions with them and observation of them in his official capacity. Through Agastya's observations, we note that an environment of sycophancy and supplication exists in the nation. When Agastya enters the Collectorate for the first time, escorted by a Naib Tehsildar, he encounters Chidambaram, Reader to the Collector. Chidambaram officiously greets them with a curt ‚Yes?' However, on the Naib Tehsildar's whispered information about Agastya's position as an IAS officer, Chidambaram immediately turns servile and effusively greets Agastya. Agastya's introduction to the Collector sets the stage for the presentation of supplication. During the time spent in the Collector's chambers, Agastya notices a villager who had come to meet the Collector only after ‚many namastes and two half prostrations, forehead touching the Collector 's desk' (*EA* 15), petitioners who never sit or when forced to sit, perch themselves on the edge of the chair. We note the Collector's power over the people who come to meet him when he abruptly leaves his office,

disregarding the waiting people. As the Collector and Agastya walk through the corridor, ,the peons, the petitioners, the politicians' groupies and their groupies all stiffened and shut their babble' (*EA* 19). As we read further, we notice that those in positions of power in the nation-state's administrative offices utilise the service of those employees who are in lesser positions or are powerless. Usage of the peons attached to the Collector's office as domestic help in successive Collectors' residence is quite common. Many peons prefer this form of work since it provides them proximity to the Collector, which places them in a position of power among their peers.

A notable quotidian element that exists in all offices is the habit of drinking tea at all hours of the working day. The manner of tea consumption separates it from the global manner of tea consumption and makes it a unique cultural unit of the Indian nation. The practise of drinking tea from the saucer is what makes it a unique cultural feature. Many in India slurp their tea from the saucer. *English August* draws our attention to this feature repeatedly when we see the RDC, the District Inspector of Land Records, Mr Joshi and three others accompanying him, pour their tea into saucers and slurp them. Srivastav, the Collector, comments that most people of Madna drink tea ,always from the saucer' (*EA* 17). Nearly mimicking the hybrid usage of language, tea is served in teacups but poured into their saucers and drunk instead of from the teacups. We see only a few people, including Agastya and Srivastav, drinking their tea from teacups. The contrasting manner of drinking tea is a performance and presentation of the nation while enabling the sectioning off of the nation's members into spaces of habitation, which form micro-spaces of the larger 'imagined community' while it is also a performance of the nation.

Food consumption is an inevitable accompaniment of public interactions and is a factor that enables the slotting of members into respective micro-groups. The National Integration meeting that Agastya attends on his first day at Madna is where we note the presence of food items commonly consumed – laddus, samosas, and green chutney – along with tea. We note similar fried food (pakoras) when Agastya visits a colleague's residence and in the visit to Gorapak, a tourist attraction, where the breakfast contains fried *Dal*. The national spaces of habitation become apparent when we take into account the preparation and serving of food. The contrast that exists between the clean, aesthetic, simple,

wholesome, well-cooked, hygienic and tasty everyday fare of Agastya's Delhi home, and at the Collector's and Dr Multani's residences and the unhygienic, crude, and tasteless fare cooked at the Rest House at Madna demonstrates the boundary between the elite and the other. However, a similarity exists in the regular menu in both the spaces where quotidian fare includes *dal*, vegetables, fish, rice, curds, parathas, and fruits.

Let us now consider the music that one listens to, which also contributes to spatialisation. Throughout the novel, we note that the general populace's public areas play film music with cacophonous loudspeakers while the elite locations play a mellow thumri or ghazal. It is important to note that classical music is the foundation of most film music. Therefore, there is a commonality to both kinds of music. While quotidian life involves hiding and revealing differences, a sense of commonality is initially manufactured to highlight the differences. Therefore, as Ben Highmore says, the everyday has the potential ability to produce commonalities more than differences (2). The differences that are present at the micro-level are incorporated into the overarching macro-space and are represented as ‚variety inherent in unity' (Edensor 25).

Conclusion

The performances and presentations of the nation within the micro-spaces of habitation form the foundational blocks of the composite production, performance, and presentation of the nation. The observation of the quotidian presentation of the nation in *English August* reveals that the macro-space of the Indian 'imagined community' consists of micro-spaces that are the repositories of the cultural nation. These spaces are nuanced and need a more detailed study which is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, we obtain a glimpse into India's 'imagined community', which accommodates micro-spatial units that have commonalities where the commonalities supersede the differences and enable the constant production, performance, and presentation of the nation and its culture.

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12

The „Sinking Sublime" in William Wordsworth: A Note

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Abstract

It is my intention to argue the case of the 'Sinking Sublime' through three sonnets of William Wordsworth. The 'Sinking Sublime' illustrates the complex transition of the thematic from nationhood through the ambivalence between physical death and transcendence, culminating in the literal manifestation of deathlessness. The sonnets selected for this purpose are entitled 'Composed by the Sea-Side, Near Calais, August 1802' (1807), 'Mutability' (1822) and 'I Watch, and Long have Watched' (1819).

Keywords: Wordsworth, Sinking, Sonnets, Sublime.

Introduction

The 'Sinking Sublime' illustrates the complex transition of the thematic from nationhood through the ambivalence between physical death and transcendence, culminating in the literal manifestation of deathlessness. The sonnets selected for this purpose are entitled 'Composed by the Sea-Side, Near Calais, August 1802' (1807), 'Mutability' (1822) and 'I Watch, and Long have Watched' (1819). It is my intention to argue the case of the 'Sinking Sublime' through three sonnets of William Wordsworth.

Functional and Critical Importance of Sublimity in Wordsworth's Sonnets

The first sonnet under my discretion, best known for Wordsworth's inclusion of the phrase 'Bright Star' that inspired Keats's famous sonnet by the same title, begins with a pleasurable description of twilight:

> Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the West,
> Star of my Country! – on the horizon's brink

Thou hangest, stooping, as might *seem*, to *sink*,
On England's bosom; (Hutchinson ed. p. 241, ll. 1-4, italics mine)

I am enthralled by the subtle de-sublimation of the 'Star' for deriving pleasure; the celestial body has been connoted as ‚Fair`, which is against every possible scientific description that can be garnered for its defense. Add to this that the ‚Star` is worthy of pleasurable experience at a particular time of the day, allowing the reader to ruminate if the Sublime is subject to situational appreciation and critique, but also temporal conditions of visibility. The ‚splendour` of the Sublime object is first eliminated from enlightening the East, and then further removed from all but the poet's ‚Country` as opposed to the poet's hemisphere. The Star is a ‚splendour` –a replicable phenomenon to the West, but an indispensable symbol of the nationality of a nation. Note the use of the phrase ‚horizon's brink`, a subconscious complex where the Sublime object's sublimity is of functional and critical importance when cornered, contrary to its original centralisation. Add to it the erotic masculinity in the next two lines that follow, where the feminisation of England allows the ‚Star` to assume the male role, though far removed from its original ferocity, moulded and re-presented for practical purposes. This assumption of the male role, in a comprehensive sense, engages the idea of the sublime, both psychological and analytical, in contrast with the form of the 'beautiful'. The question this begs is: Is not the Star 's sublimity of moral worth only lowered when it ‚seems` to have shrunk from its original dimensions for pleasurable perception and pedagogical importance while retaining its sublimity, here the masculinising spirit of a nation? By way of an extension, is the androgynous sublime?

What I suggest by the phrase ‚Sinking Sublime` is an event where the Sublime subject or object, whilst retaining its ebullience, power, frisson and limitlessness, is truncated and reduced to a capsule of moral virtue where the so-called 'Sublime' characteristics cannot operate beyond a specific situation.[i] In the case above, the situation is the nation. A lessening of the power of the Sublime occurs here because the presumed universal sublimity of the Star is reduced to a motif, or motto, for a far more geophysical, geo-cultural area: The Nation. It is representative of an entity whose synthetic worth is determined upon its coagulation with indeterminate concepts of a contrasting kind, the 'beautiful'. It allows the Sublime to be incorporated as a moral law for the conception of an individual, or a nation, as is the case here:

There! That dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! One hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! (9-12, italics added)

It is not the Sublime that mankind appreciates; critically speaking, it is the 'sinking sublime' considered practical for moral elevation of perhaps just *One* nation. ‚Beneath' its influence, nations are created. Wordsworth continues his erotic imagery as the line, beginning with ‚Beneath', ends with ‚lies', suggesting both masculine ebullience by dint of the celestial body's sublimity, and the recipient female represented by the Country of ‚England'. The use of the demonstrative ‚that' coalesces their identities, both Earthly and supernal, into ‚One life, one glory', suggesting the auspices of a complete, all-encompassing identity through the literal and agential unification of the masculinised and the feminized, hence facilitating (pro) Creation. To answer the former question then: it answers to the 'sublime' question by assuming an androgynous identity which is sculpted from its so-called 'maleness'. The 'sinking sublime' in this sonnet is a metaphor (the Star) of controlled male energy that rehabilitates the personality of a nation. The ‚beneath' also signals, implicitly, that the Star falls beneath its usual position in the astronomical firmament to serving *one* nation. This ‚one' is at once a syncretism and an absolutism, a singularity within dualities.

I move on to the second sonnet. Entitled 'Mutability' and published in the ‚Ecclesiastical Sonnets' volume, it treks a different philosophical route:[ii]

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
And *sink* from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care. (p. 353, ll. 1-6, emphasis added)

Here, the motive is turbid, exhibiting an improvement over the earlier sonnet discussed. The act of sinking oscillates between ‚low to high' and ‚high to low', yet is restricted to ‚dissolution' only, not otherwise. What Wordsworth argues is this: dissolution, a ‚human' vice, oscillates along a moral scale, subjecting humans to moral suffering as well as moral elevation if some conditions are met. This paradox can be noted in ‚awful notes', which, methodically speaking, argues auditory

displeasure on one hand and reverential inadequacy on the other (awe-full). The word ‚chime', suggestive of religious temper, plays second fiddle to ‚melancholy' which is creative temper wrought with improprieties considered diseased. ‚Melancholy chime' *acts* as an oxymoron that juxtaposes the creative amoral beside the harmonized moral, resembling the action of ‚climbing' and ‚sinking' in one phrase. This is not all. Soon, one confronts the antidote to ‚dissolution' in the trochaic movement of the next line:

> Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
> The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
> That in the morning brightened hill and plain
> And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
> Of yesterday, (ibid. ll. 7-11)

Truth is Wordsworth's anodyne to dissolution. Truth, the epitome of moral elevation, has no objective attire to wear, at least for long. The artifice of sublime architecture in nature is visually as well as morally inadequate in dressing it, either through linguistic (use of similes, metaphors, as well as syndeton) or analeptic variations. The transient attitude of objective representations in truth-making disfigures, dilutes and defers truth without eradicating its subjective verity. This sprouts my next statement that the Subjective Truth, an association of ideas conditioned by both Creative and Catholic temper, is the true ‚Sublime'. Whereas the Creative *creates* a tendency to ‚sink' beneath the moral understood through melancholia, the Chiming restores moral equanimity – thus justifying the validity of the 'sinking sublime' again, not surviving just as an oxymoron, but now in a symbiotic relationship.[iii] Wordsworth himself explains why this coupling is essential:

> which casually did wear
> His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
> Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
> Or the unimaginable touch of Time. (11-14, capitalisation not mine)

The reason is simple – in the absence of a corporeal body, Truth exists as a subjective entity *in* and *beyond* time, implying the deathlessness of an idea that incorporates the latent heterogenous values of creativity and religiosity, an idea that David Daiches develops in his essay.[iv] While there is an implied metonymic significance in ‚crown of weeds', the stress lies on Wordsworth's dismissal of linguistic extravagance for imagination proper through his use of the phrase

‚casual shout'. The effete nature of man is a result of instability; he cannot sustain unless he is cognisant of the deathless motion of time, something that can be replicated by nominating Truth as moral agency both for ‚sinking' and ‚climbing', ‚melancholy' and ‚chime' – all represented under the banner of the 'Sinking Sublime'.[v] The ‚unimaginable touch', as a result becomes a Kantian aesthetic of the transcendental kind, visualising an ersatz synaesthesia which is replicated in its state of actual imitative paralysis.

   I now turn to the last sonnet for our discussion, published in 1819:

> I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
> Yon slowly-sinking star – immortal Sire
> (So might he seem) of all the glittering quire,
> Blue ether still surrounds him, etc. (ibid. p. 207, ll. 1-4)[vi]

   Notice the deferment that the poet initiates through language; the present tense and the present perfect tense lingers within the reader 's connotation of the word ‚long', followed by the introduction of ‚calm regret' which, being a sentiment, escapes rigorous meaning-making. It is succeeded by the heavily stressed but lethargic phrase ‚slowly-sinking', indicating two important axioms: first, its immutable nature, being a reminder of the star's dimensions, becomes a proof of its character too, as if the ‚immortal Sire' shall never sink, since its evanesce is permanently deferred by language; second, the Star has been masculinised by the poet himself, contrary to the indirect masculinising in the first sonnet. It should mean that not all stars are bearers of masculine energy (‚immortal Sir/of all the glittering quire) and need not be adroitly expressed through linguistic intricacies. Complicating this argument further, it ‚seems' as if the immortality of this sire guaranteed through linguistic deferment becomes subsequently the death-knell of all other inadequately masculine stars. It is not the sublime immortalised in language; it is once again the sinking sublime that is literally conceived for immortality. This I argue, since the poet's ‚calm regret' assures him of celestial life beyond death, confessing to no anxiety upon nightfall:

> He burns, transmuted to a dusky fire –
> Then pays submissively the appointed debt
> To the flying moments, and is seen no more. (7-9)

   The line begins with ‚He burns', and the pause that follows it, terminates with ‚dusky fire', implying that it is only the tangential fire

which creates the moral coefficient before it is ‚seen no more', but becomes a prominent organ for human masculinity in the psyche. The ‚flying moments', which seem to convey imperennial status, means that its pursuit vis-à-vis perception is unlikely to yield simplistic results. Hence, if it is ‚seen no more', what it implicates is that it has transcended the perceptive zone, which is not the same as accruing no value, epistemologically. According to G.M. Harvey, ‚For the Poet the ironic distinction between the star and mankind becomes a double irony and thus a vehicle of sympathy, when the hidden parallel between their destinies is discovered to be stronger than the obvious contrasts (85).

I agree with Harvey's observations on the oncoming of sympathy, but the word ‚hidden' when mankind and celestiality are paralleled is more complicated than Harvey explicates. He does not clarify why ‚double irony' should be treated as appropriate for sympathy. While their constitution remains similar yet paradoxical with regards to their ends, sympathy comes into question only when ‚mankind' can be substituted for ‚moral-kind', where tragic flaw qualifies for sympathetic feeling at an individual level. Moreover, the ‚obvious contrasts' do not outplay the similarity of destination (I use this instead of the more ambiguous destiny). I shall quote for the readers the last movement of the sonnet:

> Angels and Gods! We struggle with our fate,
> While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
> Depressed; and then extinguished: and our state
> In this how different, lost star, from thine,
> That no tomorrow shall our beams restore! (ibid. 10-14)

The ‚obvious contrast' here is between Man who is mortal, and the ‚slowly-sinking' star which is not. The subtler paradox is that man is mortal not because he becomes physically defunct; he is defunct because he cannot transpose and incorporate the masculine spirit of the star. The reference to ‚fate' is a reference to destination as opposed to destiny, since Wordsworth's aim is teleological. The lack of asyndetons gradually transform into asyndetons (clearly an impression of the Longinian sublime), but teleology supresses rhetoric as destination does not seem to be determined by language as much as *being*. As Wordsworth clearly states, it is not the dimension that determines the immortality of the celestial body, but its spirit and dignity. It explains the deterioration of the mind, and the parallel is not ‚hidden' as Harvey states. Difference

becomes epistemological, and the sonnet's strength rests upon restoration of hermeneutic difference as opposed to difference divorced from similarities completely.

Conclusion

I conclude with another observation expressed in the form of an interrogation: since the 'sinking sublime' is obviously absent in the subject (the ‚We‘ in this poem), and since we know that sublimity cannot be bestowed upon an object, the moral spirit of the sublime both differs and defers (see the first clause of the third line, succeeded by the phrase ‚lost star). Is not the 'sinking sublime' differed and deferred into negativity then, by the end of this sonnet?[vii]

Notes

i   The truncation through dichotomy is indifferent to what J. Jennifer Jones calls the *panoramic sublime* in her paper; its definition as ‚an aesthetic that finds its particular power in the imitation of the sensually immersive, hyper-realist aesthetic‘ (364) is insufficient because the star, although being the center of a panorama itself, is aesthetic and imitative only in so far as every imitation is a transcendence into inimitable forms of creation. If the *seemingly* glorious manifests a distinctive glory, then distinction grants it an inimitable stature from other imitable forms of pseudo-creations or inimitable forms of the un-creative sublime. As Kant proffers in the *Analytic of the Sublime* in *The Critique of Judgement*, the ‚sublime in nature is improperly so called, and that sublimity should, in strictness, be attributed to the *attitude* of thought‘ (Tr. James Creed Meredith, OUP, 1973, §30:280, p. 134). Thus, the 'panoramic sublime' in nature is a suffixed aesthetic attitude, not a prefixed postmodernist aesthetic, which seems like an enthusiastic over-assumption. This is complicated by Jones's understanding of this attitude as ‚sensually immersive‘ which does not seem to bode well with the tenor of Wordsworth's panorama. As the aforementioned quote suggests, only the words ‚hangest‘ and ‚stooping‘ carry an indication of immersion in the sublime while being scouted by non-sensual forms of exclamations at both ends. The problem with assuming this postmodernist stance to the sublime here is to overlook the fact that Kantian sublimity fixates ‚only [upon] a might of the mind‘ (ibid. 124) that actively represses sensibility. In other words, calling the ‚sensually immersive‘ sublime is nearer to calling the subliminal the true sublime, which is definitely not the case here. However, Jones's definition of the term ‚material sublime‘ as functioning ‚both to discover and confirm the difference between the terms by establishing the relative value of each through their opposition‘ (359) approaches the sinking sublime positively. See ‚Absorbing Hesitation: Wordsworth and the Theory of the Panorama‘, published in *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2006, pp. 357-75. *JSTOR*, 10.2307/25602057.

ii   As Mary Moorman puts it, ‚They [*Ecclesiastical Sketches*] were characteristic therefore not of any academic school of thought, but of his own mature mind, nourished by his early sympathies, and by his recent reading of history and biography' (394). See *William Wordsworth: The Later Years 1803-1850* (Oxford University Press, 1968).

iii   I emphasize the quality of the oxymoron; the resistance incorporated within individual words in the phrase 'sinking sublime' is as apparent as the difference that Theresa Kelley observes in the difference between Wordsworthian and Kantian sublime(s) (p. 75, 77). Surely there is a difference in the spiritual and heightened intellectual model of each; it is, to put it sceptically, a minor difference in degree, not in kind. Wordsworth's ‚absolute triumph' (77) agrees in all totality with Kant's *Geist* in *The Critique of Judgement* whose *Seele*'is that which sets the mental powers into a swing that is final' (ibid., §49:314, p. 175). On a different note, the 'Sinking Sublime' is not a symbiosis with a being outside but within forces *in* a Being; in the words of Kelley, they ‚co-exist with the darker energies' (73) within the characters of sublime praxis and sublime restraint. See Theresa M. Kelley's Wordsworth and the Rhinefall', published in *Studies in Romanticism*, Vol. 23 No. 1, 1984, pp. 61-79. *JSTOR*, 10.2307/25600470

iv   See ‚Theodicy, Poetry and Tradition' by David Daiches in *Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature*, pp. 73-93. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1957.

v   The instability caused can be resolved in a simple manner. In a letter that Wordsworth writes to Isabella Fenwick on 5th October, 1844, Wordsworth goes on to describe why the best and greatest among poets chose to abandon poetry at crucial moments of their lives, unless they were overwhelmed by the resolution of individuality which determines the truth value of everything: ‚No man can write verses that will live in the hearts of his Fellow Creatures but through an over powering impulse in his own mind, involving him often times in labour that he cannot dismiss or escape from, though his duty to himself and others may require it' (1231). See *The Letters of William Wordsworth: The Later Years 1841-1850*. Ernest De Selincourt ed., Clarendon Press, 1939.

vi   The element of negativity in the sinking sublime is, at its best, an extension of the general sense of negativity in the idea of the Sublime. As can be adduced from the title of Guy Sircello's paper, ‚Is a Theory of the Sublime Possible?', permanent scepticism has existed in the ideologies surrounding the subject. As Sircello points out, ‚A true theory of the sublime is impossible' (545) and that a ‚(finally negative) assessment' (545) can be meted out to the sublime. This narrows down the idea of negativity to three sub-ideas: first, pure negativity is non-conducive to either sublime experience or sublime epistemology; second, non-negativity in the assessment of sublime, akin to positivity, is another name for the non-sublime – a thing that Sircello overlooks but is taken up and rigorously worked at by Geoffrey Hartman in *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* and *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*; thirdly and lastly, a microcosmic comprehension of the collective unconscious of the sublime and a conscious, sceptical attempt at a conceptual rapprochement as a reminder of its ultimate negativity is the only demonstrable version of the

sublime. Sircello's paper was published in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 51, no. 4, 1993, pp. 541-550. *JSTOR*, 10.2307/431887. Accessed 3 Jan, 2021.

vii As Wordsworth puts it himself in his prose fragment ‚The Sublime and the Beautiful', ‚Duration is evidently an element of the sublime; but think of it without reference to individual form, and we shall perceive that it has no power to affect the mind' (351). The purpose of this paper is to elaborate the degree to which each must be adjusted for the healthy sustenance of this adjustment. Duration, being elementary to the sublime ‚project', cannot be compounded in theory or in practice. Wordsworth's Kantianism is at display here. See *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (II), edited by W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser. Clarendon Press, 1974.

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13

The Voice of the Subaltern in Kabir"s Poetry

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Abstract

Saint Kabir Das, the Indian mystic and a celebrated poet-prophet, was in a real sense the ‚dictator of language' (as eminent Hindi critic Dr. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi put it), as he could command the proletarian masses' attention simply through the force of his unadorned yet profoundly lyrical verses. His enormously evocative compositions brought the unlettered and unprivileged people together and paved the way for social reformation. The immensity of his convictions and the succinctness of his exposition drew ordinary people to him and motivated them to doubt the veracity of deeper truths about life in its physical, spiritual, and mystical dimensions. The intensely meaningful verses laced with pluralistic viewpoints raised critical awareness about Indian society, its culture, religions, customs, rituals and other realities. Kabir's works are relevant for they elicit an intellectual response on the questions of social discrimination, economic disparity, religious differences and mental servitude, among other things, further urging us to explore the true meaning of our mortal existence. Kabir, an educationist par excellence imparted important lessons in integrity, social cohesion, spirituality and peace to people of all walks of life. The present paper delineates Kabir's articulations on subaltern aspirations in the light of his spiritual inquiry, analysis of socio-political milieu, censure of orthodoxy and exclusivity in favour of universal humanism. Moreover, the paper seeks to establish the relevance of Kabir's poetry in our times to work the redemption of the humanity from the present-day crisis brought by monolithic cultures, dictatorial ideologies, tyrannical institutions and repressive thought processes.

Keywords: Reformation, enlightenment, ideologies, universal humanism

Kabir was a poet who embodied the spirit of the masses. He belonged to the lowly, the downtrodden, the browbeaten and the oppressed. Borrowing the term of reference 'subaltern' from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay 'Can the subaltern speak?' (1988), one could argue that in the Indian literary history, Kabir, (1398-1518) was the earliest example of a poet-prophet who lent a voice to the marginalised people. Kabir's songs were orally transmitted and formed an integral part of 'popular culture and literature.' However, the critical flavour of those writings could never bring him the approval of the establishment. His songs were marked by 'plurality' and the acknowledgment of the 'other' as they defied all binaries of caste, class and consciousness with sheer tenacity of purpose. Kabir, in his preference for the language used by cowherds, fishermen, potters, weavers and pariahs, rejected the ancient language of the Gods and that of the privileged class. His verses were devoid of sentimentality and laid bare the truth behind all worldly affairs. David Lorenzen describes the chief aim of Kabir's verses as raising a ‚protest against social discrimination and economic exploitation.` Kabir didn't think much of the religious and caste hierarchies enshrined in the ancient scriptures and perpetrated by the Brahmanical class. He confronted brahmins and maulawis head-on for dividing the society on the basis of caste and class. In popular and literary imaginings, Kabir was depicted as a religious and social reformer who sought a spiritual reconciliation and purification of Islam and Hinduism, as well as the propounder of an exalted mystical religion of the heart which aimed to do away with vulgar exterior rites and noxious social practices and prejudices (Lorenzen). Kabir's choice of the dialect used by the working class; his employment of symbols and metaphors from the work place and the rural life helped him formulate an aesthetics and an alternative religion which could effectively and unabashedly articulate subaltern aspirations.

Despite the considerable amount of critical research that has been done on Bhakti Literature over the last few decades, the debate over the voices of the margins in Kabir's writings and their deeper nuances has remained largely unexplored. The present paper, therefore, examines Kabir's place in the history of the bhakti movement, as well as his contribution to socio-cultural reforms during a time when feudalism, formalism, casteism, sectarianism, conservatism, and other anti-mass sentiments were on the rise. Kabir, the saint-poet of the 15th century held pre-eminence among the Saints and Sufis of North India including

Namdev, Jnandev, Tukaram, Raidas, Eknath, Chokhamela, Meera, Surdas, Lal Ded, Mir Dard, Baba Farid, Bulle Shah to name a few. The poetry of Kabir vehemently confronted questions like ritualism, pseudo-orthodoxy, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and oppression of the subaltern. He strongly advocated the re-formulation of spiritual experience for the establishment of peace and social harmony. The present paper conducts a study of Kabir's poetic corpus to understand his role in becoming a voice of the 'subaltern'. Kabir's contribution is magnanimous in the Indian literary thought and philosophy as he undercuts the mainstream literature to assert a voice of authenticity and honesty. While the important incidents of Kabir's life such as his birth, parentage, education, faith, marriage, progeny, followers, death are still shrouded in mystery, the affirmations of his popularity and his contribution to the ongoing social reformation movement are not to be debated. Kabir 's writings are increasingly pertinent to our times as they encourage us to break the shackles of social discrimination, economic disparity, religious discrepancies, mental servitude and so on, urging us to find the true meaning of our existence. The present paper delineates Kabir 's articulation on subaltern aspirations in the light of his spiritual enquiry, analysis of socio-political milieu, censure of orthodoxy and exclusivity in favour of his universal humanism. In the end, the paper seeks to establish the relevance of Kabir's poetry in our times to bring about the salvation of humanity from the present crisis caused by monolithic cultures, dictatorial ideologies, tyrannical institutions and repressive thought processes.

Kabir won respectability from a complete cross-section of society-male and female, old and young, high caste and low caste, rich and poor alike for his critical thought and liberal mindset. Kabir 's Nirgun verses were spiritual songs that invoked the glory of the all-pervasive divinity in its impersonal and attribute-less aspect:

> *UdJayega Hans akela*
> *Jag darshan ka mela*

> (The swan will fly away all alone, Spectacle of the world will be a mere fair)[i]

Kabir's poetry integrated all faiths and beliefs by foregrounding 'the best that was thought and said' in the interests of a society that internalised the values of unity, purity of heart, peace, critical inquiry,

self-knowledge, and love for all. He firmly argued for the re-construction of spiritual experience for establishing social harmony. Kabir 's God is neither to be found in pilgrimages nor temples and mosques. It is neither to be attained through fasting nor by the practice of yogic postures. Rather, it is the faith of the devotee that enables him to see the great truth in a moment's time:

> *Moko Kahan DhundhereBande Mein To TerePaas Mein*
> *Na Teerath Mein, Na Moorat Mein Na Ekant Niwas Mein*
> *Na Mandir Mein, Na Masjid Mein Na Kabe Kailas Mein*

(Where do you search me? I am with you
Not in pilgrimage, nor in icons, Neither in solitudes
Not in temples, nor in mosques Neither in Kaba nor in Kailash
I am with you o man, I am with you)[1]

Furthermore, the human body is to be perceived as a cloth finely woven, dyed in the colour of God. Kabir, the mystic saint says that he has covered himself with this cloth with great care and will eventually leave it the way it has been:

> *Jhini re jhini re jhinichadariya, Jhini re jhini re jhinichadariya*
> *Ke ram naam rasbhinichadariya, Jhini re jhini re jhinichadariya*

(This is fine, this is fine cloth. It has been dipped in the name of the lord.)[ii]

That Kabir refused to negotiate with false moral standards was clear from the fact that he bowed neither before the dictates issued by orthodox Hindu society nor the injunctions imposed by the hypocritical Islamic community. Kabir's writings acquired the status of 'counter-canon' as he confronted the conformist forces in religion. His verses rigorously probed and analysed the socio-cultural dynamics of the period and dismantled the hegemony of the upper classes. His writings centered round the mystical meanings and professed an alternative mode of religiosity which did not differentiate on the basis of caste, colour, creed, language, and religion. He vociferously argued that the human heart was the special abode of the Divine. Kabir's poetry contained incisive commentary upon a society that was steeped in superstitions; the religions that were bigoted and ideologies that aimed to divide humanity. His poetry educated simple-minded folks by imparting the fundamental truths of human existence. Kabir, the pioneer of social resurrection,

suggested the perfect antidote for the most painful wounds of society. He fervently prayed for the well-being of everyone:

> *Sayiitnadijiye, jaamekutumbsamaye*
> *Main bhibhukhanarahun*
> *Sadhu nabhookhajaye.*

> (Give so much O God, suffice to envelop my clan
> I should not suffer cravings, nor the visitor goes unfed)[iii]

Kabir was a great mystic and spear headed the Nirgun saint tradition that flowed across North of India. He was variously referred as 'the Indian Luther of the 15th Century', an avdhut, and an advocate of Advaitwad. Kabir unleashes his frustration on those who engaged in dehumanising practices. He was a realist who condemned the systemic social inequity and injustices perpetrated in the name of caste. The rationalist in Kabir, exposed the sham and hypocritical behavior of the dominant class:

> The hungry cannot be devout
> Please take back this rosary<..
> I want a half seer of cereal,
> To fill the belly twice a day
> I want a cot to sleep in,
> Be my pillow a wooden frame.
> I utter no lies or hyperboles,
> I only take thy name, O God!

Kabir's democratic tone and temper formed the most ubiquitous features of his verses. He had the courage to call a spade a spade:

> Whose art thou, the Brahmin? Whose am I, the Sudra; whose blood am I?
> Whose milk art thou? Kabir says, Who reflects on Brahma, he by me is called a Brahmin.

Kabir's writings were infused with historical consciousness and seemed to be attempting 'subaltern historiography' as he constantly engaged with the problems of the socially frail, economically weak and politically powerless. He was extremely vocal about social stratification in the Indian society on the basis of caste and religion and his poetry contested the subordination enacted and supported by rites and rituals, fallacies and dogmas. Kabir stood as a towering figure among the saint-poets of the Bhakti cult, belonging to the medieval period, roughly said to be from the eighth to the eighteenth century AD. Kabir's writings need

to be analysed in the light of his ‚democratic socialism' and his life-long commitment to integrate diverse sections of society into an organic whole. The socialist strand of his writings placed him in the line of poets-reformers such as Namdev, Chokamela, Raidas, Sena, Tukaram who hailed from the lower castes and tirelessly worked for the emancipation of all from the mental slavery caused by their systematic oppression at the hands of the Hindu and Muslim clerics. Professor Raj Kumar traced the role of Kabir in his social context,

> Kabir's voice of dissent against the existing reality, the glaring disparity between the rich and poor, the discrimination by brahmans and high caste Hindus towards the lower castes, especially the untouchables, and his emphasis on a direct relationship with God without the mediation of brahmans and the mullahs, i.e. the clerics whom he ridicules as greedy and ignorant, had a profound impact. (126)

Much before the colonisation began in India, a different kind of subordination of Dalits and the uneducated poor was in place which also received religious sanctions as a result of which a large section of people was subjected to humiliations of the most inhuman kind. Though the term 'subaltern' is largely used as a method of intellectual discourse for studying the colonial experience of the people of the Indian subcontinent, its utility, nevertheless is no less significant in the study of sociology of a particular time, especially with its focus on social stratification, social class, social mobility, religion, social change, secularisation to name a few. One may also quote here Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci in relation to his work on cultural hegemony. In the context of postcolonialism, Gramsci created the concept of the ‚subaltern', a word which indicated groups who had lost their voice in society's institutional power structures. Kabir's poetry also has a note of protest, and his class affiliation was real. His choice of dialect, his attempt to communicate with his audience, shows that he is intrigued by their day-day-to-day lives. His choice of the vernacular, the preference of dialect for his dohas, padavali clearly spoke about his affinity with his target audience and his connection with the people of his class, whom he tried to reach out by using day to day metaphors. K Satchidanandan in his essay talks about Kabir's spiritual eclecticism and the 'cultural pluralism' which impart democratic tone to his poetry while strengthening his position among the thinkers of Indian tradition, ‚To me Kabir is not a lone voice: I place him in a whole parallel tradition of Indian poetry: the subaltern tradition of a

people's vision of the physical and the metaphysical worlds as well as a criticism of social and religious practices made from within' (87).

Kabir's poetry attacks the false values accorded to religion and in the name of which hatred, violence, fanaticism, terrorism and cruelty are unleashed upon the unassuming folks. It was the common man and his predicament that became the subject of Kabir 's verses as his poetry straddled through caste, class, creed and, religion. For Kabir, God was not a transcendent and immanent reality beyond all comprehension and awareness. It was rather close to the heart of the inconspicuous and the unassertive 'common' man. The divine being appeared in the forms of a child, a friend, and also a lover, craving for a union with the beloved. Kabir's nirgun God finds adequate expression through the frenzied love for the Divine in the following verses which are included in the Guru Granth Sahib:

> I am not skilled in book knowledge
> Nor do I understand controversy
> I have grown mad reciting and hearing God's praises.
> O father, I am mad, the whole world is sane
> I am mad
> I have not grown mad of mine own will
> God hath made me mad. (229) [iv]

Among other social evils, Kabir has spoken against the veiling of women. In the following verses he addresses his son's wife:

> Stay, stay, my daughter-in-law, veil not thy face.
> At the last moment it will not avail thee the eighth of a paisa.
> She who preceded thee used to veil her face;
> Follow not thou in her footsteps.

Most of the metaphors in Kabir's poetry were drawn from the world of weaving which clearly brought out his simplicity and quietude:

> By caste a weaver and patient of mind
> Utters Kabir with natural ease the excellencies of Ram.

Kabir's secularism secured him great reverence by both Hindus and Muslims and his two shrines at Maghar bear testimony to this fact. After the teachings of Great saint Ramananda, Kabir worshipped his Nirguna God under the name of Rama and directed all his fervent devotion to this figure who alone could bring the release from the evils of transmigration. Ramananda had other disciples in Sena, a barber, Dhana, a simple

peasant from Jat community, Rai Das, the Chamar, a woman, and Kabir, the Muhammadan weaver. Kabir lashed out at people who judged each other by their caste or religion:

Jaatinapucho sadhu ki, puchlijiyegyan,
mole karo talwar ka, pada rahan do myan.

(It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;
For the priest, the warrior, the tradesman, and all the thirty six castes,
alike are seeking for God.)

Kabir identifies himself with the higher consciousness that is permeated in the diverse dimensions of life.

(I am not a Hindu,
Nor a Muslim am I!

I am this body, a play of five elements; a drama of the spirit dancing with joy and sorrow.)

Kabir's position is supreme in the list of mystic saints including St. Augustine, Jalalu'ddin Rumi, Baba Farid, Bulle Shah who promoted the synthetic vision of God by eradicating the dichotomy between the personal and impersonal, the transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic aspects of religion. According to tradition, along with Raidas, Kabir launched a movement of Bhakti to an impersonal (Nirguna) God, who defied all anthropomorphic representation. This movement became known as that of the saints or Nirguni Bhakti. (Lorenzen2004:34) The following shabda from Kabir's Bijak, translated by Vinay Dharwadker, contained one of his most trenchant utterances, on Pandit and Mullahs who were so much occupied in reading their scriptures that they forgot God. In a style, marked with wit, eloquence and elevated thought, Kabir painted an honest picture of the life of his time:

Listen,
You saints –
I see that the world
Is crazy.
<<
The Hindu says
Rama's dear to him,
The Muslim says its Rahim. They go to war
And kill each other-
No one knows
The secret of things. (Translated by Vinay Dhawadker)

Kabir was the pioneer of social reformation during the 15th century. He had taken it upon himself to bring the decadent society on the path of virtue. He came down heavily upon the separatist practices and discriminating behavior. He denounced all kinds of sectarian and narrow thinking. ,Neither the brahmin is high-caste, nor is the Shudra low. Why hate one another? Hatred is folly.` He further says elsewhere: ,Whilst dwelling in the womb, there is no clan or caste; from the seed of Brahma the whole creation is made.` After the demise of Kabir, Kabir-Panth offered an alternative faith and mode of resistance to the members of the lower caste:

> The ideological message of Kabir, which represented an explicit attack against discriminatory practices associated with the caste system, attracted mostly people from the lower castes. Adherence to the panth seemed to offer to them a greater dignity through rejection of the caste system, and a positive status and self-image, certainly in their own eyes and in some cases, in the eyes of others as well. (Lorenzen)

In brief, the importance of Kabir's thinking could only be reiterated by saying that he was 'not of an age but for all time'. His writings came to be ever more important to our times as they set us free from social prejudice, economic subjugation, religious superstition, and mental depravity. Kabir was the greatest educationist ever who taught vital lessons in integrity, spirituality and peace. His actions are his most insightful lessons as the teachings of his life are encapsulated in his deeds.His poetry embodied the true essence of his philosophy. All throughout his life, Kabir spoke the truth and stood by the cause of truth in a steadfast manner. Kabir happened to be the greatest educationist who boldly dispelled all doubts and fears of the masses and imparted the best education ever:

> *Pothipadhpadh jag mua Pandit bhayana koi*
> *Dhaiakhar prem ka, jo padhe so pandit hoye.*

> (Mere reading of Vedas and scriptures is not enough. One who has read and mastered the greatest emotion of love is the most learned of all.)

From the discussion and analysis of Kabir's poetry, one could easily infer that he was a progressive thinker who believed in the credo of liberty, equality and fraternity. From here, it could reasonable be concluded that he was a pre-eminent mystic reformer and a radical thinker who questioned the feudalistic ideologies and advocated for harmony and true spiritual experience. His greatest accomplishment was

in affecting the socio-cultural transformation while upholding the virtues of compassion and acceptance for all of humanity. His poetry stands in a distinct category as it dispenses with many traditional conventions. O.P. Rahlan very rightly points out the characteristic features of Kabir's poetry in the following words: ‚Kabir had that daring to say the truth and the heroism to suffer its consequences. Kabir's poetry, therefore, stands in a very different category, as it breaks through many conventional bondages. It is the poetry of a free spirit.‛ (pp. 30)

Kabir's position in the tradition of saint poets is supreme. Renouncing all things of this humdrum life, the saint rues the tendency to hoard and usurp and makes a strong proposition in favour of penury and simplicity above all the virtues of the earth. In a detached state of mind, he receives greatest happiness. This detached state of being offers greater happiness to the bhakt by way of its offerings of saboori or contentment – the rewards of fakiri – which is the condition of being utterly free from desires, greed and lust for power, fame and even belongingness. Kabir's poetry offers an opportunity for a sustained multilogue with the self, with the highest power, with the humanity and with the cosmos. His poetry should be read and appreciated by successive generations for greater awakening from ignorance and to establish the possibility of the 'celebration of the self. His writings serve as a key to untying the knots of bewilderment and for unleashing the powers of the self.

Notes

i   https://www.boloji.com/mystic-songs-details/14/ud-jayega-huns-akela

ii   https://www.boloji.com/mystic-songs-details/5/moko-kahan-dhoonde-re

iii http://sacred-songs.blogspot.com/2007/06/kabir.html

iv   https://www.boloji.com/doha-details/6/sayeen-itna-deejiye

v   As qtd. in Sisir Kumar Das‛s essay ‚The Mad Lover‛ pp.20-35

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14

Sisters of Resistance: Gender Constraints in a Victorian Novel and its Korean-American Retelling

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Abstract

This essay examines two novels, for purposes of comparative analysis. The first is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, a Victorian novel published in 1847. The second, *Re Jane* (2015)*, is a contemporary rereading of Brontë's work, told from the perspective of Korean-American author Patricia Park, and set it the early 2000s. Our theoretical approach is developed through the work of scholars such as Rita Felski and Maria Rita Kehl, who aid us in understanding literary (re) constructions of what it means to be a woman, in different time and places. We have also engaged with Monteiro's work on the Victorian Era and its values, and Lee and Stephens, who study gender in Korean-American fiction. We include excerpts from both novels as examples of how patriarchal bonds are portrayed and/or through characters' acts and speech. Hence, certain passages are examined, in an effort to reveal how the retelling transmutes the original, transforming a Victorian protagonist into a contemporary Korean-American woman as she comes of age across national and cultural borders. Park's novel thus joins the list of contemporary writers whose works illuminate a postcolonial and decolonial feminist agenda in which women make their way through hybrid cultures, existential predicaments and intersectionally-structured relations of power and empowerment.

Keywords: Re-reading classics. Korean-American Literature. Jane Eyre. Re Jane. Women novelists.

Introduction

Two authors, two lives lived in different parts of the world, during different eras. The first author – Charlotte Brontë, born in England in 1816 – faced major ordeals simply to be able to be published, clearly expressed in the fact that she was initially obliged to go by a male pen name. The second author, Patricia Park, was born one hundred and forty-six years later, in the United States of America. She was raised in a Korean immigrant community in Queens, New York. A contemporary writer who did not have to fight the publishing industry as did the Victorian author she so admired; Park nonetheless had to battle prejudice within her own community.

You, my reader, might wonder what these authors have in common. As suggested above, Park found inspiration in the writer whom she welcomed as 'foremother', and decided to re-write Jane Eyre, Brontë's masterpiece, setting it in contemporary times. In an interview, Park affirms:

> When I was little and I'd misbehave, my mother used to say, in her broken English, ‚You act like orphan!‛< I realised that for my mother's generation of wartime Koreans, it meant behaving in a disgraceful way that brought shame to your family. When I first read JANE EYRE, I was struck by the similar epithets thrown at Jane–wicked, mischievous–as if she somehow embodied those qualities. My mind drew a link between the Korean post-war construct of the orphan and the Victorian one, and RE JANE was born. (Park, *Interview*)

Thus, emerges an unexpected connection between the Victorian Era and Korean post-war (Korean war) society which spurs Park's literary creation. Re Jane, published in 2015, transforms Brontë's main character, Jane Eyre, and turns her into Jane Re, the mixed-race child of a Korean mother and 'white' North American father. Park, by the means of the retelling, aims to reconstruct a character – both ordinary and remarkable – and reinvent her story, framed within a Korean-American context. She addresses issues of intersectional oppressions and reshapes the original plot, as her protagonist strives to carve a path for resisting patriarchal family patterns.

Jane Eyre is an orphan who spent most of her childhood living with aunt Reed in Gateshead Hall. As a relative of the Reed family, she is mistreated and made to feel like an outsider. The 'last straw' in her life there is the fateful episode in which, after Jane beats her cousin up, her

aunt locks her up in what they call the Red Room – the sinister, spooky place where uncle Reed died. This is where Jane has her first panic attack, collapses, gets ill and is eventually sent away to Lowood, a charity school. Years later, Jane is all grown up and makes her mind up to leave Lowood and find her own way in the world. The option that she has, as a young woman of her time, educated yet of modest means, is to seek employment as governess and tutor. Thus she ends up at the Thornfield estate, where she has been hired to school a French girl named Adèle, the ward of estate proprietor Edward Rochester. Rochester and Jane's ensuing love story, widely known by those who have read or read about this classic of world literature, involves a 'dark secret': his 'creole wife', locked up as a 'madwoman in the attic'[1].

Park's main character Jane Re – yet in the Korean language, family name comes first, allowing for the play on words in the book's title, Re Jane (or the return of Jane Eyre) – is a Korean-born orphan. Although, like Brontë's Jane, she is also sent to live with her relatives, Sang and Hannah, she spends her adolescent years with them, in their home within the Korean community in Flushing, Queens, New York. Jane Re works at Sang's grocery shop, which has been simply baptized 'Food'. Rather than the boarding school Lowood, this contemporary Jane's place in the 'outside world' is, initially, a tech company where Jane, a modern-day college graduate, is offered a job. When the company runs into trouble – its CEO is accused of insider trading – a jobless Jane is convinced by her friend, Eunice Oh, to accept a babysitting position with a couple, the Mazer-Farleys, to assist them in the care of their adopted Chinese daughter, Devon. In an interesting twist of plot, Park constructs the character of Beth Mazer – who, in allusion to Bertha, spends many hours 'locked' in her own attic, but by choice, as she is a professor of Women's Studies at Manson College, a feminist and Victorian researcher. Ed, Rochester's double, is an ordinary high school teacher. Further inspired by the first novel, Park has Ed fall for Jane, whom he seduces, in an affair which is consummated, in properly contemporary fashion. Yet the 'betrayal of Bertha/Beth' frightens Jane, who departs – and soon sets out on a search for self-understanding that takes her back to her place of origin, in Seoul, South Korea.

As you, my reader, can see after this brief introduction to these two novels, both Janes are separated by a vast span time and a wide ocean. *Jane Eyre* was set in Victorian England (1837 – 1901), period of the

expansion of British Empire, of strict rules and constraints regarding women's conduct and bodies, of Puritan doctrine. It was also the dawn of first wave feminism, as bourgeois women, largely restricted to the private sphere, as well as socialist women, 'factory girls' and, in some parts of the world, abolitionists – put women's political and economic rights on the social agenda.

On the other hand, Re Jane is immersed in the predicaments of the early 21st century, as translated into an Asian – (North) American context: her community is a very particular one, made up of Korean immigrants living in Flushing, a neighbourhood in the borough of Queens, in New York City. Discussions on gender, race, class, ethnicity and belonging come up in this novel. The cultural problematics of living in South Korea and the United States are evoked and developed, in issues that speak not only of class (in NYC, for example, the contrast between lower middle-class Koreans and upper middle class professionals adds thickness to the plot) and gender (e.g. what constraints exist for Jane and her young female friends), but also the hybridization of cultures[2]. This latter matter finds poignant expression, for example, in the condescending attitudes of 'whites' (e.g. the Mazer-Farleys' self-conscious, uncomfortable deference to Jane's origins) yet also in the discomfort and bias that Jane's relatives express toward her own 'mixed-blood' status. The way in which women of different social groups, ethnicities and generations seek empowerment and/or (re) negotiate the terms of their own existence is also a major thread running through the novel.

As we have indicated, Park's main character, Jane Re, is constructed in clear reference to Brontë'sJane, albeit transformed in a socio-historical sense and through her literary reshaping. Brontë's themes are echoed and reflected, primarily as literary inspiration and impulse, yet social, historical and cultural conditions are vastly different, leading to the complex recreation of plot and storyline. Therefore, it is a must to think over the act of retelling stories, which Stephens and McCallum describes as,

> what seems to us to be the crux of the difference is that any particular retelling may purport to transmit elements of a culture's formative traditions and even its sustaining beliefs and assumptions, but what it always discloses is some aspect of the attitudes and ideologies pertaining at the cultural moment in which that retelling is produced. (Stephens and Mccallum IX)

Examining both novels, we discover a retelling that transmits the values of its original story. Yet each one brings its own context of production to bear. In Re Jane, the context of Asian immigrants to the U.S.A. and their cultural patterns of community construction loom large, forming the basic fabric from which Park chooses to select and weave – and invent – the threads of her story.

According to Felski (132), women writers use myths – shape-shifters, which provide new reading possibilities, contingent upon on the time and context that are being written and read – , 'borrowing' stories from the traditional canon and endowing them with new meanings, ‚rewriting them in novel and unexpected ways. Embracing narratives as an indispensable device, they draw on old plots to fashion new meanings.‘ This is also a trend seen in postcolonial and decolonial literatures, in which writers take old stories and re-shape them, transforming tradition/imperialism into identity/agency.

Furthermore, as Bonnici (613) argues, rewritings can be seen as strategies that allow authors to appropriate from canonical texts and question them. Thus, feminist, or decolonial or postcolonial re-fashionings may be seen as 'subversive replies' to canonical legacies and the questions they pose. Clearly, Park's *Re Jane* can be understood in these terms, as a rewriting of *Jane Eyre* which transmutes the original meanings into 21st century issues of race/ethnicity and immigration, calling into them question along with gender and class matters – (the latter, themes at the root of the Victorian novel). In this regard, Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality is an essential one, explaining how oppression emerges from the melding of different structures of power which are played out simultaneously.

Another analytic reference is Maria Rita Kehl'sbrilliant ‚Deslocamentos do feminino‘, which takes as point of departure another 19th century classic portrait of a woman, Emma Bovary. For Kehl, the inscription of subjects, whatever the gender, is never firmly established within the discourse of the ‚Other‘. Rather, such discourses are slowly changed through the displacement of social agents, through the shifting of class, gender – and race/ethnicity – over the course of time. Furthermore, Kehl sees discourse as alive; thus, speech itself is in flux, responding to the times, signs and changes of people and their inner worlds. As researchers, we search to pick up the cues, to study language

and its speakers. Hence, speakers'/writers' practices, as they pertain to particular times, may be fleshed out through texts such as the ones we examine here, a methodological strategy enables us to move across time and places, providing insights into processes of historical change and contemporary experience.

Many important episodes in Brontë's and Park's narratives could be taken up here, in our analysis of plot, character and social time. Given the constraints posed by the necessary brevity of the present text, we have selected three excerpts, for initial contrast and discussion. We focus here on family discourse, that is, how patriarchal rhetoric is depicted within the Reed and Re households, examining the behaviour and attitude of characters, how they convey societal beliefs on women, and how – and this is the crux of the matter – what two very different, and very distant Janes try to resist them[3].

Acting accordingly their own Time and Space

At the very beginning of Brontë's Jane Eyre, there is an episode in which the main character, still a child at that time, is harassed by her male cousin, who is merciless in his mistreatment of her. In Jane's own words, ‚Accustomed to John Reed's abuse, I never had an idea of replying to it; my care was how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult` (Brontë 4-5).

She was used to complacency and acceptance of abuse. Nonetheless, in this very episode, she ends up rebelling against her cousin John. In response to his acts, she replies fiercely that he is a ‚Wicked and cruel boy!`, ‚like a murderer`, ‚slave-driver` (Brontë 5) and punishes him with her own hands (perhaps by choking – the narrator claims she was uncertain as to what in fact she had done).

Her maids and aunt reprimand her behaviour – ‚Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!` (Brontë 5), says a maid – , and she is now seen as a ‚mad cat`. She is then shunted off to the Red Room by her aunt, the place where her uncle died, now considered haunted. This scene is of enormous significance, as it is the first time that Jane physically and verbally reacts to the mistreatment she has suffered at the hands of the Reeds. Furthermore, the stifling attitude assumed by the similarly restricted household servant clearly reinforces what was expected from a girl at that time: demure, meek, submission to men's abuse. In this case, it

is also worth emphasizing that Jane is not seen as John's cousin; rather, she is ‚less than a servant' (Brontë 5), an outsider in the Reed household and doubly oppressed by her gender and class statuses.

For us, readers, Victorian patterns and moral norms are a well-known part of history, and something we tend to put comfortably behind us, perhaps more clearly the case those of us who live in the contemporary ‚West'. Famously described in Coventry Patmore's poem, ‚the Angel in the House', Jane Eyre's behaviour is a rupture, an interruption, demonstrating the ‚passionate behaviour' that is to follow the character throughout a great part of the book. Passion, in Brontë's novel, becomes a way of fighting the rules and restrictions of Victorian society.

Whereas ‚passion' becomes, for Jane Eyre, an attitude of rebellion, Park's Jane Re deals with another issue: lack of ‚nunchi'. Jane Re's community demands a particular mode of reading social situations, and then behaving accordingly. It is condensed in aforementioned concept of ‚nunchi', a romanisation of the Korean word ‚눈치'. The term is consistently repeated in Park's novel, conveying how ‚well-educated' people in Korean values – based on Confucianist ideas – can use their good-sense, acting properly and politely.

Not altogether unlike the situation faced by Jane Eyre in relation to her cousin is an incident in which Jane Re tries to argue with her uncle Sang on an ordinary matter – a credit on sodas sold at his store. When Jane is about to complain that her uncle had not informed her of an extra credit, thus allowing the trickery of the delivery man them, her aunt, Hannah, interferes and scolds her, ‚Don't talk back to your uncle', ‚Are you trying to make his high blood pressure go up?' (Park 8). For Jane's aunt and uncle, whose minds reflect the beliefs of their community, to question or contradict your elders is unfathomable. To have ‚nunchi' is to accept the given. Such attitudes seem to flow from the assumptions of Korean Neo-Confucianism in which filial piety and female docility are expected (Lee and Stephens 77).

Aunt Hannah throws other things in her niece's face, alluding to moral debt. ‚Don't you know how lucky you are? < You should be grateful.' (Park 8). Thus, as an orphan taken care of by merciful relatives, she is expected to compensate with deference rather than by expressing demands, expectations and complaints. This aspect of her ‚low status' is

compounded by the fact that she is daughter of a Korean mother and an American father, a soldier – fruit of the type of union that is scorned by Koreans. Moreover, her mother had married the Korean against her own father's will, another behaviour translated here as a complete lack of ‚nunchi`. Hence, Jane is sentenced to inherit her mother's stigma.

Placing this episode at the very beginning of the novel, Park initially induces us to believe that Jane is seen as inferior by her uncle and aunt, and their children. However, through the complexities of a character that apparently experiences both individually and culturally-forged difficulties in expressing her feelings, we are led to go beyond the seemingly disavowed bonds of affection; the story reveals that in fact, Sang truly sees Jane as his daughter. The tensions, ambiguities and richness of family ties are subject matter of this novel, revealing an often-hidden warmth alien to the middle-class Victorian family that takes in the orphan heroine of Brontë's Victorian novel.

Indeed, Jane Re confronts gender-based constraints coming from her family and her community, as they are intersected by issues of generation and status. ‚Nunchi` embodies this type of coercion, most of the time levelled at Jane in the interests of correcting her behaviour, to bring herself up to par with standards of 'good family upbringing'. Yet Jane Re's narrative destabilises rigid notions of good family upbringing, as Jane, not compliant with the politics of nunchi, eventually finds her own way of dealing with family expectations. She neither marries a Korean man, nor takes over Sang's grocery store, but asserts her own autonomy from traditional Korean beliefs that she finds constraining.

In the 'mother narrative', the discourse on women's behaviour that inheres within the Reed household emanates from John's speech and actions yet is supported by his mother and her maids. Women's acquiescence was a given, that is, to agree and accept mistreatment without complaint, to incarnate the ‚angel of the house` – symbol of morality and chastity (Monteiro 61). Yet despite the rigidity of the times, Jane Eyre challenges the status quo by acting according to her will and ‚passions`, withstanding punishment and even learning to manage her own passionate behaviour so as not to become another 'madwoman in the attic' (Gilbert and Gubar).

In Re Jane, patriarchal discourse hides underneath the importance of ‚nunchi`, the Confucian values rooted in Korean community. Like her

‚Victorian sister‛ Jane Eyre, Jane Re's resistance comes from the very bottom of her heart, her subjective construction as a young woman, what makes sense to her, what she is willing to accept. We must address the fact that most of Jane Re's rebellion against ‚nunchi‛ comes from the experiences outside of her Korean community, that is, is forged in the hybrid cultural influences that shape her life as a young woman growing up in New York – and later reshaped through her conflicting feelings regarding Beth Mazer, for whom she works as live-in nanny. It is Beth – modern day scholar who yet in some is meant as allusive to the Bertha Mason whose literary figure she knows so well – initiates Jane in 20th century feminist studies. Although Jane Re, already a college graduate, initially looks upon Beth's attempt at mentorship with a certain degree of irritation and estrangement, it ultimately becomes a source, a ground from which to reflect upon her own acts, experiences and relationships.

Conclusions

In summary, in comparing and contrasting both narratives, we see that both protagonists are undermined by the structure oppression of their times. The first Jane is subjected to Victorian patriarchal discourse of the ‚angel in house,‛ while the second has to face Neo-Confucian values of female docility and filial respect, embodied in the term ‚nunchi‛. Also evident are the layers of oppression: class and gender – in the mother narrative – and class, gender, ethnicity, race, generation and status – in the retelling. Ultimately, the rereading provides a new complexity of meanings that speak of contemporary society, and the densely woven web of women's lives inside multicultural spaces, including the significance of the sign 'family' for different cultures.

The purpose of the current study was to analyse how the retelling aggregates new forms of telling a story as significant for feminist literary theory as *Jane Eyre*. The process of actualising the classic, transmuting it to postmodern time, raises issues of what is to be a contemporary *woman in-between* (Flushing, Brooklyn and Seoul) (Bhabha), transformed by the discourses provided in each of the places that inhabit her. This also actualises resistance as a possibility, as its main character is able to break loose from the oppressive bonds of family and community, while at the same time finding in them elements that widen notions of who *belongs* to the broader society.

As an Asian North American woman, immersed in spaces of constant negotiations and renegotiations of meanings, Jane undertakes a dense journey of self-discovery. She faces moments of culture shock (particularly, Beth-Jane and Sang-Jane clashes of discourse) and learns how not to comply with the constraints of her community of birth (South Korea and Flushing) while reaffirming its warmth, its value and its 'difference'. We, as readers, are allowed new insight into the formation of postmodern women within multicultural community (ies).

For the reasons expounded above, we are able to assert that a key contribution of Park's one is the way it thrusts a classical story into the fray of postcolonial and decolonial feminism[4]. Cultural hybridisation, intersectionality and specific forms of resistance are illustrated, speaking to the challenges and struggles of the 21st century women of colour who multiple layers of constraints. As Jane renegotiates with her family on her own terms, she becomes able to speak for herself, to stand her ground. It is on this *in-between* ground of intertwined discourses and locations that Jane discovers the possibility of change, of freedom.

Notes

i. A well-known allegory in feminist scholarship taken from Brontë's character Bertha and extensively studied by Gilbert and Gubar. It is considered a powerful image that illustrates the effects of the repression of women's desire; 'going mad' would be the only possible way out of Victorian patriarchal constraints, a tragic freedom.

ii. Bhabha's concept of the hybrid leads to a complex notion of cross-cultural exchanges that construct multicultural spaces and places. Notions of 'pure, authentic' culture are, in essence, a fallacy, and a fantasy of power.

iii. According to a definition provided by Lugones (746) ,Resistance is the tension between subjectification (the forming/informing of the subject) and active subjectivity, that minimal sense of agency required for the oppressing ---- resisting relation being an active one, without appeal to the maximal sense of agency of the modern subject'.

iv. Here, we address the difference between postcolonial and decolonial schools. Postcolonialism emerges in the 1980s and 90s, from the work of scholars such as Said, Bhabha and Spivak, diasporic writers whose point of departure was the imperial/ colonial past of the Middle East and South Asia. Decoloniality is a perspective emerging in the new millennium, in Latin America, seeking to address the specificities of its historical forms of oppression and their contemporary institutions and cultural manifestations. Despite differences, the similarities of decolonial and postcolonial critiques of the politics of knowledge production should be emphasized (Bhambra).

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BOOK REVIEW

1

Somethings Keep Happening in Mind

Title of the book: A Friendship with Time
Poet: Bibhu Padhi

A Friendship with Time, Bibhu Padhi,
Hornbill Press, Kolkata, 2021, pp. 108, Rs. 249/-

Reviewed by Jaydeep Sarangi, Principal, New Alipore College, Kolkata, WB

A seasoned poet Bibhu Padhi's sixteenth collection of poems A Friendship with Time uplifts whatever it limns – turning the trivial into the exalted and sublime. He cannot rest until he translates whatever moves him – into poems. For Padhi, anything that agitates, consoles, ignites, uplifts, electrifies and liberates – constitutes poetry.

Here is a poet, who enters into the home of thoughts unbidden without ringing the doorbell. Readers take a trip down memory lane and re-live the old moments again. Padhi strives to bring to surface what lies in his subconscious. History records what occurred, poetry what might be. That's why poetry has been defined as divine ecstasy.

To spin a thought's wing waiting is a kind of suspended animation. It is a stock currency of life. We wait for the rains before we can plough. Poet Padhi universalises the state of waiting:

,This is the time I wait for
Throughout the year –
For sleep, further sleep.` ('An Ordinary Day')

Some things keep happening in the poet's mind. Padhi lives through the pain and waits for rain to restore ease:

,I am enclosed by
the superstitious safety of my home
and I wish I were out in the rains.' ('Mid-July Rains')

For Padhi, life unfolds its roots and dreams. He thinks that at times, human mind is damp with cold and rain. Padhi's thoughts take notice of the seeds of our lives to be sown away into earth's ancient subsoil and dispensable prides of human journeys.

,What grows on life, except faith
And hope, what leaves sustain our trust
In our very own love for life's variety? ('Alone')

Human life is a happy journey where we meet up with people from different shores. A close bond with night develops gradually. The poet is eagerly waiting for a probable meeting with someone in night's dark business of things. Bibhu Padhi records details of each waiting watched through the night with love and care, with love and needs:

'Loves and needs to be with, even if it is for a night.
For another chance, it has to wait for another year –'

('A Night of Blessings')

The poet waits with his thirsty soul and a humble heart for life, love and truth. Friendship with time, loneliness, silence, birth and harvesting. We never notice but silences have their own mode of prayers. Words are few. A pair of remote lips are shy like the night's whisper. The poet notes that one doesn't need words for love and friendship. It's a chemistry of hearts in love.

Waiting makes man introspective. Engrossed in thought, the poet looks before and after and penetrates the hard facts of reality by forgetting the present. Padhi describes a vivid state of waiting:

,It seems during all these years
I have been waiting for things
To arrive on their own –.' ('Trying to Find Things')

For the poet love smiles, is quiet, like memory. The earth seems to wait. It waits for earthy remedy, a much wished for cure. The prophetic voice keeps the flame of hope in the midst of erratic times.

Human life is whirlpool of activities finding out missing history of things. The voids open up fast and furious. Whatever may happen, there is a strange leap to hold back to normalcy. Bibhu Padhi is a calm and

consistent soul maker. He recognises the spirit of birth and harvesting with mesmerising images:

,The world eagerly waits for your
devotion and effort, your
green finger's care.` ('Harvesting')

It is difficult to leave the place, once it is fixed to his name, links and roles. The poet explores how everything is, lives and breathes or just ceases to be. Every special intimacy is a smile and forgetting in time.:

,The mind seems to have
Turned the other way –` ('A Question of Faith')

The poet is engrossed with deep meditations on subjective truths. 'Hands' and 'fingers' are physical order of operators which are set as opposite to the 'sacred' order of the mind. Padhi is poet of subtle senses. His mind takes an inward route to receive 'the wind – swept pain'. He nourishes the feeling of being left alone with poetically erratic thoughts. His thoughts are random like movements of human minds, unpredictable. For the poet, he senses are higher than the body, the mind higher than the sense; above the mind is the intellect, and above the intellect is the Atman. His questions reveal a mind that seeks to free itself of the sadness of grief, too – a mind that has learned that it can find relief in night:

,Before its arrival, there are messages
That announce its arrival, in words(.)` ('A Night of Blessings')

The theme of death and departure in some of his poems in the volume is a delicate one to approach; these poems meditates upon nature, the monsoon rains, the rainy seasons, the temples or street happenings, the crispness of the air and the clarity these poems bring, refresh the poet's sensitive mind. In everyone is waiting and delayed; each for the others. Padhi'spoems.

The poet is fascinated by 'summer rain' which is the harbinger of hope in a flat and uninteresting life. Deeply moved by the arrival of rain, the poet sings out with limitless joy. Stories of monsoon and butterfly gather and disperse. The poet shows his relation with Orissa faith, hope, dreams, and memories. Padhi has written several poems on the Sun Temple at Konarak, Cuttack and Mahanadi. His realisations are more than physical, a belated friendship with time:

‚The rest follows in ragged lines
of black and white. Afternoon.‘ (‚Afternoon in Summer, Cuttack')

Life doesn't give us a day off. Movement between sublime portrayals of the beauty of life's unending flow of continuance and the changing habits of objects, places Bibhu Padhi into company with great sensuous mystique John Keats' concept of the ‚negative dialectic.‘ Padhi reminds us how literature is a special mode of knowing the world and truths and perhaps, it can give us an adequate apprehension of palpable experiences through wide ranges of images and symbols related to time's daily demand and its routine consequences:

‚Everything else – all that
Promises to be true – is vague
And nameless(.)‘ (‚Body')

The title of the collection is itself intriguing; but as one reads on, the intention is made clear in the poet's titular poem at the end. The entire collection is a fuzzy relation between life with time, 'slow meetings' and 'quick departures'. This friendship is with 'small words' and 'songs of the hour'. It's about a belated friendship or yearning for a friendship. Padhi thinks that time is everywhere, ‚inside yesterday, today in/the dreams of tomorrow.‘ (‚An Hour from the End of the Year')

Each poem in this collection represents Bibhu Padhi's personal yearning to find what connects images, and each poem lies like a small gem waiting to be unturned. Padhi is always a very special poet who haunts us with exotic, unshared meanings. Padhi's achievement lies in the fact that the precise, mellifluous and intimate words have been able to convey the essence of deep psychological thought and the clinical trekking of the mind which transcend the limitations generally expected by the very form.