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FROM THE EDITOR

Literary Oracle comes to life with the publication of its first issue: *Literary Oracle* Vol. 1.1 January-June 2014. It is a humble gift offered by Authorspress and the Editor to the literate on the eve of the 68th anniversary of India's independence. It aspires to be one of the best of its kind in the field of literature, language and its application. It is a modest step taken by me, Sudarshan Kcherry, the Managing Editor, and a group of erudite academics from across the globe who understand the urgent requirement of the teachers and scholars for a credible platform for publication of their scholarly endeavours. The purpose is exclusively academic and singularly favourable to fostering robust quality in research and publication worldwide. The journal encourages independent thinking and promotes both experienced scholars and budding researchers. It has a competent referral committee and is double blind peer-reviewed. The editors are sympathetic towards the new researchers, yet quality is not compromised with.

In an era where Humanities is being ignored by the growing greed for technology and market, the publication of *Literary Oracle* is a bold step to draw attention back to insightful literary criticism. The global scene is vastly multicultural and culture itself has become multidimensional. Literature too has become a heady mixture of cultures and as a reflection literary criticism has become interdisciplinary. Scholars have been drawing heavily from various fields of knowledge to analyse texts and culture thereby making critical analysis a potpourri of ideas. Though not oracular in nature, the journal offers space to theoretical insights in the field of

culture and literature. The present issue hosts about 18 articles on diverse literary interests keeping in the true temper of the diversity of its country of birth, India. The first article by Debashree Dattaray discusses the scenario of comparative literature in India, which has been a curiosity for litterateurs across the globe for decades now. The article 'Chitrangada: A Modern Myth' compares the myth of the princess Chitrangada from the great Indian epic *Mahabharata* and its nineteenth century adaptation into a dance drama by Rabindranath Tagore. Among other things, the article is an engagement with the woman's question in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century while it engages with anti-colonial discourse.

The article on '*Feminism, nation and the state in the production of knowledge since 1989: An epistemological exercise in political translation*' has been contributed by Rada Ivekovic, the noted feminist activist and theorist from Eastern Europe. Her article addresses the problems of women in a war ravaged and conflict ridden Eastern Europe. She talks about identities wrought about by '-isms' of which Feminism becomes a victim. The discussion questions and problematises normative value systems, issues of nations, boundaries, territories and language. The rich deliberation is followed by six interesting and wide-ranging articles on feminist studies by senior academics as well as research scholars, which comprise articles on African-American and Indian womanist writers. There are articles on postfeminist theory and on ecofeminism. The next two essays in this volume analyse the short stories and a novel of the all time favourite Indian writer, R.K. Narayan, respectively. Both the articles do justice to the literary production of Narayan. Language and culture are inseparable components of any literary production; the question that arises at times is the manner of conveying this to the masses. The article on '*Translating Language and Culture in the 21st Century Classroom*' offers a very pragmatic approach to English language teaching and transferring culture to an audience much removed in experience and imagination from the matter served.

The article by Bouhassoun is a discussion on translation's social relevance as communication and its inability to sustain itself under the burden of theory. He analyses translation in the Arab world and says that 'the act of translation is being carnivalized and cannibalized by philosophers, writers, poets, linguists and even translators' and brings to light the faults in the translation of Gibran's *The Prophet*. Translating culture leads one deep into the territory of philosophy. What we take to be life and existence is governed by principles that are explained by philosophy alone. Religion forms an inevitable part of this. Two articles in this volume focus on religious philosophies of Islam and Buddhism, respectively. Abhibbunisha Begum attempts to define Islamic philosophy and analyse Rushdie's texts in that light. Dr Jacques Coulardeau delves deep into *Abhidhama* Buddhism trying to understand the underlying philosophy of peace. He wishes to 'consider the role of the mind in Buddhism as the intercessor between the individual and the surrounding world'. This essay is informative, as it is interesting and educative. The penultimate essay on Philip Roth's *Nemesis* broods over the issues of life and death. War and devastation serve as motif in *Nemesis*. The writers explore the complexity of living under the constant threat of death in this essay. Traversing the diverse fields of literary and philosophical analyses we come to the ultimate part of our literary sojourn in this volume. This volume could not have felt complete without a touch of indigenous/regional literature through translation. Professor Sachhidananda Mohanty's translation of Pt. Nilakantha Das's "The Evolution of Oriya Literature" is a pointer to the history and evolution of one of the important classical languages of India. This translation is a valuable contribution, in that, it has made available to a wider reading public the richness of Oriya literary history. We would always welcome such work as it offers insight into the literature of lesser known languages of the world.

This volume is richer for the review of the book *Angel's Wisdom for Your Life* by Mani Goel, reviewed by Dr Bhoi. It is

in keeping with the theme of this collection of essays and contributes to the wholeness of literary endeavour.

I must thank all our advisors and members of the editorial board for their encouragement and help. Editing this journal has been challenging and rewarding work. The dream of seeing *Literary Oracle* actually in print has finally come true. I thank all the contributors for making this journal vibrant.

Here's hoping for a happy future for *Literary Oracle*. We hope to see this journal make outstanding contributions to the domain of literary theory, criticism and language.

Shruti Das
Editor

RESEARCH PAPERS

Comparative Literature in India:¹ A Perspective

DEBASHREE DATTARAY

In 1907, Rabindranath was invited by the stalwarts of the newly established National Council of Education or *Jatiya Siksa Parisad* (1906)² to speak on Comparative Literature. He uses the term 'Viswa-Sahitya' or World Literature to indicate a Comparative study of literature, a term which immediately reminds one of *Weltliteratur* used by Goethe in 1827. Rabindranath opines:

Just as this earth is not the sum of patches of land belonging to different people, and to know the earth as such is rusticity, so literature is not the mere total of works composed by different hands. Most of us, however, think of literature in what I have called the manner of rustic. From this narrow provincialism we must free ourselves; we must strive to see the work of each another as a whole, that whole as a part of man's universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestations through world literature. (Quoted in Bose, Buddhadeva, "Comparative Literature in India", *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 8, 1959)

When the Bangla poet, academician and thinker, Buddhadeva Bose, established the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur *University* in 1956, the thrust had been on non-English, and therefore anti-colonial literary traditions. As early

as 1956, Bose marks out a clear trajectory for the discipline of Comparative Literature as follows:

Potentially, India is one of the richest fields for Comparative Literature... The history of India is a story of absorption, adaptation and assimilation, of continual coming to terms with foreign influences, and of resistance transformed into response. We have great links with many cultures of the East and West; our religions have influenced Western thought; interest in our arts and literatures is now keen and widespread. If Comparative Literature is permitted to develop, it can be of service in bringing India and the world spiritually closer and it can make a small contribution to the growth of that cosmopolitan spirit which is much more discussed than achieved. (Bose: 1-10)

The emergence of Comparative Literature as a concept in the western world may be dated from Goethe's (1749-1832) use of the term "world literature," which he coined in the last decade of his life as a reaction to Romantic — even pre-Romantic — literary criticism, breaking through the traditional limits of Occidental literature by revaluating popular poetry and the literatures of the Middle Ages and of the Orient. Speaking to his young disciple Johann Peter Eckermann in January 1827, the seventy-seven-year-old Goethe used his newly minted term *Weltliteratur*, which passed into common currency after Eckermann published his *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* in 1835, three years after the poet's death.

One of the most important studies exploring Comparative Literature methodology in India has been *Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice* (1989) edited by Amiya Dev and Sisir Kumar Das. The book was an outcome of a seminar held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on 22-26 June, 1987 on "Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice." The book is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the different schools, orientations and ontological/epistemological standpoints of Comparative Literature. The second section focuses on inter-literariness or literary transactions as the *modus operandi* of the discipline. The

third section devotes itself to particular cases of reception, themes, genres and movements. The fourth section emphasizes upon literary theory, translation and historiography. As is self-explanatory, the four sections of the book discuss the expanding boundaries of the discipline of Comparative Literature methodology. The volume demands an understanding of the tools offered by Comparative Literature to study literary processes and phenomena. One of the most crucial essays included in the fourth section of this volume and which marked a direction for reading texts alien to one's culture is Amiya Dev's "Literary History from Below." Dev's principal premise in this essay was that the cornerstone of literary historiography lies in the fact that data constructs theory and not vice-versa. In his essay, Dev continues a discourse initiated by Douwe Fokkema in his Erasmus Lectures in Harvard in 1983 (Fokkema 1984).

Fokkema had added to Jurij Lotman and Umberto Eco's ideas of code. To Lotman's concept of the language and literature codes, he made an addition of the genre code, the group or socio-code and idiolect. He further developed upon Umberto Eco's concept of overlapping codes to the writers. On the basis of the codes, Fokkema illustrates the relationship between text and author, text and social context. Starting from Lotman's notion of code, Fokkema distinguishes five codes that operate in virtually all literary texts: the linguistic code, the literary code, the generic code, the period code, and the author's idiolect. It is, however, the period code that is of particular interest to the literary historian, and Fokkema demonstrates the usefulness of this concept of period code in the writing of literary history by outlining the period codes of Modernism and Postmodernism. Fokkema is also particular in his assertion that a period code and a socio-code are not synonymous in their connotation. He further delineates the difficulties of envisaging a period code within the paradigms of a Western literary tradition. Amiya Dev explores literary historiography as a discourse and further enlarges the concept of the period code as a part of literary theory. He asserts that

If the reader is in history, then all his consciousness is also in history. (Dev 1989: 320)

This theoretical premise forms a crucial entry point for non-indigenous readers of indigenous works of art. It encapsulates the idea of responsibility and positionality in terms of reading a literary work, which has been relegated to the margins. More importantly, the reader is forced to take into cognizance the entire gamut of intra- and inter- literary relationships and transactions, as well as shifts in genre or socio-code. This is because there cannot possibly be a definite and absolute concept of a period. The flexibility of the period skirts through issues of the avant-garde or the canonized and depicts the multiplicity and duplicity of the same.

In this process, it would be inadequate to fit material to an assumed epistemological base. Dev's proposition of a 'literary history from below' ensures understanding in terms of both synchrony and diachrony. In fact, he calls for a dialogue between the same. Also, the concept of time is defined in all its multiplicity. Dev opines:

Literary historiography cannot therefore be a simple matrix, regular and predictable. (Dev 1989: 324)

Amiya Dev's theoretical location marks an entry point for the reader in India where the relationship between Indigenous commonality and differences as the prime site of comparative literature may be identified. The essay foregrounds the apprehension of homogenization of differences in the name of unity. Dev's search for common denominators and a possible pattern of togetherness locates reception of Indigenous studies in India as well. One is able to perceive Indigenous literature as a fluid entity rather than being a fixed or determinate entity. Indigenous literature in its multilingual and multicultural background represents an *apriori* situation for Comparative Literature and conditions of diversity. One is able to foreground the primary works of Indigenous authors and thus comprehend the respective Indigenous epistemologies,

philosophies and value systems. The concept of 'reception theory' as an approach within literary criticism pays attention to the function of the reader in a process of literary experience.

According to Robert Holub, the term horizon of expectations refers "to an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a system of references or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text." (Holub: 59). Jauss discusses the process of formation of a horizon of expectations in the text as follows:

A literary work, even when it appears to be new, does not present itself as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions. It awakens memories of that which was already read, bring the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the "middle and end," which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading according to specific rules of the genre or type of text. (Jauss: 39)

The significant contribution by Jauss in this context is his ability to connect general and literary history. Jauss further envisages that the task of literary history involves the representation of literature both synchronically and diachronically and also in the context of a 'special history' in a unique relationship with general history. Jauss elucidates that the horizon of expectations develops through the reader's life experience, socio-cultural customs and understanding of the world which have an effect on the reader's social behaviour. In addition, according to Jauss, hermeneutics is a critical element in the ever-changing "horizons of the interpretations," which defines a distinction "between arbitrary interpretations and those available to a consensus" (Jauss: 147)

Jauss' approach to the idea of hermeneutics focuses on the importance of history and incorporates the philosophical

hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), who was a follower of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Gadamer explains hermeneutics in following terms:

...all interpretations of past literature arise from a dialogue between past and present. Our attempts to understand a work will depend on the questions which our own cultural environment allows us to raise...Our present perspective always involves a relationship to the past, but at the same time the past can only be grasped through the limited perspective of the present...a hermeneutical notion of "understanding" does not separate knower and object in the familiar fashion of empirical science; rather it views understanding as a "fusion" of past and present. (Selden et al: 55-56)

Therefore, the science of hermeneutics delineates two roles for the reader, viz., that of the 'implied reader' and secondly, that of the 'actual reader'. Holub points out the concept of the implied reader as controversial as it implicates the reader with a 'textual condition' as well as in the 'process of meaning production'. (Holub: 84)

Wolfgang Iser, one of the prominent figures in Reception theory, introduces and defines the term 'implied reader' as one which

incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process. (Iser: xii)

The term implied reader is defined as "the reader whom the text creates for itself and amounts to a network of response-inviting structures, structures, which predispose us to read in certain ways. (Selden et al: 56) In contradistinction, the actual reader is defined as the reader who "receives certain mental images in the process of reading; however, the images will inevitably be coloured by the reader's existing stock of experience." Jauss links literature and society in a close connection by adding the concept of horizon of expectations to the idea of reader-response advocated by Iser. Jauss argues,

"The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectation..." (Jauss: 39)

Hans Robert Jauss (1921-1997), one of the main contributors to Reception Theory, published an essay, "The Change in the Paradigm of Literary Scholarship" in 1969. In this essay, Jauss focuses on the relevance of interpretation by the reader, replacing the obsolete literary scholarship methodology which involved the studies of accumulated facts. (Holub: 1) Reception Theory defines literature as the process of how the reader and the text interact with each other, and it has been a revolutionary way of looking at the history of literature and literary criticism. Reception Theory also confines the role of the reader within this process, and the "power" of the reader does not function as the dominant in the act of reading the text. This is indeed of the pivotal aspects of understanding Indigenous literatures which have been given to various ethnocentric and patriarchal biases over the years. Reception theory necessitates the involvement of the reader into the history of the literary process for an insightful interpretation of a text.

In the context of Comparative Indian literature, the functionality of concepts related to reader-response is problematized by the injuries of imposed change, political exclusion, and loss of identity. Indian leaders, writers and activists have been functioning within the constraints of state and international legal systems, activist lobbying strategies, and public ideas and expectations. They have been exploring ways towards an understanding and materialization of cultural justice while rearticulating, and re-dignifying the collective self. They have faced considerable challenges with theoretical positions which attempt to define their collective selves and identity as a people and a nation. Such impositions have often cost their right to autonomy.

Therefore, a narrative of reader-response relegated to the domain of hermeneutics in relation to individual texts would

be incomplete without considerations of the fluidity of the text in terms of authorial interventions and targeted readership. Rather, literary history needs to be envisaged as a discourse privy to the ups and downs of a postcolonial condition. Such an approach would invite dialogues which are 'temporally syncretic, that is, past and present are simultaneous in it.' (Dev 1989: 320)

For example, in the context of India, Amiya Dev has pointed out that India's principal literary languages themselves form a interlinked repository of cultural and literary processes. Consequently, according to Dev, no Indian literature is ever itself alone: "Bengali will be Bengali +, Panjabi Panjabi +, and Tamil Tamil +. In a multilingual situation there cannot be a true appreciation of a single literature in absolute isolation." (Dev 1984: 14) "The very structure of Indian literature is comparative," as Sisir Kumar Das has stated; "its framework is comparative and its texts and contexts Indian." (Quoted in Chandra Mohan: 97). Comparative Literature methodology therefore necessitates interdisciplinary practices which involves both the theoretical proclivities of the reader and an understanding of the historical process as well. Moreover, the methodology foregrounds literature as a social practice and its study involves a comprehension of all the social systems which help to produce and receive literature.

The normative conditions of a culture shape the selection of works that enter into it as world literature, influencing the ways in which the literary process is translated, marketed, and read. In India, for example, world literature comprises a dyadic identity within a multilingual situation and the pervasive postcolonial presence of the English language. This is the primary premise of Comparative Literature that literary expressions of a culture must be understood from the perspective of its own norms and conventions. The objective of Comparative Literature is to highlight differences within the purview of cultural relativism. It involves a corresponding openness to interpretation and response, rather than subjecting

itself to theoretical exclusiveness. The idea of Comparative Literature, then, is from its very inception a radical idea that refigures divisive antagonisms based on given and assumed parochialisms into relations of engagement and exchange – in other words, an idea and ideal for the future.

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Notes & References

1. Comparative Literature in India began in 1956 with the establishment of Jadavpur University in Calcutta, a university that had as its parent body the National Council of Education. The National Council which came into being in 1906 marked a significant moment in the history of nationalist struggle and initiated a system of education for the people of India in opposition to colonial systems of learning. It was at the National Council of

Education where Rabindranath delivered his speech on world literature – or *visvasahitya* – that he called Comparative Literature in 1907. Buddhadeva Bose, a poet associated with the modernist movement in Bangla poetry in the thirties of the twentieth century was called upon to head the Department.

2. The National Council of Education or Jatiya Siksa Parisad (1906) was established as a parallel system of education, outside the University of Calcutta. This was to become the present Jadavpur University.

Chitrangada : A Modern Myth

SHARMILA MAJUMDAR

Devdutt Pattanaik dedicated his book *Jaya*, which is an illustrated retelling of the *Mahabharata*, to 'all the scholars, authors, archivists, playwrights, film-makers and storytellers, both ancient and modern, who have worked towards keeping this grand and ancient epic alive through their songs, dances, stories, plays, novels, performances, films and teleserials for over 3000 years'. This description fairly covers the gamut of human creative activities through which the myths of the *Mahabharata* have been translated and kept alive. Translation of this kind, in its broadest sense, is non-literal, adaptive, interpretative and finally regenerative. These myths have lent themselves to psycho-analytical and anthropological studies that try to find the source and trajectory of their formation as well as to ideas and ideologies that make them points of reference and engage with their relevance and contemporariness.

I shall primarily concentrate on Rabindranath Tagore's interpretation of the story of princess Chitrangada in the eponymous dance drama. There are three salient points that I want to make in this paper; first, the act of translating the myth of Chitrangada into a dance drama, among other things, is an engagement with the woman's question of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century; secondly, it is also an engagement with anti-colonial discourse and thirdly these two areas are closely related.

The story of princess Chitrangada in the *Arjunavanavasa-parbadhyay* of the *Adiparva* in the *Mahabharata* has inspired quite a few works in literature, in cinema and performing arts. The

film and the novel that I cite later, I believe, strengthen the argument of the relevance and contemporariness of a myth.

Long before he composed the dance-drama (first performed in Kolkata in 1936) which is essentially meant to be performed through song and dance, he wrote a short play, also called *Chitrangada*, in 1892 which deals with the same subject matter and theme. A comparative study of these two works composed about forty years apart shows the trajectory of Rabindranath's development both as a poet and as a thinker. *Chitrangada* of the short play is mortified by the fact that she is not beautiful and couldn't attract Arjuna's attention; a failure she attributes primarily to her upbringing as a boy and continues in *Rachanavali*, (445) [trans. as 'I am no ordinary woman who can't express her love openly and consequently live the life of a widow; my desire must be consummated.'] But she doesn't have the maturity and the confidence of the princess of the dance drama though *Chitrangada* in the short play is bold enough to talk about her desire. In the intervening four decades the poet studied the woman's question from different perspectives, in different situations and tried to formulate his own position regarding the place of women in family and in society. In these forty years women in India came out of home in hordes, particularly in response to Gandhi's call for non-violent non-cooperation movement against the British, partook of responsibilities in public life; in general scripted their anti-colonial text by availing themselves of the colonizer's education system. The rhetoric of the dance drama is consequent upon all these changes.

If we accept that feminism is premised upon the contestation of patriarchal hegemony, equality of genders and engages with issues that are primarily about the vindication of the rights of women, then Rabindranath can arguably be described as a feminist. Born in 1861 into an enlightened Brahmo family of Kolkata he reaped as much benefit of the Bengal Renaissance as he contributed to it. The protagonists of the nineteenth century Renaissance in Bengal did not allow

the rationalist, liberal humanist view of life that they derived through exposure to European thought to be a derivative discourse altogether. They assimilated ideas borrowed from foreign sources with millennia old tradition. The *Mahabharata* with its complex narrative, philosophical and ideological discourses offered a happy hunting ground for exploring various spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual issues that were and still are relevant for India.

In this context Ashis Nandy's contention in *The Intimate Enemy* may be revisited. His argument that Indians lost and recovered their selves, considerably mutated, under colonialism holds good for Rabindranath also. I quote: "It is now time to turn to the second form of colonization, the one which at least six generations of the Third World have learnt to view as a prerequisite for their liberation. This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all" (Preface, xi). A few pages later in the same Preface he wrote: "The colonized Indians... in their own diffused way... tried to create an alternative language of discourse. This was their anti-colonialism; it is possible to make it ours, too" (xvii).

This is the argument I would like to pick up to make my point. What Rabindranath achieved in the dance drama is the synthesis of a myth of his Indian inheritance, his upbringing in the Western rationalist tradition – the Brahmo faith is deeply indebted to this tradition, his familiarity with various European discourses including the woman's question and his attempt to construct a modern Indian identity that will include all these – an analytical approach combined with sensitivity to the Indian situation.

Rabindranath took a romantic/idealistic view of man-woman relationship. Both the short play and the dance drama deal with the intrinsic merit of a relationship not founded upon physical beauty and hence sexual attraction. Though he could not deny the role of physical attraction in this relationship he

believed in privileging what he called human value over sheer carnal desire. The history of sexuality in India has explored the spectrum from the *Kamasutra*¹ of Vatsayana to the platonic love of Chandidas, the Brahmin poet and Rami, the washerwoman as can be found in the *vaishnav padavalis*.² Both these texts consolidate the feminist position by making the woman an equal partner in sexual as well as platonic relationships. That Rabindranath privileged the spiritual over the physical is probably the consequence of a combination of factors – his Brahmo upbringing, familiarity with European romantic literature and his idealistic nature. His translation/reinterpretation of the myth of Chitrangada captures a significant period in Indian history and the dance drama becomes a feminist text the seeds of which were sown in the short play. In the late nineteenth/early twentieth century India was negotiating a tryst with her past to emerge as a modern nation.

One of the major items on the agenda was the place of women in society and the myth of Chitrangada, the warrior princess who ruled a kingdom without a male chaperon, was perfect for appropriation and reinterpretation. The relationship between myth and history in Indian culture, as the two terms are understood in the West, is different. Nandy argues, 'the salience given by Indian culture to myth as a structured fantasy which, in its dynamic of the here-and-the-now, represents what in another culture would be called the dynamic of history.'

In other words, the diachronic relationships of history are mirrored in the synchronic relationship of myths and are fully reproducible if the rules of transformation are known' (*The Intimate Enemy*, 56-57). There is no synonymous word for myth in any of the Indian languages; the closest equivalent being the *Puranas* which in Sanskrit means the 'old' or the 'past'. The appropriation of myth as history and the claim of its superiority to history in India have rendered the *Mahabharata* amenable to intervention, to a continuous process of projecting the past in the present and anticipating future.

In the myth of Chitrangada, as it is narrated in the *Mahabharata*, she is the daughter of Chitrabahan, the king of Manipur. According to this myth Lord Shiva granted Pravanjana, Chitrabahan's ancestor the boon that in each generation only male children would be born into the royal family. When a daughter, Chitrangada, was born she was brought up as a boy; she was trained in archery, horse riding, the art of warfare and governance. Unlike royal girls she indulged in the game of hunting and after her father's death ruled the kingdom. Arjuna, the third of the five *Pandava* brothers fell in love with beautiful Chitrangada and when he asked for her hand, the father of the bride agreed to the proposal on the condition that the son born into the marriage would belong to the royal dynasty of Manipur and not to that of the *Kuru* to which Arjuna belonged. This is a major concession granted in patriarchy. Though in the epic when Arjuna marries Chitrangada her father is the ruler, in the dance drama from the very beginning she herself is the ruler.

Rabindranath adapted the myth in the dance drama, *Chitrangada* with a few deviations which are factually minor but significant for reinterpretation. In Rabindranath the princess and her entourage are described as *balakbeshi* which means dressed as boys. When Arjuna first saw her with her female friends in hunting gear he thought they were a bunch of boys whom he advised 'to go back to their mother's lap'. In the *Mahabharata* though, there is no mention of Chitrangada appearing before Arjuna in male attire. This is Rabindranath's innovation. In the short, poetic preamble to the drama he foregrounds the theme of dichotomy between the attraction for physical beauty and emotional and spiritual bonding in a love relationship. He has subtly worked his thesis by making Chitrangada appear in hunting gear thereby looking like a boy; not feminine and therefore not beautiful or attractive. He also subverts patriarchy in the initial exchange between Arjuna and Chitrangada. In the *Mahabharata* it is Arjuna who proposes which is essentially a male prerogative but in this drama Chitrangada proposes. When Arjuna refuses her, the

patriarchal equation of femininity, beauty and sexual attraction is reinforced. Disappointed Chitrangada prays to Madan, the god of love: 'Endow me with the grace of a flower, make me divinely beautiful, unparalleled on earth for just one year' (*Geetabitan*, 692). Here she makes what can be construed as a telling commentary on the culture of patriarchy, "All my life I have learnt the skills of a man and have not been initiated into the art of stealing a man's heart; Arjuna, the celibate, refused me and went away as he didn't see the woman in me" (692).

Later in the drama she is metamorphosed into a beautiful woman by the boon of Madan. Arjuna falls in love with her without knowing her true identity but pines for the woman he hasn't met, the princess Chitrangada, whom her subjects describe thus: "She is princess Chitrangada. She is a mother in her capacity for affection and a king for her prowess" (700).

Here the gender binary is clearly reinforced and subverted. Rabindranath carefully uses the masculine gender 'king' to describe the princess. It includes various tensions inherent in a traditional patriarchal society when it comes to deal with a person who conforms neither to normative masculinity nor to normative femininity. But there is no doubt in popular perception that 'affection' belongs to the domain of femininity and 'physical prowess' to masculinity.

The prose translation of the dialogue that follows foregrounds Tagore's engagement with sexual politics, privileging a feminist point of view over patriarchal hegemony. When Arjuna asks Chitrangada whether she knows the princess he uses the image of Goddess Durga, who in Hindu mythology is the supreme power incarnated in a female form, to describe her: "I heard that she is a woman in her capacity for affection; a man for her heroic abilities. She sits on her throne like goddess Durga riding her lion" (701). In the age of the *Mahabharata* patriarchal hegemony was less claustrophobic as can be found from the stories of women who like Krishna's sister and Arjuna's wife Subhadra, drive chariots

and marry of their own volition. But Rabindranath is dealing with a situation where highly structured patriarchy is firmly entrenched in the social system. So his Chitrangada replies, "She is ugly to say the least. She doesn't have arched eyebrows or eyes as black as kohl. She is a good shot but can't kill a man with looks. She doesn't have the usual feminine repertoire of pretension, coyness, feigned cruelty and suggestive gestures full of lyrical cadence" (701). Arjuna's thus expresses his appreciation, "I am eager to meet this valiant woman. She is like an unsheathed sword and thunder. She is not the stuff of desire of a lustful man but embodies the terrible beauty of the prowess of a *kshatriyo*"³ (701). The images he uses here are masculine and powerful. This is not as unusual in the context of the epic as it is in the context of early twentieth century Bengal where women were mostly confined to the domestic space and negotiating their entry into the public domain.

This conversation carried out through song and dance sums up the way gender is constructed, the binarization that nurtures it as well as the patriarchal position. No wonder that I am tempted to cite Simone de Beauvoir for her observation about how a child born as a female becomes a woman which subsequently became axiomatic. When Arjuna declares that he wants to accompany the heroic princess Chitrangada to the battlefield, Chitrangada decides to get rid of her disguise of a beautiful woman. Madan thus blesses her, "May all illusion be cleared, may the triumphant chariot of love come and may your lover realize your true self beyond physical beauty" (703).

In the final sequence Chitrangada meets Arjuna in her former self. There is no mention whether she is dressed as a man or a woman; she is only bereft of her beautiful and attractive appearance. Her beautiful appearance can be construed as disguise since Arjuna, like Orsino and Orlando, never knows who she is. The song that follows consolidates the feminist position. She says, "I am Chitrangada, I am a princess. I am neither a goddess nor an ordinary woman. I am not to be put on a pedestal and worshipped" (705). In the Indian context this assertion has a special significance. Among

many patriarchal tropes in traditional Indian society, deification of women, particularly in the role of mother, is probably the most useful. It creates the binary of deity and demon, chaste and vamp, wife and prostitute and so on and so forth.

If we remember that the norms of sexual and gender behaviour in the *Mahabharata* were less rigid and the intervening thirty odd centuries completely ossified them, we will be in a better position to appreciate the shift in attitude in the dance drama. The mothers of the five Pandava brothers were Kunti and Madri who were married to Pandu, though none of the sons was born of Pandu. This was acceptable in a culture where begetting a son was more important than the physical chastity of a wife. The society accepted five husbands of one woman if that served a political purpose. Draupadi was married to all the five Pandava brothers. The journey of princess Chitrangada, from the epoch of the *Mahabharata* to the days of Rabindranath, through a rigid, chauvinistic Brahminical culture that prescribed death for a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, foregrounds the self regenerative quality of a myth.

To my mind the cross dressing of Chitrangada which may have been inspired by Shakespeare's heroines is a validation of the assertion that anti-colonialism is a fall out of colonial enterprise. It is, as in Newton's third law, an equal and opposite reaction. As the English system of education replaced the *tols*, centres for Sanskrit learning or *madrasas*, centres for Islamic learning more and more Bengalees were exposed to English literature and Shakespeare caught their imagination like never before. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the first graduate of the University of Calcutta wrote an essay *Shakuntala, Miranda and Desdemona*⁴ that may be considered as one of the earliest examples of comparative literature written in Bengali. Rabindranath himself reportedly translated the entire play of *Macbeth* into Bengali, first few scenes of which have survived⁵. So it may not be too farfetched

to argue that he was inspired by the Elizabethan convention of employing boy actors in the roles of young females and the way Shakespeare has manipulated this convention in plays like *As You Like It* or *Twelfth Night*; that he appropriated the themes of disguise and dichotomy between appearance and reality that are recurrent in Shakespeare's Romantic comedies. Cross dressing and consequent disguise is a theatrical device that opens up avenues for exploring gender and feminist issues and Rabindranath gives it a whole new dimension.

The cross dressing of Rosalind or Viola is prompted more by the compulsion of their situations than by choice but for Chitrangada male attire is more a matter of choice than of compulsion. Both Rosalind and Viola take up the disguise of men after a fall in their fortune. For the female protagonists in Shakespearean comedies male attire gives them a kind of immunity against the male gaze, thereby protecting their feminine modesty. The purpose of male disguise is not to contest the gender stereotyping but to reinforce the binary that has been constructed over centuries. Viola, shipwrecked and without a male guardian having lost both father and brother, says to the Captain, "Conceal me what I am" (Act I, Scene II, line 53) and "Thou shalt present me as an eunuch to him" (Act I, Scene II, line 56). She assumes the name of Cesario and presents herself to Duke Orsino.

Viola as Cesario is effeminate. Orsino doesn't lose sight of her physical features which betray a pretty young woman.

Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious: thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part.
(Act I, Scene V, lines 31-34)

Shakespeare plays on the themes of disguise and the dichotomy between appearance and reality and various love interests working at cross purposes because of this. It also conforms to gender stereotyping. Olivia falls in love with Viola, a situation that not only inspires mirth but validates the

perception of femininity as frailty that is popular in many cultures across the globe. Here is a woman who vowed not to set her eyes on any man for seven years, falls for the first man she sees. Viola's comment on this situation is worth quoting:

How easy it is for the proper false
 In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!
 Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,
 For such as we are made of, such we be.
 (Act II, Scene III, lines 28 - 31)

As You Like It has a few situations similar to *Twelfth Night*. Banished from her uncle's court Rosalind as Ganymede engages in exploiting and reinforcing the gender binary. Her disguise of a man is contrasted with her womanly heart–

A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
 A boar-spear in my hand; and in my heart
 Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will–
 (Act I, Scene III, lines 112-114)

Again, in Act II, Scene IV her femininity is emphasized “I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought show itself courageous to petticoat:” (Lines 4-6). Normative patriarchal expectation of the woman being a weaker vessel and the hugely popular war of the sexes – between doublet and hose and petticoat – is reiterated but probably not whole heartedly as both Viola and Rosalind, like many of their ilk, in their wit and presence of mind are more than a match for their male counterparts; also these are not exclusively female virtues. Shakespearean women in these comedies – beautiful, feminine, appearing in male outfit, exhibiting strength of character and a sense of purpose foreshadow the modern woman who dares live her own life. Chitrangada's negotiation with double disguise of a male and a beautiful woman three centuries later testifies to the forces of colonization that changes the colonized society for ever.

The ‘us and them’ duel which forms the basis of preliminary feminist discourse is relegated to the sideline in

Chitrangada as Rabindranath makes the male counterpart more perceptive about the issues of gender parity. Arjuna, in spite of being the virile hero of an epic, is presented as the nineteenth century Bengal Renaissance man. Both Orsino and Orlando are confined within the framework of patriarchy. They are in love with beautiful women, feeding on music or love poems hung from the trees and happily marry them when they are revealed in their true identities. Physical beauty of their lady loves is at the core of their attraction for them. Rabindranath overturns the normative privileging of female physical beauty and sexuality over cerebral capacity and competence and his Arjuna even after he has accepted the love of Chitrangada in her beautiful self, pines to meet the unusual woman who is capable of both motherly affection and kingly prowess in the battlefield. Later in the dance drama when Arjuna expresses his appreciation of the princess Chitrangada, she considers herself fortunate at the turn of the events as she has never been comfortable with her beautiful, feminine, sexually attractive identity. In the drama Chitrangada is disguised twice over – first as a boy, then as a beautiful woman. It is interesting to note that even physical beauty with which a woman is not born and which she acquires later is treated as disguise. Rabindranath here makes a categorical feminist statement. A woman though she is not beautiful and in spite and because of her normative masculine attributes stands her ground. In the song in the final sequence to which I have already referred Chitrangada tells Arjuna, “You cannot be condescending and neglect me; make me an equal partner in whatever you do and then only you will realize my worth” (Geetabitan, 705).

Chitrangada’s companions also declare “Women must get rid of what is accepted as usual feminine trappings and earn man’s respect” (702). Here Rabindranath uses two words – *ramani* and *nari* – both synonyms of women but with different connotations. The etymological meaning of the word *ramani* is ‘suitable to have sex with’ and *nari* is a female.

Anybody who is aware of the differences in etymological meaning registers the subversion of patriarchal perception of woman as an object of desire. Not only the woman is elevated from a subaltern position, the man also accepts it gracefully, as Arjuna states.

This statement contains various shades of emotion which may be put thus, "I am humbled and honoured and I rejoice in it" (705). This transference of the theatrical convention of the colonizer to an indigenous myth which is conducive to a feminist rereading completes the circle of my argument. In 2012 Rituparno Ghosh made *Chitrangada: The Crowing Wish* that explores the myth of Chitrangada from a perspective the grounds for which was prepared by Rabindranath some seventy years back. I will not discuss the film as a film and will confine myself to the basic argument of its content. The following is an extract from an interview of Rituparno to *The Telegraph*, a national daily published from Kolkata, in its issue dated 27 August, 2012:

Q. In the preface to *Chitrangada*, Tagore writes that his play is about breaking illusions and finding one's true self. How does it relate to your story of a gay choreographer?

A. I wanted to talk about desire... ichhe... and I found *Chitrangada* was the perfect fit for it. Tagore's *Chitrangada*, not the *Chitrangada* of *Mahabharata*, is about non-normative gender. If you read it carefully, you will notice that Tagore had pulled out all the gender markers from the text. He never calls her 'kurupa', he says 'kurup'.

In Tagore's text the king of Manipur raises his only daughter as a son. Chitrangada grows up like a man but when she meets Arjun she wants to become a woman. So she goes to Madan for a boon, becomes a beautiful woman, and then she wants to become what she was before. It underlines the impermanence of 'surupa' Chitrangada.

In answer to another question Rituparno says, "what I mean to say is that gender identity is fluid and the film is about this...that there's a transcendental quality in all of our

identities because no identity is permanent, finite or fixed.... You know, sexuality is not sex. Sexuality exists in the mind, in the intellect, in your thoughts. It's not in bed" (*laughs*).

In the same interview Rituparno argued "When a new concept is being formed, you need new texts. After Section 377 of the IPC,⁶ I felt we needed to create new texts."

It is interesting to note how a text, a reinterpretation of the *Mahabharata* myth, lends itself to another reinterpretation in a different medium. As I have argued earlier Rabindranath's translation of the myth of Chitrangada, first in the short play and then in the dance drama, capture as much the poet's preoccupation with the theme of self discovery as a period in the history of India. In the same way Rituparno's film creates a new text as is necessitated by contemporary India's engagement with homoeroticism. Apart from the fact that translation from the print media to the visual media involves some kind of rereading, the film has added dimensions to the story of a princess who cross dressed.

In the short play Chitrangada regretted the confusion in her gender identity when she met Arjuna. She felt a woman in man's clothing and the transition for her was not difficult. Far more difficult was her adjustment with the beautiful appearance in the dance drama. In this context it may be noted that the two words – *kurup* which means ugly and *surup* which means beautiful – have not been used in the text of Rabindranath. I am aware of a convention among performing artists to assign the roles of Chitrangada before and after her transformation into a beautiful woman, to two singers/dancers and refer to the role before transformation as *kurupa* and to the role after transformation as *surupa* with 'a', the feminine suffix attached to it.

Rabindranath did interchange some of the markers of gender in the text, like describing Chitrangada as 'king', the purpose of which, I believe, was to affirm a feminist perspective within a heteronormative structure rather than to contest it. His narrative did not provide for the space to

problematize the body/mind duality in sexuality which 'exists in the mind, in the intellect, in your thoughts' and not in the body. As the cross dressing of women has lost its political content because of the unisex dress code of the twenty first century, the markers of gender identity have migrated from the body to the mind.

The film *Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish* uses the play-within-the-play technique where the narrative of a dance repertoire company that produces the dance drama, gathers meaning, every shade and nuance of it, in association with the myth of the warrior princess. Significantly the character of the drummer who falls in love with the character of the director who plays the role of Madan, the god of love, is Partha, one of the many names of Arjuna. The character of Rudra Chatterjee, the director, undergoes sex change. So it becomes the story of a person who is not born but becomes a woman, falling in love with a man bearing the name of the third Pandava brother, who becomes aware of his bi-sexuality only when he meets the man who undergoes body modification. The same myth seen from two different perspectives foregrounds several questions – who is a woman? How does one become a woman? Is the sexuality in body or in the mind? It is not an ordinary story of a gay couple. It goes far deeper into the psychology of sexuality. The following quotation from the interview corroborates this:

In the film Rudra, my character, is supposed to play Madan in the dance drama, someone like Cupid who doesn't need love. But in the process of staging the drama, Rudra becomes like Chitrangada. Chitrangada's journey becomes his journey. In this there is a kind of heterosexual hegemony and the film is against it. So the film is about what I am and what I become. It is about sexual reassignment and body modification. If I become a woman from a man, will it be conforming to heteronormativity? Do I need a new body to make my sexuality appropriate? This is the question that the film raises.

Finally I would like to discuss a novel, *Arjuna O Char Kanya* (Arjuna and four women) which also deals with the myth of Chitrangada. Written by Tilottama Majumdar, it has been published in *Sharodiya Desh*, 1420.⁷ As the name of the novel suggests it deals with four women who all became wives of Arjuna. The novel is a rewriting of stories from the *Mahabharata* which provides the author with the scope to explore, among other things, the way contemporary women want to look at themselves. Neither Ulupi, nor Chitrangada nor Subhadra compromise with their femininity. The stories of Ulupi and Subhadra are complementary to the story of Chitrangada. These women are different from one another but they share something in common. They are beautiful women, sexually attractive who are not ashamed of giving free reins to their desire. They are submissive in love, become doting mothers and at the same time they are intelligent, well educated, not confined to the domestic space which has traditionally been preserved for them in patriarchy. In a way they combine normative femininity with normative masculinity thereby interrogating the binary of gender.

In the novel when Arjuna first sees her, Chitrangada is dressed up as a male, presiding over a court of law, discharging the duties of the son and heir to the king of Manipur. They don't meet till they are married. Arjuna falls for her at the very first sight, meets her father and asks for her hand. But this is not merely a regressive narrative where the man is stung by desire and the woman is given in marriage to a suitable boy.

Like Rabindranath's Chitrangada, Tilottama's princess has also been brought up as a man and is dressed as one; unlike Arjuna of the dance drama, Arjuna of the novel falls for Chitrangada in spite of her cross dressing. Tilottama's treatment of the man woman relationship, like that of Rabindranath, is idealistic. She creates a dichotomy between love and lust, an idea that resides at the heart of post European Renaissance modern sensibility. In the novel at the beginning

Chitrangada is not comfortable with her male attire with which come the responsibilities of ruling a kingdom. The following is a conversation between Chitrangada and Arjuna:

Chitrangada : Can any woman become like a man and more so does she want to?

Arjuna : Then what do you want to do?

Chitrangada : I want to be like any other woman. I want to wear good clothes, deck up myself, go out, perform the rituals and bring up children. I am waiting for a son to be born to me and I will get rid of this life of a man.

(Majumdar, 218).

This is the construction of gender that has become a cliché. But as the narrative progresses Chitrangada becomes a thoughtful, intelligent, mature woman, capable of defending her kingdom, whom Arjuna comes to love. More importantly Chitrangada realizes the necessity of freedom that her non normative upbringing has given her. Ulupi, the first woman in the narrative chain, is thoughtful, educated, mature, skilled in various arts and free in a woman's garb. Chitrangada becomes all these as she gets rid of her male attire. In Tilottama's scheme of things sartorial markers become inconsequential. It is a release of female sexuality from patriarchal hegemony, a discourse in which a woman doesn't have to be like a man to become an equal. It is possible to remain a woman in sex, to enjoy that sexuality and not feel inferior because of both or either of these. Chitrangada in the novel interrogates the psychology of a society which equates perceived ability with attire.

My father dressed me up as a man because he wanted me to perform the job of a man. A woman is doing the job but has to dress up as a man. I have objection to this dressing up. Why can't I do whatever I can as a woman? (235-236).

This paves the way for several other questions regarding the equation between biological gender which is sex, psychological gender which is sexuality and sociological gender which is marked by normative behaviour. Can Chitrangada be a

woman, both biologically and psychologically and achieve whatever is possible for her without being marked out by normative and restrictive pattern of behavior? This is a twenty-first century position that the myth takes opening up possibilities for other such positions as we move ahead.

The English translation of Bangla excerpts are done by the author.

Notes

1. *Kamasutra* composed by Mallanaga Vatsyayana in Sanskrit in the third century is best known as a sex manual. It is also about many more things including power relation in a marriage. A translation by Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar is published by OUP.
2. Vaishnava Padavali , lyrics inspired by the *Bhakti* cult, were written mostly between 14th and 17th centuries. Chandidas, one of the earliest *padavali* poets, was born in BIRbhumi district of Bengal in the 14th century. A collection of his poems is edited by Bimanbihari Majumdar and published by *Bangiya Sahitya Parishat*.
3. *Kshatriyo* is the warrior caste in traditional Indian caste system.
4. Surviving portion of Rabindranath's translation can be found in the 30th volume of the *Rachanavali*, published by Viswa Bharati, Kolkata.
5. This essay makes a comparative study of the characters of Desdemona and Miranda with Shakuntala, daughter of Viswamitra and Menoka; wife of Dushyanta and mother of Bharata after whom India (*Bharatvarsha*) is named, as she appears in a play, *Avignanam Shakuntalam*, written by ancient poet Kalidasa. It can be found in the part I ,vol.I of *Bankim Rachana Samagra*, published by *Saksarata Prakashan*, Kolkata.
6. Section 377 of IPC that criminalized gay sex is a British colonial legacy. In 2009 Delhi High Court decriminalized private sexual acts between consenting adults.
7. *Desh* is arguably the best known Bengali bi-monthly magazine, published by Ananda Publishers, Kolkata. An annual festival number is published during Durga Puja, most important festival of the Bengalees. 1420 refers to the year in Bengali almanac.

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Feminism, Nation and the State in the Production of Knowledge Since 1989 : An Epistemological Exercise in Political Translation¹

RADA IVEKOVIC

The Production of Knowledge and Bordering

The present paper addresses some problems of a post-partition and post-conflict situation in the countries once belonging under a common denomination of "Yugoslavia". Yugoslavia existed as a shared multinational state with several languages between 1918 and 1991, when it was dismantled in a decade long war and civil war of partition. Socialist Yugoslavia (since the end of World War II) was a non-aligned country with India and others, and indeed the first meeting of the nonaligned countries took place in Belgrade in 1961, some years after Bandung. While it was non-aligned in foreign politics, Yugoslavia strived in its inner setting to pursue workers' self-management, after a split with Stalin's Soviet Union in 1948. Political and cultural ties between India and Yugoslavia had been very strong. The reasons for the collapse of Yugoslavia are many and impossible to analyse here, but they were also part of the systemic failure and end of the Cold War division. As in India, the partition (in this case into 5-6 pieces) had been a bloody affair leaving many consequences over generations. The population, and especially women, suffered a lot from that partition.

During Yugoslavia, in the autumn of 1978, a meeting that has by now become historic was held in the Students' Cultural Centre in Belgrade, entitled "Comrade woman – a new

approach?" It was convened by Dunja Blazevic, the then Director of the Center, and Žarana Papic, sociologist, a young editor at the time. Žarana is no longer among us, nor are Lydija Sklevicky, Jelena Zuppa and several other participants who made significant contributions to feminist politics and theory. That meeting marked a turning point not only for the women's movement in the Yugoslavia of that time, logging a fresh start (and a beginning for my generation), but also a crucial moment, for multiple reasons. Most importantly, it set in motion social movements that were critical of the policy and authorities. Although the official, rather soft Marxist ideology proclaimed the equality of women, the latter were not happy. Somewhat concurrently, the movement of the Roma people sprang up throughout the country. While in the aftermath of 1968, the students' movement and individual dissent were typically repressed, the women's movement – predominantly associated with universities – was mainly subjected to regime criticism combined with journalistic and machistic derision. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that the feminists were able to invoke proclamations and declarations of the, formally, relatively progressive – yet unaccomplished – state feminism. At that time, we were learning from western feminism, combining it with our peculiar experience and with lessons learnt from the antifascist struggle during WW II; nevertheless, we were aware of the different historical situation we were in compared to radical western feminists, some of whom were simply fighting for essential rights, such as the right to abortion and the right to divorce, which we already enjoyed. The 1978 feminist conference in Belgrade confronted us with those feminists and immediately opened up not one, but myriads of perspectives that instantly made us realize that there was no space for unilateral thinking among us. My presentation here will not dwell directly on that event or on its political legacy. I am not a historian and feminist history is not my subject matter, however remarkable i believe it to be, and deserving to be preserved form falling into oblivion and fairly supplemented. Personally, i do not relish the idea of

“legacy” (which was in the title¹ of the conference in Zagreb), i am not inclined to capitalize on it or regard it as a museum exhibit. I leave it to others, to reconsider the importance and the history of 1978 and its unquestionable impact on broader circles in big Yugoslav cities. It definitely had a – somewhat suspended – direct or indirect influence on the following generations and intellectual elites. However, none of the things i have since been doing as part of my work, my “discipline(s)” and in my life would have been possible, had it not been for that venue.

This is where, among other lines, i began thinking politically from. It is particularly important to understand the historical circumstances in which the feminisms – and the plural form is deliberately used here – would soon be facing war and, as a reaction to it, the rise of nationalisms² they would be opposing. Partly the same women participated both in the “first” and in the “second “. That “second” wave of feminism, in which i was not involved directly on the spot because I had left the country at the very beginning of the war in 1991, also has great merit. Having withstood the worst years and the war in resisting violence, it has spelt out and sharpened political thinking and attitudes, so that nowadays it stands among the most progressive forces in the Yugoslav successor states and is capable of convening conferences and events of interest. This was just a brief comment, a reminder of how much this convention owes to the previously mentioned one, which in turn, remained indebted to the preceding generations of women who fought for freedom, emancipation, justice and equality. On one occasion (after 1978), at the meeting of the feminist section of the Sociological Association in Zagreb, we organized a small promotional encounter marking the jubilee reprint of the pre-war (Second World War) magazine “Ženski svijet” (*Women’s World*). As my mother had been part of its team, she attended that meeting, and i had the opportunity to find out that, in the eyes of her generation, my mother had also been a feminist. And yet, to our great dismay, the women’s movement has ever so often been dotted by

discontinuity, that every generation began feminism from scratch. On the other hand, from the historical and philosophical point of view, discontinuity is needed and beneficial, even vital for continuity. I will not dwell on the reasons for this, let me just say that we are lucky to have had discontinuity. All the dynamic emerging forces, unlike the dominant sclerotic ones, resort to scattered, seemingly “underground” intermittent breakthroughs, and this is where their strength lies. My recount of the conference in 1978 about continuity through periods of discontinuity is merely oral memory. That said, i am changing the topic and am here reverting to the text i had prepared, which is not unrelated to the aforesaid.

I will argue here that the “-isms” are instruments of producing knowledge which creates separate areas (disciplines), maps them or projects them onto certain areas or groups, thus creating borders, distinct territories and “identities”. Among the latter, there are also prescribed, normative sexual identities, whose normative forms are referred to as *gender* in English.

Feminism itself is yet another-ism, fraught with all the plus points and downsides of -isms. It definitely implies a risk, e.g. the risk of essentialisation of the sexes (*spolova*³). Such objections are widely known and invoked both by feminists and by anti-feminists. The answer to this is that there can be no risk-free arguments or political engagement, fortunately, for otherwise we would be condemned to totalitarianism with one unquestionable truth. That said, i nevertheless do not choose to reject it, as i believe that the feminist orientation will be indispensable over quite a long term, since reasonable feminist demands, let alone equality or mere *women's rights*⁴ have not been achieved, and also because there is no such knowledge or language that could guarantee the truth. That is why i see feminism as *a series of open epistemological principles sensitive to the social relations of sexes* that are continually being redressed and complemented. In this sense, as an epistemological formation, and to a great extent as a political engagement

(these often coming hand in hand), feminism has played an outstanding ground-breaking role in social sciences and political life, enriching them with its innovations and achievements, both in terms of research methodology as well as of social awareness, on the political level. In this sense, feminism is an important element of the epistemological revolution that encompasses several periods (as well as historical-contextual differences), as much as the decolonisation of anthropology (Zarana Papic & Lydia Sklevicky), Subaltern Studies, Postcolonial Studies, the Decolonial "Option"⁵ etc. We emerged from 1989 and then from the Yugoslav wars *without a significant or operational conceptual apparatus*, we awakened to epistemological anarchy and disorientation, and i have in mind here the citizens (*gradjanke i gradjane*) of our former country in general. [The period] "1989" requires an epistemological revolution, as much as the first decolonization of the 1960's. That revolution was considerably enhanced by feminism. In the post-Yugoslav countries, feminism has another, much more important role, however modest in scope, a role that is yet to be assessed in the future. Unlike nationalistic, religious and other movements on all sides, feminism did not destroy any bridges. Feminism nurtures cross-border ties, continuity in discontinuity, thus cultivating the historical dimension and methodological advantages, which can be preserved despite the gap that was created in 1989. At this point, let me note that the concept of "1989" also includes a series of the wars of the nineties. As much as it denotes the "reunification of Europe", it signifies splits, partitions, secessions and rupture.

Feminism, which in its plurality (the details of which will not be elaborated here), bears a *philosophic importance* even when unacknowledged by philosophers, displaces the purpose of rationality, logic and thinking onto tracks that are opposed to their original application or traditional use. Thus, it essentially and substantially recognizes the alterity and allows for a higher degree of *principled democracy*⁶ than it is traditionally known to our disciplines and particularly in

academia. In this way, feminism probes the limits of thought and politics. This “discipline”, let’s call it *philosophical feminism*, manifests its profound engagement on two plans – methodological-speculative and practical-political. In this sense, the role of feminism in the Yugoslav countries, that of a bridge between the period “before” and “after” the recent wars and at the same time that of a leap in perspective/viewpoint and in the subjects-agents of speculation and events – is unparalleled in view of 1989. And the experience of 1989 has had a bearing not only on the fate of Central, Balkan and Eastern Europe, but also on the entire world⁷. That was a turning point. For many, the turn towards neoliberal capitalism in globalisation.

Therefore, feminism has a specific, important and new role in the recent breakup of Yugoslavia and in the successor states of the former common country. But it had also played a remarkable role in the long term, revolutionizing social sciences and the political horizon globally, (*toute proportion gardée*), much as Post-colonial Studies did. The latter, it seems, have concentrated their global impact within a shorter span of time and more intensively, receiving clearly targeted reactions that re-echoed, recognizing it perhaps to a greater extent than feminism had been credited; they have generally been approved as the outcome of an evolution in the understanding of history, of universality, of the subject-agency in politics as well as in comprehending geo-political ensembles in view of the revolution in historiography. It is not accidental that feminisms, as well as Subaltern and Postcolonial Studies should be confronted with an exaggerated resistance of the institutionalized way of thinking, which generally tends to cooperate with domination. There appeared a remodelled Gramscian concept of “subaltern subject” at the crossroads of revolutionary historical and feminist contributions to historiography: in India (country of origin for much of the respective studies or of the intellectuals who, first through US and other western universities, launched it), the subaltern subject is designed as the one that is recognised neither by the

dominant subject (the British authorities), nor by the subject forged out of resistance to the former (i.e. nationalistic, liberational elites); the most common examples for this are in India peasants and women, but can be others in principle. The subaltern subject thus finds itself in a "double bind" position, forced to fight for freedom side by side with more powerful temporarily like-minded groups that negate it: it is thus forced to act simultaneously against one part of the ruling ideology of resistance, both in concert with it and in opposition to it. Such is the situation of feminists in Yugoslavia too.

The subaltern subject, therefore, embodies better than anyone else, by making it visible, the original division of the subject as such, in the building of a new and non-dominant universality.⁸ I identify the latter in *karma*, as a principle of solidarity of *all* forms of life (trans-gender & trans-species),⁹ and in a principled non-privileging of humanity (which stands for a particular "speciesm"). This new type of universalism¹⁰ provides for the possibility of translation – amid *the impossibility of translation as such* or the latter's eternal imperfection and incompleteness. In such an asymmetric situation, women and the feminine (as essentially *non identifiable*) are both a translated object and a medium of translation; they are the translators. Therefore, they remain in the gap, enabling exchange, translation, communication, socialization and politics, as ambivalent, yet not quite as substantially "other" (because "women" and the "feminine" are not so), but as at the same time the "same" and the "other", and also "neither the same", "nor the other". There are other "conceptual" characters and figures that resemble women in this sense, whose role in political and societal translating has been historic. Depending on the concrete situation, they can be political companions to women in part of their common trajectory. Why in "translating"? Because it fosters a flow of events, motion and constant change that can help us overcome the impasse of "communitarianism" and "identity" calcification. Migrants, who are already on their way and uprooted, represent one such figure (among others) of

openness toward others. When they reach “our” (European, American, Australian, Israeli and other) borders, migrants find themselves in a situation of non-citizens, without rights, without documents, without families, without homes or property. This volatility is their predominant feature and propulsive force on their way (for diverse reasons). On their way, they establish themselves in a (mobile) *community* with their fellow sufferers-travellers, primarily as “citizens” of a new and broader, more important sort, *unrelated to (any) state* and prepared for a new era. They are the ones who open up new horizons to those of us who live in countries of immigration (which are at present struggling against the inevitable immigration from the south and east in the most disgraceful manner). It is they who bring us a ray of hope for changes in our depoliticized and inhospitable societies. Nowadays, we can learn from them.¹¹ It is from them, and from women, women’s movements with feminisms that our systemically patriarchal societies or, societies paradigmatic along masculine patterns,¹² have been learning and have yet to learn. Both (Postcolonial Studies and migrants; women and feminisms) are mediators. Translated and at the same time translators, neither here nor there, they (*oni i one*) have made translation a vehicle of “transition”. At present, as a phenomenon of unprecedented proportions on the global scale, the migrants are one of the potential allies of women and women’s interests, inasmuch they are the proponents of a new human universality in the process of creation (though they may not be aware of it; in any case, they are a particular type of subject, with an unstable identity). Those allies must be approached and one must fight along with them, instead of them being expected to address us first. “Our” causes must be combined with “theirs”, because one cannot do without allies. We ought to bear in mind that women, as well as migrants, refugees, the banished and stateless are susceptible to selective and arbitrary, and definitely subordinate inclusion into the citizenship, when they are not completely excluded from it. Citizenship rights apply *unequally* (contrary to their

alleged universality), either as passive or active, to different groups, the clearest division being between the natives and the foreigners, who are being separated by an abyss.¹³ We should also bear in mind that political actions today often reach beyond national borders, even though we may not be aware of that. New allies might spring up any time. The migrants are instilled with the desire for rebirth, for transformation, reincarnation and turning into others (the words are not too strong), not only for their own sake, but also for all others' sake, and in this sense they represent sheer openness and new prospects. They are the European most conspicuous *missing citizens* today.¹⁴ On the way and during migration, they are building themselves citizenship,¹⁵ solidarity and responsibility outside and across state borders. The traditional citizen figure is opposed to that of a migrant, who is not a citizen and is generally unable and often unwilling to become one, and therefore cannot claim any rights, while even his/her fundamental rights are at stake. That means that a migrant is a "nuisance". This is indicative of how "citizenship" and "nationality" actually coincide. Problems arise when cracks appear between them, manifesting themselves as lack of national homogeneity, like in the case of migrants or minorities. The national state prefers its citizens and its "nationals" to foreigners and migrants.

"Gender" is a *regulative idea* in the Kantian sense,¹⁶ which serves the purpose of questioning and regulation (*ravnanje*), and not for prescribing or constituting. "Transcendental" ideas can be regulative, indicating "the way" in life experimenting, with no pretensions to the absolute or theological finality and certainty (Kant understood god as a regulative idea). Thus the constant receding of the horizon before us is acknowledged, and ultimately, so is the inexhaustible politicality of each and every act and decision. The differentiation between sex and gender, which does not function equally in all languages, is politically beneficial to a certain extent, but is reflexively inconclusive and problematic; as much as the concept of gender, the distinction serves the

purpose of rationalizing, disciplining and of social engineering (from the social state to harsher forms, from the left to the right). Every political system rests on a complex system of exclusions, and especially on subordinated and differentiated inclusion, where the regime of the sexes (gender) is the first to be laid down, with no consultation with the interested parties or any of their representatives, as an axiom and tacitly accepted order.

Does Sovereignty Suit Women more than Its Contemporary Relativisation?

Sex in itself is nothing, but as an idea it represents a border, "a first" border. Borders help us set standards and comprehend the world with our knowledge. They delineate the units of our knowledge, tentative and diverse "objects" (among which is that of "sex") and cannot be abolished as such; but a politics can be assigned to them and can be controlled by means of *cognitive politics* that we choose and the goal that we set. Sex in the meaning of "boundary", "cut", "section" can be used as a concept in homo-political, homo-economic, homo-social societies as ours, in promoting inequality of those to whom either of the sexes is ascribed. In this sense, *instrumental sex* (instrumental to power and authority) is a directive idea, escaped from the circle of a mere and much more rewarding regulative concept of gender. Because sex is an ascriptive category and sometimes an allegation. A crucial historical moment that also controls this historically established inequality is, as well as for colonies, initial western modernity, although this is here only a component of the explanation, since the global consensus about the subordination of all women to all men has older origins. Nowadays, along with the alteration of the relation of the nation toward the state and sovereignty, *the fundamental incompleteness and incompleteness of the nation can be an opportunity for women.*

The principle of preserving identity and sovereignty is paralysing. It generates *self-foundation of the self (or of the same)*

by means of the mechanism i have named *partage de la raison* (partitioning/partaking of reason).¹⁷ Hierarchical constructions such as sexual differences, the nation, etc. are instrumental to it and interdependent. Yet, the preservation of continuity consists of a series of interruptions. Thus the condition and cost for a community (under the sign of one and the ego) is paradoxically – the existence of at least one divisive element. This *section* is a precondition for the existence of a community. Sex is one such “prime” *différend*,¹⁸ which constitutes the community and also the nation to the extent in which it is (and in the periods when it is!) a community.

What is it that maintains sovereignty? Let us say that it is the abundance of self. In this aspect, politics is a passion (a passion for oneself) and a “homo-doxo”. It is therefore not surprising that sex and sexuality are a pledge of power that can reach the point of *sacralisation of dominance*. However, the difference of sexes, and even more so “gender”, are but one of their forms – a form fundamental because it is normative, a form of *partage* (dividing/sharing) *de la raison* (of the mind or of reason): sex and gender are, namely, hindering this process of *partage de la raison*, inasmuch as they are *preventing translation*. They are ontologically “weak”, which is why they have a ritual, commanding character that compensates for their lack of substance. Sex is, therefore, a *strong idea* (exactly that: *an idea*), constitutional for a fictional sexual identity in the function of hierarchy as much as for any other identity. It is a “prime” section in thinking/of thinking, a *partage de la raison* before the mind could be reflected. We can doubt its existence (that of sex) (beyond its biological aspect), beyond the phantasmatic heterosexual normative construction that generates divisions and, which is worse, hierarchies and dominance. From the biological sex that is accessible to us only through culture, to the social and political distance between the sexes, there is a leap in dimensions from the imaginary to the real, or between the normative and the experienced. But sex in its form *partage de la raison* marks citizenship and nation, whose hierarchies it upholds and renews. Historically, the

subordination of women establishes them both, notwithstanding the fact that the feminine subject cannot be identified.

Let us take as a starting point that the production of knowledge, with the purpose and under the excuse of rationalization, facilitating its understanding and conveying, is the result of a certain *politics of knowledge and positioning* of its subjects in a certain context. In order to encompass the supposed entirety of the “object”, which is actually only being created in this very process, the procedure of acquiring knowledge, its distillation, inevitably draws borders and devises “units” and wholes.

The entities created in this way are of different orders. One order, or dimension, is linguistic in the broadest sense.¹⁹ Which parallel orders this is about in the “objectal”²⁰ world, depends on the historical context. One of the constantly reproduced borders (and yet reproduced differently in every context, so that it has its historical quality) is sexual difference – let me remind of its aspect of severing (*section, sex*). This border is constantly being modified and moved, like other types of border for that matter – but it is important to highlight it concerning this one kind of border because “sex” has a (constructed and utilitarian) pretence of immobility. Other types of borders that are being constructed, along with those referring to knowledge, disciplines, categorizations and classifications, i.e. in value judgement, are the so-called ethnic or national borders. Sex and sexual borders, or establishing gender, play an important role in the building of a nation as its essential constitutive part. That is why, for women, an important moment of negotiation and political pressure is precisely that when the nation is being reconfigured. That chance ought to be taken, because the period of sclerotisation of a nation is not favourable for the alteration of hegemony.

Sovereignty, the State and the Nation

Sovereignty is, in its “western” modern form, the outcome of

Westphalian secularisation of the divine state in mid-17th century (1648). It is characterised by the positing of the axiom of an indisputable transcendence. The latter was primarily ascribed to the monarch, and later to the people. Sovereignty can be questioned neither conceptually (on the plan of knowledge), nor practically, or in terms of its source or purpose (it does not have a source, for it rests on circularity). For putting it into question, one is responsible before the law – of which sovereignty itself is the source. Thus the concept of sovereignty can justifiably be compared to the Sanskrit concept of *svayambhû*, “self-arisen.”²¹ The political figures established by sovereignty itself move top-down. Opposed to this are reactive figures and resistance, moving, or at least in principle and in the ideal case striving bottom-up. Except for being vertical, sovereignty, as a hierarchy, also implicates a dichotomy between the “centre” and “periphery”, between the West and “the Rest”, between the metropolis and the colony²² etc. Sovereignty is the sovereignty of the nation state. The colonies, in order to win independence, had to struggle for their own national sovereignty. In this way, they entered modernity – by creating alternative forms of modernity. All these modernities converge in neoliberal globalization nowadays. Modernity is an epochal change, though not uniform. Colonies have access to (western meant as universal) modernity provided they renounce continuity with their own antiquity and history, their own epistemologies, the genealogy of their own concepts and conceptual apparatus. The same applies to women. (Western) modernity thus represents a constructed continuity from antiquity to the present (with a vision of the future in direct line) for Europe, and an imposed discontinuity for the other continents. *Together, this continuity and this discontinuity make up global history* and two or more sides of a medal that increasingly permeate each other.

The national state and its borders, a product of western modernity, have been exported to the continents beyond Europe by colonialism. This form became dominant globally, having reconstructed retrospective perception of the national

state as fatal and uniquely possible, just like the nation was constructed as a historically inevitable and – in retrospect – original form. Other historical options have been discarded. This has been complemented with forms of gradually developed national awareness (where it had not existed before), with the policy of national education and official national historiography. Strategic methodological nationalism corresponds to this. From the period of World War II well into the 1960's, such nationalisms, as far as non-European continents were concerned, were liberational. Nowadays, in the aftermath of 1989, this is no longer the case.²³

At the other, bottom end of the vertical or ladder at the top of which sovereignty is located, there is the subject. It is then said that sovereignty rests upon it or that sovereignty guarantees it. The logic is circular and self-sufficient. This is actually about a system of organisation of the world and of rationalisation of dominance, both in the political and in all other ways. The feminist critique, as well as subalternist researchers, Postcolonial Studies, translation theories etc. and also, not to be forgotten, at least partly, the Marxist epistemological attempts all point to the historical and situational location of the subject. Nowadays, this goes without saying. More than 20 years ago, while i was still living and working in Zagreb, this was not clear, and we occasionally had our male colleagues, who considered themselves to be senior to us and superior in intelligence, as if by definition, treat us with derision. A subject thus conceived bears the traits of an ideal dominant subject in the current hegemony, so that it is never female, except for the alternative paradigms of resistance, where it is pluralistic, and only partly "feminine". Once again, the issue of the relation between the individual and the collective is posed here, i.e. that of developing the "commons", beyond the public.²⁴

In other words: this collective, or common element, which comprises both common goods, given resources (thus generating diverse problems depending on the circumstances: water, air, soil, etc.) as well as what is yet to be acquired and

developed as common, is characterized by partaking (sharing in) and giving (*partage*, in the positive sense). This *sharing with others*, partaking, is a matter of politics, both social and economic, and also of the politics of knowledge, or epistemology. Although the role of women in this process is fundamental, it is far from being secured and is yet to be conquered and established. Every historical turning point reverses the counters to zero, with some arrangements, compromises and minor concessions, preserving the essence of dominance. Each historical crossroads and change of the paradigm of circumstances for a new systemic “deal” between the sexes is, at least for a brief period before the relations become sclerotised again, also a chance for putting in place a new gender regime. This is done, among others, through the categories of knowledge and by means of construction of political imagination. Cognitive justice, therefore, constitutes an important part of the horizon of justice.²⁵

In principle, the subject could always have been either individual or collective. Part of the cold war ideological controversy between *real capitalism* and “real socialism” rested on that opposition: the former invoked individualism and the preservation of individual rights and property, and the latter, a certain collectivity and the preservation of primarily collective rights and social or state property. Both options imply violence, but differently deployed. In the period after World War II, an untranslatable dialogue of two deaf parties went on between those two clans, i.e. the Cold War, and in some instances genuine war. In the aftermath of 1989, together with a premature “triumph” of the “free west” and the capitalist option, it was made to look as if the Berlin Wall had fallen only on one side, towards the east (in all that, Yugoslavia fell into oblivion, just as it slid into utter self-oblivion among its former peoples) so that the official political discourse from that side sounded like a one-dimensional and all the more bureaucratised language, despite considerable nuances.²⁶ Authority “emanates” from the sovereignty of the people, which is sanctioned as a doctrine. At present, when this wall

has finally crumbled from the western side as well, we can also hear this one-dimensional, ideologised and uniform language (*langue de bois*) and way of thinking (*la pensée unique*) on the other side. And this is practically all that we can hear nowadays. All the other voices are stifled. This, at the same time, poses a challenge to women, who in the western hemisphere are affected by the backlash, and also to the populations of colonized countries, a fabricated global enemy – the Muslims, or Roma people as ever and currently, and nowadays above all, *the migrants*, bearers of a new universal interest.

The case of the multiple assassinations in Oslo on July 22nd 2011 is probably inscribed in the superstructure of the cold war bipolar construction in the post-bipolar world: the assassin, a *male* assassin in this case, represents himself as a knight saviour of the European, Christian and masculine western civilization from the ubiquitous evil: communism, feminism, homosexuality and Islam. Allegedly, one of his first targets would have been Gro Harlem Brundtland, the epitome of social democracy and the “mother of the nation”, a remarkable Norwegian progressive politician. Seldom has Christian fundamentalism been labelled as a source of terrorism (it was marginally mentioned by scholars in the Bush era), but it has considerably moved forward on the list in the meantime; and, its roots being much older, it is itself among the factors responsible for the positing and generation – by the west and the colonial heritage – of Islamic fundamentalism. In the 1990’s, it was overdramatized as a transnational and powerful source of overall terrorism.²⁷ However, in an initial reaction to the Oslo tragedy, on the very same day, Christian fundamentalism was cautiously mentioned as a possible motive. This genealogy of violence ought to be examined regarding all its components. It has been neglected in the “securitarian”, the policing attitude toward social freedom, in the closing of the borders of Europe. Regular migrants are being persecuted, the disempowered are being generated, the foreigners deprived of documents and civil rights arrested,

walls are being erected. Instead, paedophiles are being hunted, the social and political life is being depoliticised, moralised and desemanticised, yet the essence of vice is sought in others and never within. The Norwegian black knight is, for the time being,²⁸ treated as an isolated case, as an anomaly, and we are still far from developing an object equivalent, in the west, to "Al-Qa'ida" – a mighty menace as a global threat. Of course, feminist analyses clearly point to the conjunction among the multitude of phobias of the jeopardized civilisational masculinity, and can be in the foreground of a new, sober interpretation of such events. It is easy to expose how detrimental the association of an "excess of testosterone" and the power conferred to individuals by the "civilisational" support of history, where they are featured as a model for political hegemony.

The subject on which sovereignty rests and which it invokes is "the people" (at the time of the Cold War, the same denomination persisted on both sides of the wall, but with different connotations). That subject is becoming increasingly devoid of its active, material, real importance and active potential as we draw further away from revolution (the French; Mexican; October; Yugoslav; any revolution), and as a citizen has less and less decision-making power and fewer decisions to make. Decisions are taken above the heads of citizens. The subject, as well as the citizen, becomes a figurehead.

The proponents of sovereignty in the socialist countries of diverse denomination were more and more *representatives within the authorities* and within the framework of the state that endorsed it all, called "the people"; "the working people", "the communists", "socialist ideas" etc. The proponents of sovereignty – therefore also the subjects – are no more "the peoples" (although nominally they still bear this supposed capacity), but rather unmanageable financial market forces, emancipated from the states. Thus we now have "governance" both in "socialism" (China) and in the west. In the present-day constellation of the global, predominantly post-industrial,

financial and cognitive capitalism, neither the subject nor democracy are any longer requisite. *Sovereignty is transferred from the state to the market.* The global market is sovereign, the nation is subjected to it, and the functionalities of the national state are changing. The market outgrows “the state”, but uses its clout, the state army, so that the weight of a national state that was economically dominant in the previous period remains indisputable even when it is outweighed by the international market: Europe is at present a mightier economic power with a bigger market potential, but the USA still exerts a stronger political and military influence in the world in spite of its weakening, so that Europe remains subordinated to it in spite of having a larger share in the global trade. Soon, both are being overrun by Asia. The USA keeps playing a more important role (although somewhat diminished) of world order watchdog than Europe. It is just little by little that we have been moving out of the bipolar Cold War world, over the interim unipolar world headed by the USA, toward a multipolar world. In this respect the Crimean and Ukrainian crises are a setback.

As far as the language is concerned, its constellation is similar on the level of universality and on that of “internationality” (within globalisation, the “transnational” is more appropriate than the “international”) – one language and one truth equal the one scale for the entire reality, which is the market (but this is quickly changing, and we might all be learning Chinese very soon). Yet, even the market, as used to be the case with the sovereign state and the nation, upholds individual liberties and especially private property. After “1989” (which is actually, much more than a certain year, a long, still ongoing period) the state subordinates itself ²⁹ to the transnational market which takes advantage of it, and thus transforms a succession of functions of the national state without formally abolishing it, because it is at its service. Instead of sovereignty, “governance”³⁰ is installed, which continues to invoke sovereignty as a mere formality, i.e. it establishes itself *within* it, while crossing all boundaries at the

same time. The market has outgrown the state and the states. Thus, "governance" is an inside/out construction, comparable to some new Leviathan. The sovereignty of the national state, which had marked the hegemony of the previous epoch, has been weakened considerably, so that the state has been "dying out" in favour of the market, in locations and in ways unexpected by an earlier Marxist theory. A superior principle to that of state sovereignty is now at work, namely the supra-national economic interests, to which, in the form of their respective financial systems, sovereignties comply, thus denying themselves. "Identities" are thus hopeless, non-starter anachronisms dating back from the time of national sovereignties, which are trying in vain to *recover* and establish local centres of a world that has in the meantime exploded either into polycentricism or into the nonexistence of any centres any longer.

The idea of going back to the previous state of affairs is an illusion. This is the situation in which, admittedly with some differences and some questionable advantages of the former, both postcolonial national identities in their second wave (with a long tradition of struggle for independence), and national identities that emerged out of the end of the Cold War and the downfall of the socialist sovereignties, find themselves in. The original perception of the fall of the Berlin Wall exclusively to the east has proved deceptive. The process which has been unfolding ever since 1989 is a gradual but definite crumbling of that wall on the western side, with the same, though prolonged outcomes: ethnicisation, fragmented trivial nationalisms, "populisms"³¹ and the rise of racism everywhere, even in the core of western Europe, which in this process is becoming foreseeably Balkanised, mirroring the dreadful Yugoslav model from the 1990's and afterwards. One of the characteristics of the turnaround that engulfed the planet with "1989" – the touching up and smoothing over of the *historical* dimension of history i.e. relativising the values without the requisite new epistemological instruments for a critical attitude towards them, general desemantisation,

depoliticisation and disorientation. The Cold War was “easier” because everything was black-and-white.

Nowadays, in other words, in globalisation, the most frequent responses to this *desovereignisation of the state* – are again collective: communalisms and nationalisms. They support the idea of autochthony of the nation (who was there “first”). Still, does it have to stay that way? A high toll has been paid to that in the Yugoslav area, both by the “subject” and by the “counter-subject”, both by the parties of aggression and by the sides of resistance to aggression.

Someone who was able to problematise this issue even before 1989, which is indeed a question of modernity itself regardless of the later Cold War options east/west, socialism/capitalism (since *both* derive from *western modernity* and deal with sovereignty as one of their basic axioms) was, in this the former Yugoslavia, Radomir Konstantinovic.³² Although his examples are local, and we are used to recognise the Yugoslav situation in his book *The Philosophy of the settlement (palanka)*, this particular choice of material is irrelevant and does not diminish the *epochal universality* of his analysis valid elsewhere too. I have encountered people from all corners of the world who, having heard Konstantinovic’s arguments, recognised the state of *palanka (the provincial, comment added, S.L.)* as a familiar climate in their own social environments. In addition to identifying the downsides of modernity, whose impact on other, and post-colonial countries in particular, have been widely researched, Konstantinovic’s work is an epochal contribution to constituting a requisite new post-1989 and post-colonial epistemology, which is still being painstakingly developed. An ever more sombre and comprehensive analysis is conducted by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (*op. cit.*), based on different (yet translatable) theoretical assumptions on the contemporary circumstances of globalisation, especially in Latin America.

Language and Nation, Patching and Mending

Naoki Sakai looks into nationalisms from his own perspective

of the translation theory.³³ He reverses the position of the nation and derives it from the transnational, inasmuch as he derives language from *translating as the antecedent of language itself*: namely, language as such is *already* translation. It precedes the definition of language and its relation to any particular nation. Paradoxically, translation *crosses, but at the same assumes and sets* boundaries. Placing the (national) language, as well as the nation, into the “origin”, the “timeless”, and the “source” is an epistemological trick, all too familiar with, by way of resting on an indisputable axiom which implies *the ban on further exploration of origins*, which are established once and for all. Namely, such research could reveal that origins are always elsewhere and ungrounded, with no definite beginning. The origin actually conceals the fact that there are no origins to be found. The unity of language (national “identity”), as a historical *a priori*, therefore, inevitably misfires. Ascribing such an *a priori* “bedrock” to a language or nation means concealing the impossibility to trace back its basis. Language is complex in itself and by definition. It bears other languages and their potentials within itself. Thus it could be said that the unclear term of “mother tongue” in fact, potentially denotes for us the mother of all other, acquired languages.³⁴ The fictional unity of a language, like that of a nation, can be only a “regulative idea”. It is not a tangible, experience reality, but a fiction that is yet to be “accomplished”, that catalyzes abstraction, conceptualization and thinking, without which reasoning might not be possible. Such fictions are indispensable in speculative thinking and rationalization. Also, they are necessarily evolutionary, which implies that there can be no final definition or identity. This equally applies to feminism and its subjects, which cannot be rounded up as separate independent units. We have to proceed in practice without a solid object, but with a strategic aim and epistemic principles (which are also liable to change).

We are therefore currently working within an epistemological uncertainty, unlike the framed and limited, internally systematic Cold War certainty. Defining languages

and nations as completed identities means petrifying discontinuity. Translation can, in some of its aspects, increase such petrification, and conversely, depending on the underlying *politics*, it can enhance the creation of ties and continuity in the problematic and torn connections in a society dominated by divisions, rifts and discontinuity. Such a translation policy, as a political method, would be ideally practised by feminisms. In his book on Pakistan, *Shame*, Salman Rushdie said that translation means “to be borne across” (the border). Yet the English term “borne” is homophonic with “born”. This means, as i see it, *that we are born only if we are being borne, by another*. Translating as an activity reveals this general debt to the other or others. Alterity is, therefore, part of us and it dismantles identity with oneself. Irrespective of the state or states, appearing on the horizon today are new forms of constituting and instituting, which are still evolving through informal and merely experimental forms that we have been unable to name yet, that are not classical social movements, but are political and peculiarly novel. Traditional political representation has lost a great deal of its value along with the deterioration of sovereignty. Among these new forms, away from being active through the system of representation, are also migrations, as well as part of the activity going on over the Internet and other twitters. Women’s movements, even the older ones, often belong to this camp, by being unconventional and by being denied their political dimension. Nevertheless, we are now aware that “*the political*” (*le politique*) is in itself normative, and that political qualities are denied to those who are meant to be obstructed from accessing the public scene. Migrants delimitate our political and public space, that in which we are unable to hear them even as they speak, because we do not share it with them, because we have not accepted them.³⁵

The nation has played a historical part in the homogenization of scattered, diverse, multi-lingual, miscellaneous people. In France, regional options and local languages were cruelly stifled in bloodshed at the Revolution.

To this day, there and in other places (eg. Latin America) there have been problems related to the inclusion into the nation of those on whose principled exclusion that nation has rested ever since its inception. Let us be reminded that the founding principle of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia, comment added, S.L.) Yugoslavia was different – the nation was not the paramount principle, but rather the federation, which brought together not very clearly defined “nations”, “nationalities” and federal-administrative units (republics) and sub-units (autonomous provinces), was to be so. In other contemporary circumstances, we now have Europe as a supra-national unit, and cases such as Italy, where “Padania” has been profiled as a form of anti- or sub-national separatism, because the rich north no longer perceives any common interests with the poorer south. This is also what happened in the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia, but over a much shorter period of time, which left no room for a historical process to take its course, and in a much more brutal way. In Spain, the regional separatist tendencies have been to a great extent overcome, except with the Basque Country, but reappear in the request for devolution, like in Scotland. And the problem of Ceuta and Melilla remains gaping in the African part of the Spanish territory. All this is happening within the framework of the general European relativisation of state sovereignties and the European Regional Policy. On the other hand, Belgium, which had been without a government for more than a year, which has a completely divided society with only the dynasty symbolizing national unity – has shown that the government, political forms of representation, etc. are no longer needed when the *technical* mechanisms of cohesion and the institutions have been *formally operating smoothly and stably*, as administration, long enough. This has been made possible by governance, whereas sovereignty is merely formal, but as such remains useful as a kind of container.

The nation serves, in its *naturalised* form, of which we have seen many in the period of the partition of Yugoslavia,

the purpose of uprooting social antagonisms by “flowing into” a higher instance (the nation). It is the object of desire of the nationalists and it is hailed, it has been imposed on others, while many accept it indifferently or put up with it, because they “cannot beat it”, since it is in synergy with mightier forces: the state and its sovereignty, the legal system, the army and war. In its constitutive phase (in a more or less cruel, and more or less physical manner – ranging from the conceptual level to massacre), the nation erases class difference, “ethnic”, “racial” competition or clashes (at times leading to their escalation), as well as to some extent sexual antagonism. As regards the sexes, the nation offers rallying around the patriarchal vertical, and the inclusion of women as dependent second-class, i.e. as subaltern citizens. The state that takes over the hierarchical vertical from *the nation as an established community* based on the axis of birth (*rod*; while “narod” means “people”) on the principle of the gender hierarchy as a paradigm for all other hierarchies, and not from *the nation as a society* (because such a nation has neither been attained, nor is it attainable), that state guarantees and obscures the secondary status of the female citizenry. Of course, grading also applies to other societal groups, differentiated according to principles other than sex, and grading is an open string, which means that new groups of subordinately included (rather than “excluded”) can be added. We have seen endless instances of such bargaining in the Yugoslav reshuffling, because in every reconfiguration of a system, of a state or of a world, the regime of the sexes is renegotiated, and that regime is referred to as “gender”.

Gender is, certainly, ambiguous, as much as translation is. It is ambiguous because in “nature” it does not exist in a determined form, according to the model male/female, and because the sexual delineation cuts *through* each and every one of us, and not between us. We can never be assured what the “other” sex is, nor can we ever agree on that, although we may have a regulative idea about it. Linguistic conventions regulate a simplified usage of those terms. Likewise, we cannot agree

on what is another language or another nation. Why? Because the other is constitutional for us, it is our “external”, or “outwardly” projected constituent. Without the other, there would be no us. Therefore, neither “the other” nor “we” is assigned. The nation is not assigned either, although historically, it is more firmly established by its first constructions between the 15th and 19th century, while more recently, events such as decolonisation, or the 1989 rip, invoking the nation was often seen as a solution for a consumed legitimacy of the forms of governance or sovereignty from the preceding period. It turned out to be a vain hope.

Methodologically, nationalism constitutes our knowledge, our education, our disciplines, *without being our fate*. It is necessary to break loose from that. Women and feminism (as an epistemological configuration) can play an important role in this getting away, as they are the ones that disturb, patch and dismantle the blissful, constructed continuity of nation and of dominance.

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Translated by Stanislava Lazarevic

References

1. A previous version of the present paper was first presented in the serbocroat original at the feminist conference *REDaktura* in Zagreb in 2011, then published online by Women in Black from Belgrade in *Women for Peace*, pp.139-166, http://www.zeneucnom.org/pdf/women_for_peace.pdf . It had first been addressed to readers in the post-yugoslav states. It is here adapted for Literary Oracle by the author.
2. *REDaktura*: transjugoslavenski feminizmi i zensko naslijeđe (REDacting Trans Yugoslav Feminisms: Women's Heritage Revisited), 13 –16 October 2011 / Zagreb.
3. Far from the liberational aspect of anticolonial nationalisms, “nationalism” definitely has a negative connotation in post WW II Europe (think of Nazism), and especially so since 1989 (end of the Cold War) and since the spread of nationalistic populisms world-wide.

4. The terms "sex" and "gender" do not function in the same way in different languages. The distinction belongs mainly to the English language; it looks very different from the French language i usually use, or from Serbo-croat, although the term "gender" is being introduced of late. But "gender" in English and "genre" in French etc. would have distinct genealogies with respect to specific histories (something the English language cannot acknowledge and doesn't care about). What is generally irreflected in English is that both "sex" and "gender" are *both* easily essentialised and that they do not correspond to the idealised distinction between "nature" and "culture": *both* sex and gender come to us through culture. The distinction between the two has some practical political use, but it has its theoretical limits. My usage of the terms is nearer to the French and Serbocroat usage than to the English usage, as i never loose sight of the relationality of the two or of their political construction.
5. Namely: women's *human* rights (these are both universal and particular).
6. And with us, during the last *undivided* Yugoslavia, modestly, also *the principle of non-alignment* combined with *the principle of self-management*, neither of which was conceptually or historically devoid of potentials.
7. It is, of course, far from always being achieved. But it is possible in principle (and only in principle), and it is defended.
8. 1989 marks not only the end of the division of Europe, but also the introduction, or rather, the disclosure, of planetary neo-liberalism. In Asia, Latin America etc., it is important in various ways as the turning point of the new economic boom and liberalization, and also as the end of dictatorships in Latin America. In Africa, the end of the Cold War accelerated the demise of apartheid in the South African Republic.
9. Universality that is not, by means of imposed universalization, at the same time domination, that is our aspiration. Etienne Balibar, "Les universels", *La Crainte des masses*, Galilée, Paris 1997, pp. 419-454. But subalternists and postcolonial scholars reject completely most of the time any kind of universal as allied to domination.
10. A vulgar and predominantly western interpretation of the concept of *karma* is "destiny" as the impossibility of controlling our own lives. This is an orientalist reading, which has often been relied upon even in the reverse process of auto-orientalization even in later Asian sources, in an attempt of attaining the "political" discourse. This political discourse was, namely, made inaccessible for them by way of the norms of the colonial and imperial politics of knowledge. My reading rests on the possibilities opened up

both by Buddhism and by my teacher Èdomil Veljaëic, who, nonetheless, did not himself reach the point of outright political reading. We also come across some more vulgar interpretations of *karma* as the idea “that is your fate” in Hindu Castism or in the interpretations of the *Bhagavad-Gita* by diverse modern political denominations, and also, unofficially (and only seemingly paradoxically) with the Khmer Rouge in justifying genocide over urban populations. Rada Ivekovic, *L'éloquence tempérée du Bouddha. Souverainetés et dépossession de soi*, Paris, Klincksieck 2014.

11. Historically, feminisms have strived for the treatment of differences both from the universalistic, and conversely, from the particularistic point of view. However, it is obviously necessary to grapple with both ends of this construction, which is a whole, whereas tackling only one end always proves to be insufficient and achieves the opposite effect. *Our interests are at the same time universal and particular.*
12. The Arab uprisings of 2011. See a series of texts by a group of authors “Arab revolutions” in the journal *Transeuropéennes* <http://www.transeuropeennes.eu/en/articles/248> ; also Sandro Chignola & Mezzadra, *Lampusia*, *UniNomade* 25-2-2011: <http://uninomade.org/lampusia> ; Collettivo Edu-Factory, “La nuova Europa comincia dal Maghreb”, 25-2-2011, <http://uninomade.org/la-nuova-europa-comincia-dal-maghreb> ; Sandro Mezzadra & Brett Neilson, “Né qui, né altrove: migration, detention, desertion. A dialogue”; <http://www.borderlandsejournal.adelaide.edu.au/issues/vol2no1.html> ; S. Mezzadra, “Avventure mediterranee della libertà” (in print).
13. This is not about the role of individual men, but about the historical alliance between male dominance and power as such: the state with its sovereignty and even international relations, societies, communities, “governance”, over time, have all acquired that character. Women, as well as men, are the transmitters of those values, which range from the private sphere to the public and political, cognitive, etc., to inequality and injustice.
14. See the case of the “missing” in Slovenia. Many authors have addressed this subject. Sandro Mezzadra/Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke UP, Durham 2013.
15. *The missing citizens* can be missing in various ways and on different levels. *We* miss them. They drown in the Mediterranean or die by the thousand trying to reach Europe, see the blog of Gabriele Del Grande, <http://fortresseurope.blogspot.fr/> : from 1988 until May 11, 2014, at least 19,720 persons disappeared in the waves, out of those who had been counted (not counting the unlisted or other borders).

Missing are those citizens too who are passive for different reasons. Missing are citizens who are excluded from the social, economic and political sphere on account of caste, class, religion, colour of their skin, gender, sexual orientation etc. Women have been most frequently and moreover, historically, in this position. The concept of "missing citizens" is based on the model of that of "missing women" of Amartye Sena. It is important because a category becomes visible and real once it is named, opening a niche for representation. R. Ivekovic, *Les citoyens manquants*: <http://www.reseau-terra.eu/article1061.html>

16. *Citizenship, citoyenneté*; in Slovenian, a more neutral term, "občanstvo", an older term that dismisses the dilemma between "bourgeois", "civil" or "civic" society, between the "bourgeois" and the "citizens". Acknowledgement to Rastko Moènik.
17. As much as the term "rod" in Serbocroat, the term "gender" has been relatively losing part of its normativity and precision. Namely, a regulative idea cannot be completely normative, although the norm for gender roles tends to be set heterosexually as much as possible, especially regarding women.
18. R. Ivekoviæ, *Le sexe de la nation*, Paris, Eds. Léo Scheer 2003; *Dame-Nation. Nation et différence des sexes*, Ravenna, Longo Editore 2003. The concept *partage de la raison* functions exclusively in French, where i use it to denote the idea of "partitioning/partaking of reason". *Partage*, just like the term *partager*, means two opposite things at the same time: separate, but also share with others. These two meanings are two sides of the same medal and it is therefore necessary to bear them both in mind in order to comprehend the dialectics of their interaction as *in-com-possibles*. (Translation added by S.L.)
19. *Différend*: "that which makes the difference". Cf. J-F. Lyotard, *Le Différend*, Minuit, Paris 1983. The term has been maintained in the English title: *Differend : Phrases in Dispute*, Univ. of Minnesota Press 1989. "Prime" does not refer to time, of course, but to a possible logical conceivability.
20. Language, translation, both intra- and inter-lingual. "Language" also comprises visual, linguistic and other ways of representation, projection, rationalization, cartography, etc.
21. Why in inverted commas: because in the way of thinking i am trying to establish, the opposition subject-object is questionable and disputed.
22. I have examined diverse degrees and origins of sovereignty in Europe, China and India elsewhere: *L'éloquence tempérée du Bouddha. Souverainetés et dépossession de soi*, op. cit.

23. Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power", *Modernity. An Introduction to Modern Societies*, ed. by Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, Kenneth Thompson, Blackwell, Malden (Mass.) 2000 (first ed. 1996), pp. 184-224. Naoki Sakai argues that within the Westphalian model, the second geopolitical area has been excluded by the first from the rules that are valid for the "West" (while the latter at the same time performatively equates itself with the "International community"). These rules are: 1) sovereignty of the nation state and self-determination, 2) legal equality among nation states, 3) the rule of international law among the states, 4) non-interference with internal affairs of other countries. None of these referred to the colonies (extra-territorial and unconstitutional) or to territories that were not organised as national states. Sakai, "Translation and Bordering", presentation at the international conference "Borders, Displacement & Creation", Porto, 29-08-4-09-2011.
24. This matter is more complex. Nationalism must always be observed within a historical process and context. In the mid-20th century, nazism severely and permanently compromised the existing nationalisms as such, at least in Europe and Asia (Japan), but this did not apply to the colonies that produced by induced reactive nationalisms during the 1960's, which liberated most of the Third World. Palestine may look as a disputable case, as it is still on the agenda because its process of emancipation has not been completed yet. However, the case of Palestine is simply that of an Israeli colony brokered by European forces (especially Great Britain) at the end of World War II. The present-day Palestinian nationalism is liberational. Nationalism can, by all means, lose its liberational character occasionally, it might even be its general tendency. Nationalism is liberational inasmuch as discrimination and exclusion are (not) based on "identity". Colonial nationalisms generate liberational counter-nationalisms.
25. Toni Negri, "Il diritto del commune", <http://uninomade.org/il-diritto-del-comune>, 14-03-2011.
26. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Para um novo senso comum (vol. 1) : A crítica da razão indolente. Contra o desperdício da experiência*, Cortez, São Paulo 2000.
27. Darko Suvin, "Diskurs o birokraciji i drz avnoj vlasti u po-revolucionarnoj Jugoslaviji 1945-75" (unpublished manuscript) reveals these nuances in detailed readings of the official socialist thought in the country (Tito, Kidriè, Kardelj, Bakariæ, etc.).
28. R. Ivekoviæ, "Terror/isme comme politique ou comme hétérogénéité. Du sens des mots et de leur traduction", *Rue Descartes* n° 62, pp. 68-78; "Terreurs et traductions", in *Contre-*

- Attaques. Perspective 2 : Jean-Marc Rouillan*, sous la dir. d'Alain Jugnon, Paris-Marseille, Al Dante 2011, pp. 131-169.
29. This was one week after the event.
 30. Yves Charles Zarka, "La dictature des marches à l'âge de la servilité de l'État", *Le Figaro* 19-7-2011, p. 19
 31. I am tempted to translate governance as "gospodarstvo", although in the Croatian variant of the language this word has acquired different meanings in time, which of course obstructs my personal translating inclination. Yet the closeness of meaning of "gospodarstvo" in the sense of (national) economy and in the sense currently mostly derived from Foucault's usage of the term "gouvernance" (as well as "gouvernementalité" for the entire overall system), as well as the close link between the ideas of rationalisation and efficiency, open up the horizon of the contemporary and are thought-provoking.
 32. Caution regarding this term and the use of inverted commas are due to its relativisation, although problematic, convincingly attributed to it by Ernesto Laclau in *On Populist Reason*, London, Verso 2007.
 33. Konstantinoviæ, *Filozofija palanke*, BIGZ, Beograd 1981 (first ed. Third program of Radio Belgrade 1969).
 34. Sakai, "Translation and Bordering", *op. cit.* and his other works. See "Translation as filter", <http://www.transeuropeennes.eu/en/recherche/find/>, 25-3-2010.
 35. Boris Buden/Rada Ivekoviæ, "Babilon moj roden kraj", <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0908/ivekovic-buden/hr> March 2008.
 36. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *The Critique of postcolonial reason. Towards the History of the Vanishing Present*, Harvard UP 1999. R. Ivekoviæ, seminar held on 19th March 2011 in Geneva, "La nouvelle universalité de l'exil", in *(Re)penser l'exil* N° 1 <http://revue-exil.com/la-nouvelle-universalite-de-lexil/>, publ. on Feb. 14, 2012. ed. by Marie-Claire Caloz-Tschopp.

**A Woman's World in Shashi Deshpande's
The Dark Holds No Terrors:
A Feminist Study**

CHANDRAMANI

Feminism is an ideology which assays not only to understand the world but to alter it to the vantage of women. Feminist literary criticism primarily responds to the way woman is presented in literature. The feminists believe that in order to understand woman's position in the world one has to understand the system of patriarchy. Adrienne Rich defines patriarchy as: "... any kind of group organization in which males hold dominant power and determine what part females shall play and not play, and in which capabilities assigned to women are relegated generally to the mystical and aesthetic and excluded from the practical and political realms" (Rich 76). Theoretical foundation of feminist criticism is laid by Simone de Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex* (1949), that purports at overthrowing social practices which leads to oppression, subjugation and victimization of women.

It was mainly after the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s that the contemporary feminist ideology evolved and the female voice was heard with special concern. The focus of the literary studies was shifted to women's writing with a view to re-reading, re-visioning and reinterpreting it in the light of long-existing gender bias and sexual politics in history, culture, society, family, language and literature. (Dobson 196).

Indian English novel has had its luxuriant growth in the hands of Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, Shashi Deshpande, and a few others in the

nineteen eighties and after. Shashi Deshpande is one of the most accomplished women novelists of the postmodern period. In the post-1980 era, love, sex, marriage, loneliness and search for identity are some of the leading themes in Indian English novel. Thus, the theory of feminism embraces all these themes which act as a backdrop for feminist writing.

Literature is a truthful expression of life and its success lies in the blending of both art and morality. Thus, a novel is a product of social redemption. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, in fact, Shashi Deshpande's magnum opus is an exemplary step towards attaining social redemption which mainly concerns and revolves around the female. It has been translated into German and Russian. It charms the readers with its unusual technique of telling Sarita's complex and pathetic story — a story of a chained soul which strives for autonomy of the self. It belongs to the domain of feminist criticism known as Gynocriticism. Gynocritique is more self-contained and experimental which seeks to formulate a female framework for the analysis of women's literature to develop new models based on the study of female experience rather than to adopt male models and theories. "Shashi Deshpande has presented a woman's world from a woman's point of view. None of the novels discussed have well-developed male characters, and are seen only in relation to the protagonist as husbands or fathers or brothers. In Deshpande's novels, husbands have been indirectly made responsible for their wives' troubles" (Dickman 33).

The Dark Holds No Terrors explores the myth of man's superiority and the suppression of a career woman Sarita. Sarita, in the novel, is a successful doctor who suffers a sadistic relationship with her husband who cannot accept the fact that his wife is more professionally successful than him. Manohar's male ego does not permit him to acknowledge his wife's professional progress and this professional jealousy strains their relationship. Manu did not subscribe to equality of status between men and women. His ideal was that of oneness of the two and not of equality with each other. He held that woman

by nature is more emotional than man. The taboos laid down by Manu restricted women of the family. In a philosophic sense, marital relationship is like two bullocks yoked together for a better compatibility in a marital journey. Deshpande in *That Long Silence* too comments on this philosophic comparison based on husband–wife relationship: “two bullocks yoked together . . . it is more comfortable for them to move in the same direction. To go in different direction would be painful. . . .” (11–12). Each individual’s activity affects the other in some way or the other.

The novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* like most of Deshpande’s other novels analyses how the lot of women has not changed much even in the twentieth century. Here, Deshpande’s protagonist, Saru (short for Sarita), is focused on her responses to questions pertaining to women’s identity maintaining relationship within her family. Sheila Rawbotham in *Women’s Conscious: Man’s World* (1973) too recognized that working class women experience the double oppression of the sexual division of labour at work and at home. Buhler points out the phases in a woman’s life: “. . . in childhood a woman should be under her father’s control, in youth under her husband’s and when husband is dead, under her sons, she should not have independence. . . .” (Buhler, 1992). Buhler stresses on the phases of a woman’s life unlike Ferguson. Ferguson primarily speaks about the shifting roles of women to their male counterpart, “. . . in every age woman has been seen primarily as mother, mistress and as sex object — their roles in relation to man.” (Ferguson 4–5)

As a reputed feminist writer, Deshpande mirrors realistic picture of the contemporary middle-class, educated, urban Indian women. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, she portrays the miserable plight of the contemporary middle-class, urban woman Sarita. Virginia Woolf, while defining women’s place in the patriarchal society, voices the sentiments of millions of her sisters. She bemoans the unenviable position of women in these words:

A very queer, composite being thus emerges. Imaginatively she is of the highest importance; practically she is completely insignificant. She provides poetry from cover to cover: she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband. (Woolf 41).

Simone de Beauvoir's phase 'the second sex' with reference to woman cuts ice. She opines that woman's idea of herself as inferior to man and dependent on him springs from her realisation that 'the world is masculine on the whole, those who fashioned it, ruled it and still dominate it today are men' (Beauvoir 298). David Kerr rightly observes, "It is not history, nor fate that enslaves us, it is our own fears, our own willingness to be slaves, our own failures in the courage to be" (Kerr 138). This is what really causes the hardships in women. Introspection and the acceptance of what they are, has given them the courage to face the challenge of an identity crisis.

The existing criticism on *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is quite insightful and penetrating, but it basically aims at questioning the patriarchal system in one way or the other. Although, critics and scholars have taken up and discussed various problems faced by the woman in the contemporary male dominated society – gender discrimination, inequality of sexes, and male chauvinism — yet the strange mother–daughter relationship is centrally significant to the understanding of this novel. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* by Shashi Deshpande is an insightful story of mothers and daughters in a typical patriarchal framework, foregrounding the daughter's search for her own refuge. It is the institution of patriarchy which burdens the woman with its definitions of feminine characteristics and forces her to adhere to them. The interesting fact is that, this work of moulding the woman in a patriarchy–constructed feminine identity is carried out by the woman herself. Patriarchy has used mothers to instil and perpetuate

its values in the children of both sexes. A woman is made to feel blessed and superior if she gives birth to a son. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?": "Between patriarchy and imperialism subject constitution and object formation the figure of woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'Third-World Woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (83). Spivak's observation can be closely analysed in Saru's father's indifferent attitude when she comes to his house after an estranged marriage. Saru does not find her father's affection for her. He speaks to her as though she should not have come. This attitude of her father makes her ask, "Baba does it trouble you to have me here? Tell me if it does, I can go to a hotel" (*The Dark* 18).

Sarita is a woman who is fettered by her marriage to a man who has sadistic tendencies. She undergoes a nightmarish experience of rape at the hands of a stranger who she realizes, eventually, is no other than her own husband. Her suffering stems from her husband's sadistic treatment of her and her mother's callous attitude towards her. When the mother, herself a patriarchal construct, imposes patriarchal principles and values on the daughter, the daughter may submit or rebel as a reaction to it. As psychologists suggest, "mothers come to symbolize dependence, regression, passivity, and the lack of adaptation to reality. Turning from mother represents independence and individuation, progress, activity, and participation in the real world" (Chodorow 82). Thus, the novel makes use of the orchestration of events, drawn from the past and the present to highlight and evidence the fissures and ruptures in the personalities of Sarita.

Sarita realizes the enormous capability of the self in the course of her struggle with the institution of marriage and understanding the different kind of relationships — mother-daughter, brother-sister, husband-wife and teacher-student relationships. These entangled relationships make Saru to ponder about her marriage life which encourages and

motivates her to think that it is she who can solve the entire problem: “. . . because there’s no one else, we have to go on trying. If we can’t believe in ourselves, we’re sunk” (*The Dark* 220). A woman loses her identity soon after her marriage. She is viewed as a wife or mother who in a way effaces her real self and enforces an alien self on her. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* presents the story of a marriage that does not hold and is about to crumble down to an inevitable collapse. The storm, the storyline focuses on, is the disoriented and unhappy conjugal life of Sarita and Manohar.

Women characters in fiction are most often a function of cultural values and male subjectivity rather than an accurate portrayal of woman’s real situation and her reactions to it. Women are traditionally portrayed almost exclusively in terms of their relationships to men — as wives, mistresses and accessories — whereas men are portrayed in a wide variety of situations, coping with the heroic problems of the “human” condition. Simone de Beauvoir expresses her own views on the man–woman nexus in her famous book *The Second Sex* (1949):

Man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria without reciprocity Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees . . . she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex . . . absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to man and he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. 534.

Sarita’s life is depicted as an ordeal from the very beginning. The discrimination made by her mother made Saru’s childhood uncertain and unsecured. With maturity of reasoning and questioning she fails to stomach the preference shown towards her brother, Dhruva. She resents the discriminatory treatment when Dhruva being his parents’ favourite gets away with many things which are denied to her. She struggles to attract her parents’ attention and partially

succeeds to get her father's love. Yet, her father's activities also often give the impression that "daughters are their mother's business" (105). She is always considered a burden to be eased, or a problem to be solved, or a responsibility to be dispensed with. The writer's representation of mother and daughter is of abiding interest. The petrifying image of the mother in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* can be seen through mother-daughter relationship:

You take care of me, you keep watch over me. You want me always in your sight in order to protect me. You fear that something will happen to me. Do you fear that something will happen? But what could happen that would be worse than the fact of my lying supine day and night? Already full grown and still in the cradle. Still dependent upon someone who carries me, who nurses me. Who carries me? Who nurses me? (Irigaray 60-61).

Mother-daughter relationship is not a static but dynamic one which passes through certain significant stages. What is interesting about it is that its impact can be felt on both of them, since every mother was once herself a daughter and every daughter would one day, possibly, attain motherhood. In this way, the experiences of the mother shape the life of the daughter, and the life of the daughter, in turn, transforms the experiences of the mother.

Sarita's mother's strong preference for her brother drives her to a sense of restlessness and alienation. Saru was deeply hurt at the indifferent attitude of her parents who would celebrate her younger brother Dhruva's birthday and other religious rituals related to him in a grand way whereas, Saru's birthdays remains barely acknowledged. This disparity of treatment makes her think that her birthday is only a matter of displeasure for her mother. It is Saru's mother who believes that a girl is a liability and a boy an asset, instils a sense of insecurity in her daughter's mind which makes her rebellious by nature. Kamala constantly reminds Sarita of her skin texture which fills Sarita with disgust and hatred for her. Saru does not commit to her hatred because of her advice to keep away

from the sun but because of her biased treatment. Kamala does not realize how her words affect the child. Saru's mother's advice symbolises that women are "self-actualising whose identities are not dependent on men" (Martin 83). Her earliest memories speak about the gender discrimination shown by her mother in favour of her brother:

Don't go out in the sun, you'll get darker.
Who cares?
We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.
I don't want to get married.
Will you live with us all your life?
Why not?
You can't.
And Dhruva?
He's different. He is a boy. (*The Dark* 45).

Human beings are products of the social system in which they live and dwell, and in order to play their societal roles appropriately, certain types of relationships have been established. The one thing that these relationships give birth to is a sense of commitment. One of the most committed relationships, from emotional and psychological point of view, is the one shared by mother and daughter. But Saru's relationship with her mother is contrary as she has not been fortunate enough to get motherly love. She remembers her mother's bitter words for her when she was a little girl unable to save her younger brother from drowning. She is frequently haunted by her mother's taunt 'why you're still alive and why you did not die in your brother's place instead.' Saru's mother feels that Saru is not supposed to live when Saru's brother Dhruva is dead and gone. She admits "I hate her, sapping me of happiness, of everything. She's always done it to me . . . taken happiness away from me. She does it even now when she's dead" (109). She vows to strike back 'show her and make her realize.' Her realization of her mother being dead not only brings her grief but anger. A childish rage fills her when she remembers what she had often told herself she would do to her mother, "I'll show her. I'll make her realize." (60)

Her heart experiences pain when she recalls her mother's curse that ruined her marital life as a consequence of her determination to marry Manohar. Positive activities that kick-starts with stiff negative concepts (like curses) breed adverse consequences and outcomes: "You won't be happy with him. I know you won't. A man of a different caste, different community . . . what will you two have in common?" (98). Very rightly, it soon affects Saru's conjugal life causing conjugal disharmony. When her brother dies by drowning in the pond accidentally she is haunted by the thought that she is responsible for her brother's death. Even her mother finds her guilty when she comments, "you did it. You did this. You killed him. Why didn't you die? Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (191). Sarita is determined not to follow the example of her mother; rather, she wants to be as unlike her as possible. "To get married, and end up doing just what your mother did seemed to me not only terrible but damnable" (140). She resolves to be a doctor hoping that a professional career will be "the key that would unlock the door out of this life" (140). Saru's confrontation with her mother reaches its peak when she decides to marry Manohar. Being unwanted Saru develops the feeling that she has to belong somewhere, to someone very dear. She marries Manu because her parents oppose the marriage. She gets attached to a person whom she later tags as 'a wreck, a ruin, a sadist' and who unfortunately is her husband. Sarita's boring life is projected through her sinking feelings. She writes of her anguish: "Nobody likes me. Nobody cares for me. Nobody wants me. . . ." (83). Saru's life is much controlled by the orthodox social tradition than her own modern point of view. After her mother's demise, her father is world-weary and has renounced the problems and entanglements of earthly life in spirit: "He had always been so much a man, the 'master of the house', not to be bothered by any of the trivial of daily routine. And yet he seemed comfortable in this new role, as if his earlier inactivity had been a giving-in to his wife's ideas, nothing to do with himself" (20). Men have portrayed women as they find them not as women

would have perceived themselves (i.e., from men's point of view, not from the point of view of women themselves). This kind of attitude prompted Carlo Christ to say that 'Woman have not experienced their own experience.' (Christ Carol 5)

Sarita is a successful doctor in the day time, becomes a "terrified trapped animal" at night in the grip of her sadistic husband: "And she a normal, sane person, not that two-in-one woman who, in the daytime wore a white coat and an air of confidence and knowing, and at night became a terrified, trapped animal" (*The Dark* 134). After fifteen years, she returns to her parents' home, much against her female ego, to escape from the brutality of her husband inflicted on her every night. Her greatest problem in life is her own inability to accept the fact that the person whom she married out of much love and respect is in fact such a tormented individual who has let out his complexes through a sadistic sexual relationship with her. In this regard, Catherine MacKinnon identified pornography. She asserted 'sex is what women are for' and the purpose of 'women's existence is to satisfy the sexual desires of men'. She concludes that if women want to overthrow patriarchy pornography must be eradicated (Hekman 94). Sarita shows her individuality by raising her voice against her husband when he wanted to make love. Men always think that the bodies of women are their property. They feel whenever they want to make love their wives have to surrender themselves. It is immaterial whether they are willing or not. Don't the women have freedom to say 'yes' or 'no' to their husbands? This view of feminist critics is much debated and is stretched to various approaches. Quite similar to MacKinnon argument, Shulamith Firestone views "woman's reproductive biology that accounted for her original and continued oppression, and not some sudden patriarchal revolution, the origins of which Freud himself was at a loss to explain . . . Thus throughout history, in all stages and types of culture, women have been oppressed due to their biological functions" (Firestone 73-74).

Sarita's realises that her profession, her social prestige and popularity marred her conjugal relationship with her

husband Manu: “. . . this terrible thing that has destroyed our marriage. I know this too . . . that the human personality has an infinite capacity for growth. And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller. But perhaps, the same thing that made me inches taller, made him inches shorter. He had been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband” (*The Dark* 42). John Ruskin shares Saru's view in relation to a successful marriage:

A man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly; while a woman ought to know the same language or science only so far as may enable her to sympathize in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends. (Sesame and Lilies 74).

Sarita is as restrained as a puppet in every decision she wants to take: “If I have been a puppet it is because I made myself one. I have been clinging to the tenuous shadows of a marriage whose substance has long since disintegrated because I have been afraid of proving my mother right.” She in the process of reviewing finds herself responsible for all the events. She takes herself as “the guilty sister, the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife . . . persons spiked with guilts. Yes, she was all of them” (*The Dark* 220). Whatever her faults and life had been, she ultimately reaches the depths of self-actualisation. At last she reaches a stage which in the words of Elton, McNeil and Zick Rubin, when she is “not beaten by the other people's rejection — by low self-regard, by anxiety, or by conflict” (Elton 445). Their theory is quite logical: “the self develops in an open, flexible, expansive manner, the individual will continue on the road to self-actualisation” (Elton 445). Saru's philosophical introspection points out that escape is a ridiculous idea.

She silently conceals her guilt and confusion. Her mother's accusation that she killed Dhruva compels her to maintain silence. It affects her psyche as she starts to blame herself for his death even though she knew that she had not been at fault. Her parents' neutrality in hearing her part of the

story also adds to her silent suffering. Saru's mother adapts to this unthinking silence because of her firm belief in traditional norms. In spite of her domineering nature she maintains a rigid silence regarding her problems and ailments. Her slow approaching death by stomach cancer could have been averted. When Saru learns about her condition she wonders about such women whose lives are enveloped in a deafening silence that cannot be broken even in case of extreme pain. Saru finds:

The myriad complaints, the varying symptoms, she thought, if put together it would provide a world of data for a treatise on the condition of women . . . all the indignities of a woman's life, borne silently and as long as possible . . . everything kept secret, their very womanhood a source of deep shame to them. Going on with their tasks, and destroying themselves in the bargain, for nothing but a meaningless modesty. Their unconscious, unmeaning heroism, born out of the myth of the self-sacrificing martyred woman, did not arouse either her pity or her admiration. (The Dark 107).

Sarita tries to reconcile the demands of others with the demand of her own self. Carol Gilligan believes that women give importance to relationships and care for others. Gilligan asserts that women's sense of self and morality revolves around issues of responsibility for care of and inclusion of the other people. She rightly points out in the following lines the importance of being responsible to both the self and the others:

Thus she strives to encompass the needs of both self and others, to be responsible to others and thus to be "good" but also to be responsible to herself and thus to be "honest" and "real". Although from one point of view, paying attention to one's own needs is selfish, from a different perspective it is not only honest but fair. This is the essence of the traditional shift towards a new concept of goodness, which turns inward in acknowledging the self and in accepting responsibility for choice. (Gilligan 85).

Reconciliation to reality is established in the words of Baba, at the end of the novel, when he motivates Sarita to give

Manohar a chance. The advice of Saru's father reminds us of Deshpande's Vanita Mami (a traditional wife in *That Long Silence*) who regards husband as a 'sheltering tree.' This status of husband is the generalised status given to all husbands by their respective wives in a male dominated society. Thus, a married woman is supposed to stay in the house of her husband till death. Sarita realizes that her life has been drawn out to be one of suffering. The readers will sense grit and power in the factual viewpoint of Nalu (the spinster in the novel) which sums up Saru's long introspection with her marriage on positive note that "It's all a question of adjustment, really. If you want to make it work, you can always do it" (The Dark 118).

Most of Deshpande's heroines grow up envired by women who silently bear the gross injustice done to them or submit to a life of hopelessness. They refuse to endure the straitjacketed role of a traditional wife in a male dominated society. As they are educated, modern and sophisticated, they refuse to yield to an unquestioning life. What angers them most is their impuissance in fighting their rights in tradition bound society. They are taught by their conservative families not to revolt from the very beginning. This restriction established by their families differentiates them and give them a new personality. As Charles Correa in her essay named "Quest for Identity" says: "We develop our identity by tackling what we perceive to be our real problem . . . we find our identity by understanding ourselves and our environment" (10). Sarita is not a detached individual but a representative of a class of women that have always suffered under male domination and societal double standards. It is only by forsaking the path of self-denial that she is able to tread on the path of self-development. Thus, the novel ends with a pragmatic solution to her problem of relationship.

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Towards an Understanding of Post-Colonialism and Feminism

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Post-colonialism¹ as well as feminism² has been concerned with the ways in which and the extent to which representation and language are fundamental to identity construction and formation of subjectivity. For both, language is a vehicle for subverting colonial and patriarchal domination. Both discourses share a sense of deconstruction from an inherited language or an original feminine tongue. Yet, both the colonized and feminists have used appropriation to subvert and adapt dominant language as well as consequential practices. The texts of post-colonialism and feminist theory coincide on many aspects of the theory of difference, identity and labelling of the individual by the dominant discourse as well as giving other strategies of resistance to such control and domination.

Post-colonialism and post-modernism³ emerged co-historically in the second half of the twentieth century and share some stylistic traits. Post-colonialism is usually identified with the political, cultural and literacy emergence of the *third world*⁴ or the *underdeveloped*, whereas post modernism is related to the elite of the *first* or the *developed world* ; post-modernism acts as a Euro- American Western hegemony and considers certain cultures as backward and marginal: “understanding a culture is tantamount to reading an alien, faded incomplete manuscript full of contradictions, questionable amendments and tendentious commentaries” (Geertz 1973 : 15). Both occur after the national movements that defined European imperialism and global modernization

over the past few centuries. But, what are the implications of post-modernist ideas on literature? Post-modernism challenges boundaries, including those of form or genre, of decency or social codes, between reality and fantasy, of *high* and *low* cultures. It explores the marginalized aspects of life and marginalized elements of society, the fragmentation of the self. A character can be differently configured in different situations. But, because post-modernist belief is that life is a fiction, post-modernist fiction calls special attention to its own fictionality. This is called *self-reflexive* literature: literature that is conscious of its own status as fiction and that reality is structured through language. Both movements challenge the particular and the universal. Even more, feminism is the direct result of a burgeoning of post-modernism. Post-modernist texts exhibit a thematic concern with femininity and the female body, notably beautiful, ravenously sexual, victimized and idealized.

So, is there any constructive intersection between feminism and post-modernism? Some Marxist and feminist critics claim that post-modernism is apolitical and a historical, i.e. contradictory to feminism. Feminism is inherently an active political trend as it criticizes male centered culture, aims at eradicating women's oppression and revealing women's differences from men; thus, it seeks particular socio-cultural changes. Post-modernism and feminism intersect specifically because of their concern and their questioning of cultural norms and deconstruction of traditions. Some post-modern theories are similar to those of feminism since they criticize the *status quo*⁵, focus on the concepts of resistance and transgression, and challenge therefore, cultural institutional and ideological structures. "Post-modern theories' energetic critique of the system of hierarchical binary oppositions that under-girds Western thought destabilizes the classic dichotomies between man and woman, male and female, masculine and feminine" (Cornier 1996: 23).

Noteworthy is the fundamental difference between post-modernism and post-structuralism.⁶ While post-structuralism

seeks to emphasize deconstruction, post-modernism stresses both deconstruction and construction. Both seem to be different and yet call into questions key Western notions of subject, representation and truth. Therefore, each set of oppositions has a dominant concept linked to man, authority and privilege on the one hand and a subordinate one linked to woman: man/woman, male/female, masculine/ feminine, subject / object, self/other, sanity/madness, reason/irrationality, active/passive, presence/absence, truth/falsehood, fact /fiction, on the other. Besides, there is a distinction between women's writing and feminist texts. The former is to reveal a kind of writing perceived from a culturally constructed position, i.e. inferior to that of men. The latter upsets male centred connections and thoughts whatever the broad trends of feminism, to achieve equal status with men within extant social structures or to dismantle and restructure the social system. Feminism remains revolutionary and contains points of intersection with post-modernism. Feminism has produced powerful criticism of the relationship between representations of women and oppressive socio-sexual relations. Feminist theory aims to be more effective by developing an autonomist position for women's representations as phallocentric, a male-centred discourse as the foundation of society, responsible for women's oppression. Women's specificity is denied in phallocentrism. If representations are displaced as gendered and not universal, does this create space for woman's autonomous representation, i.e. her own femininity?

The debate concerning issues of stereotypes⁷ in cultural representations, notably literature has assumed exhaustive power over the last decades. The importance of such representations lies both in their descriptive and prescriptive values, i.e. in how they are used to communicate and to socialize men and women's place in specific ways as to conform to the religious dictates. The main critical concerns remain those of identifying the historical roots of such representations, their value in the creation and perpetuation of specific ways of seeing the world. In understanding the

complexity of cultural identity, one could analyze critically the in-between spaces which lead to “new signs of identity and innovative sights of collaboration and contestation in the act of defining the idea of society itself ”(Bhabha 1994:2).

Women struggle to modify gender relationships within the family itself, for gender oppression is still a fundamental issue in their daily life. But, how does gender interfere in life? Located within the context of gender and caste discrimination, women remain easy target for exploitation and violence. The problems faced by the underprivileged and marginalized women in accessing justice go beyond those identified by the government, notably caste, gender and community discrimination within society, organs of government and the criminal justice system.

What is being argued is that a consciousness and recognition of human rights can come when the society achieves a higher economic level. Equality between men and women under existing conditions is not the answer. This kind of feminism would challenge authoritarian gender relations as well as render degrading and dehumanizing the gender division of labour. The building of a feminist movement is not only in the interest of women but is a condition and indicator for development itself. Feminism challenges authoritarian relationships in the home, violence against women and a gender division of labour. It would run contrarily towards human rights abuses and enable a more coherent use of labour resources through the development of people's gifts and aptitudes.

Notes

1. Postcolonial began to circulate in the Western academy in the early 1980s and congealed in 1989 with the publication of *The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* edited by Bill Aschcroft It was most appreciated than the pejorative *third world*.
2. Feminism is a term commonly and quite indiscriminately used. Some of the currently used definitions are: a doctrine advocating

social and political rights for women equal to those of men, an organized movement for the attainment of these rights, the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created, belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women

3. Postmodernism is highly debated between post-modernists themselves; it includes a wide range of concerns: reorganization of knowledge (utility), storing (computers), challenging borders and limits involving those of decency, exploration of marginalized aspects of life and elements of society, refusal to live in a world under nuclear threat and threat of the geosphere, faster communication ... The confluence of the post-modern and post-colonial is fundamental in its challenge to genre distinctions and the conventions of realism. They share both a range of concerns, a debate with the past and a concern for marginalization and differ in their conception of history and the location of their discourse. It has been shaped by feminism. It does challenge dominant discourses as does post-colonial theory.
4. Third World is a rather pejorative way to mean post-colonial world. It was first used in 1952 by Alfred Sauvy, the French demographer. Academies reacted to the term *post-colonial* more favourably than to the pejorative *third world*, administrators welcomed it as less threatening than *Imperialistic* or *neo-colonialistic*. Post-structuralists and post-modernists readily provided it a sympathetic audience.
5. *Status quo*: the class relationships determined by the base and reflected in the superstructure of a society. The ideologies of a culture work to keep those relationships
6. Post-structuralism in literature reveals that the meaning of any text is unstable.
7. Stereotype is a representation and has a semiotic meaning in that something is *standing* for something else. Representations are constructed images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content. There is always an element of interpretation involved in representation. There are negative images that can have devastating effects on the real lives of marginalized people.

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**Enslavement of Land and Lady:
A Postcolonial Ecofeminist Exploration in
Nectar in a Sieve by Kamala Markandaya**

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The avant-garde Ecofeminism is a top-notch concept in postcolonial locus. Ecofeminism as an abstraction popped up in 1970s and 1980s as fusion of ecocriticism and feminism. The term was introduced by Francoise d' Eaubonne in her book *Le feminism Ou La Mort in* (1974). Ecofeminism connects the exploitation and domination of women with that of the environment and asserts that there is a semblance between women and nature. Some intellects such as Ynestra King epitomize it as third wave of feminism, while other theorists theorize it as deep ecology. Ecofeminism serves as an environmental critique of feminism and feminist critique of environmentalism. Hence, ecofeminists have varied trajectories. Rosemary Radford Reuther, Ivone Gebara, Vandana Shiva, Susan Griffin, Alice Walker, Starhawk, Sallie McFague, Luisah Teish, Sun Ai Lee-Park, Paula Gunn Allen, Monica Sjoo, Greta Gaard, Karen Warren and Andy Smith are the persons who gave their voice to ecofeminism. They focused on the minute particularities of oppression of both nature and women by capitalist patriarchy. This twofold slavery of patriarchal power structure must be examined together, or neither can be confronted fully. The power dynamics of patriarchal system stabilizes the worlds, both natural and social. Ecofeminism is a multifarious challenging structure which stands with strong tenacity to eliminate all sorts of ordeals.

Ecofeminism as a movement in India is still in its embryonic stage. This movement should be injected with much energy, so that it will advance towards the establishment of a stronger foundation in order to retrieve land and lady from servitude. Many women writers in India have passionately wielded their pens for the cause of ecofeminism through different genres. Among them Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Mahesweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Kamala Markandaya and C. K. Januare prominent. Kamala Markandaya, a lady of literature, excelled in the field of narration in a superlative degree. Through her polished and fluid literary style she outlined the lineage of rural India realistically. The Eco-regional theory is well conceptualized in all most all her works. How the aboriginals are expunged and dumped in a dingy condition is the highlight of this paper. Her widely acclaimed work *Nectar in a Sieve* is sterling instance of it. The enslavement of Rukmani in *Nectar in a Sieve* and her desperate longing and slogging to get her life protected from derailment is the projection of this paper.

Capitalism first appeared in Western Europe and was spread through colonialism. This civilizing mission was carried away by uncivilized intensions. Virtually the most expected outcome was disintegration in natural, social and psychological world. The nemesis of colonial rule is also felt in postcolonial aeon. In some of the major postcolonial countries such as Africa, South Asia, and particularly India, we have been seeing the pungent effects of colonialism in some way or other. The hazardous outcomes are clear in both the natural and social scenario. In order to wrench ourselves free from such forces it is vital to bring together postcolonial and environmental issues. So that prolonging imperialist modes and colonialist standpoint of social and environmental dominance can be challenged. Before the emergence of ecocriticism as a movement and academia, environmental activism was alive in India. After the arrival of such discipline this movement became even more vigorous. In India Chipko movement has gained momentum and it is recognized as a

highly successful epitome of grassroots environmentalism. This movement paved a path for the mobilization of women. This movement raised its voice against massive deforestation, lumbering and mining. Vandana Shiva, a physicist by profession and a renowned environmentalist, claims that women have special connection with the environment. She argues that women produce wealth in partnership with nature. The sense of holism is not something unknown to the women. There is a nexus between all living being and environment. This fact cannot be denied. But to the utter dismay this holistic relationship is unrecognized by patriarchal capitalists. In the book *New Woman/New Earth*, Reuther states:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society, whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this (modern industrial) society. (Reuther 204)

Medha Patkar headed the Narmada bachao andolon, a social movement consisting of tribal people, farmers, environmentalist and human right activist against the Sardar Sarovar dam being built across the Narmada river in Gujarat. Maheswata Devi, both an activist and a well-known feminist writer, took some constructive steps for the development of tribal environment. Arundhati Roy well known as Booker's prize winner for *God of Small Things* penned down profusely focusing on all environmental issues. She inveighed against the nuclear tests in India. She also raised her voice for some very sensitive issues such as liberation of Kashmir. In recent years, C.K. Janu took some strong steps for the adivasis and their home land. Kamala Markandaya was galvanized by the somber aftermath of colonialism. She captured the reality on her canvas with utmost ease and felicity. All her works are the replica of real world. The feeble condition of her female protagonist and their consistent endeavor to stay tuned with their homeland which ends in futile is quite notable.

Nectar in a Sieve is the third work of Kamala Markandaya which was published first in 1954. She adopted writing as her profession after the liberation of India from the grip of British rule. She entitled her work *Nectar in a Sieve* by being inspired by Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "Work without Hope". Work without hope draws *Nectar in a Sieve*, and hope without object cannot live. The pandemonium that prevailed in sociopolitical economic, psychological and environmental sphere after colonialism was well inscribed in this novel. She projected the impact of Industrialization on the poor peasant and lower middle class family in both rural and urban area. The economic threats of the commoners and their traumatized state are not something invisible in this postcolonial era. Modern automatization contributed towards the mayhem in the natural ecosystem and their inhabitants.

Rukmani, the main protagonist and the narrator, peeps into her past life, and launches into her life-story, describing what it means to be poverty-stricken. The narration starts with a happy note. Her nostalgic memories, her sentiments and her smoldering fire for her husband's affection are quite interesting. Rukmani was nicknamed as Ruku. She was the fourth daughter of once-important village headman. As the wealth and status dwindled, it was hard to arrange a dowry for Ruku. As a result of which Ruku had to marry an ordinary layman, who accepted her without demand. Nathan, a poor guy but with a rich heart accepted Ruku wholeheartedly. Ruku settled into a simple farming life very happily. Nathan and Ruku depended on farming for their survival. The identity of Ruku is not static in the novel. She married at a very tender age. Soon after her marriage she identified herself as a peasant woman. She joyously interacted with nature mother, and was gladdened to see the fruition of nature. Susheela Rao locates Ruku's special relationship with nature in her "heightened awareness of nature's beauty" (Rao 42) as well as her connection to the rhythms of the seasons. Rao points too many passages in which Ruku comments on the aesthetic and atmospheric beauty of the landscape. She was immensely

happy with both her partners. Her husband's affection was priceless to her and the accompaniment of land was quite contending. But change is law of nature. Everything is transient. At times nature acts in an adverse way. Nature's fury is beyond comprehension and control of human being. In Ruku's word, 'Nature is like a wild animal that you have trained to work for you.' (*Nectar in a Sieve* 43) Ruku was always less demanding kind of woman, who always knew how to make do with the situation and be jolly. Her personality is best reflected in these lines of *Nectar in a Sieve*:

When the sun shines on you and the fields are green and
beautiful to the eye, and your husband sees beauty in you
which no one has seen before, and you have a good store of
grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and as sweet
stirring in your body, what more can a woman ask for?(8)

Rukmani describes her ideal concept of life in the above mentioned lines. The strong connectivity of Ruku with nature and land can be visualized from the above quoted lines. The above mentioned quote is often regarded as mystifying. But if considered simplistically it is nothing but a peasant woman's happiness that is satisfied with the fulfillment of basic and elementary needs. The inscription of grains can also be symbolically interpreted with the female sexuality. The production of grains by nature and biological capability of women to reproduce has got some parity: The process of creation and procreation is carried away by both nature and women. Her first plantation of pumpkin and her ecstasy at the fruition of pumpkin is something childish. But her maturity of thought is seen, when she compares the swelling of pumpkin with her sprouting desires of intimacy with Nathan. Here is a moving description of pumpkins planting :

I had planted in the flat patch of ground behind the hut, a few pumpkin seeds. The soil here was rich, never having yielded before, and loose so that it did not require. Much digging. The seeds sprouted quickly sending up delicate green shoots that I kept carefully watered, going several times to the well nearby for the purpose. Soon they were not

delicate, but sprawling vigorously over the earth, and pumpkins begin to form, which fattening on soil and sun and water, swelled daily larger and larger, and ripen to yellow and red. . . .(10)

The childlike innocence of Ruku, while describing the growth of pumpkin is quite amazing, but her internal desires are also not hidden from us. Ruku very well demonstrates it when she says how the sowing of seeds disciplines the body, and how the sprouting of seeds uplifts the body. Her deep nurtured erotic emotions want a vent. She is intensely tied up with both nature and Nathan. She even intends that her alliance with both must be strengthened.

Rukmani switches from one identity to another. One thing that is prominent in all her identities is ambivalence. Uncertainty has enveloped her life. From a child right upto motherhood, Ruku experiences violent and flabbergasting experiences. Ruku and Nathan were blessed with a baby girl named Ira. That very year they were also bestowed with rich harvest. But to our utter disappointment birth of a daughter was a doleful happening for them. From the very first day of Ira's birth, she is considered to be a burden for the poor pleasant couple. They were over burdened with the idea that they have to arrange a certain amount of dowry for their daughter. This is a typically orthodox Indian attitude which is chastised by Markandaya through her works in general and *Nectar in a Sieve* in particular. The prejudice against the girl child in India is still agile. A son is considered to be the support of parents whereas a daughter is a liability. Nathan and Ruku craved for a son who could help them multiply their income. Apart from the sustainability factor giving birth to a son is a matter of pride for Indians. Nathan and Ruku's are also no exception to it. After the birth of Ira, Ruku faces infertility. She furtively gets herself treated by a white doctor Kenny. She never revealed a single word regarding her treatment to Nathan. After this treatment Ruku delivers five sons in quick succession in following few years. Now the family is complete with incomplete basic amenities. Ramesh Chadha has critiqued

it by contextualizing it with traditional Hindu society and religion. According to Ramesh Chadha:

The birth of a daughter in India is not considered an occasion for rejoicing. A son could have continued Nathan's vocation whereas the daughter would take dowry and leave only a memory behind. This attitude arises partly out the rigors of the dowry system (Rukmani herself had suffered from it) and partly due to the traditional view that a son is his father's prop. This view is also supported by religion: A son is the savior the ancestors as he alone has the right to offer oblations.(Chadha, 1988).

Inexorable fate was waiting to embrace the whole family. At this very juncture of life a tannery is built nearby. The tannery brought some very acrid changes to the natural environment. It marked a period of transition. A wave of modernization took hold of entire ecosystem. The weathering beauty of nature was nothing but a stroke of bad luck for Ruku. A sense of trepidation enraptured Ruku's mind regarding her deprivation from motherland. Ruku's despair at the loss of natural charm was quite innate, as she was born and brought up in nature's lap. A sense of ecophobia took roots in her which is quite instinctive. Philia and phobia are two mental states which is interconnected. Excessive philia (love) for something gives birth to a sense of insecurity, which ultimately takes the shape of phobia. The acute attachment of Ruku towards nature sparked off a sense of fear in her. She was frightened at the thought of loss of her homeland. Simon Estok critiqued it in his lines in an aggrieved way. Estok states: "Ecophobia is rooted in and dependent on anthropocentric arrogance and speciesism" (216).

Markandaya has reproached the inhuman treatment of nature by humans for the sake of luxury, which is quite eye-catching in this novel. The post-independence scenario of India is chalked out here. The constructive steps for economic development, and a revitalizing voice to restore humanity and equanimity in natural environment, both concepts clashed each other. Nature and women have been used and misused

by men since antiquities. In Mary Daly's work *Gyn/Ecology* (1978) we can find words of demurral against such enslavement. In Estok's words: "The commodification of nature and of sexual minorities are similar," and that this "commodification of nature and sexual minorities means othering and difference and space" (Estok 214).

Lumbering, pollution and inflation of price in the market are the results of tannery which is tested by almost everyone in some way or other in *Nectar in a Sieve*. In the meantime a series of crestfallen happenings occurred in Ruku's family. Heavy rain washed away Ruku's land. Ira, who was newly married, was dumped by her husband for being a barren lady. The two elder sons of Ruku, who chose tannery as their profession, were driven out by the authority for their misconduct. In midst of all this the love making of Ruku and Nathan continues. In such a highly adverse situation the last and the youngest son of Ruku is born. More ill befalls the family. Raja, Ruku's fourth son succumbs at the tannery. He was beaten black and blue at the attempts of his theft. Penury and hunger ironically snatched the life of Raja. In the meantime while the whole family is shattered. The two elder sons leave for work in new distant lands. Nathan is too weak to earn his wages. The youngest one was sinking out of hunger. Weather and nature were most unfavorable for the family. In midst of this plethora of problems Ira resorts to flesh trade and tries every possible means to rescue the life of her youngest brother. Here fair is foul and foul is fair. Despite her foul and fair efforts Kutty breathes his last. Suffering is the dominating theme in the novel. This never-ending hardship, and tussle for survival is well reflected in these lines: "In our lives there is no margin to misfortunes." (136) Infidelity of Nathan is also quite unbearable on the part of Ruku. But women as symbol of benignity dare to forgive such culprits. Hence Nathan was forgiven by the compassionate Ruku.

Illiteracy, superstition, prejudice, ego, adultery, and infidelity are some of the human vices and tragic flaws, which

added to the cause of doom of this peasant family. Markandaya has represented the grim reality very realistically. According to A.V.Krisna Rao and Madhavi Menon, social reality is defined as the "awareness of the social force that surround the individual, and their power to influence lives of men and women for better or for worse-, and the overall interaction of individual and the society." (Rao and Menon 1997)

The tannery brought havoc with it. Ruination of natural ecosystem was the outcome of the tannery. Vandana Shiva has considered such kind of development as mal-development, and such development only mal-nourishes the whole environment. She has negated the futuristic technology as a swindle. She in one of her works *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and survival in India* (1989) reflect on ecofeminism during 1980s. Shiva interweaved "death of the feminine principle" with "mal-development," a term she coined to stress on 'Third World' dependency on agriculture. In one of her essay "Development, Ecology and Women" Shiva articulates it very clearly:

Mal-development militates against equality in diversity, and super imposes the ideologically constructed category of western technological man as a uniform major of the worth of classes cultures and genders. . . Diversity, and unity, and harmony in diversity became epistemologically unattainable in the context of mal development, which then becomes synonymous with women's underdevelopment (sexist domination), and nature's depletion (deepening ecological crisis). . . . (Healing the Wounds 83).

Shiva also published with Maria Mies, in order to get themselves embroiled for the cause of postcolonial ecofeminism. Their joint venture, *Ecofeminism: Reconnecting a Divided World* is an emblematic reference of it. In this book the author links the capitalist patriarchal economic system with the oppression of 'women' in both the northern and southern hemispheres. In fact not only women and nature are the sufferers, but also the mute animals also suffer a great deal in

the hands of the wrong doer. Such improvising mission of men strikes dreadful towards nature. The tannery, not only destroyed the serenity of the environment, but also victimized the helpless animals. The meadow lost its charm. Ruku is quite conscious of the lessening presence of living beings in the environment. The birds have stopped chirping. Animals do not turn up in the valleys. The establishment of tannery is nothing but the complete spoiling of pastoral life.

“Atone time,” she recounts, “there had been kingfishers here, flashing between the young shoots for our fish; and paddy birds; and sometimes, in the shallower reaches of the river, flamingos, striding with ungainly precision among the water reeds, with plumage of a glory not of this earth. Now birds came no more, for the tannery lay close” (69).

A part from this drastic outcome of tannery is the massive massacre of wildlife. Animals were slaughtered and their leather were transformed into consumer goods. It was nothing but a butchery:

Not a month went by but somebody's land was swallowed up, another building appeared. Day and night the tanning went on. A never-ending line of carts brought there raw material in—thousands of skins, goat, calf, lizard and snake skins—and took them away again tanned, dyed and finished. It seemed impossible that markets could be found for such quantities—or that so many animals existed—but so it was, incredibly. (47)

The lesion that nature and women have been enduring must be examined well. In Judith plant, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*, the consequence of tannery is loss of freedom for everyone. The most strenuous and pitiful part occurs when the poor peasant couple lost their small patches of land to the hands of tannery. In an immoral and deceptive manner the belongings of poor people were snatched. Nathan and Ruku were landless and roofless. These extenuating circumstances designed the way for exodus. Ruku and Nathan had to leave their homeland out of compulsion and progressed towards a distant unknown city. All their possession turned

out to be a few bundles. Now the concept of ecoregionalism arises. Ecoregionalism is also akin to environmentalism in certain aspects. Biophilia is the main essence of life. Biophilia means a deep affiliation towards one's biological environment. The struggle to grab the ground by Ruku evidences it. Ecoregionalism has been a foundational issue in ecofeminism. Bioregionalism is also termed as ecoregionalism, which means a strong sensation of being attuned to one's natural region. Ruku's ecoregional emotions are also no exception to it. Homeland is the identity of the person. Ruku by losing her homeland lost her identity. Longing for one's homeland is best reflected in Ivone Gebera's work, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*. In the anthology, *Home! A Bioregional Reader* (1990), Judith Plant first developed the connections between bioregionalism and ecofeminism. Both perspectives value "all our relations" with nature and with humankind, and both value home—yet they define this term in different ways. Bioregionalists say "find a place and stay there," but "home has been a very isolated place for women" (21).

More calamities were waiting to bind the old couple. In that huge city the old couple could not trace their son, who was the last ray of hope in their life. Out of God's grace they could find a temporary accommodation in the temple. Meals were arranged for the poor people by the temple trusty. In such unpropitious circumstances she was reminded of Nathan's words: "There is no going back. Bend like the grass that you do not break" (32). At these extremities Ruku didn't give up hope, rather tried her hands in different odd jobs such as writing and reading letters for others. This late realization of literacy brought Ruku a few pennies. It was too less to materialize the dream to go back to her village. In order to enhance their income the weak couple worked in a very dangerous field where stones were broken using dynamites. This chancy business broke the mental strength and physical condition of Nathan. Nathan breathes his last in the arms of Ruku recalling some wondrous moments of past. Ruku lost

everything. The series of angsts she encounters where perhaps predesigned by the destiny. The ecopsychology of Ruku is well encapsulated in this novel. As geographical location, climatic condition and culture has got a major role to play on the external appearance of human beings. The same way environment also has got some spell on human mind. Thus the surrounding of Rukumani nourished and shaped her mind. The fear psychosis of Ruku is quite instinctive. She never wanted to get herself detached from nature. She cherished the company of both land and her love. But nevertheless misfortunes are her constant companion. Ruku was often counseled by Doctor Kenny to fight for her rights, but she was passive enough to fight back. In Ruku's words: "What was it we had to learn? To fight against tremendous odds? What was the use? One only loses the little one had. Of what use to fight when the conclusion is known" (69).

In the penultimate paragraph of this article, I would like to revive the lines of Val Plumwood, a philosopher activist, who is instrumental in strengthening the pillars of ecofeminism. Plumwood suggests that we "belong to the land as much the land belongs to us, "a belonging and identity that is articulated in "the essentially narrative terms of naming and interpreting the land, of telling its story in ways that show a deep and loving acquaintance with it and a history of dialogical interaction" (230). Earth is the only planet which is considered to be paradise. It is also considered as Eden garden. In the due course of time it lost its exuberance. For that human being is solely responsible. Human being is no more humane. Here, human is animalized and animal is humanized. The process of genesis and apocalypse occur in a cyclic manner. In order to sustain in this simplistically complex world we must adopt and adapt ourselves to the egalitarian ideology. Anne Primavesi's *Apocalypse to Genesis* (1991) illustrates the above mentioned theories biblically. Primavesi interprets the Spirit of God in creation as an image of the regenerative power of trees, oceans and human bodies.

The unconditional service and conditional servitude of land and lady (Ruku) in the hands of deleterious patriarchy is endless. Tireless steps should be taken to ameliorate both land and lady. Susan Griffin protests in her work, *Women and Nature*, and Karen J Warren has strived to fight against such capitalization in her work, *Ecofeminist Philosophy* that the world and the creatures should be reckoned as one organic whole. Monism should be established by dismantling dualism, or else the best land will convert into waste land. The earth is teetering on the brink of collapse. Some recuperating steps must be taken with determined briskness to synchronize the entire environment.

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Attainment of Self and Reclaiming Roots: A Study of Alice Walker's Meridian

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Don't wait around for other people to be happy for you. Any happiness you get you've got to make yourself.

—Alice Walker

The impact of the social milieu, one is placed in, shapes the behavior and temperament of the individual concerned. The world around, if healthy, goes on to making a positive human psyche. It is constructive for both the individual and the social environment. If otherwise, it not only distorts the particular victim individual's psyche but also the psyche of the oppressor and their future generations to come. The progeny of the oppressor internalizes and exercises oppression as privilege and the progeny of the victim mutely undergoes it as destiny. The continuation of such patterns of behavior questions the stability of the society concerned at large. The oppressor ruthlessly continues with it, since it confounds his greed. On the other hand it dehumanizes the victim's progeny. It can, therefore, be presumed that the psychic forces motivating human behavior stem from the uneven social conditions hovering over the temper of the society in particular. A close study of the interrelationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, since time immemorial, has been providing a context to literary endeavors of writers belonging to all ages and mileu.

The forcefully made *accepted* social milieu is always the product of the preached and practiced codes of the dominant community. It is the produce of threat and violence of those having upper hand in the matters of life. The dominance of

the community is established and legitimized through brute force. It ultimately results in shaping the face and feature of economy, polity, and culture of the society particular. All walks of life, through brute force and fake ideology are brought under control of the minority masters. Through this multilayer weapon, the lives of the innumerable subjugated are designed to serve the community of the subjugator. The minority or those who do not belong to the dominant community, as a consequence, has to suffer a lot. In a multicultural and multiracial society like America the social atmosphere, therefore, is bound to be tense. The race and patriarchy controlled white society did play and is playing a havoc in the lives of the African Americans. Its worst effect could be seen on the life of black woman, since woman, irrespective of clime and culture is the easiest prey to any sort of oppression.

Assertion and recognition of the self of a person is essentially needed for the '*wholeness*' of an individual, which was unjustly denied to them, for example, the blacks in America, for long. The black woman in America had to bear pain and the burden of invisibility, at the hands of the racist patriarchal white society and the male chauvinism within the black community. Black woman's biased portrayal in the mainstream literature added insult to the injury. Such attempts traumatized her subjecting her to psychological and mental torture. Under this double jeopardy of racism and sexism, black woman has often been neglected as an outsider. In literary depiction, of both the white and black writers; she is depicted in fixed stereotypes such as: unwed mother, a handy workhorse, a good housekeeper, great in bed, and a maid etc. Such fixed conceptions concealed her worth as a human being. Ralf Ellison, Richard Wright and James Baldwin presented black woman as a lifeless object –that can be used and misused as per the whims and pleasures of the master. The masters of either color discriminated her alike. They wrote about black boys and native sons, unjustly neglecting the humble and passive 'Black Susans'.

The creative corpus by the black women writers in the 20th century presents a complete antithetical picture of black community in general and black woman in particular. The focus now, is on black woman as an *individual person* struggling for freedom and selfhood against race and gender discrimination within and without the domestic circles, simultaneously. They exposed the “past (that) pulled the present out of shape” (Walker 91). The new black woman projected in the literary manifestations of the women writers, appears to set out to dismantle the race designed social structure of America. The belief of male supremacy over the female, the natural offshoot of the patriarchy that shrouded her personhood also came under fire. Annihilation of the male imposed stereotyped identity and assertion of an independent womanhood is the driving force of the women protagonists of Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison. Alice Walker through her works makes an appeal to the lay black woman to reconstruct her own identity through her perspective alone. The thematic concerns of her works have been woven around the sense of worth and dignity of black woman. Walker philosophizes that the bond of sisterhood is the weapon and shield with which black woman can defeat the twin-monsters. Black woman’s journey from *complexity* to *conclusion* is the central concern visible in most of her works. Alice Walker, an African American womanist writer in the twentieth century, therefore, has acquired a unique place in American life and literature. The true womanist, as she prefers to be called is instrumental in bringing about a sea change in the lives of black women in America.

Meridian, the novel by Alice Walker, centered on Meridian Hill, is a crusader for the rights of black women. Matured by the experiences of womanhood, wifehood and motherhood, Meridian is made fit for fighting against the chaos of the social upheaval in the white American society. The novel narrates the explorations of the protagonist through loneliness, guilt, and self-doubt, to acceptance of the self, returning to her cultural past. With it dawns upon her the

value and dignity of her race and gender. The twin standards, by which she and her community were humiliated by the so called superiors, now have been rediscovered as sources of sustenance. She discovers pride in adhering to it. This new vision enabled her to see the poor condition of black woman and the community was placed in. The transformational stages the heroine passes through are the symbolic representation of the society and the individual's moving towards selfhood. The journey of the individual becomes the journey of the entire community. The stage of selfhood, attained after several ordeals, provides ample scope for her to hum melodies and sing her own lyrics. Meridian, as a child, did not receive the nurturing love needed for a child from her parents. Mrs. Hill, the mother of Meridian, was made incapable for discharging such a responsibility by the color-code acceptability and worth of an individual. The cold and insensitive attitude of the mother, fashioned by self-hatred, ill-nurtured Meridian's blooming. It deforms the nature of the protagonist in the very constructive phase in life. The temper of the mother is fashioned by the racial and sexual stigma prevalent in the contemporary society. The mother, simultaneously, was also overburdened by the oppressions of the white community. Mrs. Hill fulfills her duty as a religious caretaker of her children, but is unable to understand the struggle of her children for needs beyond the body. She only considered appearances. "In the ironing of her children's clothes she expended all the energy she might have put into openly loving them. Her children were spotless wherever they went. In their stiff, almost inflexible garments, they were enclosed in the starch of her anger, and had to keep their distance to avoid providing the soggy wrinkles of contact that would cause her distress" (79). It kept the children at distance not only from the mother but also from people around. Their tongues were starched by the temperament of their mother. As a result of this Meridian's tongue twists at several moments during her early phase of life. She could not use her tongue as a medium of liberation. In addition to this Mrs Hill was a blind-believer

in the church. She could not find fault with the uneven social milieu since she had a strong blind belief in god. Unable to comprehend the teachings of the preacher in the church she would believe that good will prevail in the world one day.

At this unstable juncture in life, another unexpected psychological blow is received by Meridian- the unintended pregnancy at adolescence. Eddie, her boyfriend imposes on her the burden of wifehood and motherhood. The novelist commenting on the relationship says, "In her life with Eddie she knew she had lacked courage, lacked initiative or a mind of her own" (109). Ungroomed in matters related to sex, Meridian accepts Eddie simply as a protector of her body and it is not love that nurtured the temporary relationship between them. The domestic world, she was dragged into, mercilessly trained her to become a good wife and mother. The callousness of the mother, the husband, and the society around, collectively make Meridian a scapegoat. She was trapped in this web and release looked distant. Such a situation exhibits a struggle between Meridian Hill on the one side and the oppressive forces on the other. In spite of all, the race-gender prejudiced society could not dampen the spirit of freedom in her. She relentlessly challenges the forces that try to enslave her, and at the same time upholds the sanctity of herself. An outright refusal of the imposed secondary status in the name of race and gender, and a yearning for womanhood/personhood shaped her thought and action. Whatever hurdle comes her way towards self realization has been interrogated and if found hollow, thrown away. The racial and patriarchal values are disowned on similar grounds. The unhealthy domestic situations are also challenged by the awakened Meridian. The sanctity of marriage and motherhood is questioned on the basis of the constraints it imposes on woman.

The first important stage towards selfhood, Meridian arrives at, is her decision to break away from the stifling origin. She joins the Civil Rights Movement that aimed at the

emancipation of all blacks from the racial confinements. The zeal for change associates her with it. In the second phase of her journey towards independent personhood Meridian appears completely conscious and assertive in her temperament. She mocks every bourgeois value. The movement and its activists, to her, appear harbingers of peace. In the company of Truman, an activist in the movement, "She felt protected when she was with him. To her he was courageous and 'new'. He was, in any case, unlike any other black man she had known" (100). Though an activist for social justice his behavioral temperament was deeply rooted in the patriarchy. He "did not want a general beside him. He did not want a woman who tried, however encumbered by guilt and fears and remorse, to claim her own life" (110). Her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement makes her realize, at a later stage, that here too her sex has made her secondary. She was expected to play the role of a silent female assistant. Despite his revolutionary slogans and superficial belief in black women as earth mothers, Truman basically gets attracted to white virgins. The black male counterparts in the movement expected black women activists "attractive, but asleep" (110). What Truman, an activist in the movement, expects from his woman, is the general expectation of the black male activists in the movement. They want their woman to be virgin and who will be "a woman to rest in, as a ship must have a port" (103). The end of her romance with Truman lands her at a new realization. The movement and its activism appear fictional to her. She, now decides to chart out the course of her personal liberation independently and on her own terms. Meridian refutes the safety and security provided to woman by *male-nourished* society in exchange of her honor. She also disapproves of her confinements and the conventional design of a perfect woman. Such women, rightly observes Lynn Pifer, "are perfectly mindless, nicely dressed, walking corpses" (84). Living by others' standards, to Meridian, is death-in-life. The search, at the end of the novel provides her a set of values on which she could construct a new life not only for her alone,

but also as exemplar to others like her. She repudiates the claims of the body from that of the spirit. Meridian tells Truman that she has volunteered to suffer until her people are delivered from oppression. Truman's desertion of her and the abortion she undergoes later on marks the end of her second phase towards the realization of selfhood.

In the third and final stage, the protagonist of the novel, Meridian travels into her socio-cultural past. It marks an entry into "the world cleansed of sickness" (Walker 219). Through it Meridian manages to escape her death at the hands of race and patriarchy. The songs and stories of her cultural heritage give her a new vision and life, with which she can serve her people. The images and stories of black women from the past such as Louvinie and Sojourner Truth and Miss Winter her friend, provide Meridian the required strength and stamina to face social hard times. The journey into the past proves to be a life-force needed to bloom in a complete hostile milieu of America. With the recognition of her own roots, she finds in them the strength and sustenance required to flourish in a hostile temper. She aligns herself completely with the social and racial past of her community. Her personal identity, thus, evolves through the collective self of her disconnected past. Through it she finds a voice, overcoming the silence under repression of the race and patriarchy. Thus, a journey towards the roots is a metaphorical way to move forward. With the formation of an alternate value system to live by is the final stage of her growth. The cultural past of her race, now, is the eternal source of strength. Meridian discovers that her identity is inextricably tied to her people. Her "existence extended beyond herself to those around her." (Gerda 43) In the new found light of this awareness, Meridian evaluates her commitment to the racial struggle of her people in America. She feels a sense of belonging intrinsically coupled with a sense of duty. Her mission in life echoes through these lines: "I want to put an end to guilt I want to put an end to shame" (Walker 213). The attainment of *self* gives her a sense of self-worth, of power, and her place in the world.

Meridian is fashioned out of the African-American native heritage. Her story is an alternative answer to the racist oppression. The picture of a gigantic tree- stump from which a tiny branch is shown sprouting, given to Meridian, at the close of the novel symbolically explains the rebirth of the heroine. Meridian fighting ceaselessly against the racial and sexual fragmentations attains *wholeness* for herself and metaphorically for black women.

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Romantic Overtones in Fanny Burney's *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* (1814)

RAKHI GHOSH

Through her novels, Frances Burney or, Fanny Burney, as she is more popularly known as, adopts the veil of a domestic tale and dovetails it with a critique of eighteenth century English society that subtly discriminated between men and women. During the initial years of the eighteenth century English economy was primarily agrarian and the fundamental economic unit was still the traditional patriarchal household, the growth of commercial interest encouraging landowners to engage in urban enterprise. Increasing specialization of manufacture and the effects of the ongoing land enclosure accompanied and to a large extent contributed to a brisk economic movement. Consequently domestic occupation became divorced from industrial occupation and it had a critical impact on the economic function of women. Middle-class women withdrew from direct forms of economic activity altogether and came to enjoy uninterrupted leisure. By the end of the eighteenth century Lockean rationalism argued for and promoted the education of women. As women became educated, there also emerged women novelists who were suitably equipped to uphold the problems women had to confront in a society that threatened to marginalize them.

The Wanderer or Female Difficulties was published in 1814 at the end of Fanny Burney's career. By that time Fanny Burney had carved for herself a niche in the literary world of London. The conservative voice that had dominated her earlier novels like *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782) and *Camilla* (1796) had transformed itself into a rebel in *The Wanderer*. In this novel,

there surfaces strong links between the decorous heroine and the female rebel. The heroine emerges as a lone individual who repudiates the values of the rigid eighteenth century English society. Thus Burney highlights her ties with the Romantic movement in depicting the solitary figure at loggerheads with traditional society. The title of the novel carries with it both romantic and feminist implications. 'Wandering' is a quintessentially romantic activity and not a few wanderers traveling in the wasteland to recover an epiphanic vision can be traced in Romantic literature. However, the epiphany in this context has strong realistic implications as well.

The novel outlines the journey of a penniless heroine, Juliet, who flees France in order to escape the dark excesses of the French Revolution. She assumes the mantle of a wanderer or lone traveller to escape the political tumult of France. The loss of her purse aggravates the problem of the concealment of her identity. Mistakenly identified as a negro woman, the heroine thus assumes the role of a nameless Everywoman who can be both black and white, both Eastern and Western. *The Wanderer* resounds with Burney's preoccupation with naming, identity and legitimacy; issues that she also explores in her first novel, *Evelina*. Evelina herself has no surname that she can own, going instead under the assumed name of Anville, which is simply a rearrangement of the letters in her name. In her second novel *Cecilia*, the eponymous heroine cannot claim her fortune because her husband refuses to take her surname as is stipulated in the will. In the context of Burney's obsession with names, it strikes us as pertinent when we recall that she addresses her journal to a 'Nobody.' When she began her early journal dated 1768, she wondered to whom to address as that person would be her confidante. In the absence of a flesh-and-blood one, she despaired:

to *whom* da[re] I reveal my private opinion of my nearest Relations? the secret thoughts of my dearest friends? my own hopes, fears, reflections & dislikes? – Nobody!

To Nobody, then, will I write my Journal! since To Nobody can I be wholly unreserved – to Nobody can I reveal every thought, every wish of my Heart, with the most unlimited confidence, the most unremitting sincerity to the end of my Life! (*The Early Journals* 1-2)

The name “Nobody” suits all the heroines of Burney. Devoid of a good family name, they must wander unprotected through the world while trying to find a foothold of their own. Society shuns an unidentified woman; without a name/label she loses her value. While the male wanderer can enjoy undisturbed solitude, a woman refugee has constantly to steer clear of the men who attempt to molest her. The circuitous wanderings of the heroine ultimately culminate in a realization: “Deeply hurt and strongly affected, how insufficient, she exclaimed, is a FEMALE to herself! How utterly dependent upon situation – connexions – circumstance! how nameless, how for ever fresh-springing are her DIFFICULTIES, when she would owe her existence to her own exertions!” (*The Wanderer* 275). Juliet experiences overwhelming despair when patriarchy thwarts her attempts to find employment even as she gets ready to articulate her vision of women empowerment chiefly through economic freedom.

The novel opens with Juliet having already suffered the vicissitudes of fortune that the other heroines of Burney are merely threatened with. She has lost all chance for love because she is already married to a brutal French revolutionary – having fallen victim to the turbulent circumstances of revolutionary France; she is without funds and owing to various complications including some lost papers, she cannot establish her identity as an English heiress; she is nameless because her real name cannot be revealed without endangering the life of her imprisoned guardian.

Marriage is perceived never to come as a source of respite or reprieve to Juliet. Either it is a soulless alternative or a bitter pill served with generous doses of orthodoxy to women. Marriage in eighteenth century English society was looked

upon as an alliance of sense and neither sensuality nor sensibility mattered. Monetary settlements continued to cement alliances. To the ruling patriarchs in the family, the things that counted most were name and acres and therefore, marriageable daughters were nothing but strategic pawns in the entire game that involved endless manipulations for profit. That daughters detested that they were being sacrificed for mercenary motives, seldom worried their parents. I quote from the view of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu put forward in Roy Porter's *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* "People in my way are sold like slaves, and I cannot tell what price my masters will put on me [...]" (Porter 27). According to the same historian, after marriage, a wife had four cardinal functions to perform: the first was to unquestioningly obey her husband, the second was to produce heirs unendingly hazarding her own health, the third was to run the household as smoothly as she could and the fourth was to show off her ladylike graces (Porter 27-28). Though the ideology of romantic love and companionate marriage prevailed during this time, it was truer in theory than in practice.

Juliet's pennilessness adds a gruesome touch to her loss of identity. Savage economic pressure mounts on her with her namelessness causing everybody to view her with suspicion. Precisely these are the yardsticks by which a woman's identity was decided upon. Her virtues did not come in handy then. For Juliet, marriage to the French Commissary is a nightmare and the root of all complications in her life. She becomes a wanderer to escape the clutches of matrimony that was determined to erase her existence. Marriage hardly seemed a viable alternative to Burney as well much as she tried to stick to conventional propriety. Her adolescent, self sought freedom and she could only lament that her cook was getting wedded: "This same marriage Ceremony is so short, I really should have doubted it's validity had *I* been the Bride; though perhaps she may not find the Road it leads her to very short; be that as it may, she must now trudge on, she can only return with her wishes, be she ever so wearied" (*The Early Journals*

65). Though she is writing this in the early years of her life, yet there lies a realistic note to her observations. Like her, Jane Austen too, sounds disillusioned about matrimony. Marriage seems to them to be a life full of chores and additional responsibilities with a complete loss of liberty – a situation akin to imprisonment: “O ‘heavens’! how short a time does it take to put an eternal end to a Woman’s Liberty! ...I declare my heart ach’d to think how terrible the poor bride’s feelings must be to walk by such Crowd’s of people the occasion in itself so awful!” (*The Early Journals* 17). We notice that Burney nurtures none of the usual romantic illusions about marriage.

Though Juliet tries her best to sell her talents and skills, people like Sir Lyell Sycamore assume that she is out to sell her chastity. Desperate to earn her own living, Juliet tries a series of occupations – music teacher, musical performer, hired companion and nursemaid and even lower class jobs such as seamstress, milliner and shopkeeper. Moreover, she takes advantage of a stay in the country to examine the jobs performed by rural women. Through bitter experience, she learns that the types of employment open to women were certainly very limited, paid little (sometimes not enough for subsistence), lacked prestige, were dull, monotonous, and fatiguing, deadening alike for the spirit and body. She also discovers how difficult it was for women to obtain any type of honourable work, since they were given negligible training, sparse education and so few opportunities. Dorothy Marshall observes that the education available for woman was much more “sketchy and haphazard as they were eligible neither for the endowed school nor for the university” (Marshall 137). A code of upbringing for girls from the gentry was firmly in practice by the middle of the seventeenth centuries. Either girls were taught at home with the aid of a governess or in one of the finishing schools, according to whatever the parents thought best. In essence, education of girls usually enhanced their ability to be more ladylike. They were imprisoned in showy, useless existences. Their superficial upbringing was encouraged and girls were not trained for any kind of vocation

as most "schools [...] fell into the traditional finishing school pattern" (Fletcher 373). Boarding schools for girls also existed in the seventeenth century that merely provided a superficial training in the social graces, that would enable a girl to catch hold of a husband. Amidst the drudgery of her toil, Juliet discovers that women are not necessarily humane to each other, nor are they devoid of the baser aspects of human nature that make repression and revolution a perpetual possibility.

At the time that Burney wrote her novels the established conflict between the private and the public worlds continued to dominate. The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries outlined the separate spheres of activity of men and women. As men had greater physical and natural strength, they were believed to be superior to their wives and could dominate them. Wives, on the other hand, had to take up the responsibility of childcare and domesticity. It was a schematic system in which it was implied that women would be confined in the 'private' sphere while men would inhabit the 'public' world. It was the entrapping/confinement of women that Burney rejected in *The Wanderer*. In her last novel, Burney overthrows her timidity to advocate how imperative it was for middle-class women to have access to work only for the sheer necessity of survival.

Burney "recognizes that work has psychological as well as economic value, neither of which was available to ladies" (Rogers 136). Though Lady Juliet Granville is rescued from taking up a mundane profession at the end of the novel, that Burney should have devoted page after page in tracing her agony as she desperately hunts for a job, is enough indication that such an issue gnawed at the heart of the novelist. Thus domestic retirement was seen as an infirmity rather than reassurance. Cynicism dyed feminine forbearance and resignation even though Burney – the conforming conservative that she was – had no other alternative but to show that a lady who maintains an impeccably virtuous nature will ultimately be rewarded by destiny. Authors like Burney were acquainted

with looming economic shortage in their own lives and attempted to depict, though covertly, that unless a woman was properly equipped to follow a profession, she could not hope to avert financial disaster that threatened to overpower her. The money theme forms a significant concern in all her novels primarily because a young woman is about to become the object of merchandise in a marriage market: "The insistent exploration of women's peculiar relationship to money defines the new female fiction. Here is where the heroines of such widely differing novelists as Fanny Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe with her Gothic thrills, and Mary Wollstonecraft, the political radical and the feminist, join hands. The topic is approached from every direction: the poor, but nobly virtuous heroine, a prey to fortune-hunters; the orphan; the dependent relation; even the unhappily married heroine" (Copeland 25). When a woman attempts to take up a job she must transgress the limits of her private world and enter the public domain of economic activities in the world of man. Burney herself did so as she sought to make a living by selling her novels. Moreover, when she introduces Elinor as a feminist voice in the novel, Burney does not shy away from giving a political overtone to her novel and thus enters the world that men had hitherto forbidden women to enter, the public world of politics. Pam Perkins qualifies the term 'wanderer' as a masculine figure (Perkins 74). When a woman is called a 'wanderer', it signifies the loss of her virtue. A 'public' woman, is incidentally, a prostitute. Therefore, it becomes evident that when a woman becomes a public figure or a wanderer, it is implied that she is unchaste. This is how the masculine world bars the entry of the domestic woman in the economic realm.

Harleigh, the hero of the novel, discourages Juliet from performing in public because if she does so she will classify herself as a professional woman, thus giving up her claim to respectability, so that he will be unable to marry her. Performing singers and instrumentalists were, like actresses thought of as disreputable and these professions had the flavour of prostitution about them. Harleigh's attitude to

public performance by women is not exceptional as the common belief was the fact that a woman should play only to entertain her husband and family. The skills of a lady and her private virtues ought never to come handy as to allow the lady to support herself in the public world. Rather a better option seemed to be to beg for masculine aid. This is what Burney ironically assesses in *The Wanderer*. As far as professional wives are concerned Burney resents and is depressed by the fact that reputed singers like Miss Linley had to sacrifice their booming careers bowing to the wishes of their husbands. In a journal entry written in 1791 she narrates: "Miss Linley is married to M^r Sheridan. She has entirely given up singing in Public, ... though Heaven knows how many Heart it may break" (*The Early Journals* 255). Harleigh falls prey to Juliet's feminine charms and is convinced that she is a gentlewoman. But Juliet will forfeit that right if she makes public her artistic talents. Burney too, equates this experience of Juliet's with her own. To publish novels and get paid for them is definitely a public performance and that public/ private divide was never to be deleted. As long as woman's social role remained confined to the private sphere of family, motherhood and marriage, women's access to the public sphere remained minimal. As individuals and as a group or class, women did not enjoy equal liberties, parities and opportunities in the public sphere as compared to those enjoyed by a majority of men and allowed their talents to rot.

Harleigh's role of the hero in the plot is understandably one-dimensional. He does not seem to be a flesh-and-blood character as limited streaks of his character are brought to the limelight. While he is passive, he is also fastidious – as fastidious as Edgar. Significantly, both are staunch about observing propriety. Both are in love with their respective heroines, yet cause untold misery to them. Harleigh depicts least emotional action as far as his regard for Juliet is concerned. Burney's heroes rarely act decisively; they seem to be keen in inhibiting the spontaneous reactions of the spirited heroines.

Burney's novel *The Wanderer or Female Difficulties* is a feminist novel in the sense that it works on the theme of a variety of problems that women's lives are usually beset with. Margaret A. Doody convincingly argues: "*The Wanderer* shows that Burney had at least been listening, seriously listening, to the feminists of the '90s, to writers like Mary Hays and Mary Wollstonecraft" (Doody 334). Fanny Burney's own bitter experience as the Second Keeper of Robes to the Queen is undoubtedly at work over here. The anxieties that she faced while supporting her new family on her small pension from the Queen and the meagre living that she earned by the efforts of her own pen add to her apprehension. *The Wanderer* seems to embody the implicit assumption that a woman's identity is emphatically spelled out by the ideal standards. J.F. Thaddeus points out the fact that women "of every class and character suffer from and are malformed by the female difficulties that society constructs to impede them. The chief of these difficulties is that people judge by appearances, that we all live in a constructed world, where people play many parts, taking their cues from others, acting and reacting in a wilderness of veils and unsupported assumptions" (Thaddeus 160). Preoccupation with propriety in Fanny Burney's novels gradually gave way to another sort of development – a growing rebellion against the restrictions imposed upon women as women realised how they were trapped by the traditional concept of ideal womanhood.

In *The Wanderer* emerges the most defiant and the most emancipated woman character, a disciple of the French Revolution, Elinor Joddrel. Elinor's character is woven with bold black and white hues: "The stranger, in return, upon nearer inspection, found in Elinor a solid goodness of heart, that compensated for the occasional roughness, and habitual strangeness of her manners" (*The Wanderer* 77). She offers the simple option to women to throw off the shackles and earn liberation by defiance of tradition. Initially she starts with helping Juliet, an unknown pauper. She assumes the role of the champion of her sex by trying to awaken other women to

the servitude in which they were expected to reside. She assures women that once they are determined they can change their dependant status. Women are bound to conquer their thralldom once they change, grow and achieve self-sufficiency. Owing to male oppression women remain in an inferior position as they become too timid to demand their rights. Elinor explains at length on the specific means men use to deprive women of the same education that they receive so as to make them misfits in the world of employment. Men deny women equality in opportunity so that male pride is never deflated. She rails bitterly against the injustice done to women through sheer denial: "Woman is left out in the scales of human merit, only because they dare not weigh her" (*The Wanderer* 399). Elinor wryly hints that men restrict women from every office except that of the kitchen, so that they can continue to enjoy gastronomical delights. "Ellis, Ellis! You only fear to alarm, or offend the men – who would keep us from every office, but making puddings and pies for their own precious palates!" (*The Wanderer* 399). As Elinor falls in love with Harleigh, even though she is destined for somebody else, she takes a very bold step indeed, a step that usually women of Burney's generation were forbidden to adopt. She repudiates that long wait for the man to court her and instead declares her passion with as much vigour as she speaks her ideas on women's rights. From the conventional point of view, Elinor's pursuit of Harleigh is indecorous, intemperate, and even irreligious. Indeed Elinor manifests her rebellion by outshining other women characters in terms of perverseness. She not only boldly announces her passion for Harleigh but also twice attempts to commit suicide when she comes to know that Harleigh loves Juliet.

Although Elinor falls prey to the emotion of love and the inordinate pursuit of romantic love, her comments on her own sex continue to hold ground. Since Fanny Burney was too moral and didactic a novelist to let reprehensible ideas stand uncorrected, Elinor is willing to recant her atheism by the end of the novel. Gilbert and Gubar explain this act of apparent

conformity in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. According to them, the female artist resists the effects of male socialisation. She objects not to the masculine reading of the world, but to his reading of 'her.' So to legitimise the rebellion, the woman writer seeks a scapegoat (Gilbert and Gubar 49-50). In this novel, Elinor is the scapegoat whose radical ideas stem from those of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* who provided a model for the eloquence of Elinor. But no one refutes her ideas on the injustices done to women especially the author herself and Katherine Rogers endorses the fact: "...Burney pointedly avoids making a definitive judgment on Elinor. Elinor scorns the modesty and decorum which were practically as important as chastity, to say nothing of obliging compliance and respect for her elders, and flouts all the superficial standards that Burney maintained in her life and in the heroines and explicit teaching of her novels. But Burney does not pillory her as sinful, foolish or ridiculous; instead, she endows her with high qualities and sympathetically analyzes what is wrong with her position" (Rogers 164). Elinor is given the opportunity to speak at length on the inequality and indignity that women suffer:

Why, for so many centuries, has man alone, been supposed to possess, not only force and power for action and defense, but even all the rights of taste; all the fine sensibilities which impel our happiest sympathies, in the choice of our life's partners? Why, not alone, is woman to be excluded from the exertions of courage, the field of glory, the immortal death of honour; - not alone to be denied deliberating upon the safety of the state of which she is a member, and the utility of the laws by which she must be governed: - must even her heart be circumscribed by boundaries as narrow as her sphere of action in life? (*The Wanderer* 177).

Eighteenth century England deemed it improper that women be sexually aware and offered them dual options – either they would consent to be exchanged through marriage or prostitution, or to remain old maids, without sex and love. Burney seem to be attacking this hypocritical attitude as society pilloried both kinds of women, one who made her sexual desire apparent and also the old maid. The first one,

masculine society denigrated as a 'whore' and the second as a 'witch.' Elinor protests against such double standards by declaring her love unabashedly. In no uncertain terms Elinor talks of her profuse emotion so much so that even Harleigh, much antagonized as he is bound to pronounce: "Even now, perhaps she conceives that she is the champion, of her sex, in showing it the road – a dangerous road! – to a new walk in life" (*The Wanderer* 165). It is undoubtedly love which makes her a voluble, vociferous/remarkable speaker. A splurge of emotion makes her realize that Nature intended that men and women are born and must remain equal: "Listen, therefore, for both our sakes, to mine: though they may lead you to a subject which you have long since, in common with every man that breathes, wished exploded, the Rights of Woman: Rights, however, which all your sex, with all its arbitrary assumption of superiority, can never disprove, for they are the Rights of human nature; to which the two sexes equally and inalienably belong" (*The Wanderer* 175).

Clearly Elinor is mouthing Mary Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft in chapter 9 of her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* exhorts men to assist women to gain their liberation: "I then would fain convince reasonable men of the importance of some of my remarks; and prevail on them to weigh dispassionately the whole tenor of my observations. – I appeal to their understandings; and... entreat them to assist to emancipate their companion, to make her a *help meet* for them!" (Wollstonecraft 186). Elinor's impassioned rhetoric is her 'vindication'. Such a speech cannot but make us realize how serious Burney thought this ideology was; how deeply Burney felt that it was wrong when woman was unendingly discriminated against! Nurturing conservative sentiments, she could not have but been critical of patriarchal hegemony. Consequently Elinor appears as an agent of subversion who is not only content to shed the timid and passive behaviour eulogised in women, but boldly champions the French Revolution by being outspoken in her views about women's political rights. In sharp contrast to Juliet who protests and

mourns in private, Elinor's rhetoric of rebellious discourse is irrevocably public. Her problematic characterization is enough indication that Burney too had listened to and supported feminist polemic that had begun to rear its head in eighteenth century England. Elinor acts as mouthpiece for the basic tenets of female emancipation advocated by early feminists like Mary Astell and members of the Bluestocking circle in eighteenth century England like Lady Mary Chudleigh. All of them, not unlike Elinor, upheld that

since GOD has given Women as well as Men intelligent Souls, why should they be forbidden to improve them? Being the Soul was created for the contemplation of Truth as well as for the fruition of Good, is it not as cruel and unjust to exclude Women from the knowledge of the one as from the enjoyment of the other? (Astell 188-89)

Though I have chiefly dwelt on the metaphorical nuances of the French Revolution that *The Wanderer* exhibits namely through the aspects of freedom for women and equal rights for both men and women, the French Revolution is also present in the novel literally. In fact, the novel has unmistakable references to the political overtones that were unfolded in the course of the French Revolution. Burney justifies in the Preface to her novel why she could not keep the world of politics at bay: "...to attempt to delineate, in whatever form, any picture of actual human life, without reference to the French Revolution, would be as little possible, as to give an idea of the English government, without reference to our own: for not more unavoidably is the last blended with the history of our nation, than the first, with every intellectual survey of the present times" (*The Wanderer* 6). Naturally, *The Wanderer* could not afford to do without references and allusions to this epoch-making event. While Elinor Joddrel stands as an embodiment to the ideals propagated by the Revolution, we also come across various representatives of the aristocrats in the novel who clashed with champions of equality in the Revolution. Elinor also refers to 'bastilles' that recalls the French prison (*The Wanderer* 475). Other references

include the mention of the Roman Catholics who were being tried in both England and France, the mention of the tyrannical reign of Robespierre etc. Thus beneath the façade of conventionality, we are able to uncover a Burney who did celebrate the effects of the French Revolution in her discourse, as that event unfolded before her the numerous possibilities that opened up in the world of women as women became aware and conscious of their own rights.

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The Theme of Marital Discord in Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure*

SUDHIR NIKAM

Mohan Rakesh is a well known playwright of the Hindi theatre, one of the pioneers of the *Nai Kahani* ("New Story") literary movement of the Hindi literature in the 1950s. He wrote the first modern Hindi play, *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (One Day in Aashad) in 1958 followed by number of plays like *Aadhe Adhure* (Halfway House) and *Leheron Ke Raj Hans*. He is noted for writing in the realist mode. He was the contemporary of playwrights like, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and Girish Karnad; together they ushered modernity into Indian theatre especially, in regional languages: Rakesh in Hindi, Tendulkar in Marathi, Sircar in Bengali and Karnad in Kannada. Rakesh and Tendulkar wrote most of their plays in the realist vein; representing the predicament of modern man. Mohan Rakesh was deeply moved by the human conditions in the changing economic, social and emotional situations in the middle-class families during the sixties. There were many socio-economic upheavals in the country at the time. The growing needs and demands in the times of economic upsurge, especially in urban places forced educated middle-class women to take up a career and support their family. This phenomenon brought many changes in values and relations within the family system. It also invited problems in relationships, especially conjugal relationship.

Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* depicts Savitri, a middle-aged working woman dissatisfied with her circumstances- an unemployed son, a promiscuous teenage daughter, and above all a husband who has failed to provide her with emotional

and financial security. She seeks to fulfill herself in relationships outside marriage, only to realize that men are all the same beneath different facades. The playwright wrote *Adhe Adhure* at a time when the socio-economic changes were yet new to cope with. The structure of family, relationship and society witnessed great changes. The middle-class was more affected by the changing circumstances. Education was given high impetus and educated women were forced to take up careers due to economic pressure. But the career-woman in Indian society was looked down upon with a suspicion. Savitri in *Adhe Adhure* is confronted with circumstances where she struggles to maintain her family and at the same time facing cynical taunts and criticism of people in society. Rakesh has portrayed the problems of husband-wife relationship in his play and has treated it very sensitively. Savitri and Mahendranath are a lower middle-class couple who have faced degradation from the status of upper middle-class because of circumstances. The focus of the paper is to show how Rakesh has presented the estranged man-woman relationships and what techniques he has used to treat this theme.

In traditional Hindu society marriage is given a lot of importance and emphasis. Its basic purpose is selfless love and duty to the spouse. And even though the structure of marriage has changed in the changing times still this spirit persisted. This spirit of marriage in the changing socio-economic conditions in the sixties invited problems and conflicts in the relationship between husband and wife. Raghuvir Sinha mentions in his book *Social Change in Contemporary Literature* that conflicts in a relationship brought forth many women's issues like status of married woman and development of her personality, predicament of working married women etc. He also mentions that because of the sense of authority and possessiveness in a man he is unable to easily concede any economic freedom to his woman (31-32). In spite of the fact that a husband allows his wife to work, he is unable to free his mind of prejudices and jealousy. This is evident in the play

in Mahendranath's treatment of his wife. The huge losses in his business and his inability force Savitri to take up a job and run the family. Mahendranath feels dejected and helpless and thus resorts to taunting his wife. His dependence on her earnings further pushes him to meanness and at times cruel behavior towards Savitri and their children.

Savitri and Mahendranath are aware of their strangled relationship right from the beginning of the play. Each is trying to struggle with the other in order to stay together as a family. Both the spouses are unable to understand each other. They are not able to stand each other's differences of opinion; as a result each one moves away from the other. Rakesh portrays clearly in the play that for both the spouses marriage becomes a mere compromise. The playwright shows deep sensibility towards the agonizing individuals in the play. He represents the problems in a relationship between man and woman very delicately. Both the central characters of the play, Savitri and Mahendranath, are shown to be helpless against the changing times and conditions of their lives. Both are struggling for survival in the deteriorating conditions of their family and towards the end they get nothing but resentment. When Savitri decides to break her bonds with Mahendranath assuming that other men—Singhaniya, Jagmohan, and Juneja—might understand her, she soon realizes that they are all the same like her husband in different garbs. Mahendranath decides to leave the house for ever but is forced to return home due to an attack of high blood pressure. He is in a state of helplessness and faces resentment from his family. Even though the playwright subtly reveals the disintegrating relations between husband and wife, he also reveals how socio-economic pressures force them back together. The return does not bring happiness; on the contrary it brings more resentment and problems. Thus the play lays bare the intricacies of complex human relationships.

Communication is considered as a very important factor in human relationships. But *Adhe Adhure* shows how the lack of communication leads to disintegration of the family

relations. Communication between Mahendranath and Savitri leads to fruitless arguments and futile criticism. Sinha mentions, "Things which could be solved or smoothened by personal discussion or dialogue and through mutual understanding of each other's views are often lead to hot argument or misunderstanding..." (32). Both of them become rude and cruel not only with each other but also with their children. Savitri is working hard outside to save her sinking family and is frustrated to see the worthlessness of her perseverance. When she comes back from work she is greeted with an empty, untidy and filthy house. She becomes angry when there is no one in the house to offer her a glass of water let alone to help her with daily domestic chores. She gets all the more frustrated and angry when she realizes that she can expect neither financial nor emotional support from her husband. Savitri's desires for things that can never be fulfilled. In her search for a complete man she is unable to understand her husband. She constantly compares Mahendranath with other men around and thus invites more argument and resentment from him. Mahendranath is also unable to overcome his weaknesses and support his wife. Being unable to provide financial or emotional security to Savitri he provokes fights and bitterness from her. Savitri is further agitated when she realizes that her children are also equally irresponsible. Binni, the elder daughter elopes with Mohan and marries him. Ashok, Savitri's son, is unemployed and whiles away his time collecting pictures from magazines. He feels inferior when his mother gets male colleagues home. He is an escapist and does not hesitate in voicing his distaste for his mother probably because of empathy for his father, a fact about which he is not conscious. He openly demonstrates his annoyance when Singhaniya comes to see his mother. He never shows any inclination towards understanding the misery of the family. He does not think that Binni loves Mohan and considers her elopement as a mere excuse to run away from the house.

Kinni, the youngest daughter, is frustrated because her needs are not fulfilled and she has lost respect for the elders. She grows bad tempered day by day as she faces taunts from people about her father's unemployment, her mother's male friends and the elopement of her sister. All the characters are shown as resenting and helpless including Mahendranath. He is an introvert and is overpowered by a sense of helplessness. He questions himself and status he occupies in the family. Why he should endure everything silently? He feels that depending entirely upon his wife he is like a "rubber stamp, devoid of self identity." He thinks himself as "a worm that has eaten his house." His wife also magnifies his sense of futility. In one such instance she remarks to him, "Your house, do you really think it's your house" (28). Even Savitri is portrayed as helpless as Mahendranath. She feels that Mahendranath is not her kind of man. She questions, "Why does man make home? To fulfill a need... to fill his inner incompleteness and to make himself complete" (29). In her desire to spend her life with a complete man she encounters a number of men who take advantage of her. Her quest remains unfulfilled and in the procedure she spoils her relationship with her husband. Both of them are married for more than twenty years and are yet struggle to understand each other.

The marital discord between Savitri and Mahendranath is portrayed very sensitively by Rakesh through the struggle between the couple. Each of the spouse is struggling to find meaning in their lives. On the one hand Savitri is struggling to find a way to come out of her prevailing conditions, Mahendranath on the other hand is struggling to get a sense of meaning out of his existence. Both the characters are caught in a flux which only portrays true predicament of modern middle-class individuals for whom marriage has become a compromise and this feeling further leads to the disintegration of their relationship.

To portray this theme of marital discord Mohan Rakesh uses a technique of 'situational play' in *Adhe Adhure*. He strongly believes that situation is supreme in the play. It is the

situation that leads to “the crisis of identity and break down of communication in human relations” in the play that leads to tragic effects (Choudhuri 513). The playwright also adopts other techniques to achieve his aim of portraying complexities involved in man-woman relationship. He allots no proper names to all his characters. It is through the nameless characters that the playwright reveals the monotony, loneliness and emptiness in modern marital life. The person who plays the character of Mahendranath also plays the character of other men, Singhaniya, Jagmohan and Juneja for instance. This shows that the same person changes his personality when he is brought into different situations. The same person appearing as four characters shows that they are basically different facets of Mahendranath. Rakesh uses this premise to reveal complexities in man’s personality and hence his relations with others.

The playwright also plays with the name of Savitri. In Hindu mythology Savitri has been portrayed as a woman loyal to husband. She fought with *Yamraj*, the lord of death, to get back her husband’s life. But Rakesh’s Savitri can desire nothing better than to get rid of her husband. The mythological Savitri found her life meaningless ‘without’ her husband but Savitri in the play finds her life meaningless ‘with’ her husband. Through the character of Savitri the playwright portrays the predicament of modern educated women from the middle-class of the nineteen sixties, who wanted to contribute to the world outside her home but could not come to terms with the changing values and conditions of her times.

The play also portrays marital discord between yet another couple, Binni and Mohan. Their relationship is equally meaningless. Though they claim that they love each other they do not understand each other. Mohan keeps on taunting her about her family. Binni on the other hand becomes revengeful and wants to hurt him by doing things that he does not like. For instance cutting off her hair or taking up a job. Thus, Mohan and Binni are also struggling against the meaninglessness of their relationship. Mohan Rakesh’s plays

are not a cry of anguish or despair but a realistic portrayal of the contemporary man-in-street, his sufferings and ecstasies, his dreams and frustrations (Dodiya 29). Since drama is a powerful and potent means to explore human experience, Mohan Rakesh has used it for exploring man-woman relationship in a very realistic way. The playwright has succinctly grabbed the inner conflicts and tensions in a relationship and portrayed them in *Adhe Adhure* and has revealed complexities involved in human relationships.

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Narrative Discourse in the Short Stories of R. K. Narayan

SUBHRA PRAKASH DAS & MADHUMITA DAS

For generations of readers R. K. Narayan has earned the reputation of being 'a simple writer'. The plainness of his technique is the illusion of his art. Critics have called him 'a conscious craftsman ... a master of the art of fiction' (Alam 94). He has been called 'a man of letters pure and simple' (Iyengar 279). Usually his short stories focus on one incident having a single plot, a single setting, a small number of characters and cover a short period of time. He takes us directly into the thick of the situation without an exposition. "Generally, the narrative structure of his works may be divided into three sections: set up, conflict and resolution." (Sarbani 49)

This paper proposes to analyze five short stories of R. K. Narayan and attempt to frame the underlying narrative structure. The stories under discussion are: "An Astrologer's Day", "The Missing Mail", "Father's Help" (from *An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories* 1947), "Leela's Friend" (from *Lawley Road* 1948) and "Naga" (from *New Stories from Malgudi Days* 1982). In his *Narrative Discourse*, Gerard Genette draws on a distinction in narrative between *receipt*, the actual order of events in text; *histoire* in which events "actually occurred" [we can infer this from the text]; and *narration*, which concerns the act of narrating itself (1972: 4). "Narration is essentially a way of linguistically representing past experience, whether real or imagined (Traugott and Pratt 248) and "narrative is international, transhistorical, [and] transcultural (Barthes 79).

Narrative involves two basic components: the tale and the teller. "Narrative focuses our attention on to a story, a sequence of events, through the direct mediation of a 'telling' which we both stare at and through, which is at once central and peripheral to the experience of the story" (Hawthorn vii). One of the distinctive characteristics of narrators is that they are typically trusted by their addressees. Therefore,

- a) Narrative is 'worked upon'. Sequence, emphasis and pace are usually planned.
- b) Prefabrication seems common in various types of writing.
- c) Narratives have a trajectory - a beginning, middle and an end.
- d) Narratives have to have a teller.
- e) Narratives involve the recall of happenings, temporally remote from the teller and his audience. (Toolan 4-5)

The opening of a short story comes to play a role of prime importance. This opening is a composite of three factors. It is at the beginning that the author has to (i) set the tone of the story, (ii) describe the setting and the protagonist, and (iii) give the time during which any action takes place.

R. K. Narayan's narrative mode usually follows the above traditional pattern. His narration is generally free from jumpiness or contriving. There is the quality of naturalness about it or penchant for restraint and understatement. There is occasional use of symbolism but it is generally direct and unadorned. His style and language are for most part functional and even bare. He handles the modern fictional techniques such as flashback, interior monologue and stream of consciousness (Smitha 2).

According to Michael Toolan, a narrative has to have a beginning as in "An Astrologer Day". It is a simple but intriguing story of an astrologer who plies his trade in a small town. The story builds up certain suspense in the mind of the

readers regarding the circumstances that had compelled the protagonist to leave his village all of a sudden without any plan or preparation and take to astrology to eke out a living in an unfamiliar town. Here the narrative is 'worked upon'. The sequence, emphasis and pace are planned. One evening as he is about to pack up and go home at the end of his day's work, a man walks up to him and challenges him to answer his questions.

"I charge only three pies per question, and what you get ought to be good enough for your money..."

"I have some questions to ask. If I prove you are bluffing, you must return that anna to me with interest". (Narayan 6)

Following some deliberate and careful hesitation and bargaining, the astrologer tells him that he was once left for dead after being stabbed with a knife and pushed into a well. In the middle of the story we find him telling the man his name (Guru Nayak) and advises him to return to his village and never leave home again. He informs the man that his enemy has been crushed under the wheels of a lorry. This satisfies Nayak and he pays the astrologer and goes away: "Rub it on your forehead and go home. Never travel southward again, and you will live to be hundred". (8) Narrative techniques demand a story has to have an *end*. The astrologer goes back home and tells his wife that he was once involved in a drunken brawl. He thought he had killed the man but now the burden of guilt had been lifted from his heart. "An Astrologer's Day" ends with the shock of the discovery that the astrologer was himself the person who had stabbed that man and then the irony of both his reading of the past and his advice to his client Guru Nayak, is brought home.

It is to be noted here that there is a narrative break the moment the astrologer recognizes the gruffly, adamant customer who demands to be told his past and future. The rest of the narrative suspense centers round the apparent subversion of the narrator's own identity as he devises ways and words to ward off this potential devil out of his life. No

sooner is the devil out of his sight than he rushes home to re-narrate the story of his life to his wife (he is already narrating it to the reader) in flashback technique. The astrologer-narrator 'works upon' the sequence of the events and dictates the tone and atmosphere as it is understood that he now tells the secret to his wife for the first time. The author is no longer the omniscient observer-narrator. Narayan has allowed the pseudo-astrologer to work upon the telling of the narrative and acting the persona and thereby arrest the reader's attention. For the reader, however, some questions remain unanswered whether the astrologer himself leaves the town for good or continues to live there content that his fake identity has not been blown off or begins further queries to find the customer's future activities etc. "An Astrologer's Day" stands out as probably still his most popular short story, a piece that showcases his trademark irony and his ability to deliver a delightful O' Henryesque surprise ending (Paolo 12).

In "Father's Help" the narration begins with the story of Swami, who, like other children of his age, hates going to school. Swami tells a lie about his teacher Samuel who is a hard task master. But his father is stricter and can see through his son's lies and playacting and sends him to school with a letter to the headmaster complaining about Samuel. He tells his son, "Well, there is a full account of everything [Samuel] has done in the letter... You must bring an acknowledgment from [the headmaster] in the evening." (86) The father knows his son to be a truant and a liar. The beginning thus sets out the tone and pace of the story where the son turns out to be the narrator and prepares the reader to see the school teacher's [imagined and real] atrocities through Swami's eyes.

The letter turns out to be an instrument of punishment. Throughout the day [the middle part of the story] Swami tries to construct situations where he will be caned by the teacher. But all his deliberate intrusions are casually brushed aside by the teacher in the classroom as minor disturbances. The boy-narrator almost literally begs to be beaten so that he can draw

the sympathy of the classmates, head master and, of course, his father and, finally, the readers. But through this middle of the story the reader already believes that Samuel after all is not a ferocious teacher as made out by Swami. Yet the narrator has to be accepted with a bemused smile because he is just a mischievous kid. In such a peculiar situation there is a strange bonding between the narrator and the addressee. The latter does not want the narrator to be beaten black and blue and yet wants Samuel do something cruel so that the narrator gets justice and his stand is vindicated.

The final irony [the ending] of the story is that the headmaster is on leave and the acting headmaster is none other than Samuel himself. Swami returns home with the undelivered incriminating letter. How can he complain against Samuel to Samuel? His father of course does not believe him and says, "Don't come to me for help even if Samuel throttles you. You deserve your Samuel". (92)

The narrator-addressee bonding takes a different stance as the father does not believe the headmaster-is-absent theory and thinks that his son does not have the simple courage to deliver the letter of complaint. A shy boy needs to be punished by a hardhearted teacher. Yet the addressee does not disbelieve the narrator because the latter is a mere school boy afraid of his hardhearted teacher and also because the boy-narrator has a method in his narration.

Again, Narayan is no longer the narrator and therefore the addressee has a bemused relation with the boy-narrator. But Narayan's omnipotent irony is visible in the title "Father's Help". After the narration is over, the reader wonders how the father can 'help' in the constructed situation of helplessness of Swami. Does the father come to his son's rescue or leave him in the lurch to imagine other complicated stories in future? Narayan could also have tried the title "Father's Letter", but he wants to play a pun in the narrative of 'help' which turns out to be no help.

'Janus-headed ending' is a term which 'combines the final look back which is essential to the closed endings ... with the suggestion that life goes forward which is essential to the open one' (Bonheim 143). Narayan uses quite a few techniques to signal the ending, but we get a sense of life moving on, of there being no resolution to the action, as is the case in both "An Astrologer's Day" and "Father's Help". Dialogue is used till the very end. This is a modern technique and another reason for Narayan's popularity with the readers (Lakshmi 33). Both the stories end with dialogues and carry a sense that the narrative goes on even after the formal ending of the story.

"The Missing Mail" is a story of a postman, Thanappa, who knows the business of all the residents on his beat. In the beginning of the narration it presents a warm-hearted and lovable character in Thanappa, who gets personally involved in the affairs of the people to whom he carries letters. In one instance he says: "I did not know that you had applied for this Madras job; you haven't cared to tell me! It doesn't matter. When I bring you your appointment order you must feed me with coconut *payasam*" (11).

This genial hearted Thanappa was most friendly with Ramanujam, who was a senior clerk in the Revenue Division office. And he happily stays to give advice when Ramanujan's family is trying to marry off their daughter Kamakshi using newspaper matrimonials and bio-data sent through the mail. Ramanujam begins to have worries about her marriage. After a barrage of failures, he feels: "I don't think there is a son-in-law for me anywhere...." (Narayan 13). In the middle of the story the parents worry more and more that the marriage season is going to end soon with no ray of hope for them. Kamakshi's grandpa's reminders become fiercer. So Thanappa advised Ramanujam to take the girl to Madras and that he did. Soon a marriage was settled with a prosperous groom. But still there was some fear: "It is the very last date for the year. If for some reason some obstruction comes up, it is all finished for ever" (Narayan 16).

At last the wedding is over. But just when the reader is made to believe that all is well that ends well, Narayan uses his masterstroke with the use of the so-called Janus-headed ending. A few days after the marriage, Thanappa brings the father a telegram announcing that his uncle has passed away in some village. But the telegram was dated two weeks earlier! The postman had been sitting on it for two weeks, knowing that the family's knowledge of the death would ruin all the wedding arrangements. Predictably enough, Ramanujam was very angry at Thanappa's withholding the mail and he cried, "Don't think that I intend to complain. I am only sorry you have done this...." (Narayan 18). The closed ending combines the final look back, but we get a sense of life moving on and there being no resolution to the action. He apologizes, but it's clear that he's done the right thing. Like the previous two short stories, this one too has been told in third person and yet retains the force of the narrative as the reader also sympathises with the action of a clever postman who could avoid a family catastrophe by weighing the pros and cons of delivering a death news vis a vis seeing a daughter getting married.

Genette calls this 'achronological movement back in time' *analepses* because a chronologically earlier incident is related later in the text. The opposite is *prolepses* which is an achronological movement forward in time, so that a future event is related textually 'before its time', before the presentation of chronologically intermediate events. (quoted in Toolan 50)

"Leela's Friend" is another moving story of Sidda who is a devoted servant of the little girl Leela. In the beginning we see Sidda as an imaginative play mate. He explains incomparable stories and theories to Leela like "But if you stand on a coconut tree you can touch the sky". Even he says, "Whenever there is a big moon, I climb a coconut tree and touch it." (Narayan 199) Narayan not only emphasizes the friendship of the two children but constructs a bonding of faith. Whenever Leela looks at Sidda she gives a cry of joy.

His company makes her supremely happy and it gives her immense joy to play the teacher to Sidda. He has to drop any work he might be doing and run to her. It is indeed a case of role reversal. The bigger friend Sidda becomes the pupil and the little girl Leela the master. He reads to her lovely stories and they are happy together. In a way the two complement each other's presence and absence. The narrator very carefully maps out the boundless joys of their world, away from the intrusions of the adult world. In the middle of the story suddenly Sidda is accused of having stolen her gold chain. Mother suspects Sidda of having stolen it. Sidda, once questioned, feels frightened: 'His throat went dry' (Narayan 201). He runs away. But Leela takes his side against her mother. She doesn't mind if he has her chain, "Let him. I will have a new chain," but Mother thinks "he is a thief" (203). With Sidda missing from the house, Leela refuses to go to bed. "I won't sleep unless Sidda comes and tells me stories ... I don't like you, Mother. You are always abusing and worrying Sidda. Why are you so rough?" (201)

At the end we find that Sivasanker, the father, has reported Sidda to police about the boy being a thief. But to add a twist to the tale the omniscient narrator informs that the chain has actually been dropped into a pot and is discovered sometime later. During the same period Sidda probes into the mean psychology of the rich towards the poor. The same Sivasanker, who had never found Sidda a bad chap, now says, "I will tell the Inspector tomorrow... in any case, we couldn't have kept a criminal like him in the house." (205) By deliberately ending the story where he has, the narrator tells the reader to choose sides whichever way they prefer to. In a delicate situation like this where the narrator does not seem to subscribe to the theory of poetic justice or wish-fulfilment, the addressee becomes the best judge of the complexity of the tangle and the so-called omniscience of the narrator fails to come to play.

There is a deceptive simplicity in the art of narration in this short story "Naga" where the central character is a young

boy who faces two crises. The first is his abandonment by his father. He is able to overcome this challenge through snake charming in which he uses the family snake, Naga. The second crisis concerns Naga, now grown old and tired. Since Naga cannot survive on his own, the boy must either set him free or take care of him. He says: "You should learn to be happy in your own home. You must forget me. You have become useless, and we must part. I don't know where my father is gone. He'd have kept you until you grew wings and all that, but I don't care" (Narayan 228).

He realizes that he cannot shirk his responsibility which pulls him away from total freedom. The father has taken care of his son during the years of total dependence and taught the boy his own trade, and compassion towards animals. In this story the humans have no names but the animals do. These Nagas represented as cobras with halos, are benevolent entities and are generally viewed as protectors, even of the gods. The boy becomes a protector in its stead and becomes something more than himself in the process. In the final section of the story, he gains insight and warns the snake, "Know this: I will not be guarding you forever. I'll be away at the railway station, and if you come out of the basket and adventure about, it will be your end. No one can blame me afterward." (229) The psychological growth of the snake charmer boy through these crises of life has been narrated through an evolutionary psychic process, both realistic and sentimental (Sarbani 56).

The boy tries several tricks to throw off the snake. But the man-animal bonding has already taken place. Unlike Sidda- Leela bonding (where the adults forcefully break their idyllic coexistence), here the boy himself tries to break the bond because he is becoming an adult and now understands the drudgery of having an old cobra with him and he has no inclination to carry on his idyllic coexistence with the cobra. But the serpent seems to have other ideas and is in no way inclined to go to the forest and search for his food alone and risk his life. The dependence is not merely physical but also

emotional. Sidda runs away from his friend-cum-teacher because he is afraid of the police whereas Naga does not want to leave his master-protector because of security in life.

Thus, Narayan's short stories depict the triumphs and frustrations which we encounter and experience in life. The indefatigable persistence and charm of human life finds the most fruitful expression in his stories. Eminent critics like Henry Miller and Anthony West acknowledge Narayan as a 'born storyteller' or 'a first-rate story-teller'. They recognize the simple, unpretentious and natural grace of his narrative art. In fact, the wide variety of themes in Narayan's stories is paralleled by an equally satisfying variety of techniques. The sheer narrative value of his short stories induces a freshness and new dimension to the art of story-telling.

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The English Teacher: A Mythico-magical Journey of R.K. Narayan

SUBISMITA LENKA & BHABANI S.BARAL

“Narayan writes not merely with an intense social awareness of his own age but with the past of India in his bones” (Narasimhaiah 198). These discerning words of C.D.Narasimhaiah seem to hold the key to this unique novel of the master craftsman studded with myths of all kinds. Additionally, Narayan the innovator makes use of modern devices of pre-figuration and intertextuality to add spice and colour to the traditional Indian story. In fact, a critical evaluation of these pre-figurations and intertextuality is the staple of this article which intends to shed light on this element in Narayan.

Narayan’s use of ancient myths and legends is only too common to be ignored. Similarly, the assertion that Narayan’s landscape in *The English Teacher* is not exactly a portrayal of the prelapsarian innocence is also equally an acceptable proposition. Talking about the Indian classical training Narayan writes in *The Writerly Life*:

Our minds are trained to accept without surprise characters of godly or demoniac proportions with actions or reactions set in limitless worlds and progressing through an incalculable timescale.

With the impact of modern literature we began to look at gods, demons, sages and kings of our mythology and epics, not as some remote connections but as types and symbols, possessing psychological validity even when seen against the contemporary background.

(Narayan, *The Writerly Life* 466)

Mytho-poeic imagination can also easily co-exist with the contemporary reality. It may be worthwhile to mention here that even though myth is believed to impose some kind of a scaffold on literature, the allegation hardly holds ground when John J. White in his book *Mythology in the Modern Novel* maintains that "mythical characters set a goal for their modern counterparts and the modern counterparts on their part may either fail that goal, succeed, or surpass it" (White, *Mythology in the Modern Novel* 17).

In the European context, writes R.K. Narayan in *The Writerly Life*, "...the theme of romance is based on a totally different conception of the man-woman relationship from ours. We believe that marriages are made in heaven and a bride and groom meet, not by accident or design, but by the decree of fate, the fitness for a match not to be gauged by letting them go through a period of courtship but by a study of their horoscopes, boy and girl meet and love after marriage rather than before." (466-7)

John J. White in his stimulating book *Mythology in the Modern Novel* classifies mythological fiction into four types:

1. the complete re-narration of a classical myth,
2. a juxtaposition of sections narrating a myth and others concerning with the contemporary world.
3. a novel, set in the modern world, which contain a pattern of references to mythology running through the work, and
4. a novel in which a mythological motif prefigures a part of the narrative, but without running consistently through the whole narrative.

One distinctive feature of all these four types is that all of them refer to some traditional mythology and carry with them the dogmatic belief attached to them. However, White's approach is very cautious. From the very outset he distinguishes a mythological work from what is called a mythical one and maintains that a mythical novel is one which is commonly

associated with a dynamic quality, a “mana” seldom present in a work that he describes as mythological. Being divested of this kind of religious connotation mythology becomes an equivalent of any ordinary allusion and this is further reinforced by his use of the term “pre-figuration” instead of myth. He considers the use of myth as a technique and explains that a myth introduced into a novel can prefigure and anticipate the plot in several possible ways: Ordinarily the term “pre-figuration” means “coming before” and it offers a system of comments on modern events. Liberally extending the term he maintains that even these pre-figurations include literary plot “pre-figurations” such as Shakespeare’s plays in Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Chekhov’s *The Seagull* and in Macdonald Harris’s *Trepleff*. As it is well known, many novels refer to other works and discourses. As a genre, the novel consciously gives space to other works. This is what nowadays goes by the name of intertextuality and this is a feature which Bakhtin appreciated in the novel. Going back to the middle ages; it was often seen, the relationship to another’s word was equally complex and ambiguous. The boundary lines between someone else’s speech and one’s own speech were flexible, ambiguous, often deliberately distorted and confused. Certain types of texts were constructed like mosaics out of the texts of others. The term intertextuality, writes Pramod K. Nayar, “refers to the allusions, references to other works, echoes, quotes and citations and even plagiarized sections of a work”(.30).

Intertextuality, it seems, has come to stay as a feasible method of influencing not only literature but also other works of art. *Casablanca*, a film by Michael Curtiz is a brilliant example. A reading of the book and a visit to the film make it amply clear that it is not true that works are created by their authors. Umberto Eco feels that “works are created by works, texts are created by texts, altogether they speak to each other independently of the intention of their authors. A cult movie is the proof that, as literature comes from literature, cinema comes from cinema”(Eco, “Casablanca: Cult Movies and

Intertextual Collage" 413). When in an inter-textual collage the author does not know what to do with the story, he puts a stereotype situation in it because he expects that they will work as they have already worked elsewhere. So powerful is the influence of stereotypes that without any reason whatsoever Laszlo, a man with ascetic temper orders something to drink and he changes his choice of drink at least four times. Obviously, Michael Curtiz was unconsciously quoting similar situations in certain other movies. At times *Casablanca* the film is compared with the play *Hamlet* by Shakespeare. It is really interesting to know what T.S. Eliot said about the play. Umberto Eco writes:

He viewed *Hamlet* the result of an unsuccessful fusion of several earlier versions of the story, and so the puzzling ambiguity of the main character was due to the author's difficulty in putting together different topoi. So both public and critics find *Hamlet* beautiful because it is interesting, but believe it is interesting because it is beautiful. (415)

II

The *The English Teacher* appeared six years after the death of the author's wife, in the year 1945. Hema, the little daughter made it possible for Narayan to recover from his wife's death. She tethered him to life. Like Rajam, Susila was from Coimbatore and both of them suffered from the same royal fever, typhoid. And within a month or two they died leaving their daughter and husband all alone. Within five years of marriage Narayan lost his wife and the astrologer who had found the horoscopes of the couple not matching was proved right. This tragic experience left a void in his life and he never married to fill it. His daughter wanted his caresses and affection. This pre-occupation of looking after a motherless child gradually moulded him and made him lead a sociable life. Hema's thought and responsibility never allowed Narayan to escape. The result is *The English Teacher* and the gift of voluminous other works of the author for the society. Narayan's protagonist, Krishnan followed the author's

footsteps. Even though he went for an arranged marriage and had to live a few years without his wife and daughter, his love for his wife is no less than Narayan. Like Narayan, his hero earned his livelihood from English literature, as he was a professor in English at Albert Mission College. He had to deal with Shakespeare, Carlyle, Milton and so on. As a professional, Krishnan was an able teacher and was loved by his students. The farewell speech of Mr Brown, the principal of Albert Mission College is an ample testimony to this.

The writer's idea of death finds place in the second part of the novel. His belief that death is like "a change of vehicle" may sound unscientific but this helped him live his life after his wife's tragic fate. The physical body may decay because of disease, death and cremation but the soul is eternal. Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita has precisely preached the same. Narayan personally never accepted the idea of his wife's permanent absence (death). Rather he felt his presence in his life. And the same idea is depicted in the present novel. Krishnan every Wednesday rushed to the farmer, who had the power to communicate with the souls of the dead. According to Susila's advice he desperately tried on his own to transport his thoughts to her. After communicating with his wife Krishnan feels, "a moment of rare, immutable joy – a moment for which one feels grateful to Life and Death." (Narayan, *The English Teacher*, 184) A rare incidence of mythico-religious experience indeed.

Walsh writes about Narayan that he "is the poet of Indian domestic life, and it is interesting to note the significant similarities between his method and that of another – Western-practitioner of this act, namely Katherine Mansfield." (Walsh, *R.K.Narayan: A Critical Appreception* 51) She preferably uses autobiographical elements in her works, i.e., she explores, arranges and shares her real life experience. Her theme, plot and creativity revolve around the personal past and present i.e., what all can connect to, the place, family equations, household issues, harmony of young and old, etc. Like

Mansfield, Narayan has used three generations in the present novel to bind and strengthen the family relationship. The grandmother arrives with lots of utensils to help her daughter-in-law to set up the new house. Days together she remained busy in moving to the nearby shop, and arranging and re-arranging the kitchen store before welcoming the new inhabitant (daughter-in-law and granddaughter). Mansfield's *Prelude* also does similar kind of work and provides Narayan the space for an intertextual engagement in his book under discussion. She with her experience had a civilising influence on the new house. Her expert knowledge in kitchen helped others to set up the raw house. In Narayan's novel while the new inhabitants arrive at the gate, the grandmother welcomed them and carried her granddaughter. Even after she returned to her village, she sends an old friend of her to help her children in their work. According to Walsh, in this historical context the time: present, past and future is bound together with the thread of "religion, custom and immemorial habit"(53).

In developing the second theme of the present novel Narayan dares to make his readers believe in Krishnan's effort to bring back his dead wife from the other world. It is the most extraordinary trait incorporated in the realistic fiction because very rarely we find presence of such magical (say mythical) elements in writing of this kind. Some considered it to be misplaced and exaggeration of thought. It is considered as extraordinary as Patrick White's success in making the reader accept the developing passion between Voss and Laura in his novel *Voss*. Just as readers accept the developing relationship between them by means of dreams, letters and symbols, Narayan's readers unhesitatingly accept his belief in afterlife and the other world. White achieved his goal through powerful poetic idioms and Narayan despite his intertextual references, by his sober conversational prosaic approach. The author's conversational approach convinced his readers.

Narayan believes in *karma* (service) and different types of *karma* as sub-themes are used here, *karma* for earning livelihood and *karma* as social responsibility. Devdutt Pattanaik writes:

Seasons come and go. Cultures rise and fall. Values change. Worldly truths seem conditional, relative to space, time and the opinions of people..... Purification of the chitta leads to enlightenment. With enlightenment comes ananda, tranquil bliss. In bliss, Shiva transcends all desires. There is no urge to sense or respond. There is no need for the body or the world. There is no action, no reaction or response. No karma, hence no samsara. The world ceases to be. All that exists is the atma, the uncrumpled pure soul, in self-contained isolation. (Pattanaik, *Myth = Mithya : A Handbook of Hindu Mythology* 145)

Narayan supports the idea of *karma* of Dr Pattanaik. His characters, the headmaster of the school or Krishnan, both chose the profession of teaching kids rather than dealing with elders. Leela's headmaster being a rich man by birth preferred to live a simple life in Anderson lane. Dealing with innocent kids, answering their questions and watching them exhibiting their creative skill gave immense pleasure to him. He preferred to stay in the school. Even on Sundays he kept his school open, to be with the little intellectuals and see them grow. The children's school headmaster had been predicted of his death by "a creature of strength and truth." The man surcharged his "mind with new visions, ideas and strength." Hence, his "life underwent a revolution" (162) and he became a *sanyasi*. Even though earlier he believed in God, usually before dinner prayed and meditated for fifteen minutes, slept on the floor, lived on two meals a day, now he became a true *sanyasi* and, made his school, his *ashrama* (home of a saint) and dwelt there for rest of his life. The headmaster served the society and also never turned his back to family responsibilities. Regularly, sent them money and their visit to the *ashrama* was welcomed. Though his wife was ready to get him food, he decided on looking after himself. He named it as "*Sanyasa Ashrama*" (168). His thought and ascetic life style helped Krishnan to find true

vocation. Occasionally Krishnan was carried away while teaching, for example, *King Lear*, but mostly he was dissatisfied with his profession. Krishnan was carried away by the “sheer poetry” used in *King Lear*. He enjoyed reading the play and engaging classes on it. The storm scene enchanted him so much that he called it “the very heart of the tragedy” (13). His appreciation of the storm scene (storm within and storm outside as depicted in the tragedy) may be grounded in the storm within himself i.e., his dislike for the education system, which fed the student on “literary garbage”. Also it is a premonition (read pre-figuration) for the tragic life the protagonist had to undergo.

The school headmaster and Krishnan, both believed in *karma* philosophy. They undertook their responsibilities without fail and not only that; they did every possible thing to accomplish the task. Let it be the social or professional *karma*, no one could match them in perfection. Bhagavad Gita preaches principle of *karma* to mankind and maintains that those who shoulder their responsibility sincerely meet God and enjoy the heavenly life after death. Both Krishnan and the headmaster followed it.

Narayan has dealt with Susila’s crematory rituals in certain details. He has even made it a different section all together. It starts with how her body lies on the floor and her dear ones wail in grief around her. Then the priest and bearers arrive to start the ritual. The author meticulously describes each and every rite performed in Hindu religion. How she was lifted by the bearers and was carried away to her destination, escorted by her husband with a pot of fire. He never forgot to mention about the mundane Chitragupta, who keeps the record of the dead people before cremation. After she was allowed to be carried onto the funeral pyre, Narayan describes the funeral rites with profuse details. May be due to his memories of his wife’s last days. Krishnan used to sit with the farmer to communicate with his wife’s soul, near a temple. In the temple *Vak Matha*, the Goddess is believed to come out of

a syllable. The farmer adds, "it is said that *Sankara* when he passed this way built it at night, by merely chanting her name over the earth, and it stood up, because the villagers hereabouts asked for it." (109) This place gave him a feeling of Eternity, and was untouched by time and its repercussions.

Death is no limitation to human pleasure. Not only Narayan believes in it, but also Pattnaik supports the idea with his views on Indian myth (53-4). Living beings are unaware of what happens after death, even gods are not sure about it. Nachiketa, a young boy in the *Upanishad* asks Yama, the god of death to disclose this mystery. Yama in response states, the body has two parts i.e., *atma* (soul) and *sharira* (flesh). Among them *atma* is immortal and *sharira* mortal. And the *atma* is surrounded by three shariras: *sthula-sharira* (flesh), *sukshma-sharira* (mind) and *karana-sharira* (the casual body memory of deeds). Death happens when Yamadutas (Yama's messengers) drag the *sukshma-sharira* out of the *sthula-sharira*. After this the *karana-sharira* does not respond to the worldly stimuli and the decaying process starts. As per Hindu rituals after death, the body is immediately cremated. During funeral ceremonies the skull is opened to release the *atma* and *karana-sharira*. The *atma* and *karana-sharira* then travel to Yamalok (the land of the dead). Yama by consulting Chitragupta, his accountant (who maintains the record of *karma* of all *jiva* or living being) decides upon the fate of the *jiva*, i.e. rebirth or *moksha* (liberation from the obligation of rebirth). It is also believed that if *shraadh* (funeral rites) is not preformed because of some reason, the *karana-sharira* gets transformed into *preta* (ghost). And in situations like that of Susila, who had left her beloved husband and three year old daughter alone after her death, unexpected will surely try to be in touch with them even after death. This is the idea behind Susila's attempt to communicate with Krishnan with the help of the spirits and the farmer, who could interact with the spirits. The above reason must have haunted the soul of Susila with responsibility and affection. So, she neither wanted rebirth nor *mokshya*.

Susila's spirit helped her husband to have contact with her through Raja yoga and made him feel her presence even after her death. Krishnan smells jasmine, every time his wife's spirit hovers around him. It might be because he was fond of his wife with jasmine strands tucked in her hair and had even decided to call her Jasmine. Altogether fifteen times Susila communicated in the book. The last attempt of both, Susila and Krishnan, was the best one. Which made Krishnan speak, "it was a moment of rare, immutable joy – a moment for which one feels grateful to Life and Death" (184) and with it the novel ends. Susila's description of life after death i.e., the restriction and the independence of a spirit shows the beauty and the variety of Indian mythology. She further adds,

Our life is one of thought and experience. Thought is something which has solidity and power, and as in all existence ours is also a life of aspiration, striving, and joy. A considerable portion of our state is taken up in meditation, and our greatest ecstasy is in feeling the Divine Light flooding usWe've ample leisure. We are not constrained to spend it in any particular manner. We have no need for exercise as we have no physical bodies. (130)

The lesson on psychic communication by Susila helped her husband to try on his own and be successful in feeling her presence long after her death. The journey which Krishnan started with the farmer reached its destination and on the way he learnt about soul, their life style, lesson on psychic communion, law of life and so on. These lessons helped him to gain his lost happiness and confidence to lead a successful life. Susila – Krishnan interaction supported Krishnan in making decisions and adhering to it.

Narayan submitted himself to art in the most difficult period of his life i.e., after his wife's tragic fate. And Walsh names it as "personal therapy". He further explains, it as "an activity which helped to control the chaos of life by submitting it to the discipline of art"(56). Truly, this personal therapy worked and the result is before us i.e. *The English Teacher*. Naipaul's Ralph Singh of *The Mimic Men* made a similar

discovery and writing became his process of life. Witnessing the success of Narayan in real life because of personal therapy, complete submission to art inspired Naipaul to write *The Mimic Men*.

The inclusion of pre-figurations and intertextuality in *The English Teacher* is not an end in itself. Rather they not only complement but also reinforce the traditional myths contained therein, that is, the myths of death, *karma* and death after life, etc. Just as the mythical themes such as death and *karma* go into the novel to make it what it is, the texts of earlier writers, as it has been already shown, have strongly influenced the writing of this Narayan novel. Together they contribute to the creation of a masterpiece, which is a mythological creation of its kind.

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Translating Language and Culture in the 21st Century Classroom

CHANDAN DAS

Language features universally in the social structure of the higher orders of the animal kingdom; it simply happens to be the most complex and variegated in the family of man, the most developed and diverse of them all. Because of an accident of history - the British Empire - a language generally imposed over a large part of the world's geography, coloured with local linguistic idiosyncrasies, cooptation, indigenisation and hybridization, involving vast tracts of Asia, Africa and the Americas - English is widely acknowledged to be the most widespread language used across 21st century cultures if only because the internet had a population of 694 million users as far back as 2006,¹ or as early in the 21st century. As Braj B. Kachru observes, prophetically and presciently,

The alchemy of English (present and future), then, does not only provide social status, it also gives access to attitudinally and materially desirable domains of power and knowledge. It provides a powerful linguistic tool for manipulation and control. In addition, this alchemy of English has left a deep mark on the languages and literatures of the non-western world. English has thus caused a transmutation of languages, equipping them in the process for new societal, scientific and technological demands. The process of Englishization has initiated stylistic and thematic innovations, and has "modernized" registers. *The power of English is so dominant that a new caste of English - using speech fellowships has developed across cultures and languages.* (Emphasis added)²

Ants and bees use language, if we take it to mean communication and understanding between two or more

living entities,³ although some lexicographers confine it to the human community⁴. Hymenoptera inhabit complex social structures,⁵ and their languages are complex in proportion. Ants follow each other and communicate the location of food through scent and signals ; bees tell the hive about nectar-bearing flowers through aerial dances. The question is - would a North American ant or bee understand her Indian counterpart perfectly or share her nutritional preferences, were their cultures to be apposed, or would translation be required for understanding, discussion and agreement ? If so, how would the translation be done, and who would do it ? Why have social insects like these failed to develop a language as complex as English or Odia, although, in evolutionary terms, they have been around a lot longer ? Or does a literature and prestigious literary prizes and awards, in the form of a dead mole's entrails or nectar from a rose in Kew, already exist in the insect world, whereof they know and we are unaware, complacent with our own Nobel and Booker prizes ? In the recent film, "John Carter of Mars", the language problem between an English -speaking earthling, and the Martians is amusingly dramatized and the translational problem solved very simply - Carter drinks a potion which makes the Martian language intelligible to him. The Tarzan comic strips of the 1970s featured entire words purporting to belong to the language of the apes, such as "Kreegah !" and "Tarzan bundolo !" or "Tantor" (elephant) which I, as a gullible six - year old, believed to be actually spoken by the large primates of Africa, until an adult whose credibility I greatly respected told me that this was just monkey business and apart from that Edgar Rice Burroughs never saw Africa in his life. The translation involved in dubbing/subtitling Hollywood movies results frequently in distortions or hilarious translation equivalents - the Dark Lord becomes "Anishta Dev" in "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows 2", while Bond's famous martini order, "shaken, not stirred", with all its cultural implications reflecting Bond as a connoisseur is completely lost in its Hindi rendering on an Odia audience unfamiliar with

martinis, and one wonders how Fitzgerald will fare in India should “The Great Gatsby” be released in India dubbed in Hindi - or anywhere in any language other than English.

The viral expansion of the visual media - cinema, You Tube, e-mail and television - has produced an explosion of cross - cultural communication, understanding and therefore the effective translation of the symbolism of, say, the Beijing Olympics’ opening ceremony or the Queen’s Jubilee in Britain, to the cultures of the entire world in a synergy of pictures and language. This brings me to our vocation and avocation as translators of a culture that exists in a half-light in our nation, between history and contemporaneity, between ourselves and the other, between the domestic and the alien, using the language of that very culture - the language and culture of England, Great Britain, the United Kingdom, the British Isles, or Britannia. As teachers of English we are involved in act of war between our nativity and the culture and language of our calling. In making our peace we translate the context, explicate the ambiguities and communicate the content of the text across the gulf of unfamiliarity.

It is a common perception that while students from vernacular schools (in this case, Odia Medium Schools) may be good in their scientific or technical subjects, or even excel in them, they tend to be poor in communicative skills in general and spoken and written English in particular. Such views and our own experience as teachers of English force us to confront the problem, which over time has become chronic, of how to develop English learning and communicative skills in LEP students and the question of how and why they have come to be so. The practical issues encountered in the classroom prompt us to find ways and means by which these issues can be addressed so as to improve the standards of English learning and communicative skills which prevail in the classroom today. In teaching English to young minds who have no idea what a daffodil looks like, the teacher has to mediate constantly between the here and now, creating out of

thin air the correlatives that will synchronize the one with the other. He has to translate constantly, and because the translation is faithful it cannot be beautiful. Harish Trivedi discusses this cross - cultural transaction thus:

Traditionally, translation was seen as a segment or sub-field of linguistics, on the basic premise that translation was a transaction between two languages. J.C. Catford's book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation : An Essay in Applied Linguistics* (1965) was perhaps the last major work written on this assumption, in which he defined translation as being "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another."

But shortly afterwards, it began to be noticed that literary texts were constituted not primarily of language but in fact of culture, language being in effect a vehicle of the culture. In traditional discussions, the cruxes of translation, the items which proved particularly intractable in translation, were often described as being "culture - specific" - for example, *kurta, dhoti, roti, loochi, dharma, karma or maya*, all items peculiarly Indian and not really like the Western shirt, trousers, bread, religion, deeds both past and present, or illusion. But then the realization grew that not only were such items culture - specific but indeed the whole language was specific to the particular culture it belonged to or came from, to some degree or other. The Sapir - Whorf hypothesis, to the effect that a language defined and delimited the particular world-view of its speakers, in the sense that what they could not say in their language was what they could not even conceive of, seemed to support the view that the specificity of a culture was coextensive with the specificity of its language. The increased valorization of diversity and plurality in cultural matters also lent strength to this new understanding of language and culture in a way that earlier ideas or ideals of universalism had not.

Thus, in a paradigmatic departure, the translation of a literary text became a transaction not between two languages, or a somewhat mechanical sounding act of linguistic "substitution" as Catford had put it, but rather a more complex negotiation between two cultures. The unit of translation was no longer a word or a sentence or a paragraph or a page or even a text, but indeed the whole language and culture in which that text was constituted. This

new awareness was aptly described as “The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies” in the title of a chapter jointly written by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevre in their book *Translation, History and Culture* (1990). (Emphasis added.)⁶

Culture translation in the classroom, must deal with several factors -the diversity of school boards ; a majority of LEP students ; absence of audiovisual aids ; unfamiliarity or lack of exposure to anything beyond city limits or rural localities ; the identification of English literature, by the so-called English medium students of elite public schools, as Harry Potter, Chetan Bhagat, Nancy Drew or the faint memory of Tom Sawyer from Class Five ; or just the general disinterest that pervades our society and our time. The teacher of English in a non-English speaking country, therefore, is an interpreter of not only English culture but also works translated into English, wherein he must aptly mediate with that language with correspondents available in the vernacular : translating, explicating, and facilitating the task of supplying to an unknown culture and language, meanings or equivalents from local cultural items that are familiar and known. In this context, it is interesting to compare how two cultures fare in translation in a class of Odia students, the subject being English.

“A Fishy Story”, an excerpt from Jerome K. Jerome’s classic *Three Men in a Boat*,⁷ explores fishing, a major socio-cultural English pastime. At the outset, the pun in the title must be explained, and the word “pun” itself, along with the significance of fishing in England and the tradition of fishing fibs and tall stories. But this presupposes a knowledge of fishing : the students have seen fish but no fishermen, leave alone rods, lines, hooks, or bait. Asked to name an English river, “Thames” is a rare, feeble response. The locale of the story, an inn, must be explained as a resting place where travellers can avail of food and lodging and rest their horses ; parlour, a sort of seating and dining chamber, and consequently, fires and chimney - pieces, constitute an account of an inn’s interior ; the various registers and dialects, telling

us the speakers' backgrounds, must be explained ; the various species of fish, and their size – minnow, trout, pike, cod ; the way the size and weight of the fish progressively increase with each narration ; lock, a kind of sluice gate ; "playing the wag from school" - truancy ; "Whacking" - spanking or caning ; and finally, plaster of Paris, as also "the rule of three and practice". The conclusion of this exercise, in sum, is the effective translation of culture at the expense of the text's most vital element, its humour, which suffers complete semantic loss.

In contrast, the culture of the Indonesian Stone Age tribe which still, according to the text "The People Time Forgot",⁸ survives deep in the forests of Irian Jaya, undergoes easy translation. The Korowais' bows and arrows, bark wrappings, nostrils pierced with bat bones, tree houses, diet of sago pith and beetle larvae, beauty marks made by hot pebbles pressed on the skin, spirits and demons and fights over women and pigs makes perfect sense to the teenagers of rural and urban 21st century Odisha. Both the culture and semantics of the text are retained effectively in translation. Incidentally, the piece also describes a failure of culture translation - the Korowai, having seen nothing larger than pigs, are terrified by the picture of a horse, and refuse to believe that buildings ten times taller than their tree-houses exist !

The purpose of this paper is to depart from the long-held, traditional view of translation as primarily a passage between source and receptor languages and expand it to include, among other things, the translation of culture, from source culture to receptor culture within and using a single language. As England, Irian Jaya and Odisha demonstrate, the translation of cultures depends much more on familiarity of acquaintance with cultural elements rather than mere proximity in time and space, and the appeal of an advanced culture in terms of humour or poetry may not always compare with the intelligibility of a culture primitive, remote, but at the same time simple and smacking of things familiar and known.

The innumerable cultures of the world need a common language for introduction and acquaintance, a common linguistic currency for cultural exchange ; as David Crystal puts it.

It may be that English, in some shape or form, will find itself in the service of the world community for ever.⁹

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Translation, Lost between Communication and Procedures

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Jean Baudrillard aptly describes the act of translation in his *Carnival and Cannibal* (2010). The act of translation is being carnivalized and cannibalized by philosophers, writers, poets, linguists and even translators. It lies under tons of theories with different concepts creating a maze of chthonic labyrinths and misunderstandings. However, cannibalism takes another aspect when the translator 'eats' the text. Nothing is left in order to assimilate the spirit of the original body. Is translation cannibalism?

Two main issues have always been following the translation performance. The absence of a legitimate method, and that of gain and loss. Translation, based on equivalence, has been the subject matter of all translators, writers, poets and linguists, from the earliest times. In the middle ages, Arab translators already explained their own ways to find the appropriate equivalence. They tried to focus on the form and find ways to find appropriate equivalences in Arabic. These equivalences were either word for word or phrasal structures that perform the closest meaning. In fact, The Abbasids inherited a strong intellectual commotion raging in Persia, Cham, and Egypt before and after the Arab conquest. Nestorian Christians and Jacobites already translated from Greek into Syrian their scholars' works and Aristotle's books as a support for their theological arguments. However, they - the Abbasids - knew how to take advantage of this new discipline by creating in the year 832 AD Beyt El Hikma, The House of Wisdom. The translation method responded to the

rational mind and canons of the Mu'tazilites. Thus, Ibn Ishak Hunein (809-873) said that several translations were carried out and were being compared for a single piece of work. The concept of equivalence was discussed to bring the most appropriate translation. It is clear that the Abbasids were aware of the problems of language and translation, and knew that the performance of the target language cannot always be perfect. Essirafi (893- 979) was skeptical about the translation of Greek philosophy into Arabic during a scholarly confrontation with a famous translator, Jonas Bar Mathias and so was Abu Hayan Ettawhidi (923-1023). The translation performance used to swing between the word for word or the spirit of the text translation. From social universals to linguistic universals, the path to translation tends to go through complex landscapes despite the adequacy of their respective handling of translation.

This quest for the perfect equivalence has not stopped. Today, the linguistic issue has replaced that of consciousness. Transcendental critique of language replaces that of consciousness' (Habermas 154). The language has a grammar that rightly transcends the linguistic particularities, and makes translation more or less feasible. This particularity can be analyzed only on a text that in return becomes a means of communication. The latter depends on a relativity of communication that also depends on a relativity of understanding that, despite all objectivity, is needed in such a way that translation receives more or less a hermeneutic dimension. Communication, equipped with such relativity, becomes another aspect of the definition of translation. Gibran's following text from his *The Prophet* (1923) seems to be an instance of this relativity of communication "and if you cannot but weep when your soul summons you to prayer, she should spur you again and yet again, though weeping, until you shall come laughing' (Gibran 61). His Muslim translator adapted the verb 'laughing' and used an adaptation that recalls glorification and humility, fear and deep respect of the deity. The verb is well used among Muslims.

Communication operates only in a social context. It is through this activity that society continues and revitalizes while transmitting knowledge, regulating social behavior and socializing individuals. In our context, to insert translation into a model of social sciences is based on two points: Communication preserves the symbolic representation of the society. This reproduction of the imaginary is generated by language. This implies that communication would be valid only within this imaginary. In other words, the two points are at the origin of conflicts between different societies according to Habermas. We return here to the idea that communication is monolingual because for Habermas, experience (*le monde vécu*) 'offre un réservoir de convictions, et les participants à la communication y puisent afin de satisfaire leur besoin d'intercompréhension, né dans une situation déterminée par des interprétations susceptibles de consensus' (Habermas 432). The implication of such an idea throws forth the presence of linguistic and sociocultural rules in general. It would be naive to think that communication is only the transmission of information based from what we have said. For Habermas, communication is a complex activity because based on varying and unstable factors, with different psychological structures and different understandings of human experiences and apprehensions of world views. Explaining Habermas's thoughts, his translator Rochiltz says that communication – according to Habermas – 'est avant tout la condition d'existence de la société à travers l'ensemble des exigences réciproques qui en constituent le tissu et la cohésion' (xvi). Habermas does not break with history and historical tradition. They are anchored in the collective unconscious and the unconscious of the individual: 'On ne suspend pas de cette manière une continuité historique vivante; tout au plus la refoule-t-on' (30).

Although Freud's influence is apparent in Habermas's quote, communication remains logical and meets specific rules upon which depends its validity. The rules of a normal communication are that there is no contradiction in the

discourse leading to the communication even if the contradiction often conveys information. There should be no difference between the 'external discourse' and the 'internal discourse'. There should also be a relation between the speaker and the listener, and an interaction between time and space (256-258). If the interpretation is different from the translation by the channel, the use of dictionary and the possibility of the text reconstruction, translation in this case is centered on the significance after communication. We are interested in the final production of meaning as an interactive link between two - or more - different entities. In doing so, on one side, the production is observable, quantifiable, analytical and empirical because produced in a social objective context. On the other side, both the theory and practice should include the hermeneutic dimension because translation deals with meanings and symbols.

If translation differs from interpreting and simultaneous interpreting, it follows that the analysis should be different. A linguistic and rigorous study would provide us with a method prior to other future analyses. Therefore, at this level, from an epistemological point of view, only the structure can be studied outside the traditional values and symbolic imagery. This definition of translation is only a short distance far from the untranslatability theory because any language reproduces itself through an imaginary and a socio-cultural well-defined orders. J. House rightly conceives the real problems of translation in a purely social context: It is the problem of 'social role relationship' and 'social attitude' (House, 39). Translation, accordingly, is subject to a hermeneutics and linguistic dimension because there can be no translational practice without a linguistic and cultural participation. Habermas thinks evidently clear the relationship between society and language because he said ' 'sans toute relation grammaticale avec des interactions aux normes coutumières et des expressions d'expériences ordinaire ne serait pas seulement incomplète mais impossible' (244). Hermeneutics here does not exclude the language because

every thought is through and in language. Hermeneutics will help us to grasp the meaning and to convey through rules that universal grammar establish, or that specific linguistic grammars establish too. Both dimensions are complementary. Hermeneutics is in charge of the experiences and linguistics of the correct grammatical reconstruction. Thus, Habermas defines translation as an interaction between hermeneutics and linguistics. In fact, he states that 'C'est en l'absence des règles transformatrices qui permettent d'établir par substitution une relation déductive entre les langues, lorsqu'une 'traduction' exacte est exclue, que l'on a besoin du type d'interprétation que nous appelons généralement traduction. Elle exprime un état de choses dans une langue qui ne peut le traduire littéralement et pourtant peut le rendre 'en d'autres termes' (185). His definition could but comfortably sit on the speech acts. Moreover, from the theory of speech acts, Habermas makes an interesting definition of culture. This definition and its speech acts contribute, in the context of translation, in finding equivalents: 'Nous appellerons 'culture' la sphère de la réalité, structurée par le langage' (293). Culture is based on the speech act and communication.

Communication depends on three sets: the speaker, the content and the listener. Therefore, the auditor should adopt and assume the role of speaker (active) and the listener (cooperative) using in turns speech acts. A speech act may achieve its purpose only on the basis of standards and valid assumptions ' 'd'un arrière-fond normatif d'institutions, de rôles, de formes de vie socioculturelle dont on a pris l'habitude, c'est-à-dire de conventions' (394). Our only concern with Habermas's theory is that social factors and human laws are not always universal; hence, the problematic resonance of a 'scientific' and empirical translation because of the impossibility to translate all the social properties. In the same perspective, Marianne Lederer seems to favour following the method of simultaneous translation. This is also in her book *La Traduction Simultanée* (1981) that she makes an apology for such an enterprise. For Lederer, translation is simply confined

to communication, and accordingly translation - must focus on the message, just like oral translation. It should particularly support the meaning and the 'parole stylistics' (*stylistique de la parole*), that she defines as a kind of language stylistic as expressed by Vinay and Darbelnet with the condition of the use of the contextual and situational language. At any rate for Lederer 'La stylistique de la parole se distingue de la stylistique de la langue en ce que la clarté de l'expression se mesure par rapport à l'ensemble des facteurs qui interviennent dans la communication : qualité de celui qui parle et de celui à qui s'adresse le discours, situation sur laquelle s'appuie l'énoncé bagage cognitif commun, etc.'(356).

Lederer's approach focuses particularly on the meaning, and understanding is intimately linked to the languages in question, to the translation subject and the cognitive aspect, to the '*mémoire immédiate*' and '*la mémoire à long terme*'. Translation works as a synecdoche and an exegesis. Highlighting the link between semiotics, psychoanalysis and anthropology, and especially the genius of the language, Lederer's conception would be very effective; without which the problem could get worse insofar as the concern of semiotics. Communication does not depend on the surface meaning, but its ramifications go deep into the culture of the individual and society. Communication is also the product of the un-uttered, the unsaid, and connotations. This is the role of Subject and Object that can take the form of a second subject. The auditor is involved in any language situation. However, it takes a certain distancing from the notion of communication as it was issued by Jakobson who thinks that 'Un processus de communication normal opère avec un encodeur et un décodeur. Le décodeur reçoit un message. Il connaît le code. Le message est nouveau pour lui, et grâce au code, il interprète le message' (Jakobson qtd. in Coquet 59).

Communication seems to have three levels. These three levels are easily adaptable, in my humble opinion, with the semiotic aspect of language, the semantic level and the effect

of communication on the recipient/destinataire. The first concerns the relationship between language and the 'black box', the effectiveness of language to adequately convey information. The second point refers to the relationship between signifier and signified, while the last one focuses on the effect of communication on the speaker. These points are important in any communication because they highlight the actants of the communication, the reaction of both communication and code.

Knowing the code presupposes a mechanical movement by the recipient and sender, or it is unlikely that they would have the same 'history', the same information for the linguistic behavior be of the same linearity advocated by Jakobson. Coquet does not seem to spare the simplistic encoder and decoder thesis put forth by Jakobson. For him

'En fait, si nous tenons compte, comme il se doit, de 'l'histoires' des acteurs, nous n'avons pas affaire à des automates transmettant ou recevant une information neutre, mais à des sujets dotés de modalités dans le cas le plus improbable serait qu'elles fussent identiques. Le je et le tu (le narrateur et le narrataire), engagés dans des programmes parallèles ou complémentaires, Ne sont donc ni isomorphes (ils ne partagent pas la même identité structurelle) ni isotopes (ils ne sont pas situés sur le même plan de signification)' (59).

Communication is normally monolingual and speakers use linguistic aspects of a language among others the same lexical items and semantico-syntactic norms. However, communication between two different languages is possible, and translation is a distinct aspect. Criteria are imposed notably knowledge of a common functional role, of a common situational context, and ultimately adequate linguistics norms in the used languages. Communication is the transfer of information elements notably the message and the meaning. Message and meaning are an interweaving of culture and ideology, the level of social class and level of language. The invariable core interlocution should be the element to be transferred by excellence.

If we return to Lederer, it should be noted that she is not so far from Coquet's conception of communication. We said that for her, translation imitates interpretation. However, what is amazing with her, in fact, is her conception of communication, which is very reminiscent of the behaviorist model, although she denies it (208), which seems almost as simplistic as Jakobson's. We must say that in all oral discourse, a speaker is not supposed to use the entire philosophical and cultural heritage belonging to the language. Her thesis would be applied in a reduced field, that of the simultaneous interpretation where the interpreter anticipates the syntactic structure (Wills 58). It is true that she emphasizes the linguistic knowledge and cognitive baggage, but 'knowledge', this equivalent of Coquet's history', seems to be lacking in as long as it lacks its roots in reality and it does not seem to reflect this. She claims that 'On a souvent tendance à penser que l'interprète de simultanée, faute de posséder le savoir qui permettrait de participer intelligemment aux débats, est dans l'impossibilité de comprendre autre chose que la langue.(...). Les interprètes ...ont besoin de connaissances, mais ce ne sont pas celles du spécialiste' (208-209). However, in Lederer's quote, we feel like an aura of intuitionism in understanding that is only due to this anticipation of the syntactic structure of the interpreter in relation to linguistic habit used in the speaker's syntagmatic and paradigmatic choices. But a method that anticipates a grammatical structure on the meaning on the basis of intuition, and that cannot stand on empiricism cannot be reliable, and therefore we are obliged to express reservations about her thesis. Indeed, this attitude towards understanding seems clearer when she explains the method of interpretation. 'L'interprète ignore par définition ce qu'il va entendre et doit pourtant s'appropriier le savoir de ce qui se dit pour le transmettre à autrui...' (208).

The lack of empiricism in the interpreter's initiative is also expressed through her '*tâtonnements*' that we can translate by 'groping towards the meaning' or ' trials and errors ', and 'hesitations ' because for her an interpreter starts with

speculation about the speakers's words and meanings and a set of hypotheses about the meaning in the beginning 'Chez l'interprète qui ne peut avoir les certitudes du spécialiste, tout est, au départ, hypothèse de sens, mais hypothèse consciente et se prêtant en conséquence à des ajustements...Sa compréhension marqu(e) consciemment les étapes de la progression vers le sens et donc analysable grâce à ses tâtonnements et hésitations.' (211)

However, the scientific method cannot be sustained by intuitions or allow us to fall into subjectivism and take the path of error and falsehood. For Lederer, '*une traduction linguistique, même correcte sémantiquement et grammaticalement, est rarement en mesure de restituer le sens du texte original de façon immédiatement intelligible*'(340). In the preface of Lederer's book, Seleskovtich reinforces her ideas 'il est aussi futile d'avancer des théories linguistique pour expliquer la traduction, qu'il serait vain d'analyser la langue pour découvrir les secrets de la pensée' (06). The problem is that the above quote claims to reach the maze of thoughts through simple interpretation. But do we really know what the speaker thinks when he speaks or when he makes his choice of syntagms from a variety of paradigms? Can we tell the real motives or intentions of an idea in relation to another? We question the ability of the interpretation to penetrate the secrets of the 'black box' even if understanding is an important part of the enterprise. It is still the scientific method that is the source of Peter Newmark's criticism against the interpretative school in general and Lederer in particular. In fact, in this context, Peter Newmark sees in her approach a distancing from the scientific method because it does not respect language. The rigor of the linguistic analysis that the supporters of the scientific method want to establish is certainly necessary although translation is communication *par excellence* or 'meta- communication' as conceived by Ladmiral (148). Newmark was among the first to think about the usefulness of a whole translation 'theory'. (Munday 10). Nabokov, of course, tried to define translation as 'rendering, as closely as the associative and syntactical

capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original' (25), but as Newmark notes, he was unable to remain faithful to his claim. The main issue with literary translation is the imaginary realm rather than the associated and sophisticated literary style. It is understood that the whole issue with translation is the gain and loss problem. In other words, translation stands on communication and linguistics, and that is a fact. Until recently, Susan Bassnett acknowledges that 'Yet there is a lot to be learned from determining the criteria for undertaking a translation' (114) when dealing with translation of novels. The scandals of translation as reported by Lawrence Venuti (01) are real when entering the new millennium without a clear method other than those borrowed from linguistic sciences, social sciences, philosophy and other fields that show some interest because of their need to question translation.

At any rate, Vinay and Darbelnet's comparative stylistics is inspired from linguistics, and both translators do not lose sight of that important aspect of translation insofar as early as the first few pages of their book, they say that 'La traduction a pour but de faire connaître à d'autres ce qui a été dit ou écrit dans la langue étrangère. Celui qui traduit ne traduit pas alors pour comprendre mais pour faire comprendre. Il a compris avant de traduire' (24). This '*mais pour faire comprendre*' is communication *par excellence*, and here we get rid of the first claim. However, one question remains unresolved. Should translation be erected on a theory and rules? Both linguists and translators would agree to find a firm method for translation. However, the more we advance, the more it seems that the problem of translation itself summarizes the problems with its theory. Scholars from different fields approach translation from a certain point of view thus laying the foundations of a certain relativity. Therefore, if the allegation of scientific influence has been issued against some translators, as in the case of Cary, we cannot find a better answer than Fedorov's criticism who sees in Cary's work a literary diversion. Trying to avoid what Seleskovitch calls 'aporia', logical contradiction

(Hellal 17), a summary of the two currents is needed and would be a potential alternative to avoid linguistic and metalinguistic language problems. Translation Studies, in fact, owes its existence to two factors : a willingness to wade through science and the social performance of translation for the purpose of communication.

However, it would still be useful to note that the translation from a linguistic inspiration is interested in literary translation. Vinay and Darbelnet have studied the literary question since they deal with the translation of the metaphor. What emerges is that linguistic translation cannot be mechanical when it follows and complements the semiotic translation because 'La langue d'arrivée ne permet pas de traduire la métaphore littéralement... Notre tâche est d'être fidèle au sens et de le présenter, autant que faire se peut, sous une forme qui rappelle celle de l'original' (199-200). Incidentally, such a conception of language translation is by no means a mechanical translation, insofar as faithfulness to the meaning assumes that language is not a nomenclature of ready words. Already at the beginning of the century, F. Saussure in his ' Cours de Linguistique Générale' wrote that 'Si les mots étaient chargés de représenter des concepts donnés d'avance, ils auraient chacun, d'une langue à l'autre, des correspondants exacts pour le sens : or il n'en est pas ainsi' (Mounin 21).

This is not the case either in the example of Vinay and Darbelnet for whom faithfulness to meaning is rather the concern of the equivalent. Nevertheless, we have the impression that the translation methods they have made look more like "recipes" (Wills 99) and often tend to overlap in the same translational operation in the search for a possible equivalent. What is important, however, in my opinion, is that this equivalent may still not be a concept, but an arrangement and stylistic movement worthy of a moment of art as it is necessary to work on both the content and the form. The result can only be a total disruption of constituent structure in the

absence of formal correspondence, a deep disruption but a necessary one for a better support of the concept of equivalence because language flows *sui generis*. This is our concept of equivalence. This equivalence is not a static one. Borges ironically objects to the claim of the treacherous translation. For him, an equivalent is always in transformation : 'But for Borges, no such thing as a definitive work exists, and therefore, a translator's inevitable transformation of the original is not necessarily to the detriment of the work. Difference, for Borges, is not a sufficient criterion for the superiority of the original' (Kristal, 01). Although, he accepts the fact that a translation can never attain 'the scripture standards' (01) of an original text, Borges seems to fall short within the frames of Vinay and Darbelnet's adaptation technique. Literature is both sophisticated style and ontological experience. Translation would not be the linguistic form type text on its own. Is it high time to return to a theory of translation that stands on its methods? Can Vinay and Darblenet be a source of inspiration? Translation should have its own methods and own tools, own techniques and own disciples to stand as a thorough theory. Of course, a translation will not be the same, and there will be a multitude of opportunities to provide the reader with different frames and different ways to read an original text. However, the problem is that there is a discipline in search of its own method. Sergey Tyulenev conceives translation as 'a 'self-organizing system' (35). It cannot respond totally to social sciences, but at the same time, it cannot be a literary hermeneutic study on its own. Simultaneously, it cannot be linguistic proper. In fact, we know that translation is understanding and communicating; we also know it is carried out through language, but we need to revisit its methods. I believe that Vinay and Darbelnet's methods and techniques can be revised to elaborate a translation theory.

In conclusion, what remains to say is that the issue of translation would be transferred to another sphere. In fact, we should not question the translation methods, but we can discuss on opportunities to find solutions to issues like those

of gain and loss. Should a translator act as a vampire and bite/possess the foreign text or submit his neck to the menacing sharp teeth of that foreign text? All said one has to lose his soul to the translation.

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The Limits of What is Possible: The Role of Religious Philosophy in the Global Scenario with Special Reference to Salman Rushdie

ABHIBUNNISHA BEGUM

Leave this chanting and singing and
telling of beads!
Whom do you worship in this lonely
dark corner of a temple with doors
all shut?
Open your eyes and see your God
is not before you!
He is there where the tiller is tilling
the hard ground and where the
path maker is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and in shower,
and his garment is covered with dust.

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

‘Philosophers stretch the meaning of words until they retain scarcely anything of their original sense; by calling “God” some vague abstraction which they have created for themselves, they pose as deists, as believers, before the world; they may even pride themselves on having attained a higher and purer idea of God, although their God is nothing but an insubstantial shadow and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrine.’

— Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

There is no general definition of what Islamic philosophy is, and the term will be used here to mean the sort of philosophy which arose within the culture of Islam. There are several main strands to Islamic philosophy. Peripatetic philosophy follows

broadly the Greek tradition, while Sufism uses the principle of mystical knowledge as its leading idea. Some would argue that Islamic philosophy has never lost its concentration on the *Qur'an* and other significant Muslim texts, and that throughout its history it has sought to understand the essence of the realities both of the Sacred Book and of the created world. The decline of nomadic philosophy in the Islamic world did not mean the decline of philosophy as such, which continued to flourish and develop in other forms. Although it is sometimes argued that philosophy is not a proper activity for Muslims, since they already have a perfect guide to action and knowledge in the *Qur'an*, there are good reasons for thinking that Islamic philosophy is not inherently fundamental on religious grounds.

Perhaps the best way of specifying the nature of Islamic philosophy is to say that it is the tradition of philosophy which arose out of Islamic culture, with the latter term embedded in its widest intellect. Muslims had not only the *Qur'an* to help them normalize their lives and theoretical queries; they had also the *hadith*, the traditional sayings of the Prophet and the righteous caliphs (his immediate successors and companions) and the *Sunna*, the practices of the community. There was further the system of *fiqh*, Islamic law, which discussed particular problems pertaining to how Muslims ought to behave, and the science of grammar, which explained how the Arabic language ought to be understood. There was also by this time a well-developed system of *kalam*, theology, which dealt with the less evident passages of the *Qur'an*, and which sought conceptual unity in apparent difficulties arising from the combinations of diverse canonical texts. Philosophy can then deal both with the exoteric aspects of the *Qur'anic* disclosure and the esoteric dimensions which lie at the heart of religion.

Peripatetic philosophy in the Islamic world came to have substantial importance for a fairly limited period, from the third to sixth centuries AD (ninth to twelfth centuries). Sometimes the distinctness of this form of reasoning from

traditional Islamic methodologies was emphasized by the use of the term *falsafa*, an Arabic neologism deliberate to represent the Greek *philosophia*. Often, however, the familiar Arabic term *hikma* was used. *Hikma* means 'wisdom', and has a much wider meaning than *falsafa*. A good deal of *kalam* (theology) would be classed as *hikma*, as would mysticism or Sufism. Whereas much *falsafa* is defined as the knowledge of existents, wider conceptions of the discipline tend to use the term *hikma*. Al-Suhrawardi, the creator of illuminationist philosophy, called it *hikmat al-ishraq*, a title which was taken up later by Mulla Sadra, and which is often translated in English as theosophy. This sort of philosophy involves study of reality which transforms the soul and is never really estranged from spiritual purity and religious sanctity.

Philosophy as *hikma* has the advantage of referring to a wide range of conceptual issues within Islam. Philosophy can then deal both with the exoteric aspects of the Qur'anic revelation and the esoteric dimensions which lie at the heart of religion. Both the Qur'an and the universe are often viewed as aspects of divine revelation which require interpretation, and philosophy in its widest sense has a vital role here. Islamic philosophy is then essentially 'prophetic philosophy', since it is based on the interpretation of a sacred text which is the result of revelation. It deals with human beings and their entelechy, with the One or Pure Being, and the grades of the universal hierarchy, with the universe and the final return of all things to God. An important aspect of this view is that it sees Islamic philosophy not as a transitory phenomenon but as a continuing tradition in the Islamic world, not as something largely imported from an alien culture but as an essential aspect of Islamic civilization.

Muslim thinkers of the twentieth century, committed to various programs of legal alteration or political action, have developed a number of theoretical props which take them away from the traditional modes of juristic expression. They have often abandoned the particularity of school loyalties;

instead, they have adopted law-drafting techniques that reflect the realities of modern nation-states, borrowed legal and social principles from a variety of sources, and argued emphatically that the door of independent *ijtihad* is open, meaning that they can again make independent legal judgments based on direct confrontation with revelation (often using a definition of revelation, at least in relation to *hadith*, which is more limited than that of the past). The major, and certainly the most obvious, modern responses to the juristic tradition have been practical, either in the service of state law or in the service of political opposition. There has been a corresponding lack of notice in the philosophy that is articulated in the traditional forms of juristic discourse, especially those of '*furu*'. In different ways, both of the traditional genres, *usul* and *furu*', acknowledge the exploratory nature of the effort of defining God's law and situate themselves in a flexible and pluralist system of rules. They may have more relevance to contemporary problems than is generally conceded. There is a genuine need for political fiction, for books that make new and better maps of reality, and make new languages with which we can understand the world, to grapple with the problems created by the incorporation of political material, because politics is by turns farce and tragedy, and sometimes both at once.

Salman Rushdie the prominent Indo-Anglian writer of the times addresses some of the potential crises faced by the writer who endeavors to produce political fiction from an objective point of view and who soon realizes that impartiality is not viable, even undesirable in this process. In order to be true to his purpose of integrating political concerns with fictional narrative, Rushdie not only engages with the complexities inherent in what he seeks to represent, but also with the ambivalence that marks his own doubly displaced, or multiply placed migrant position. The political concerns in Rushdie's fiction comprise the rise of religious nationalism in the Subcontinent. Rushdie expands on the problems and

improbability of religion through each character's struggle to come to terms with his or her religious beliefs. Religion's role in *Midnight's Children* is introduced at the very beginning of the novel when Aadam Aziz loses his faith. This loss creates a hole in him that he will forever attempt to refill. India itself is a country rich in religions, but the complications of the religious mixture creates many of the social and political conflicts from the beginnings of Indian history — long before it existed as a part of the British Empire. Rushdie expands on the problems and uncertainty of religion through each character's struggle to arrive to terms with his or her religious beliefs.

After Aadam loses his son, Hanif, he blames himself because he has never been able to believe in God. He thinks that God has punished him by taking his son and spends his last days attempting to get revenge for his loss.

"In the remaining years of his life he often disgraced himself by stumbling into mosques and temples with his old man's stick, mouthing imprecations and lashing out at any worshipper or holy man within range" (*Midnight's Children*, 1981. 316).

In his last days Aadam finds his belief in God, but instead of finding comfort in God he demands revenge for the death of Hanif. Not only does he speak out against God and religion, but Saleem also implicates him in the theft of the hair from the Prophet Mohammed. Aadam dies, however, before his role in the scandal can be revealed and the mystery unraveled. Therefore the extent to which he was willing to go to extract revenge from God is unknown.

Aadam's inability to believe in God seems to transcend generations and bloodlines. The hole he created within himself passed down to Saleem even though they are not blood related.

"What leaked into me from Aadam Aziz: a certain vulnerability to women, but also its cause, the hole at the center of himself caused by his (which is also my own) failure

to believe or disbelieve in God" (*Midnight's Children*, 1981.315).

The blame for Saleem's inability to believe in God is placed evenly on the shoulders of Aadam. This blame implies that Saleem should not bother to try to believe because it is impossible to do so. When the Sinai family moves to Pakistan, Saleem finds himself more attracted to the ugly smells of the land of the pure. While he is in a country built for God and his other family members attempt to start new lives, Saleem cannot stay away from the dark underbelly of Pakistan. He becomes less and less engrossed to religion while everyone else embraces the new religious lifestyle.

The most prominent change within the family happens to the Monkey, or Jamila. The Monkey experiments with Christianity early in life to get a rise out of her family and restore her to her natural secondary role within the family. She becomes fanatical and recites prayers and hymns around the house and asks her mother for a nun's dress.

"She mounted to extremes of religious fervor, reciting the Our Father morning and night, fasting in the weeks of Lent instead of during Ramzan, revealing an unsuspected streak of fanaticism which would, later, begin to dominate her personality." (*Midnight's Children*, 1981.290).

The religious fanaticism that she displays for Christianity soon leads to her conversion to Islam and to her status as a role model within Islam. During the first trip to Pakistan, Saleem watches while his sister leaves her tomboy streak behind and becomes a demure, devout Muslim woman. Upon the Sinai family's permanent return to Pakistan the Monkey is now Jamila and a famous singer and a model of Islam.

Another problematic religious character is Cyrus-the-great, who, after his father dies, allows his mother to turn him into a religious guru. He becomes a mentor to hundreds of believers but shows no signs of belief himself.

"For his mother, he put on a sort of brocade skirt and a turban; for the sake of filial duty, he permitted millions of

devotees to kiss his little finger. In the name of maternal love, he truly became Lord Khusro, the most successful holy child in history" (*Midnight's Children*, 1981.308).

He becomes a great religious leader because of the sense of duty he feels towards his mother. Cyrus-the-great never denounce his love of science, which imply that he is a *sham*, putting on a show to impress his mother. Millions of people become his followers, but he never really knows who he is.

Rushdie uses religious hybridity in *Midnight's Children* to represent the identity crisis of India at the time of Independence. The religious vagueness of the characters is also the religious uncertainty of India. The root of the problems, however, doesn't start with Independence, but, instead, trace back to Aadam's return from abroad and dismissal of his traditional religion. The fact that the problems can be traced to one source suggests that Rushdie believes that colonialism is the true origin of India's problems. Whether or not there is an answer to the question, a possible solution seems to lie with Saleem and his ability to resolve differences between religions. Hence, *Shame* the third novel of Salman Rushdie gives us a bird-eye view of the role of Islam in Pakistan.

Shame will demonstrate that the primary schedule of the author in this novel is to present a foreboding, allegorical 'mohajir's eye-view' of a nation from which Rushdie has been physically estranged but which he cannot seem to shed at an intellectual or emotional level. I will argue that the ambivalence and anxiety which emerges from Rushdie's own culturally displaced position is incorporated into the dualistic structuring of this narrative which vacillates between *shame* and *shamelessness*, between the real and imagined home/nation, presented as an 'insufficiently imagined' (*Shame* 92)

It is important to clarify at the very outset that the 'mohajir's eye view' is primarily employed as a reading strategy in this paper and offers an access point to the theme of migration in *Shame*, a narrative that is culturally and politically rooted in the South Asian context. While my examination of this novel attempts to sequentially trace the explicit and implicit presence

of the *mohajir*, it avoids promoting this figure as the exclusive or fundamental representation of migrant identity in *Shame*. This paper also evaluates the way in which Rushdie attempts to subvert the essentializing fixity of nationalist discourse by unraveling the culturally coded metaphor of *sharam* which connotes moderation, modesty, *shame*, as well as honor. It is interesting to note that in Urdu *sharam* is a feminine noun and in *Shame* it is most effectively personified through the novel's female characters, who act as both the keepers and destroyers of this centrifugal force in Rushdie's novel.

In Urdu, the noun *mohajir* is derived from the Arabic word meaning 'emigrant, evacuee, or refugee' (Feroz sons Urdu-English Dictionary, 1998: 50).

A *mohajir* refers to one who has performed the act of *hijrat*; this word also comes from Arabic and connotes 'separation, migration, flight, specifically the flight of the Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina' (*ibid*: 813).

While the term *tark-e-watan*, used to portray the act of undyingly leaving one's native country for foreign lands has connotations of leaving behind and discarding, *hijrat* is distinguished by the purity of its motive, the promise of building a new homeland. Rushdie's understanding of the historical background and political implications of *mohajir* identity in the specific context of a partitioned subcontinent shapes his representation of an in essence ruptured, diasporic Identity in *Shame*. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned role of language with respect to the negotiation of *mohajir* identity, Rushdie's choice of *Shame* as the title for a novel that grapples with the question of cultural 'otherness', of migrancy, reflects his personal affinity with the ambivalence that pervades the socio-cultural predicament of the *mohajir*. Rushdie's attempt to translate the untranslatable connotations of the word *sharam* emphasizes his position as an Urdu-speaking diasporic writer who, while being forced to confer his identity in English remains acutely aware of the gaps that cannot be crammed between his native and adopted language.

This word: "*shame*." No, I must write it in its original form, not in This peculiar language tainted by wrong concepts and the accumulated Detritus of its owners' unrepented past, this Angrezi in which I am Forced to write, and so forever alter what is written.... *Sharam*, that's the word. For which this paltry "*shame*" is a wholly inadequate translation. Three letters, *shén ré mém* (written, naturally, from right to left); plus *zabar* accents indicating the short vowel sounds. A short word, but one is containing encyclopedias' of nuance (*Shame* 34).

Rushdie seeks to re-imagine through fiction and which enables him to be adjacent to the themes of migration and nationalism in *Shame*. Rushdie's goal of creating politically rooted fiction which conveys the particularity of his predicament as a multiply-displaced writer is realized in *Shame*, a novel which undermines the idea of exclusivity with respect to one geographic or cultural belonging and also destabilizes the premise of the nation as a homogenous or fixed construct.

As a Muslim code of conduct, *izzat* and *sharam* reproduce the gendered role of female passivity, withholding from women other definitions of femininity. *Izzat* is the family honor that must be upheld, particularly through *sharam* as the sign of women's purity. *Sharam*, as the narrator of *Shame* explains, denotes

"Embarrassment, discomfiture, decency, modesty, shyness, the sense of having an ordained place in the world" (*Shame*, 1983.35).

So long as women experience *sharam*, family honor is preserved, and in this sense a woman's honor is but an extension of her husband's or father's. A woman who submits to feelings of *shame* is one who does not step out of line. If she should behave without *shame*, that is, *shamelessly*, then family honor is restored only by punishing the transgressor. Yet, the need to punish women shows that, as a code of conduct, *izzat* and *sharam* are not firmly in place; the code requires a continuous enforcement through a violence that acts as a warning to women.

This essay uses Rushdie's realignment of *izzat* and *sharam* as an occasion for examining Indo-Pakistani women's performance of seemingly "traditional" gender roles, particularly as they are over determined by race and class relations. I argue that the Islamic tradition identified as residual in *Shame* is an emergent form structured by British racism and a global economy that depends on cheap female labor. In *Shame*, Rushdie presents "tradition" as a code of conduct that prevents Pakistani women from fighting British racism. Rushdie's scornful portrayal of this period of history is in keeping with his intention of evoking a sense of unease and anxiety in the reader, to make him/her feel the *shame* that is conveniently elapsed by those in power, who are complicit in perpetuate the *shame* of the nation.

Imagine *shame* as a liquid.... stored in a vending machine. When *shameful* things are done: lies...failure to love one's national flag, incorrect voting at elections...smuggling...what happens to all that Unfelt *shame*? The button is pushed...and the fluid of *shame* spills...across the floor. (*Shame*, 1983.131)

Rushdie's imaging of women in *Shame* portrays them as the keepers of *sharam* in a *shameless* society. Rushdie wants *Shame* to be a novel of 'leave taking' (*Shame*, 1983.. 23),

An effort that is performed from a distance but which ironically serves to bridge the gaps created by physical distance between Rushdie as author/narrator and *sharam* as the central trope of his narrative.

Religions are among the most powerful phenomena on the planet, and we need to understand them better if we are to make informed and just political decisions. Although there are risks and discomforts involved, we should brace ourselves and set aside our traditional reluctance to investigate religious phenomena scientifically, so that we can come to understand how and why religions inspire such devotion, and figure out how we should deal with them all in the twenty-first century. Religious allegory has become a part of the fabric of reality. And living in that reality helps millions of people cope and

be better people. To-day we have to change our attitude from that of description to that of appreciation; we have to ask whether the fruits in question can help us to judge the absolute value of what religion adds to human life.

Man is not entirely an animal. He aspires to a spiritual vision, which is the vision of the whole truth. This gives him the highest delight, because it reveals to him the deepest harmony that exists between him and his surroundings. —
Rabindranath Tagore

The above quote gives us a clear idea that man is a social animal and a spiritual being. This will provide the individual with the highest delight and harmony which exist between him (individual) and his surroundings i.e., the spiritual location of the individual which makes the atmosphere a spiritually freedom friendly and religion free for the well being of the society in particular and the cosmos in general.

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The *Abhidhamma* and the Ecology of the Mind

JACQUES COULARDEAU

I will only consider the role of the mind in Buddhism as the intercessor between the individual and the surrounding world. This mind is seen as a central element in the vision we may have of the world and in the very architecture of our relations with it, with other people and with our own experiences and even experiential existence. We are not because we think we are. We are because we are part of the world and universe that exist without our consciousness of them being in any way necessary for their existence, and we may develop from this pure existential and circumstantial experience the mind we need to become conscious of them.

The mind is a given potential carried by the brain as a sixth sense of the body that processes the sensorial impulses coming from the other five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, the last one including all the sensors inside and on the surface of our body that guarantee our physical and physiological balance) and directly processing all abstract patterns and concepts built by this mind in its processing of the various sensorial impulses it gets through the brain and the nervous system.

The mind is the construct produced by our experiential, circumstantial, existential and situational confrontation with the universe thanks to the physiological apparatus in the brain and the central nervous and motor systems. This physiological apparatus makes our mental and intellectual potential a reality with this construct that is necessarily virtual, the mind.

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graph TD
    Sa[Sa? sara  
Round of birth] --- Paramattha[Paramattha-sacca  
Ultimate reality]
    Paramattha --> Lokiya[Lokiya  
Mundane]
    Paramattha --> Lokuttara[Lokuttara  
Supramundane]
    Lokiya --> Nama[Nama  
Mind]
    Lokiya --> Rupa[Rupa  
Matter  
(units and changes)]
    Nama --> CittaBox["Citta  
Mind  
Citta  
Ceta  
Cittuppada  
Mana  
Nama  
Viriya?a"]
    CittaBox --> Cetasika[Cetasika  
Mental states (52)]
    Cetasika --> Vedana[Vedana  
feeling (1)]
    Cetasika --> Sahi[Sahi?a  
perception (1)]
    Cetasika --> Sa[Sa?khara  
Mental states (50)]
    Lokuttara --> Nibbana[Nibbana]
  
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For Theravada Buddhism the universe is a vast reality that exists outside our own consciousness and that is constantly changing, meaning that every single thing, from the most microscopic element to the biggest set of planets ever, is going through a perpetual cycle of impermanence, from birth through life (growth and decay) to death and rebirth. That is the round of rebirth and this "*saṣāra*" includes us as simple items among billions of others. We do not hold in this *saṣāra*, as purely material objects, a position that is in the slightest way different from any other piece of that universe.

These billions or trillions of items in this universe are seen as in perfect balance, each one in relation with all others and

the continuity of this ever changing universe is guaranteed by these relations, this equilibrium among all these objects which are nevertheless constantly changing from birth through life to death and rebirth. That means the equilibrium is not only concerning the material items we are confronted to but it concerns innumerable parameters that are, if not perpetual, at least long-lasting in their abstract nature. I would like to insist here on the fact that these abstract parameters are obviously material and this does not imply the items governed by these parameters are permanent, nor the rather stable equilibrium among the concerned items unchanging. We are witnessing everyday vast changes in the cosmos even if they took place some millions of light years ago and we only see them today.

This very concept of *saṣāra* leads to two other fundamental concepts without which Buddhism is meaningless. If everything changes the way I said, then the concept of "*anicca*" is crucial. Everything changing all the time, then impermanence is the basic characteristic of this universe in all the elements that compose it and in itself too. And yet since nothing can come from nothing, as the Buddha often repeated, we cannot state a point before which there was nothing and after which there was a universe. Even the theory of the Big Bang has to state something existing before it. The Big Bang is only one moment in the existence of the material universe that could be seen as the beginning of an evolution and the end of a state of existence that generated the universe in the shape we know today.

The same *saṣāra* is also bringing up a second concept, "*anattā*" or non-self: nothing can have in any way an essence or a self, a permanent, material or not, real or virtual, nature. This is fundamental because this goes against the idea of the survival of an entity that would be "me" after death and hence the transmigration of this "me" from one item to another, animal, vegetal or mineral. And nevertheless all the elements that compose our bodies will decay into basic elements and return to the cosmos in a way or another. This is permanence

in impermanence for these purely material elements when they lose their body shape. That is their rebirth and as such they will take part in the vast life of the cosmos and eventually start a long voyage along the road of evolution that might bring them back up to human life. Even the mind does not transmigrate since it is only a virtual mental construct in constant evolution that will disappear when the brain that carries it will decay into death. And yet we could follow B.R. Ambedkar who explains that the mind, or mental virtual beings, can pass from one person to another like the poem that a student learns from a teacher. We are speaking here of the transmission of a mental object through learning.

And it is at this juncture that we find the concept of “*paṃiccasamuppāda*” or dependent origination. The wider and deeper thinking of Buddhism is not based on deduction from cause to effect or induction from effect to cause. It uses another way of thinking: everything being taken into account the one thing we consider is impossible (“*reductio ad absurdum*”), or possible or even the only outcome possible, *paṃiccasamuppāda* precisely, positive “*reductio ad absurdum*.” Our brain is massively parallel taking into account myriads of elements and letting this vast more or less self-constructed confrontation, more or less self-organized accumulation of data neither produce nor generate some new phenomenon, but let it emerge on its own energy and released by the surrounding *saṣāra*. This way of thinking is *saṣāric* by essence, subductive by nature.

The human species emerged from the *saṣāra* of the cosmos, and the human mind emerged from the *saṣāra* of our purely organic and animal fight for survival with our particularly evolved body. But when that mind emerged, our species was transformed into a thinking species. *Homo Sapiens* are the only animal species with their level of brain development and the ability to invent language (not communication for which language is only a tool), hence a way to materialize their conceptualization power leading to abstract thinking and verbal transmission of knowledge. Then *Homo*

Sapiens experienced the third consequence of this emergence of ours: satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction of our needs, wants, wills, desires. And every generation widened these needs, wants, wills and desires. This is “*dukkha*” that has always been badly rendered with the word “suffering” or even worse “pain”. Dissatisfaction it is and this dissatisfaction can only come after satisfaction just like *dukkha* can only come after “*sukha*” because we cannot know we need something if that need has not been satisfied first and dissatisfied second.

When the *saṣāra* in which we live lets anything new come up through *paṃiccasamuppāda* it satisfies a need we did not even know existed and then we become dependent on the satisfaction of that need.

I do not link this *saṣāra* -generated *dukkha* to the other fundamental concept of “*taṇhā*” that can only emerge in man when a need that has always been satisfied is suddenly dissatisfied for any reason whatsoever. Then the desire may become excessive attachment, and I insist on the excessiveness of this attachment because it is absolutely natural for someone who goes through the dissatisfaction of one of his needs to desire finding the object that will satisfy that need. *Taṇhā* only develops when that objective of satisfying that particular need with this particular object becomes obsessive.

That’s the background and I wanted to insist on it because this presentation enables us to understand the phylogeny and the psychogenesis of the mind. The mind emerges from this vast circumstantial, existential, phenomenological, experiential and situational context of our development as a species and/or as an individual. A new born today – and we have to consider him/her from the very moment it is biologically conceived – goes through a mind-building process that is similar to that of the emerging *Homo Sapiens* more than 300,000 years ago.¹

The Universe and Man’s Vision of the World

Buddhism states that man, seen both as an individual in

society and a collective social being, has two contradicting visions of the universe: "*sammuti-sacca*" (apparent reality) and "*Paramattha-sacca*" (ultimate reality).

Sammuti-sacca is composed of the word *sammuti* meaning "generally accepted" and *sacca* meaning "truth". *Sammuti* is built on the root "*saṣāra*" which is the same root as in *saṣāra*. This root means "same" and "together," in other words an assemblage of similar items but that are similar by their being all caught in an architecture: they are articulated one onto the other, be it only concatenation. The suffix is said to be "*man*" apparently difficult to identify but probably behind several words that imply "meaning", "opinion," or "*muti*" referring to "hearsay, what is thought" connected to "*muta*" referring to "received by vaguer sense impressions than sight and hearing." It is this complex of possible meanings that explains the meaning of the compound *sammuti-sacca*. It is something held as truth but based on some rather vague and uncertain sensorial experience if not hearsay.

The meaning of this word is all the clearer when it is opposed to *Paramattha-sacca* which is composed of "*para*" referring to "beyond" but whose superlative "*parama*" means "farthest." Then "*attha*" refers to "good," "ideal" and "truth." Then "*Paramattha*" can refer to the ultimate reality or truth, reinforced by "*sacca*" meaning truth again. This is clearly a mental construct of the farthest or highest level, which then reduces *sammuti-sacca* to a construct of the most superficial level.

This is important because it divides the vision of the world in a lower vision that is materialistic, empirical and pragmatic on one hand, and this vision is left to itself since it is more or less illusionary. And on the other hand a philosophical, abstract constructed vision that is in its turn divided between the "supramundane" path or "*lokuttara*" that leads to "*nibbāna*," i.e. the extinction of *dukkha*, and the four Noble Truths that end in the Noble Eightfold Path, and then the "mundane" approach of man's mind and action in the

world, “*lokiya*.” The latter is in its turn divided in two: on one side “*rūpa*” referring to “matter,” hence the real world but properly – meaning scientifically – analyzed this time, and “*Nāma*” or the mind, but this term is itself a global and generic term for all that is mental, in other words the mental side of man. Note it is this mental side of man that will enable man to get on the supramundane path to *nibbāna*.

To understand this philosophy we have to see that the two concepts of *lokuttara*, (“*Loka* + *Uttara* = *Lokuttara*.” Here “*loka*” means the five aggregates. “*Uttara*” means above, beyond, or that which transcends. It is the supramundane consciousness that enables one to transcend this world of mind-body.” (Narada 11)) and *lokiya* (“worldly, belonging to the world,” (Rhys Davids 588)) come from the same root, “*loka*.” The root is connected to Vedic, but T.W. Rhys Davids is not clear on the meaning of this root in Pāli, hence in Buddhism. For him this word blurs the opposition between “immaterial” and “material.”

In fact these two words are not correct to oppose the mundane and the supramundane. We need to introduce the term “virtual” that must NOT be opposed to “real.” In fact the term “virtual reality” or “virtually real,” “virtual” for practicality, would be best. Meditation and all mental processes are absolutely “real” but virtual in nature and they could then be opposed to concrete for referring to the real world. *Rūpa* is both material and concrete since it refers to matter itself, whereas *Nāma* is mostly virtual and real though some elements like behaviors that are produced by mental states are also concrete. On the other side, *lokuttara* is entirely virtual in its materiality. Here I would say the western concepts of material and immaterial are totally inadequate to cover the conceptual world of Buddhism.

The Mind (1), *Cetasika*

The mind is the tool to enter the supramundane of *lokuttara*. But right now we are concerned by the tool itself, hence *Nā*

ma as opposed to *rūpa*. *Nāma* is divided into two sets of concepts and phenomena. On one side the mental states themselves, "*cetasika*", and on the other side the mind as the mental construct that contains the processing potential and what it produces, intelligence and even wisdom, this being presented under one single concept, that of "*citta*".

Without going as far as B.R. Ambedkar who states that "the mind is the origin of all that is; it is the mind that commands, it is the mind that contrives." (Ambedkar 151), we have to understand the hierarchical vision given by the Buddha can only be produced by the mind itself. It is not a phylogenic exploration of how the mind appeared and developed. It is not even a psychogenetic approach of how a child develops his/her mind. It is a fully developed theory of the world and human experience. The whole system itself is produced by the mind which is in a way pre-existing. But this pre-existence is only conceivable because we are considering a developed and mature community of developed and mature individuals. The mind is not at the origin of everything anthropologically. It is only at the origin of everything intellectually. It does not contrive everything because it is only a tool to capture and process everything that pre-exists in the outside world that contains us and our minds. But it is true that intellectually the mind is the very core of the system: the central processing unit of each individual, of each community, no matter how small or large, and what's more the processing and procedural tool of our individual life, destiny, trajectory, and through each one of us using our personal minds for our mental and material development, it becomes the engine of the development of our communities. Therefore it is at the top of the hierarchy, the starting point and crowning concept of the philosophy we are speaking of, as well as the driving force of each individual and of the whole humanity. B.R. Ambedkar is just fuzzy on the range of his declaration. He cannot mean the real material world is an illusion contrived by the mind, but our vision and model of this outside world is contrived by our mind. It is a mental object, a model, a virtual vision

that constantly has to be proved or disproved, verified or refuted by more and more mental work, more and more experimental explorations of the world with all our senses, including the sixth sense, viz. the mind.

The *Abhidhamma* explains what they understand with *cetasikas* or mental states:

The fifty-two states that are associated with consciousness, that arise and perish together with consciousness, that have the same object and basis as consciousness, are known as *Cetasikas* (mental states).

1. *Cetasika* = *Ceta* + *s* + *ika*

That which is associated with the mind or consciousness is *Cetasika*. (Sanskrit – *Caitasika* or *caitti*).

Definition –*Cetasika* is:

- i) that which arises together with consciousness,
- ii) that which perishes together with it,
- iii) that which has an identical object with it,
- iv) that which has a common basis with it. (*Abhidhamma* 76)

In each circumstantial, existential, phenomenological, experiential and situational episode of our life with all our past, present and future in mind, we react and we enter a mental state, positive like love, or negative like hate, and all possible degrees of variation between those two extremes. We are a reactive living being, probably a lot more reactive than other living beings, animal or vegetal and mineral. What is essential here is that most of our reactions (and all our actions are reactions) are dictated by the context, both our mental context and our material surrounding context. It is in such complex situations that we adopt this or that mental state and react. In fact Buddhism differentiates three types. The first one is “*vedanā*” (feeling) and it concerns our emotional reactions. The second one is “*saññā*” (perception) and it concerns the state in which we are receptive to the impulses coming from our senses. These two are also presented as singletons in the *Abhidhamma*, but they are generic of vast ranges of phenomena.

The third one is “*sākhāra*” and it concerns a set of fifty different and specific mental states. This term is very complex but it designates in our context here the mental states that are our reactive responses to a complex circumstantial, existential, phenomenological, experiential and situational context. They can be of different levels of response: purely instinctive at one end and absolutely conscious and controlled at the other end, and in between all possible variations. Hate is one such mental state but there are so many ways of hating. Love is also a mental state but there are so many sorts and degrees of love.

What is important is the root “*sa*” that we have already seen. T.W. Rhys Davids explained that it is the second most frequent prefix in Pāli whose primary meaning is “together” leading to a closer connection between objects when attached to a noun, or an accentuated or intensified action when attached to a verb. As a noun it is a collection of elements, a system, a network that are stated as having some unity in their assemblage. And this network is articulated on the mind per se that may control it and that may guide it. We have to keep in mind the basic Buddhist concept using this prefix is *saṣāra* and we have said this concept associated to that of *paṃiccasamuppāda* is the central mental reasoning of Buddhism: samsāric or subductive thinking. The mind’s control of *cetasika* is all the more important because the mind will be the tool used by the meditating Buddhist in order to get on the way of this meditation, to get detached from all mental states that attach him/her to the world, and little by little to get totally concentrated on the objective of *nibbāna*. We have here a deep dialectic in Buddhism. The universe is existing by itself and includes us and we, as a species, have constructed our mind carried by our brain, and this mind gives us, as individuals, the power to observe, analyze and construct a model of this universe, a model that situates us in this universe and gives us the power to detach ourselves from the universe itself and eventually reach *nibbāna*.

But these mental states are not what is most important here. What I want to study is the mind itself, hence not *cetasika* but *citta*.

The Mind (2), *Citta* et *Mana*

The *Abhidhamma* clearly defines what they call *citta*:

The first *Paramattha* or reality is *Citta*. It is derived from the root “*citi*,” to think. According to the commentary *Citta* is that which is aware of (*cinteti* = *viñānāti*) an object. It is not that which thinks of an object as the term implies. From an *Abhidhamma* standpoint *Citta* may better be defined as the awareness of an object, since there is no agent like a soul.

Citta, *Ceta*, *Cittuppāda*, *Nāma*, *Mana*, *Viññāna* are all used as synonymous in *Abhidhamma*. Hence from the *Abhidhamma* standpoint no distinction is made between mind and consciousness. When the so-called being is divided into its two constituent parts, *Nāma* (mind) is used. When it is divided into the aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*), *Viññāna* is used. The term *Citta* is invariably employed while referring to different classes of consciousness. In isolated cases, in the ordinary sense of mind, both terms *Citta* and *Mana* are frequently used. (9)

Nāma is the mental side of the human being as opposed to *rūpa* which is his corporeal or physical side. The brain is part of *rūpa*, whereas the mind is *Nāma*. The mind cannot be reduced to the brain, nor the heart as some traditions would like, because the brain and the heart are part of *rūpa* whereas the mind is part of *Nāma*. The mind is a mental construct of course based on the physical, corporeal and material world but of another nature than this world, though it has to be seen as material and virtual at once. The materiality of the mind is virtual materiality, whereas the materiality of the brain or heart is organic materiality.

Citta is clearly defined as follows:

“*citta*: ‘mind’, ‘consciousness’, ‘state of consciousness’, is a synonym of *mano* (q.v.) and *viññāna* (*s.khandha* and Table 1). Dhammasaṅgī divides all phenomena into consciousness

(*citta*), mental concomitants (*cetasika*, q.v.) and corporeality (*rūpa*).” (Nyanatiloka Maha Thera, http://www.budsas.org/ebud/bud-dict/dic3_c.htm)

Ceta/Ceto are only used as a gerund (*cetano*) and in the instrumental case (*cetasā*). Otherwise it is only used in compounds for word derivation.

Cittuppāda is more marginal and only defined in the *Abhidhamma* in notes: “Literally genesis of consciousness” (*Abhidhamma* 120). Here the idea of “genesis of consciousness” comes from the bringing together of all mental elements in order to produce this consciousness which is both a potential capability and an operational competence and its various operations. We can state the potential capability is carried by the brain and its architecture articulated on those of the central nervous system and of the whole sensori-motor body of man

Mana is one of the two generic words for the mind as the human mental capability or competence. Yet the fact that it is said equivalent to *citta* is not entirely satisfactory. Both come from a root that means “to think,” respectively *man* on one hand and *cint* or *cet* on the other hand. Both roots have produced verbs, *maññati* and *cinteti* or *ceteti*. The fact that *cinta* becomes *Ceta* or *cetas* to designate specific cases and instances like in *cetasika* pulls *citta* to the level of the particular cases of realization of this *citta*. *Citta* is more concrete or pragmatic than *Mana* which would in that case be more of an operational potential, a competence, a capacity. *Mana* would also correspond better to the construct it is whereas *citta* covers better a collection of practical cases. But once again the two are very close indeed.

The last term is “*Viññāna*” and this one is often used to designate “consciousness.”

“*viññāna*: ‘consciousness’, is one of the 5 groups of existence (aggregates; *khandha*, q.v.); one of the 4 nutriments (*āhāra*, q.v.); the 3rd link of the dependent origination (*paṃiccasamuppāda*, q.v.); the 5th in the six-fold division of elements (*dhātu*, q.v.). Viewed as one of the 5 groups

(*khandha*), it is inseparably linked with the 3 other mental groups (feeling, perception and formations) and furnishes the bare cognition of the object, while the other 3 contribute more specific functions. Its ethical and karmic character, and its greater or lesser degree of intensity and clarity are chiefly determined by the mental formations associated with it. . . The *Abhidhamma* literature distinguishes 89 classes of consciousness, being either kammically wholesome, unwholesome or neutral, and belonging either to the sense-sphere, the fine-material or the immaterial sphere, or to supermundane consciousness." (Nyanatiloka Maha Thera, http://www.budsas.org/ebud/bud-dict/dic3_v.htm)

This entry does not solve the problem of "consciousness" and what it is in Buddhism. It is a multiple notion that has multiple meanings and roles. First a superficial approach to consciousness: you cannot smell if you are not conscious of the smell you may smell. This meaning is attached to the senses and the representations constructed by the mind in the mind. If we are concerned by the sixth sense, the mind, we cannot think anything if we are not conscious of the existence of this something, conscious of the existence of this something as a representation in our minds, and beyond as the representation of a real something in the world. If we are concerned only with consciousness within the mind, it definitely is a generic word for the fact that the mind controls the body and the behavior of the subject. It implies the mind of the subject is conscious of what it does, of what the subject does, which implies the subject is responsible for his/her own thoughts and actions. Yet there is a fair amount of things a subject is not conscious of, or should I say consciously conscious of. That is the basic vision in Buddhism. There cannot be any kind of Noble Eightfold Path, any *Nibbāna* if the mind cannot direct the subject into meditation, but, and that is essential, the object of meditation is to become conscious of what attaches us to this earth, to *dukkha*, and the upmost object is for the mind to become conscious of how the subject can liberate him/herself from these unconscious and now conscious attachments. We can understand that *Nibbāna* may mean complete consciousness, hence the elimination of unconscious or

subconscious elements as such by making them conscious (if that is possible), but then in all other states of the mind that are lower than *Nibbāna* we have unconscious and subconscious elements in the mind.

The question I want to ask here is whether a subject is completely conscious of what his/her mind contains, controls, conjures and condones and of what it considers has to be rejected, neutralized or made conscious. There is in Buddhism a fair margin of fuzziness to admit that the mind of a subject, at any level of enlightenment, and I will say even at the highest level possible, has a subconscious and even unconscious side and that the whole meditation procedure is to bring this subconscious or unconscious side to light. So much so with how the Buddha taught all his life, not what was to be thought, but how a Buddhist had to use his/her mind to find by him/herself what will have to be his/her truth. The Buddha has always seen us as at least potential *bhōdisattas*.

This clearly shows how the mind for the Buddha is the central piece of his thinking, not for some kind of abstract philosophy, but for each one of us in our real lives along our attempts to control and develop them and the world along with it in collaboration with our fellow world citizens.

Buddhism, a Modern Challenge

If we follow B.R. Ambedkar and his presentation of the Buddha's life, the Buddha was quite provocative and challenging in his own life. He refused the seraglio he was supposed to have as a prince. His refusal was a provocation to a society where all "princes" had several rotating concubines. Then he refused to support and take part in a war of his small kingdom against the next one because of some disagreement on the way to use the water of the river common to the two kingdoms. He was for diplomatic solutions. But he was the only one who voted against the war and he refused to follow and implement for himself the decision of the nearly unanimous council. He preferred taking *Parivraja* to avoid the

death penalty for treason or banishment and a social boycott against his family plus the confiscation of his family's estate and lands for treason again. That's how he entered his future as a *Parivrajaka*. He took this decision based on a personal opinion and position that he refused to change in the most provocative way, and just accepted a slightly soothing "compromise."

Then he refused the favors proposed by King Bimbisara and decided to go on with his initiation in the way of solving the "suffering" of the world. Then he visited and learned from all possible sources, past and present, in this field of Hindu religion and philosophy, and he rejected them all. He first visited and refused the practice of pain as the root of merit advocated by Brighu's Ashram. Then the list is long: the Sankhya philosophy, the Dhyana Marga (Concentration of the Mind), the Samadhi School, Uddaka Ramputta, Arada Kalam, asceticism, the Vedic Rishis, Kapila the philosopher, the Brahmanic Philosophy (especially the theory of Chaturvarna), the Upanishads and their teachings, Purana Kassappa, Makhali Ghosal, Ajit Kesakambal, Pakudha Kaccyana, Sanjaya Belaputta, and the Chaturyamsamsarvad school of Mahavir, alias Nigantha Nathaputta. He rejected them all and built his own *Sāsana*, the nine-fold Dispensation of the Buddha.

To refuse the powerful Brahmanic schools and their all-powerful caste-theory of Chaturvarna concerning the divine nature of social differences that cannot be rejected or negated, particularly the lowest caste of them all, the untouchables, was a challenge to his society and it could have been a challenge to his life. He managed to reject all that without getting too much hostility by more or less appearing like an illuminated person more than a revolutionary. Then he preached and converted a lot of people. His power came then from the number of followers, though we must not forget he was from a royal family and as such was off limits as for the violence he could and would have been submitted to if he had not been of that origin.

Apart from these challenges the Buddha represented in his society in his time, Buddhism is also a vast challenge to the world and human civilizations, all of them without any exception, and it is the basis of its validity today in our most “scientific” but “postmodern” world. There is no truth in the world any more, but only points of view. The truth is procedural more than semantic. The truth can only be approached by confronting all kinds of points of view, theories and models. It is the asymptotic approach of the vastest possible collection of representations of what we try to study in the world. And any state of this “truth” is nothing but a model that has to be constantly upgraded.

Furthermore Buddhism is a direct challenge to all religions built on the concept of God, since for Buddhists the universe was not created by any creator: it just is, hence there is no creator, divine or not, including a “natural creator” like some Big Bang that would bring the universe out of an unidentified nothingness.

Buddhism is a direct challenge to the concept of soul, the supposedly divine part of man. No part of man is in anyway permanent and stable: *anicca* and *anattā* or impermanence and non-self. Psychology must state a permanently changing self and profile evolving personalities. In the same way Buddhism is a challenge to the idea of a supernatural or innate intelligence in man. Intelligence is a construct of, by and for the mind which itself is a construct of, by and for the brain.

Buddhism is a challenge to all social thinking that states any hierarchy between human beings: we are all equal in rights. For Buddhism we are all different in particular characteristics but we have the duty to love others, to love the whole universe, to share what we have with others in a vast reciprocal movement of empathy: “*mettā*” (loving kindness), “*karunā*” (compassion), “*muditā*” (altruistic or sympathetic joy) [these last two being the two sides of the modern concept of “empathy”] and “*upekkhā*” (equanimity).

Buddhism is a challenge to any opinion asserted as truth based on force or power. The only truth is *anicca-dukkha-anattā*, i.e. impermanence-the cycle of satisfaction-dissatisfaction-non-self. It is a challenge to any one or any group that believes the only way to achieve anything is by bringing other people down to their knees or down on the ground. It is a challenge to any one who believes violence is justified, be it against men, or against animals, or against nature. It refuses weapons, the use of them, the possession of them. As such it is a direct challenge to the second amendment to the US Constitution and all hunting practices all over the world, legal or illegal. It is a challenge to any state or regime that uses some coercive means to keep their population safe or on the right path.

Buddhism is a challenge to all empirical philosophies and sciences that follow a strictly pragmatic approach to the universe and humanity. In the same way it is a challenge to all theoretical philosophies and sciences that follow a strictly speculative approach to the universe and humanity. For the Buddha all we know is nothing but a representation of what the universe is the way we see it, we can see it, a model in a way, and as such it cannot replace the universe. Buddhism refuses to consider an image of the world as being the world itself, a model of intelligence or mental power as being this intelligence or this mental power.

Buddhism is a direct challenge to western rational thinking for which there are only two ways of thinking: deductive or inductive, only one way of explaining the world with a sequence of causes and effects one after the other and with a strict seriation from simpler to more complex items, or the reverse. Buddhism is for a vastly global way of thinking in which the globality of what we know eventually lets some new ideas emerge without being the cause of these new ideas but by being the womb of them, just like the universe is the womb of any being that exists within it.

The womb is not the cause of the procreation of a child, if this procreation has a cause of any sort. Since not-procreating

has a real ideological cause (one-child family in China or family planning and birth control in the west or even the whole world), by extension procreating a child has a reason: the refusal to not procreate that child. But is a negative reason enough of a cause? For the Buddha certainly not! Man must not refuse to do something for fear of something or someone or because it is forbidden by something or someone but because man is convinced doing the reverse is good for himself and humanity. We do not do something to avoid doing evil, but because we want to do good. We do not implement the negative recommendation “do not kill” but we implement the positive recommendation “preserve life,” as would Venerable Pandita (Burma) argue.

Buddhism is a direct challenge to all philosophies that preach the isolation and self-centeredness of human beings because first there is no permanent and stable self, and second we cannot survive as individuals or as a species if we do not practice the four boundless states (*appamaññā*) as we have seen: loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karunā*), altruistic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). And that love or compassion has to be directed at all living beings, and the universe is also a living being of sorts.

There are many more levels at which Buddhism could be or could be seen as a challenge. To conclude this approach of the mind in the Buddhist challenging perspective, I would like to get into one verse from the *Dhammapada*.

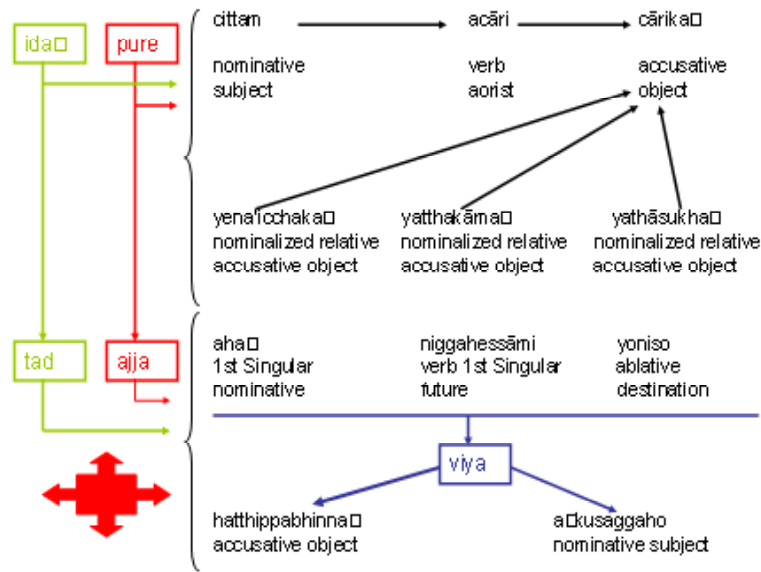
The Dhammapada, Verse 326 (Chapter 23, Nāga Vagga, The Elephant, verse 7)

*Idapure cittam acāri cārika
Yenaicchakā yatthakāma yathāsukha,
Tadajj aha niggaheṣāmi yoniso,
hatthippabhinna viya akusaggaho. (Dhammapada 254)*

I am going to study the meaning from the language itself. But for ease of understanding let's give a literal translation:

This in the past mind used to venture on ventures
 Of its own liking, wherever it wanted to go, just the way it
 favored
 So that now I am going to bring it back to where it belongs
 Like the elephant driver the elephant in reproductive rut.

Let's start with a representation of the syntactic structure:



✚ This symbol means that when all items in the first two lines are considered simultaneously and/or fulfilled, there may emerge what is stated in the third line: it is the symbol of samsaric or subductive thinking.

The whole structure is dominated by the parallel between “*ida*” an emphatic demonstrative pointing at the center of the first part of the verse, i.e. the nominative subject “*cittam*” on one hand, and “*tad*,” an accusative pronoun that refers to the whole previous section of the verse and makes it the object of the second part of the verse on the other hand.

In the same way “*pure*” that refers to the past and “*ajja*” that refers to the present reinforce the tenses of the two verbs,

the aorist of the first part of the verse and the future of the second part of the verse.

Then the first part of the verse has a subject in the nominative and a plain object in the accusative that is nothing but the semantic repetition of the verb itself ("to walk walks" though with a wider meaning than just "walk" and "wander" could be used but the repetition of it as an object noun is not possible in English).

The three added accusatives are all built on the same structure: relative pronoun + nominal form + accusative declension. These three accusatives are thus apposed to the initial accusative that is the semantic repetition of the semantic content of the initial verb. We have an accumulation of elements that mean more or less the same thing: following one's uncontrolled desires, respectively, "what X likes," "where X likes" and "just like X likes." X is the mind that is erring around with no control or restraint. What is important in this accumulative construction of a samsaric whole, is the strong parallel alliterations amplifying the syntax, some might say ossifying it, giving it an audible skeleton: first the six (five + one) /a/ or /am/ endings; the two /cāri/ and the great syntactic parallel phonetically reinforced between /yena/, /yattha/ et /yatha/.

What is important here is that the connection between this first part of the verse and the second is not a cause-effect connection. We have an accumulation of negative elements on the side of the uncontrolled mind and this creates a situation in which only one thing can emerge: the reversal of this absence of control over the mind and this control that is going to be introduced in the future is brought around by the two parallel pairs: *ida-tad*, both emphatic deictic terms, and *pure-ajja*, both temporal adverbs reinforcing the passage from aorist to future on the verbs. This is the simple meaning: an evildoing freewheeling mind creates a situation from which only a recapture of control and good objectives can, may or should emerge. But the verse is always going along with a story.

The shortest version is given by Narada Thera (*Dhammapada* 255). A medium version is given by the National Taiwan University Digital Library & Buddhist Museum at <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/BDLM/lesson/pali/reading/gatha326.htm>, and the longest one, probably the full story, is given by Daw Mya Tin, M.A. of the Burma Pitaka Association at <http://www.tipitaka.net/tipitaka/dhp/verseload.php?verse=326>, courtesy of *Nibbāna.com* at <http://www.thisismyanmar.com/nibbāna/#.U0PGpqjSySo>.

We could summarize the story as follows: A young novice monk who led a virtuous life, later desired to leave the Order. An ogress, a mother of his in a previous life, derived prestige from his being a monk, so she possessed him and took him through some nervous or epileptic trance. When she released him and he was normal again, seeing his real mother and neighbors in shock, he realized his mistake and went back to the Order. The story reveals a second meaning. The mind when it is not controlled, hence not enlightened by Buddhism may be the victim of all kinds of deeper desires, wishes and impulses. These are identified in the story as the ogress and some mentioned but not active *devas* and ogres. This ogress is the mother of the young man but in some previous life, whereas his mother in this life is repentant about the bad choice her son may make when leaving the Order and is supportive of the Buddhist choice of her son. This reference to that ogress of a previous life is a reference to the transmigration of Brahmanism (in the Buddha's time, though it could be that of the Tibetan Buddhists still in our time) and it clearly states that Buddhism is the only way to escape that fate into *nibbāna* at the end of life and *arahantship* right now in life.

But the story is particularly strong on the fact that no matter what the mind of a person may have experienced, done, no matter how many frontier lines to evil it may have transgressed, the mind can always make the choice and decision to come back to the good side and this good side is Buddhism.

The story insists on the fact that the mind is free to choose between good and evil, though yet in a social context in which some people will count more than others in the eventual decision. The mind is its own master in a way. The mind is both the elephant in rut when it is not controlled (note the sexual but purely instinctive dimension of that evil disorder) and the elephant driver when this soul is controlled by itself.

The story presents a difficulty here in this final comparison. It is clear that an accumulation of evil elements brings the emergence of a good decision as a way to escape all that evil; but at the same time we can wonder if the comparison is not giving too much of an autonomous identity to the controlling factor in the mind, hence to the mind, and maybe that could lead some people to believing the mind has an autonomous nature, if not essence, even if it be the beneficial elephant driver, the beneficial mind driver in the mind itself.

Here I am in a way challenging the teaching of Buddhism that uses ambiguous stories, or commentaries as they call them, to make the verses simpler to understand. So much simpler that they may favor the emergence of a non-Buddhist meaning.

Conclusion

All along I have shown how challenging Buddhism may be, the concept of the mind may be. All along I have shown the mind is a concept that has to be constructed, explored and elaborated with modern neurosciences.

I have shown how the Buddha in his *Dhammapada* expresses his meaning with his words and their semantic contents, as well as with his syntax and its syntactic content that is also a semantic content. But the syntax and the way the Buddha is using that syntax is meaningful too as for the philosophy of what he has to say.

Translating these complex syntactic clusters of meaningful elements is often impossible because Pāli has its own way of being meaningful. The accumulation of accusatives nominalizing relative clauses is just as meaningful as the clauses that are thus nominalized. The way a clause is nominalized is meaningful in itself, and the way these nominalized clauses are used is meaningful too and per se.

This use of the language by the Buddha is the greatest challenge of all because it requires time and effort to penetrate a language that was devised by the Buddha's distant disciples to canonically codify his teaching. If they did that they had two reasons essentially: to use a language that was not attached to any writing system, hence enabling any writing system to transliterate it. And thus to target some universality and some control of their subject itself.

In fact these canonical writings became the tools of an important globalization of Buddhism that only reaches its full global dimension today provided the Pāli canon be used to do so. And that is a challenge when some Buddhist systematically use a Sanskrit often modified version of the Buddhist writings at times haunted by some pre-Buddhist conceptions like in *Bardo Thodol – The Tibetan Book of the Dead, or the After Death Experiences On the Bardo Plane*, still a classic in Tibetan Buddhism.

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A Tale of Life and Death: Philip Roth's *Nemesis*

K. SAREEN RAJ & A. KARUNAKER

"We are all tied to the process and system of life and death
in their various forms and ways known and unknown to us"

(Prasoon 24).

Life and death have been debatable subjects for mankind since evolution. Both have remained mysteries and some of them in fact remained unexplained phenomenon till date. Many philosophers attempted to define the hidden truth of life and death. Religion and science tried to unravel the mystery with substantial evidences and theories but somewhere in the corner the ambiguity still continues. Man has been in a continuous struggle to live and has made monumental discoveries in the field of science and technology. He has always displayed keen interest in increasing his life span and struggled to exist by changing his own fate. In the process of innovation and technology, he has forayed into the areas unknown, some of which brought anti-human elements into the world. The inventions proved to be both useful and harmful in the course of time.

The World Wars have demonstrated the destructive power of science and technology. What was considered to be a great achievement by science proved to be fatal for the entire mankind. Most of the thinkers were baffled at the sight of massive bloodshed caused by the cruel wars. All the foundations laid so far in the name of humanity were shaken to the ground. Bewilderment, uncertainty, disease, and poverty dominated the world. With the Second World War,

mankind witnessed the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century and it nearly took five decades to overcome the loss. War became a synonym for destruction and pandemonium in the new age. The cruelty and aftermath of the two World Wars, Vietnam War, the McCarthy era, Anti-Semitism and the political conditions had a profound impact on the lives of many people.

Philip Roth is one of the eminent writers of America who has witnessed the brutality of the World War II as a child and came of age during the Korean tragedy. His works discuss man's tenuous place in the hostile world. The writer has a tremendous gift of looking into the perspectives of human nature and his writings reflect pain, suffering, quandary and catch-22 of the social life. Roth served the U.S army for a short time and thus used the national conflict as a backdrop for accessing history and identity. He became the spokesman for the troubled generation representing the milieu of his times. Ruth Wisse called Roth's writing:

the first literary voice that seemed to speak for our bunch, our group, our set, the particular gang of adolescents with whom I shared a mutual affection and an idea of what we stood against... a sensibility so familiar that it seemed to have come from our won midst, and in a sparkle of language... attractive to us.... Our affection for Philip Roth was part of the tenderness we felt for ourselves. (qtd. in. Cooper 5)

Philip Roth's *Nemesis* published in the year 2010 is set against the background of the World War II and the polio epidemic which triggered a nationwide panic in 1944 taking away thousands of lives in the states of New York, North Carolina, and Kentucky. *Nemesis* perfectly captures the fear and horror associated with the polio epidemics of the 1940s-50s, in Newark, New Jersey. The writer expertly portrays the sad self-destruction of the memorable Jewish character, Bucky Cantor and the brutal power of an epidemic. The short story deals with Rothian themes of injustice of fate and the tragedy of life. The central story revolves around the playground which is a metaphor for life and death. The story is presented in three

chapters with details of Eugene Bucky Cantor's humdrum life. Cantor is a P.E. teacher, a twenty three year old man who fails to fulfill his dream of participating in World War II because of his poor eyesight. He is an athlete, a javelin thrower, and a weightlifter devoted to his work. Cantor is bound with guilt as his dream of serving the army in World War II is shattered. Roth examines the themes of suffering, pain, fear, and bewilderment with the help of an epidemic. The novel seeks answers with spirituality and its validity in the complex life. The cruel war taking its toll on mankind stands as a symbol of death in the novel.

In *Nemesis*, Roth once again presents a tragic flaw, a debilitated life of a protagonist who suffers with a strange physical and psychological affliction, similar to *The Anatomy Lesson* of Zuckerman Bound trilogy where Nathan Zuckerman is tormented with a strange undiagnosed affliction: “. . . vocationally obstructed, physically disabled, sexually mindless, intellectually inert, spiritually depressed . . . ” (ZB 435).

The novel grapples with life and death, and the role of God in deciding the fate of mankind. Roth presents a protagonist who is laid low by cataclysmic events in his life. He deals with the frailty of a human being and the mortality of a man. Cantor's life is filled with tragedy as he is orphaned by his mother who dies at childbirth. His dissolute father deserts him and leaves him to the care of his grandparents. Cantor tries to live up to the expectations of his hardworking grandparents who own a grocery business in the Weequahic neighbourhood of Newark. Life becomes difficult to Cantor with his grandfather's death and the surprise attack by Japanese on Pearl Harbor. His dream of entering into the army comes to an end because of his poor eyesight followed by the guilt of letting down his mentor grandfather:

ashamed when he watched the newsreels of the war . . .
ashamed when he took the bus home to Newark from East
Orange at the end of the school day and sat beside someone

reading in the evening paper the day's biggest story — 'Bataan Falls,' 'Corregidor Falls,' 'Wake Island Falls.' He felt the shame of someone who might by himself have made a difference as the U.S. forces in the Pacific suffered one colossal defeat after another. (Roth 27)

In the beginning, Cantor is presented as a tough and successful man even though he is only five-feet-five inches. He is seen as a great javelin thrower, a powerful man, a weight-lifter and an all-round athlete with a good-heart: He is seen as, "the most exemplary and revered authority we knew, a man of convictions, easygoing, kind, fair-minded, thoughtful, stable, gentle, vigorous, muscular—a comrade and leader both . . . "(Roth 275).

Despite of everything, Cantor cannot prevent the widespread calamity and the tragic fate that befalls the place. The story begins with the sweltering summer of 1944 where America is put on high alert, as many of the people start talking about an outbreak of polio in an Italian neighborhood of Newark: "THE FIRST CASE of polio that summer came early in June, right after Memorial Day, in a poor Italian neighborhood crosstown from where we lived. . . an article appear on the front page of the evening paper, titled "Health Chief Puts Parents on Polio Alert"" (Roth 1).

Cantor begins his life cheerfully as he takes up the post of a playground director in Newark's predominantly Jewish Weequahic section. Many of the children join the playground beaming with new hope. The playground represents life and instills faith amongst children. A group of teenage Italians arrive at Cantor's playground and try to stir up trouble by threatening that they have come to spread the disease. Cantor manages the situation and sends them off. In a twist of tale two boys from the playground die by contracting polio and Cantor's faith is shaken. The faith of the children is completely crushed when the epidemic strikes the ground taking many innocent lives. One of the playground boys afflicted by polio, Arnold Mesnikoff, the narrator of the story describes the precarious situation:

as the number of cases steadily mounted in the city—and communal fear with it—many children in our neighborhood found themselves prohibited by their parents from using the big public pool . . . , forbidden to go to the local ‘air-cooled’ movie theaters, and forbidden to take the bus downtown . . . warned not to use public toilets or public drinking fountains. (Roth 6)

The Equatorial Newark climate with the hot and sultry landscape becomes a host to the virus: “the city... partially ringed by extensive wetlands... swarms of mosquitoes” (Roth 4). By describing the vulnerability of Newark, Roth is actually trying to speak about anti-Semitism, the vulnerability of Jews, and the Nazi assault on innocent Jews in Europe. Newark becomes a metaphor for perils of war. The epidemic symbolizes the horror of the war as Cantor says, “sweep through this place and destroy them all. Each morning . . . there’ll be another few gone . . . [I]n the end it’s going to get every last child ... Not a one of the children will survive intact, if they survive at all” (Roth 114-15).

Roth presents a sense of helplessness, a moment of history, and the tragic misfortune of an era. Though Cantor tries to contend terror with reason by saying, “. . . keep everything in their lives as normal as possible and . . . to try to stay reasonable and calm” (Roth 37), the fear is so strong that it drives the people with madness. Fear becomes a dominant force in the novel as the community is constricted with the fear of persecution and segregation. It is doubled by the fact that there could not be any cure for the disease: “compounded by the fact that no medicine existed to treat the disease and no vaccine to produce immunity” (Roth 3).

The wreckage left by the epidemic changes the course of history altering many individual lives. Cantor’s grandmother observes the epidemic as Jewish persecution which is similar to a Nazi pogrom. She witnesses the drastic changes in the Weequahic section due to the epidemic. She observes the unwillingness of the bus drivers to drive into the Weequahic section without protective masks, the reluctance of the

mailmen and the truck drivers to perform their duties, and strangers driving through with their windows rolled up. She even observes the anti-Semites saying that the polio started spreading just because of Jews:

The anti-Semites are saying that it's because they're Jews that polio spreads there. Because of all the Jews—that's why Weequahic is the center of the paralysis and why the Jews should be isolated. Some of them sound as if they think the best way to get rid of the polio epidemic would be to burn down Weequahic with all the Jews in it Out of their fear and out of their hatred shutting down the playgrounds Movie theaters are shutting down The city pool is shutting down. The public library is shutting down. (Roth 192-4)

Cantor battles with the spiritual crisis on one side and romantic crisis on another side. He faces a spiritual crisis while trying to reason out the death of children and begins to doubt the infallibility of God. In the process of his struggle against the circumstances, Cantor develops apathy towards God. He refuses to accept God and tries to ask him why he has allowed innocent children to die. He starts to question God by saying, who would allow such "lunatic cruelty" (Roth 75).

Cantor feels guilt at not protecting his ground and his boys. As days pass, the cases of polio increase and his playground becomes an area prone to the disease. The parents accuse him for not looking after their children, and subsequently the heroic stature of Cantor is reduced to a villain. Cantor gets caught up between the playground, kids, and his own life. He appears as Captain America not exactly fighting against Nazis, but fighting against the epidemic in his own yard: "the war being waged on the battlefield of his playground . . . fighting their fear of polio alongside his endangered boys" (Roth 173).

Marcia Steinberg, Cantor's girlfriend, a fellow teacher who works as a Counselor in the Jewish summer camp, pastoral Indian Hill in the Poconos, rings Cantor to tell about a vacancy outside the city by which he could escape and lead

a peaceful life. Marcia forces Cantor to escape from his responsibility and life: "we could be together . . . and you'd be safe . . . a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity . . . we could be alone up here . . . finally, finally be alone"—temporarily seduces Bucky into thinking he can walk out of one history and into a self-determined future" (85-87).

Cantor sees the temptation of American Dream on one hand and a sense of responsibility on the other hand. Unable to decide and torn between the two Cantor decides to take the battle against polio as a personal war: "Because this was real war too, a war of slaughter, ruin, waste, and damnation, war with ravages of war—war upon the children of Newark" (Roth 132). Cantor's best friends leave the place to fight in the war and he is left wondering about his own fate. For him running away from the situation would be a cowardly act of betrayal. Cantor keeps moving though he is caught up in the vicious circle of life.

Cantor's perception is changed on his visit to Marcia's father, Dr. Steinberg who relieves him of his fears. He seeks permission from Dr. Steinberg to marry Marcia. The romantic crisis begins with his engagement to Marcia. Cantor is caught up between life and death when his fiancé implores him to quit his job and join her at polio-free summer camp. It becomes an impossible task for him to decide on whether to stay with the children or leave with his fiancée.

The element of the Greek drama comes to the fore as polio reaches the summer camp and takes life of a camper. As several children become ill Cantor also struggles with sickness. He blames himself for bringing polio to the playground. As the number of polio cases increase Cantor leaves for the country. The memories of the young boys haunt him as he tries to disassociate himself from the past. He starts leading a miserable and deserted life. His words of inspiration to children about the great Gods prove to be false with the turn of fate: "The first javelin thrower was said to be Hercules, the great warrior and slayer of monsters, who, Mr. Cantor told us,

was the giant son of the supreme Greek god, Zeus, and the strongest man on earth" (Roth 276). It appears as if everything, all things big and small would come to an end which is the ultimate aim of life. Cantor finds that his athletic prowess is stripped from him as he falls prey to polio. The strong conviction which keeps him going is shattered.

Tragedy strikes again as we are led to believe that Cantor contracted the disease. A local disabled child called Horace gives the information about Cantor's ailment. Cantor leaves the city to Indian Hill taking the doom with him. Indian Hill is the sort of mid-century American summer camp that is always peaceful, a safe haven brimming with life.

Cantor and Marcia escape to an island located in the center of a lake and spend some memorable time. The radical change in the story with bliss all around is presented metaphorically with a swarm of butterflies: "A huge swarm of butterflies settled over Indian Hill, and for about an hour in the middle of afternoon they could be seen erratically dipping and darting over the playing fields" (Roth 179).

The fate has its spin again when Cantor learns that Donald Kaplow, a promising diver, a counterpart who sleeps in his dorm complains that he is unable to move his legs. Kaplow is taken to a hospital for a check-up and so is Cantor taken away for examination. In the examination, the authorities declare that they have contracted the disease. One of Marcia's sisters is also not spared by the deadly epidemic. In a few days, some more cases come to light and the camp is shutdown bringing the cheerful life to an end.

Then, we are taken forward in time by several decades with the narrator identifying himself as Arnold Mesnikoff, one of the boys from Cantor's Newark playground. Arnold tells the events that have followed in Cantor's life, the tragedy brought down by polio, and his hospitalization for over a year. It is at this time we come to know the sad end of Cantor, his subsequent rejection of Marcia, and the later part of his isolated life along with the feelings of self-recrimination, pain, and guilt

about his actions with children: "I wanted to help kids and make them strong," he adds on saying "and instead I did them irrevocable harm" (Roth 271).

Cantor remains a motherless child, a failed soldier unable to fight for his country, an unsuccessful playground director who could not save his children, a dejected lover cursed by fate. Cantor's nemesis turns out to be his own body. He sometimes blames himself and sometimes God for the events that befell him and others by saying: "God killed my mother in childbirth" (263). In the process of blaming himself, he imagines the entire universe to be his enemy, his nemesis. Even the island birch trees appear as the ghosts of the polio victims: "the birch trees encircling them looked in the moonlight like a myriad of deformed silhouettes—their lovers' island haunted suddenly with the ghosts of polio victims" (Roth 228). The Jewish warrior becomes a victim of fate leading him into a sense of disillusionment. The American hero, the athlete who appeared invincible in the playground is crippled by the dark forces of life.

The novel ends in 1971 with the third reunion as Cantor encounters one of the Newark playground children who survived from polio. The conversation brings back the nostalgic memories of their past. The novel ends with tragedy with Cantor saying that he has insisted his fiancée to leave him and find a physically fit husband as he is crippled by polio. Cantor remains a doomed man battling with the unconquerable forces of life. The tragedy even goes further with Cantor saying that he has never married thereafter. Philip Roth brings in a tragedy by displacing his regular characteristic features of writing- humor and sex in the novel. He touches on several significant themes like love, war, sorrow, faith, alienation, life, fate, tragedy, pain, persecution, anti-Semitism, and death.

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The Evolution of Oriya Literature (*Oriya Sahityara Krama Parinama*)*

PANDIT NILANKANTA DAS

Introduced and Translated

by

Sachidananda Mohanty

Pandit Nilankanta Das was a leading member of the legendary 'Satyabadi' movement in Orissa. Members of this nationalist movement located themselves in the Puri district of the province at a place called Satyabadi in Sakshigopal and dedicated themselves to a new system of national education based on the teaching of Gandhiji. After his education at Calcutta University where he obtained his .MA. degree in 1911, Das served as the Headmaster of the residential school at Satyabadi and became a close associate of 'Utkalamani' Pandit Gopandhu Das.

Nilakantha Das distinguished himself as a critic, linguist, literary historian, educationist and poet. He wrote poetry and prose and edited in the thirties of the last century, a journal called *Nababharata*. His books in poetry include *Konarka*, 1919, *Kharavela*, 1920, *Pranayini*, 1919 (translation of Tennyson's *Princess*, *The Evolution of Oriya Literature*, 1948; 1953, *Oriya Language and Literature*, 1954; 1958, and other works including an autobiography *Atmajibani*, 1959.

In the following extracts, Nilakantha Das seeks to define the idea of literary history. His attempt to link the evolution of language and literature with key developments in society and culture could be seen as pioneering contributions in the field of Oriya Criticism. Earlier accounts of the history of Oriya

* Written by Nilakantha Das, Cuttack: *Nababharata Granthamala*, 1948

literature such as those written by B.C. Majumdar and Suryanarayana Das lacked this larger socio-cultural perspective.

Das shows a commendable awareness of developments in the domain of language, literature and social sciences in trying to understand the evolution of Oriya literature. While some of his theories such as the linkages he seeks to establish between tribes of today with their counterparts mentioned in the early Vedic legends and icons may be questioned, and he may indeed be overstating his case at times, he is essentially correct in affirming the importance of language and literature as central to social formations. In the immediate aftermath of the Partition when this essay was published, there was a predictable fear of disunity, and consequently a distrust of seemingly divisive factors such as language and literature.

Nilakantha is, however, categorical in suggesting that language and literature, rightly understood, play a crucial role in the evolution of society. Equally do social and contextual factors influence the shaping of literature.

He shows a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the literary text and the social context and brings to the contemporary readers a holistic understanding of the arts, culture and society. He also highlights the fact that Indian Literature ought not to be seen in unitary terms. Rather, a better and more lasting model would be to think of literatures written in the Indian languages, a view point that has received a near canonical status today. He also upholds the principle of linguistic states, considered contentious in the early history of our nation.

The language of Nilakantha Das in this chapter is colloquial; his style polemical. Readers might find a few of the digressions in the original Oriya somewhat unnecessary. As a translator, I have used creative liberty to skip over some expressions and sentences in the text without sacrificing the main arguments of the author. While the purists might fault

my approach, I believe, the 'loss' entailed, is amply made up in terms of an enhanced clarity and 'gain' in the overall vision. Some parts of the text posed difficulties to me as a translator; occasionally some others caused irritation because of the repetitiveness of ideas and examples. But such experience, few and far between, was compensated by the uniform brilliance and originality of the author. To use Sujit Mukherjee's memorable phrase, it was truly translation as discovery!

First Part

Chapter One

(Preliminary Remarks)

The Meaning of the Term Literature

What do we understand by the term 'literature'? We might say that in the widest sense, literature signifies the evolution of society. Consequently, culture acts as the index to literature.

Literature encompasses all aspects of life including social behavior, poetry, philosophy, science and sculpture. Viewed from the angle, the *Ashwathama* elephant of Dhauligiri, the caves of Udayagiri, the temples of Bhubaneswar, Khiching, Puri and Konarka, the embankment on the river Kathajodi, as indeed the metal ware of Kantilo, the filigree work of Cuttack, legends and folklore, the Mahabharata of Sarala Das, modern poetry and fiction – all can be justly treated as part of literature.

Sight, Tradition and Illumination

It is important to see that literature evolves in accordance with the emergence of thought, philosophy, labor, creativity, feeling and experience. In simple language we may speak of sight, tradition and illumination. Philosophy and outlook constitute what may be called the angle of vision. It includes discussion, discovery as well as the artistic and creative process.

Tradition entails the need for creativity in art based on transactions. Illumination signifies the sudden appearance of

gesture, the limitless expression of feeling. These three constitute an integral whole and are all pervasive. They draw man to artistic joy. If sight and tradition are the body of literature, then illumination is the soul.

Judgment, Description and Allegory

Art and craft mirror the growth of culture and literary developments are seen primarily in the domain of language. Literature bases itself upon sight. Sustained by it, it grows like a living being. When the spine gets weakened, literature loses its direction or momentum. With a broken spine, it loses individuality and dies out. Or it may follow the quest of a subterranean river.

The Trend of Discussion

Based on the above mentioned considerations, we should discuss the evolution of Oriya literature. For the sake of a more complete understanding, we need to pay close attention to the evolution of languages.

Speech and Script

Clear writing leads to a better comprehension of literature. That is why literature is generally equated with the written text. However, it is possible that the oral tradition that avoids the written form may be more living and vivid. The Vedas of the Aryas were once called, 'Shruti', that which is remembered by hearing. Clearly there were no written texts in those days. Despite the advent of the alphabet, songs related to folklore, children's rhymes, tales of the Puranas were all expressed through the oral tradition. This practice continues even today. Folk tradition flourished in the absence of the printing press. It is not a current trend now but has not become completely extinct either. It has still remained as a part of Oriya Literature.

The Strength and Influence of Literature

The emerging vision and action based on a host of literary, political and economic conflicts in society rests on the seat of

language and literature: Mahatma Gandhi has strengthened Indian society and national politics by the formation of linguistic provinces. Thus many complex matters have become much simpler. The League of Nations correctly upheld national literatures based on national languages, as the basis for national formations. While such outlets took care of alternate languages and literatures in many countries, a fair amount of discontentment were also manifest during the World War II. In the contemporary world, the Soviet Union based its social sovereignty upon language and literature. This may explain the growth of the spirit of union among the people of the Soviet Union. Although many of the traditional approaches still linger, it may be safely presumed that the old will eventually die out.

World Spirit

Many in one and the one in many – this is the spirit of the contemporary world. This spirit has always guided the evolution of society. Take the example of a tree that contains roots, trunk, leaves, flowers and fruits. The constituents are all distinct. Yet none of them make up the tree. However, without them, the tree is non-existent, and without the tree, these have no existence. In other words, each is symbolically related to the other and each derives its meaning in relation to the other.

Relationship between the Individual and Community

If we were to look at the issue in a non-materialistic manner, we see that if each constituent can grow on its own organically, the tree itself becomes strong and puissant. The tree has an existence other than its parts. These parts in a syncretic manner contribute to the making of the tree: In philosophical language, an autonomous object of this kind is called an individual being. Each being is a part; it is also necessarily a whole. At the same time, each being has its unique path of growth. It does not lose its unique existence in a larger formation. This is the mystery of creativity that explains the relationship between the individual and the collectivity. This is the

meaning of the adage: diversity in oneness and unity in diversity. In the Vedas, it is called 'Rik'. It contains the secret of the growth of the world spirit. It is the will, effort and Tapasya of the Creative Principle.

Social Evolution

We must see the growth of society accordingly. Based on a piece of land and language, a man expresses himself first as the Indian society is unique, and is part of a world culture.

The Meaning of Language and Literature

We may continue with the same example of a tree to make things simpler to understand. The tree may lose its leaves and branches and suffers from temporary harm. Like the burning of a branch and leaves, in the human society, there are instances when languages and literatures are also killed. For the benefit of the English rule, we have seen the introduction of the English language, for the Catholic religion, introduction of Latin, for the Muslims, Arabic, for the benefit of Spain and Portugal in Latin America, Spanish and Portuguese. In our country too, in many places, the well developed Dravidian languages and literatures have been made extinct. The languages of the *Gonds* and the *Kandhas* are practically non-existent today. Due to crisis in the past, the Babylonian, Egyptian as well as the early Islamic cultures have perished.

The Pre-Vedic cultures and literatures too no longer exist. Such declines continue even today in a ruthless manner. The *Nagas* are being turned into Assamese, just as the *Santhalis* have been made Bengalis. At one time, the *Hos* used to be turned into Oriyas. Perhaps today they are being forcibly changed into Hindus. There is a conspiracy now to destroy *Mathili*, *Maghi* and *Bhojpuri* of Bihar thanks to the onslaughts of Hindustani.

Indian Politics

These days, a new tendency is manifest in Indian politics. That

is the communal behavior of a section of the Muslim community. The moment some one declares himself as a Muslim, he is immediately taken away from the mainstream language and culture. There is an attempt to create an artificial unity based on differences in literatures. We strove together for the sake of the political independence. That unity is perhaps not the right instrument for the social growth.

This is a device for an artificial unity. We have won independence. But there is no need to perpetuate this form of artificial 'unity'. That unity which obliterates differences such as the rich-poor etc. are not the desired unity. It is not clear how the model we currently cherish can promote the interests of the individuals and those of the community at the same time. The British exploited us because we were part of their empire. To defeat this evil empire, we thought it wise not to have separate linguistic provinces, and to immerse ourselves in a 'national' culture in favor of one national literature. We are thinking of our future based on such ill thought out and undesirable policies. Fearful of the recent example of the Muslims who are seen to have balkanized our nation based on linguistic and religious separation, we express such reactions.

Conceptual Framework based on historical Events

The division of labor in our society-flexible and fluid at the outset degenerated in course of time into the rigid caste system and the practice of untouchability. In turning our back to the outside world, and preserving our social order in an exclusive sense, we paved way for the creation of a monstrous world. Wittingly or unwittingly, we embraced evil practices like polygamy and exploitation of women. History tells us that after the death of the King of Vijayanagara Empire, the royal palace revealed the presence of twelve thousand queens. Of this lot, around three thousand were ready to mount the funeral pyre of their husband. Clearly such practices are neither authorized by Indian culture, nor are they the result

of a natural evolution. Faced by the current threat of Pakistan, such regressive aspects of our tradition are surfacing in an insidious manner. The perspective such as the present one can completely change our angle of vision.

The Sources of our Society and Literature

It is important to realize that the contemporary understanding of the formation of society would largely guide our discussion of literature. Such a view would equally determine our notion of literary history. Today, language and literature play a pivotal role in the formation and growth of society. They have a shaping influence upon economy and polity and constitute the natural law of social evolution. The earlier doubts regarding such issues have now gone into the domain of history and research. Society arose as a corollary to linguistic expression. Out of this arose literature. Once again, in the midst of many debates, their sources are being rediscovered. In keeping with the needs of the times, we must now nurture society as we do in the case of a tree. We must safeguard our land created on the basis of language and literature. Due to historical, economic and political reasons, such a situation has become indispensable now.

We must understand human society based on language and literature

Communities constitute a society. We can judge the nature of a society based on their underlying ideals and objectives. Such a community may rest on blood relationship, religious affiliation, supremacy of a king or that of an oligarchy. It can be based on a blind adherence to royalty, or can be founded upon the principle of language and literature. Literature based communities are perhaps some of the best options we have. In talking about the evolution of Oriya literature, we must look at the growth of the Oriya community or its individuality. In this historical path, Oriya literature has gone through many ordeals and survived as a stable being.....

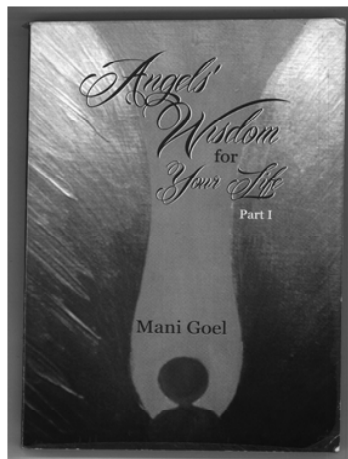
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BOOK REVIEW

Mani Goel's *Angels' Wisdom for Your Life*

Authorspress, New Delhi, 2013, Pages:18, Price: Rs 250.

CHITTARANJAN BHOI



Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity. (W.B.Yeats, Second Coming)

When the world is heading towards chaos and uncertainty and the existence of people is a questionable conviction, Mani

Goel's "Angel's wisdom for your life" penetrates into our minds and hearts as a ray of hope and serves as an antibiotic to the neurologically disordered and mentally retired modern men of this chaotic world. In this age of science and technology when a large number of our population prioritize material prosperity at the top of their life's agenda, a very few are detached from the mundaneness. Mani's book offers a valuable read which can undoubtedly lead someone towards the fulfillment of life's purpose. Mani's conscious spiritual journey and her encounter with some spiritual leaders perhaps tempted her to explore the ways of feeling and healing.

As a sacrosanct text, this book will undoubtedly generate excitement to connect with invisible spiritual realms. The author seeks to establish the fact that angelic spirits are all around us and their omnipresence can be felt with a high sense of realization. The intrinsic individualism of Mani is evident from her conviction incarnated by mastering over miraculous act of healing. Despite being a divine messenger, Mani's spiritual feeling rushes forth with a torrential guess. Her hefty credence on Buddhism is obvious from the line "Believe nothing, no matter where you read, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own commonsense." (Preface, page 23) She experiments life with an application of her reasoning ability and thereby gets the bliss of angels.

The themes of anger, forgiveness, happiness, healing and love are handled with subtlety and depth of feeling. Mani's book comprises 13 chapters and each depicts certain heavenly wisdom.

In chapter One, The author talks about the spiritual law. She is probably inspired by Rabisankar's philosophy of 'oneness' which she rightly presents saying "we are all one because we are from the same source" (36). Being the voice of angels, she urges people to ask for help and guidance for designing their life and making it colorful. She further recommends that people take life easy as the leaves grow on

the trees and grass grows on the weirs, so as to get peace and real flavor or else seriousness and hardness may make life miserable. She further welcomes people to be bold and courageous to undertake tasks and confront challenges that are in congruence with life purpose. She also invites people to lead life in a unique way by going far beyond the conventional way of leading life. She believes that an individual can make a big difference in social reform. She aptly says that when an individual becomes 'somebody' in life, fame, glory, admiration, adulation, material prosperity and all sorts of mundane things automatically start following. So chasing after such things would be rather foolish.

Angels do not have a particular shape or specific size. They are of varied attributes and they appear differently in different situations. However, their presence helps mankind in disguise which undoubtedly help replacing a long established order and creating a universe where peace prevails. 'Anger' is an evil thing; it spoils the fairest force, damages mental stability and outrages peace and serenity. 'Anger' as a human emotion gets manifested when the fragile human mind confronts disappointment, disapproval, and dissatisfaction on certain issues. This anger not only kills inner peace but also perpetrates pain and brings in sadness to others. Indeed, anger, the crude form of human emotion can better be controlled and channelized and exercised judiciously for the wellbeing of humankind.

The author's opinion on children is worth admiring. She considers children as gifted creatures. Innocence, open-heartedness, simplicity, love for others are the angelic qualities seen in children. They are considered as the hopes and aspirations of the future. The elevation and development of a structured and organized society depends on the growth of this segment of population. This enigmatic creation plays a pivotal role in enlightening the society.

The Fourth chapter is perhaps the cream-de-la-cream among all the chapters of the book. It elucidates 'forgiveness'

with all its splendor and shine. 'Forgiveness' is a godly quality. Bringing forgiveness under control is a big challenge and therefore, needs great strength of heart and mind. Mahatma Gandhi says "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." Indeed, the author resembles his voice saying "Life is therefore an exercise in developing the power of sound judgment and action with vision, wisdom, wit and surrender." (Page-66) Forgive and be forgiven should be the life's mantra and therefore needs to be cultivated by all of us. This psalm of life helps us attain mental peace and prosperity. Jesus Christ says "Father, Forgive them, for they do not know what they do" which is traditionally called "The World of Forgiveness". It is theologically interpreted as Jesus' prayer for forgiveness for the offenders. Thus forgiveness is a godly quality. In addition to it, confession of follies and foibles, realizing them from the deep heart's core and then seeking forgiveness for the wrong doing are perhaps the best approaches to life and living. If we confess our sins, the almighty becomes just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Mani is of a similar opinion "... any wrong doing towards another can be corrected only by seeking forgiveness, not seeking love or joy or happiness but also forgiveness" (68). Hence, an individual who forgives and seeks forgiveness can enlighten his/her life. Forgiveness releases pain and transports one to happiness. Mani sounds utterly unprejudiced in her statement: "Remember, forgiveness is rooted in love and its outcome is peace and joy for all involved" (70). This virtue can be imbibed by complete surrender and sacrifice before the Almighty, God. Through prayer one can attain such virtue as it has a high sense of efficacy.

In this age of science, the existence of God sounds ridiculous. But its existence is of course felt in many occasions in life. When the existence of God is a debate all around, Mani's "Angels Wisdom for your life" adds-on ample evidence to the argument. The finite presence of infinity is also evidenced from the author's statement "God is in infinity of

all things just as he is in the finite definitions of himself" (73). Even though God does not exist in our sense of reality and existence but we can realise His 'chamatkar' and 'benevolence' on many occasions. Indeed, God is nothing but the spirit behind the creation. It is therefore, a mystical experience realizing the existence of God. Bramha, Vishnu and Maheswara who stand as 'shruti karta', 'palan karta' and 'sanghar karta' respectively, are the energies that pervade, love and destroy. Despite the 'swarupas' the presence of God is invisibly visible in all objects, leaving and non-leaving. Thus the omnipresence of God became better visible when God came out of the pillar in the 'swarupa' of lion to destroy Hiranya Kasipu, the devil and rescue Prahalad, the 'bhakta'. However, God showers his blessings on the person who does his 'karma', action, perfectly and honestly. So the synonym of 'karma' is God. Mani bears this opinion when says: "He exists, in your action, in your thoughts, in your courage, the love you carry in your heart, and respect you hold for others and for all beings" (77). God is the creator and the destroyer, feminine and masculine, infinite and finite, unseen and seen. He is holy and therefore bears the capacity to hold all unholy. As the river Ganga is holy which bears all unholy things in it and makes them holy. God's holiness lies in making every unholy thing holy.

Happiness is a state of mind. It comes from within. The author's view on happiness is that, "Happiness is manifestation of your thoughts and actions as you experience them within your being" (81) Well! Very few people in this world are happy because most of us pass through worries and anxieties, conflicts and challenges, trials and tribulations, plights and predicaments and sorrows and sufferings. People who are away from all such difficulties are perhaps eligible to get some amount of peace. In fact, true happiness lies in performing our duties with honesty and integrity. Happiness comes into being when we bestow happiness on others. It further comes up when bad thoughts are killed by the good, powerful and dominant action. Mani urges people to make

wise choice in the words “choose peace over conflict, love over hatred, forgiveness over anger and resentment, silence over clamor and mindfulness over mindless way of living” (85).

‘Ati sarbatra garhitam’ i.e. excess of anything is bad. Absolute seriousness in action again destroys peace. Therefore, it is advisable to be at ease in every action so as to get the charm of happiness. Taking life easy is a passport to happiness. The chapter “Indigo and Crystal Children” is very insightful which reveals the author’s analysis of two unique categories of children, Indigo and Crystal. Mani considers them as symbol of heavenly love. These children are gifted species showered with love and compassion and free to work on whatever they have set out to do. Defining healing is a top proposition. It has great impact on both the physical and mental state of being. The author says “True healing is not just about body, it is the healing of thought patterns, actions and emotional blue prints” (91). Sirdi Sai and Gautam Buddha are historical ‘siddha purusas’ acclaimed as spiritual healers used to heal sufferings of millions and by the way tried for spiritual awakening. In spiritual scale ‘siddhi’ comes substantially to the healed ones. Prayer indeed, has an efficacy. Through prayer one can also accomplish ‘moksha’. The physical and metaphysical surroundings have a great impact on healing. A beautiful surrounding of great people serves as quick-heal balm that heals pains, impediments and unhappiness to a great scale.

‘Love’ is a silken tie which binds man to man, heart to heart and soul to soul. This metaphoric description is the prime substance of human existence. The author compares love with ‘pearls’ on the sea-bed. It is the energy that binds us all. It transforms lives of others and our own too. The implication of this magical word ‘love’ in life is immense. Mani justifiably says “When we live with love, selfishness will begin to dissipate, greed will vanish, conflicts will end, strife will disappear and only peace will remain, only peace will remain.” Her ‘Twin flames’ concept appears to be an evolution and is

manifested in relationships such as with best friends, siblings, parents and children. The chapters like "Lunar Energy"(Feminine Force), "Marriage" and "Money" speak a lot about the power and energy of feminine force, a journey of two souls with a mission, futility of money before morality, respectively.

In the final chapter the author values human life in its highest order. She urges people to lead life with love and compassion so as to get peace and joy in life. Love others and be loved should be the slogan of life. Human being as the supreme creation of God should show its benevolence and thereby fly into the world of peace. However, the lucidity of language, use of simple words, free flow of thoughts, and depth of spiritual analysis writes large the uniqueness of "Angels Wisdom for Your Life". The book is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the world of religion. Readers will surely accept this book as a sacrosanct text and it will get wide approbation among the readers of varied taste.

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