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cenacle

A Peer Reviewed Annual Journal of English

Editors

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About Cenacle

Cenacle is a unique collaborative literary venture, which came into being in 2009. It is unique in many ways. It is a collaborative literary venture of three English departments of three different colleges: namely Dr Madhukarrao Wsniks PWS Arts and Commerce College, Rajkumar Kewalramni Kanya Mahavidyalaya and Santaji Mahavidyalaya, all affiliated to RTM Nagpur University. This group came together to promote teaching and learning of English through various activities and also publishes this journal by the same name annually.

The word 'Cenacle' has its origin in Latin as *cenaculum* from *cena*. Latin *cenaculum* was used in the Vulgate for the “upper room” where the Last Supper was eaten. The earliest Cenacle was formed in 1824, as a literary coterie. This name was adopted by the group in a positive sense as the main objective is to promote academics. Since its inception, Cenacle has undertaken many activities like the following:

In Sept 2010, a National Conference on “Mediation: Literature and Films” had been organized under this banner at Rajwada Palace, Nagpur. About 215 delegates participated from all over Maharashtra, MP, Delhi, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan. Mr Sachin Kherdekar, renowned Marathi and Hindi film actor and director had been invited to give the keynote. Noted litterateur Dr Jasbir Jain, writer and critic had been invited as the Guest of honour, who conducted the technical sessions. A panel discussion had been organized comprising of panelists from various facets of literature and cinema. A souvenir was also released during the conference.

In Oct 2010, a Symposium had been organized to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore at RKKM auditorium. Dr Amrit Sen from Vishwabharti Shantineketan, had been invited as the main speaker. He spoke on Travel literature and Tagore. The symposium was well attended by students and teachers in large numbers. A cultural programme

highlighting the cultural contribution of Gurudev was also presented by students and teachers.

In Dec 2010 Cenacle had organized a one day Teachers Training Workshop on “Evaluation Techniques and Skills”, at RKKM. Dr Martin Wedell from London University conducted the workshop. Nearly 57 teachers participated in it.

In Jan 2012, Cenacle had jointly organized an International Conference with ELTAI and VMIT at Sharadchandra Arts and Comm College Butibori. It was a two day conference, with many participants from Sri Lanka, UK and Nepal. A Conference volume had also been published.

Research and related activities have been formally and informally promoted by Cenacle. The annual journal provides a space for well researched, peer reviewed papers. In Feb 2010, a lecture was organized at Santaji Mahavidyalaya on E-Journals for teachers and students. Dr Mangala Hirwade, of Library Science Dept of RTM Nagpur University was the chief speaker.

A lecture series on Poetry and Soft Skills had been organized in March 2015 at Santaji Mahavidyalaya. It aimed promoting the importance of soft skills and poetry in teaching of English. The invited speakers were Dr Binod Mishra from IIT Patna and Dr C.L. Khatri from T.P.S. College Patna.

An 8 day workshop on Research Methodology and Research techniques was also organized in March 2015 at Santaji Mahavidyalaya for teachers and research scholars. This eight day workshop was conducted as per UGC norms, with due permission of the RTM Nagpur University. It was totally a self funded activity in which study material and certificates was also given to 58 participants. Participants from all over Maharashtra attended the workshop.

In January 2017 under the banner of Cenacle, the 61st All India English Teachers' Conference is being organized in collaboration with AESI (The Association for English Studies in India) at Chitnavis Centre Nagpur. The topic of the conference is “Emerging Trends in English Language and Literature”. Delegates from all over the country are expected to attend the conference.

About the Journal

Cenacle is a peer reviewed annual journal of English, which is being published since 2011. It was started with an aim to provide a platform for teachers and research students who want to publish their research papers, book reviews and poems.

The first issue was a general issue with 20 papers on varied topics. The second issue published in 2012, had as its focus area: “Gender Issues and Female Consciousness in 21st century Women Writers.” This issue had 17 papers, 5 book reviews and 8 poems. The third issue published in 2013 focused on “Diaspora and Diasporic writings”. The whole concept of Diaspora writing, dislocation and multiculturalism was evaluated in the well researched 15 papers. It also had 2 book reviews and 5 poems. The 2014 issue focused on “Revisiting Partition through literature and films.” This issue had 13 papers, 3 book reviews and 10 poems. The 2015 issue of Cenacle had its focus area as “Borders, Border Theories and Border Crossings.” This issue had 12 papers, 2 book reviews and 14 poems.

The sixth issue had its focus area as “Literature of War and Conflict.”. Many good reviews were received, on many of the papers. It contained 13 papers on various related issues. There were 4 book reviews and six poems. Ms Gurushree Ramesh had contributed interesting write up on Time travel.

The editors have continuously tried to improve the quality of the journal. The focus areas provide a scope for researchers to find material for further research. Each issue has tried to include a theme paper, which has bigger scope and provides a deeper insight into the focus area. There is also a link between the issues which have been taken up.

Many contributors suggested that we also have open-ended issues. Therefore the 7th issues is an open ended. The editors are extremely grateful to our contributors, who have kept up the literary quality of the journal.

Editorial

Cenacle has come a long way as it is publishing its seventh volume this year. Since its inception it has endeavored to raise the bar of research and writing with meticulously edited papers. Many budding researchers have found space with lots of encouragement from the peers. The peers have also helped the writers to evolve with their support and suggestions. The previous issues had specific focus areas, which have been very helpful to researchers and interesting to lay readers also.

The first issue was a general issue with papers on varied topics. The second issue focused on “Gender Issues and Female Consciousness in 21st century Women Writers”. Each issue has had a theme paper to provide an overview on the focus area. Many papers received applaud from different quarters. The third issue was on “Diaspora and Diasporic writings” and the fourth focused on “Revisiting Partition through literature and films”. These two issues of the journal were also well appreciated. The fifth one took up “Borders, Border Theories and Border Crossings”, of which the theme paper inspired at least two research scholars to take up projects on them. The last issue has its focus area as “Literature of War and Conflict”. The theme paper again received acclaim from different quarters. The papers in this issue covered diverse aspects right from Children's Comic books to Xenophobia.

We would also like to share the experience of editing. Writing can be a solitary or lonely practice. Editing on the other hand opens a conversation albeit, usually from the distance of a computer screen. From editors vantage point, the back and forth allows an insight into the creative process. Open ended issues are

like sumptuous buffets with lots of variety. Dr Anupam Soni describes the powerful facets of Kamala Das's poetry in her paper titled: Universality in the Poetry of Kamla Das. Dr. A.K.Singh highlights the various facets of humanism in R.P.Singh's *Flea Market and Other Plays*. The Flea Market turns into a symbol which cuts across cultures and becomes a discourse on humanism.

Ms Gurushree Ramesh introduces Task Based Language teaching, its theory and practice. She explains the theory in a very systematic manner so that it could be followed practically on the class room level. Dr Jyoti Patil's paper discusses Anita Nair's *The Better man* from a feminist point of view. Her paper question and evaluate various positions of women in a patriarchal system. On similar lines Dr G.R. Hashmi evaluates Manju Kapur's novel *Custody* from a feminist lens. Both these papers focus on the institution of marriage from different perspectives.

Dr Renu Dalela looks into Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* from the immigrant point of view. Her evaluation of the novel in comparison to other novels by Kapur, describes the protagonist on a psychological level. The novel focuses on various issues migrants' face, when their own cultures clash with the new one. Dr Vinod Shende's paper on Tony Morrison's evaluates her novel *The Bluest Eye*. He presents a character study in the background of Afro American culture. Dr Swapnil Dahat assays *The Inheritance of Loss* and how Kiran Desai's take on the issue of displacement. He looks into concepts of 'exile' and 'cultural displacement' in his study.

Dr Usha Sakure examines the women voices in Anita Desai's novels. She focuses on the protagonists of select noises and describes how their voices are suppressed in different ways. Issues of patriarchy, culture and socio-economic confines have been taken up from select novels of Desai. Dr Shehnaz Khan investigates Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* which won the Man

Booker prize last year. The paper explores the technique used by the writer to present the human condition with the help of man-nature relationship. Another paper on the same book by Dr Urmila Dabir and Dr Shubha Mishra focuses on it as a translated fiction. Man Booker award to *The Vegetarian* has given a fillip to translations in the global market and brought them in limelight from different parts of the world. This study looks into the different issues of the opening of linguistic cultural borders. Dr Anupam Soni also highlights female psyche in her paper, *A Journey of Cultural Reconstruction: Bharti Mukherjee's Tree Bride*.

Ms Miniakshi Bhojar analysis *The Shadow lines*, on the postcolonial parameters. She discusses Amitav Ghosh's depiction of caste, class and religion in this novel. Dr Priya Wanjari examines Boman Desai's select novels and the identity crisis of the characters. She highlights the contribution by Parsees and the various turbulent changes they have faced over the years and have still tried to preserve their identity.

This issue has rather a small collection of poems and only a single book review. Gurushree Ramesh has made another contribution to 'Time Travel', which highlights lesser known facts of select books and authors. The editors would like to thank each one of you, who have not only supported this journal but have also regularly contributed to it. Your feedback is more than welcome.



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Universality in the Poetry of Kamala Das

Anupam Soni

Abstract

Kamala Das is a prominent poet of Indian soil writes in a subjective mode. Her confessional poetry which is so intense, gives her a chance to pour out her grievances and sufferings or resentment, or a sense of injustice, experienced by her as a daughter, as a wife, or as a woman at large. The cathartic effect which comes after writing or reading provides a sense of relief not only to the poet but the women worldwide. The struggle itself ultimately becomes the struggle of all mankind and here lies her forte (or her special power), because the best confessional poetry is always followed by a universal note which is beyond time, place and person. In her poetry, we find much that is conventional and feminine and she speaks aloud the needs, and fear of a common woman and pleads for authentic love and sense of security for her out of her own knowledge. Scare on her psyche, about her humiliating experience and her misadventures that brought conflict between generations. The emotional discontentment in an empty marriage life and the factors like loveless childhood, 'colour discrimination' and woman as a second citizen in a male dominated society are some of the reasons behind Kamala Das as a poet of revolt.

Keywords: Subjective, confessional, grievances, injustice, forte, authentic, psyche, second citizen.

Indian women while reading Kamala Das's poetry may feel complete identification and oneness with the poet. Her personal sufferings and grudges become the voice of millions of women worldwide women's marginalized position in the male dominated society. Kamala Das's confessional poetry, like most confessional poetry written by Nissim Ezekiel, Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath, has a therapeutic and cathartic effect on the readers as well as on the writer itself. Confessional poetry is written by a poet under an internal pressure in order to give vent to his or her personal grievances or feelings or resentment or a sense of the injustice experienced by him or her. By expressing what a poet has undergone, he or she is able to obtain some relief. After all, catharsis only means the feeling of relief which a person experiences after witnessing the spectacle of others suffering from the effects of stress of circumstances or of misfortunes or from a sense of guilt. The struggle itself ultimately becomes the struggle of all mankind and herein lies her forte (or her special power), because the best confessional poetry that which rises above the subject or matter to achieve the triumph of life. Because of the absolute confessions made by a group of poet in the poetry, particularly in America such poets as Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath and John Berryman they have raised themselves to a level known as confessional poets, and Kamala Das's place is certainly secured in the ranks of these poets. To give a vent to this internal pressure enables a sensitive woman like Kamala Das to speak out the feelings of women.

It is the voice of the instincts as the lion's roar and crow's cawing. She recalls the unconscious terror of childhood as she tries to differentiate herself from trees; monsoon, clouds and rain. Speaking of adolescence her female body inscribes itself on the text and she remembers too her first encounter with masculine violence that belongs to the same frightening world of trees in the storm and the mattering of the funeral pyre. Being a very sensitive person she laid a crude emphasis on the difference of the body as it can even be dangerous as that is also the foundation of gender discrimination against women, and the ironic comment, that the identity of

women's literary practices must be sought on "the body of her writing and not the writing of her body"

"In Introduction" is itself a polyphonic text with several of the poet's voices seeking articulation in a single verbal construct. The opening statement. "I do not know politics" has an ambiguous tone that comes from a women's marginalized position in society. Outwardly, it is a confession of ignorance, but it also conceals in it a potential irony as the society does not expect a woman to deal in politics. Again the agony and pathetic condition of Indian women who invite old age so early in her youth is echoed here.

Too early the autumn sights
Have come, too soon my lips
Have lost their hunger too soon
The singing birds have left.

Like an Indian woman, she cannot think of severing her relations with her husband. A woman in Indian context continues to adjust herself with her spouse for the sake of domestic peace and harmony. The revolt against the so-called sexual colonisation as demonstrated by Kamala Das can not be termed feminist because it was just toying with love outside the wedlock. Even favourably inclined critics who are all praise for her so-called "killing the Angel in the House" attitude do admit that Kamala Das constantly remains aware of her deviation from the accepted norms and that "at times when the super ego of the Angel within dominates herself, she behaves as a traditional Hindu woman with a deep seated fear of sex and with a deep love for her feminine role."

She is time and again made to play the expected gender roles. Wife, cook, embroiderer, quarreller with servant; the gender roles also become a class role:

Be an embroiderer, be cook
Be a quarreller with servant, fit in, oh
Belong, cried the categorizers.

(An Introduction)

The noted Indo – English poet, R. Parthasarathy has rightly observed in this connection – “The despair is infective. Few of her poems have, infact escaped it” The wife is treated no better than a hireling. She, therefore loses her identify and personality.

Covering beneath your monstrous ego
I ate the magic loaf and
Became a dwarf.

(The Old Play house and Other Poems)

In Kamala Das, we find much that is conventional and feminine and she speaks aloud the needs and fears of a common woman and pleads for authentic love and sense of security for her out of her own knowledge. And yet the women in her cannot be completely shadowed, and so she cannot help expressing an ambivalence proceeding from her own duality, from the combination in herself of a need for domestic security and the inborn desire to be liberated.

Compared to Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath, Kamala Das may fall short of intellectual vigor and witty tit-bits, but she does not lag behind in lyrical outburst of unpremeditated thoughts, and feelings in emotional intensity. In truth, she is more aware of the pathos in the life of a common woman playing a very passive role in our traditional-bound society than some of these women poets highlighting a different cultural and moral ethos.

The emotional discontentment in an empty married life and the factors like loveless childhood, colour–discrimination and women as a second citizen in a male dominated society are some of reasons behind Kamala Das as a poet of revolt. This is actually a strong protest against a hollow marital bond which she cannot unite. In India, where marriage and love go hand in hand, it is most unfortunate that such a sensitive women as Kamala Das is tied to a stake where she cannot fly. Such occurrences may turn a women tragic and gloomy in her attitude towards life. Kamala Das has made a repeated protest against this sort of situation in her poetry. When

the poet speaks of love outside marriage, she does not really advocate for infidelity and adultery, but merely searches for a kind of man-women relationship which should guarantee both love and security to a women. Her prose works like “I Studied All Men” “What Women Expect out of Marriage and What They get” Why Not More Than One Husband ? and “I Have Lived Beautifully” tend to consolidate her image in public as feminine yet honest, ebullient yet tragic, she talks of extra-marital relationship thus :

After that love become a swivel – door
When one went out, another came in
Then I lost count for always in any arms
Was a substitute for a substitute?

(Substitute)

Such a gripping sense of loss and deprivation caused by lover's absence cannot be regarded feminist. The use of the typical metaphor – “Swivel Door” – underlines the mechanical character of this enterprise with much emotion in it.

The search for right man never ends in Kamala's Poems. It in, however, clear from a large number of poems in “Summer in Calcutta” that Kamala's impersonal note or sense of universality is simply straight from the heart. It is not self imposed but natural for her. Her poetry is all about herself, her inability to cut off the “Amblical Cord” which connects her ancestral home and memories of childhood, about her family that gave no emotional support but left unreadable.

Scars on her psyche, about her humiliating experience and her misadventures that brought conflict between generations. Through her poems about childhood, she leaves her soul bare and steals the heart of her admirers. Women's function in the patriarchal society is primarily one of negation. She tends by the very fact of her positioning in the social hierarchy, to negate whatever is considered complete, ultimate, well-made and established in the society. Her very act of writing almost invariably

breaks the set rules and norms of the status quo:

Of each women's memories, but a collective possession,
A tradition which shapes the way
We view our individual lives.

In all these discussions of the common female experiences, what one tends to overlook is the plurality of the female experience of a similar kind of tales of victimization, agony, exploitation, disgrace and abuse. What cannot be overlooked is the innate individuality and uniqueness of every person's experience. As Hilene Cixous explains:

You can't talk about a female sexuality homogenous, classifiable into codes – any more than you can talk about one unconscious resembling another.

With extreme sincerity she pictures her request for identity. The recollections of the purity and playfulness of the childhood, in the broken womanhood, in the love of the grandmother, in the cruelty and hypocrisy of men in the painful realization of feelings of youth and approaching old age and in the despair of old age itself.

Kamala Das's poetry shows a gradual widening of the concerns over the years as she liberates herself from her initial obsession with her gender identity. She does refuse to be “the invisible women in the asylum corridor” on the “silent women” robbed of all expression. She, too is a female Prometheus with a manifest of desire that seeks to escape the paradox of being a prisoner of the hegemonic patriarchal discourse she despises, only she stubbornly resists the temptation to divide the world on the simple binary male-female opposition since that excludes not only other equally real divisions of class, colour, caste, nation or race. She would not share the man-made myth of the female being, the male's creation reiterated again and again in Devesi Bhagvata where Narayana creates Urvashi and other beauties from the thigh, in the Book of Genesis where God creates women from Adam's rib to remove man's loneliness or in Ovid's *Metamorphose* where

Pygmalion's desire lends life to the ivory idol scalped by him.

She is primarily a poet of feminine longings, Her poetry and prose reflect her restlessness as a sensitive women moving in the male dominated society and in them she appears as a champion of women's cause. She raises her forceful voice against the male tyrannies in such poems as “A relationship”, “Summer in Calcutta”, “An Introduction” and “Marine” Drive”. In them, she comes out as an ardent spokesman or spokes-woman of woman's liberty-movement and the following poetic passage reveal the monotony and tiresomeness of a hollow married life.

I shall some day leave, leave this cocoon
You build around me with morning tea,

.....

..... I shall some day take
Wings, fly around, as after petals,
Do when free in air

(Summer in Calcutta)

In her poetry, an unconscious feminist ideology remains latent which portrays women's untiring battle against the forces or male-domination and tyranny. Though torn between domestic duties and artistic aspirations, Kamala Das emerges successfully from the confusion and contradictions that confront a woman's life.

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R.P. Singh's *Flea Market and Other Plays*: Reasserting Humanism

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Abstract

The Flea Market and other Plays by R.P Singh is a picture of the world, where human enterprise has brought decadence to the world. The philosophic discourse in the play, gives it weight age and makes it different. The symbolic representation of the world like a flea market, where everyone is a vendor and exposes oneself in one way or the other for the customers. The thematic pattern of the play makes the audience think over many issues involved. Various issues of westernisation, human attraction, radical ideologies are well strung together for a thought provoking experience. This paper evaluates the play thematically for reasserting humanism and fusion of East and West in a very different manner.

Keywords: Humanism, Flea Market, Relationships, Intertextuality, Sensation.

Interfacing a play like *Flea Market* brings emotions, romance, thought and sensation all together in the nerves of the audience. Anthologised in the collection the *Flea Market and Other Plays* by R.P. Singh, it puts a potent signature in the genre of drama, at the time when the art of playwriting is ironically waning on the one hand, and there is a sudden demand for good works for theatre on the other. The three plays in the collection cut across the theory ridden writing and testify the twenty first century cult of critical thinking. Talking to an editor, R.P. Singh comments on his thematic patterns, "It is very difficult for an author to bind himself in a specific pattern. I won't say that I write for this space only, only this

canvas will be used for my creation. Nothing like so. As I have said earlier, anything which saves from emotional imbalances can become the theme of my writing. Like to scale your question with it, you will find an answer. The life of a common man in past, present and also in a visionary future- these aspects lead me towards creation. My writing saves me from many distractions. It is able to share the pleasure and pain in any form which the Soul likes, and the Soul does no wrong.” (Vishwakarma,)

The *Flea Market* begins with mundane chores and day to day humdrum of a tourist, and ends in the philosophical discourses on some major questions to contemporary civilization. It makes out the connotations of feminism but never sticks to it. Asian, the protagonist of the play, traverses through the depth of human psyche and comes up with a new interpretation of man- woman relationship. Anurag Kumar sums up its trajectories as , “*The Flea Market and Other Plays* ... exposes the modern day academics, especially its preoccupation with discourse. It further makes it apparent how there exists a lacuna between academics and reality. Through subtle portrayal of Corsea and her hardships the first one act play makes it very obvious to showcase the insensitivity of the academics towards the contemporary reality and its degradation of women as mere case or object of representation. Ketan, a 'professor by profession' on a project to gather details about French feminism meets Cosea Antoinette, a cultural anthropologist, the author of *Blue Moon*, in Paris, in a very dramatic way.” (*Indian Review*) The book of human competent brain is very difficult to unfold and the countenance of the character seldom shows the reality behind it 'in the general drama' of social behaviour. It remains a pervading dictum behind the tree works; *Flea Market*, “The Expired”, and “A Scientist E”, that comprise the collection. The protagonist Asian in *Flea Market* falls prey to the alluring offer, and malicious persuasion of the Game Keeper (a character) at the Flea Market of Paris. Meanwhile Corsea's unbecoming gesture at the first instance brings the feeling of disdain while later the story takes some form like 'U' turn. In the see-saw of discourses and gestures, the protagonist finds that the lady, in reckless behaviour, is none else than a celebrated scholar of cultural anthropology whom he had known earlier. Here the play finds a sub plot, and the tone shifts towards the main theme i.e. the discourses on humanism. The

playwright has potently managed to show the swinging in the mood and temperament of Corsea, the heroine, who moved by the unfavourable circumstances in a typical society ,has developed a new canon for interpreting the erstwhile groundings of feminism . To understand the case in point , the following dialogue is note worthy, “Hahn! I know your filthy mind. I am a woman loving women. I don't appreciate to be addressed by the cliché Lesbians. I hate 'Feminism.' The very “F” letter scorches me. Yes I am, it's treason of academics ... they defame us. Is a feminist not a human? I like women” (*Flea Market, Sc.2*). It is a quite new interpretation to the bases of the feminist movement, and stands quite shattering the canon. To cite Bishun Kumar's views on *The Flea Market* we can say that :

The play shows us certain traces of colonialism , though, the faces change, yet the ideology of alluring, titillating and othering remains the same. *The Flea Market* throws fresh insight into the colonial history of the Third World countries that the waft and weft of the occident was just to perpetuate the pain of the orient. The same is observed in the capitalist ideology where the upper/aristocrat class has left no ground to stereotype the working class as laborers for ages and ages. This is how the power politics has started doing all the meanest roles to demean and degrade the human essence/sentiments.

Use of songs and poems is a unique feature in the writing of R.P.Singh, specially in his plays and diaries, which he has used successfully in his earlier plays for children ,to name here a couple of them -“Ecologue” and “When Brancho Flies.” Such a device enriches the beauty of the play.

“The Expired”, the next one act play, in the collection, elucidates an incident occurred (imaginary or real) during the colonial rule in India. Its *locale* is Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, India , which has been a great centre of colonial rule in British India. The plot of the play takes an incidence happened on December 6, 1857 into centre. Hastings and Alice, the two major characters keep the audience spell bound till the end. They appear from a grave in a cold winter night .The hooting of owl, the other sounds around , and the gothic setting in the beginning suit the theme of the play. It tells the story of a murder out of jealousy in a

love triangle. How the powerful people distort the story in their favour is also told in the play. Jay and Mallika- the characters in the bye lane, produce comic appeal by presenting their funny acts and loaded dialogues. The play having the references like London's Ghost, and Andrew Marvel's "To his coy mistress" seem to fetch the device of intertextuality.

The third one act play in the collection-"A Scientist E" is quite realistic in tone and becomes didactic while illustrating the mal effects of drinking. The dialogue of the Scientist (protagonist of the play) speaks volumes on the theme "My colleagues made me drunk. In the first peg, I drank wine, at the second, wine drank wine and at the third... wine drank me. (*Sobs*) My research paper... an outcome of 05 long years of experiments and observation ... revealed to me the next morning. My research ... her name ... I was drunk, the research was her's ... you did well Darshan... you did well... Kill wine kill the agents ... I from the same day kill it. The day I was deceived. ("A Scientist E"). The plays like "A Scientist E" make candid appeal to the audience. "A Scientist E" is a small play by R.P. Singh which opens with a popular line of Hindi folk theatre. Its locale is Worli sea face in Mumbai. The play begins with a character rendered as Man in the beginning (later on through the development of the play the audience come to know the real name -Darshan Singh. who is a former Professor .In some disturbed state of mind ,in the beginning the man addresses the waves and during the course of the address, clear swinging of mood is visible.

A drunkard interrupts the man and forces him to drink. When at this sudden act of the drunkard the man wants to know the introduction of the Drunkard, he introduces himself- "An Angel from heaven, a *Farishta*, a *Devdoot* in the form of your friend. "(68)

The man at this shouts at him telling , "No... get out, with bottle, the disturbing cur. Wine led me here." (p69)

The drunkard elevates wine to the highest level telling – On this bottle the world and heaven nurture

Drink it

Take it

Kiss it

In water, you may see your face, in wine the heart of another. I see you Man. Take it... the fresh nectar from the ocean. The ocean of pleasure, of calm. (69)

The drunkard is hell bent to make the man drink the wine ,and he suddenly faints after speaking , "No... No... I'll make you taste. Whoever thinks of being not drunk is a scoundrel. You'll drink it. And pay for it. My guest. Be Mumbaikar. Be merry ... merr ... y (69)

At this suddenly a stranger appears speaking as if telling Bravo to the Man, "Great A raw courage... a green odour.. how now? Young chap (*offers for shaking hands*)... Me – Ismail... a landmine researcher ... I should say ... Former."

The plight of the drunkard is tactfully shown by the playwright by giving a stage direction, "a dog is see smelling the fainted man"

As if a pleasant co-incident the stranger too is against the habit of drinking .He speaks out his plight through narrating an incident, "I was on an aquatic mission ... A Scientist E. Yes, I was a Scientist E. My research ... eager to see the light of the day the same late evening. My joy knew no bounds... My dear friend... you know... The want of a thing is perplexing enough but the possession of it is intolerable. My colleagues made me drunk. In the first peg, I drank wine, at the second, wine drank wine and at the third... wine drank me. (*Sobs*) My research paper... an outcome of 05 long years of experiments and observation ... revealed to me the next morning. My research ... her name ... I was drunk, the research was her's ... you did well Darshan... you did well... Kill wine kill the agents ... I from the same day kill it.. The day I was deceived (*weeps*)." (69).

The character named is Darshan is quite moved at this and showing tears in eyes and in choked throat narrates his own story- "Me... the same lot. Wine bowed me down at IIT Chennai.. Be smarter and successful than other people if you can... but don't tell them so... I was a brilliant professor with great laurels and patents ... They gave me wine... I got into it ... They snatched my career ... I came to street with an empty bottle... Wine was in, wit was out... I move across the nation and wage a war against it... I find here a new career."

The play ends with a social message i.e. saying “No” to the habit of drinking. The chorus sums up, “Fly away o night

Clear off the sea – o sea of tears
Come forward for a cause
Come to sprinkle *montage*
We possess might
Our path on right
We take to light
We are
We are might
We possess might
One to two – two to three
... where lies fears

The play has been put in the expressionist technique, punctuation has been adjusted accordingly to the demand of the scene. Thematically it is a good play for raising a social cause which is leading to abolishing the practice of taking liquor. The use of the lines from folk song in the beginning gives an unique Indian touch. It seems that the playwright wants to speak more than the space allows through the speech and scene.

Putting everything in only one scene is also a unique practice.

Overall the collection is new voice with many strong meanings. “A Scientist E” ,in point of view is a masterpiece of didactic teaching. Although the dialogues are sometimes too big (this can be the only weakness of the plays of R P Singh) but the theme that Singh has taken into account for the audience is quite appropriate. I have seen many talents wasting their energy and capabilities in drugs and drinks. It may be anthologized for teaching in the secondary schools .

After a keen reading of R P Singh's work , one can happily endorse Professor Pashupati Jha's remark on the writing of R.P. Singh . Professor Jha writes on *Flea Market and Other Plays* that, “ it is quite clear that R.P. Singh has mastered the art of dramatics –inventing stories and related situations, conceptualizing and

creating the characters ,and writing dialogues appropriate to the occasion and event. He has a penchant for direct ,effective ,and witty expressions. This is just the beginning of a budding dramatist ; his creativity points to greater achievements ahead .It is a good sign for Indian English drama ,which ,otherwise, is largely a neglected genre these days.”

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Task-Based Language Teaching- Theory and Practice

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Abstract

This paper aims to give a brief introduction to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), present its objectives and benefits. Tasks form the core component of the TBLT approach and they provide a context that activates the learning processes and promotes second language learning. The chief principles of TBLT- authentic language, learner centred classes and interactive communication, help to make learners confident users of the language.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Task-Based Language Teaching, Tasks- types, Benefits

1. Introduction

For centuries people have been learning a second/foreign language through formal education and the approaches and methods to learning a second language have changed immensely through the years as a result of research in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and the psychology of learning. Assumptions on why and how people learn have shaped the way languages are taught in the classroom. As stated by Richards and Rodgers, “The history of language teaching has been characterised by a search for more effective ways of teaching second or foreign languages”(viii).The area of study that deals with the teaching and learning of a second/foreign language is termed applied linguistics.

Applied Linguistics is concerned with the systematic study of language structure, the acquisition of first and subsequent languages, the role of language in communication, and the status of language as the product of particular cultures and other social groups. Applied Linguistics also examines the structure of language and its role in communication, explores how children acquire language, studies how the skills of second-language speakers develop and investigates how the social or cultural environment interacts with language.

At one end of the spectrum made up of the approaches and methods to language teaching is the Grammar Translation Method with its emphasis on the grammatical aspects of a language and use of translation as a means to test comprehension, and at the other end is the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching which embraces the principle of “learning by doing” and emphasises meaningful communication.

2. Communicative Language Teaching

2.1 Background

The genesis of this approach, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) lies in the concept of language as communication. The core belief is that the goal of language teaching is to develop “communicative competence.” The term “communicative competence” was coined by Dell Hymes, a sociolinguist in 1972. He argued that although NoamChomsky's notion of “linguistic competence” which deals chiefly with abstract grammatical knowledge,could aptly describe a child's mushrooming grammar at the age of three or four, but was not sufficient to account for the social and functional rules of language. So he coined the term 'communicative competence' to refer to that aspect of a person's competence that enables him to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings with others in a specific context.

2.2 The features and principles of the Communicative Language Teaching

2.2.1 Features

A distinctive feature of this approach is that it is learner-

centred. The primary goal is fluency and it is achieved by focussing on meaning. As communicative competence is the desired goal, it is achieved by students interacting with others, either through oral practice, through pair work or group work, or through their writing. If the technique of dialogues is used then it will focus on communicative functions. Another feature is that it is task-based. Consequently, the students are motivated to learn the language because of what is being communicated by using the language.

2.2.2 Principles

The main principles of this approach are first, the 'communicative principle', the belief that activities involving real communication promote learning. Therefore, the target language is used for classroom communication and does not remain just the object of study. Another principle is the 'task principle', which means that activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning. The third principle is the 'meaningfulness principle' which means that language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process. Hence, learning activities are selected on the basis of how well they can engage the learner in "meaningful and authentic language use" (Richards and Rodgers 161).

2.3 Characteristics of the teaching/learning process

The chief characteristic is that communication is the main intention behind every activity undertaken in CLT. Students use the target language while participating in communicative activities like language games, role play and problem solving tasks and achieve real communication because they exercise a choice over what they say and how they will say it. Another characteristic is the use of authentic materials. Authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, videos etc. are preferred as they provide students with an opportunity to understand language as it is actually used.

The roles of the teacher and learner also differ from those found in the earlier traditional approaches and methods to language teaching. As the classes are student-centred, the teachers no longer dominate the classroom. The teacher acts as a facilitator

in the communication process, a guide during the classroom activities and a resource person in the teaching/learning process. When a teaching activity is in progress, the teacher observes the distinctive qualities in the students and helps them to develop these qualities.

Thus, the Communicative Language Teaching represented a paradigm shift in the way a second language, specifically English, was being taught and learnt. It made communication central and claimed that the goal of language teaching is to develop "Communicative Competence" in learners and paid attention to all of the four skills (Richards & Rodgers 172).

3. The Task-Based Approach to Language Teaching

The Communicative Language Teaching approach continues to be seen in various degrees in many new approaches like Task-Based Language Teaching, Content-Based Language Teaching and the Participatory Approach to Language Teaching. In all these approaches rather than "learning to use English", students "use English to learn it" (Howatt, as cited in Larsen-Freeman 137).

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which can be seen as an offshoot of CLT, is an approach in which tasks are used as the "core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching" (Richards & Rodgers, 223). In other words, the 'task' which the students are involved in is the central unit of planning and teaching. The practitioners of this approach argue that engaging learners in task work provides them with a better context for activating the learning process along with providing better opportunities for learning to take place.

3.1 Background and theory

Over the last few years there has been a steady increase of interest in the use of tasks in language teaching. The task-based approach aims to provide learners with a natural context for language use. As learners work together to complete a task, they get plenty of opportunities to interact. This kind of interaction facilitates language learning or language acquisition because the students have to work to understand each other and express their

own meanings. Thus, the emphasis is more on the learning process and less on the end products of these processes.

It was N. S. Prabhu who first placed India on the Communicative Language Teaching map through his highly acclaimed 'Bangalore Project'. Prabhu believed that students learn more effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using.

3.2 What is a 'task'?

The concept of a task has been defined in several ways by the proponents of this approach.

A task is any activity that learners engage in during the process of learning a language. (Williams and Burden, 1997:168 as cited in Nunan 2). It has also been defined as a range of learning activities from the simple and brief exercises to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision-making. (Breen as cited in Nunan 3). On the basis of Prabhu's definition, tasks are those which engage the learner in thinking processes: "an activity which requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process" (Prabhu as cited in Cuesta 92)

Although definitions of a 'task' vary, a few common features are

- a) A task is goal directed.
- b) A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
- c) The participants choose the linguistic resources needed to complete the task.
- d) A task has a clearly defined outcome

3.3. Rationale for using tasks

As TBLT offers students opportunities to actively engage in communication in order to achieve a goal or complete a task, it helps to develop students' inter-language. The students need to speak in order to comprehend the task and then use language to solve it. Some of the reasons for opting for TBLT are-

- It facilitates language learning by engaging the students or learners in a variety of tasks that have a clear outcome.
- It helps the students or learners to experience spontaneous interaction and this kind of interaction gives the students the benefit of learning from others; they find that there can be several ways for expressing similar meanings.
- It provides a context for students to participate in a complete interaction and not just sentences spoken in isolation. Participating in such interactions gives learners a chance to try out communication strategies.

Slowly, but surely, the students develop the confidence that they can achieve communicative goals.

3.4 Types of tasks

Prabhu identified three types of tasks- an information gap activity, a reasoning gap activity and an opinion gap activity. An example of an information gap activity is as follows- two tables, both having incomplete information are given to a pair of students. They talk to each other to complete the gaps in each other's table. In a reasoning gap activity, students need to derive some new information through inference- i.e based on the given information they have to get some new information. For instance, they could be presented with a bus or train time-table and based on that they could be asked to tell the best route to travel from one place to another. An example of an opinion gap activity is when students conduct a survey in the class room to find out the likes and dislikes of the other students regarding subjects, sports, books etc.

3.5 The benefits of Task-Based Language Teaching

The tasks that are used can be easily related to the students' real-life language needs and this in turn develops their ability to communicate in the target language. Further, the tasks encourage the students to be ambitious in their choice of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as language forms. The experience

of working together with their peers also enriches the language learning experience.

4. Conclusion

Task-based teaching offers the opportunity for 'natural' learning inside the classroom and is intrinsically motivating for the learner. As it is learner-centred, the learner moves towards becoming an independent user of the language. Even if a teacher does not adopt the task based approach in its entirety, using tasks in a traditional classroom will add variety to the teaching methodology and at the same time enthuse the learners to use the language they know.

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Emergence of the Emancipated Better Half in Anita Nair's *The Better Man*

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Abstract

Anita Nair is a feminist and highly regarded Indian English novelist of 21st Century. Women writers of this century consider marriage as a subtle idiom of patriarchal supremacy and the most prevailing bludgeon for female suppression. Anita Nair, as a writer of reputation, has a number of popular novels to her credit. In her debut novel *The Better Man* (2001) Anita Nair reveals woman's capacity to assert her own rights and individuality in marriage and develop into an emancipated human being. Her other books *Ladies Coupe*, *Mistress*, *Lessons in Forgetting*, *Cut Like Wound* and *Chains of Custody* (2016) were also received with much critical acclaim and appreciation. In her novels woman gradually but steadily, has begun to rise as an individual and has become the prime center of societal life. The woman who has scaled to the midpoint and achieved an important position in the social system is eager to discover new path for emancipation and emerge as an independent individual even in conjugal relations. My paper deals with portrayal of woman in the light of her oblique position with her husband and conjugal restraints in Anita Nair's first novel *The Better Man*.

Keywords: Emancipated, individuality, patriarchal, oblique, suppression.

Anita Nair, a popular Indian-English writer, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award winner in May 2012 for her contribution to

Literature and Culture, has been writing mainly novels and poems focusing India since 1997. Born in Kerala, raised in Chennai and writing from Bangalore, Anita always has an attraction towards expressing herself through words and conviction to portray Kerala in all hues and shades. When she started writing her first novel, *The Better Man* (2001), she had no surety of her work being published. And, today, all that uncertainty is just a part of the history with having written more than ten books with equal aplomb in different genres of literature.

Anita Nair being woman herself places major emphasis on examining women's lives and their psyche within the context of South Indian family, representing women in their traditional roles as mothers, wives and daughters. But her 21st century emancipated women have their own way in dealing with the patriarchal system still in existence. She has an intense emotional understanding of human motivations and a sharp flexible intelligence. The novel *The Better Man* describes every individual's attempt to find a degree of inner peace and manner. Throughout the story there is an underlying message about how to have assurance on one's own dreams and strive hard to fulfill the same.

If we compare Anita Nair with the veteran Anita Desai we find both of them have similar equation in portraying women in their novels. Desai's novels deal with the docile image and submissive part of her heroines whereas Anita Nair paints her female characters in a stronger way. Desai's heroines are victims in their calamity but for Anita Nair's characters fight out their predicaments. True to herself she believes in artistic integrity and feels strongly and deeply about relationship with absolute trust. "Perhaps, what I seek now is a friend like I have never had before. Someone to share a smoke and my thoughts with ... Someone whose destiny is woven with mine even though we are bound by neither blood nor any other tie." (Nair: 2001)

The Better Man explores the search of the woman to fulfill herself basically as a human being, independent of her various traditional roles as daughter, wife, mother and so on. Anita Nair strongly agrees with Simone de Beauvoir's that "that fact that we are human is much more important than our being and women".

Women have been quite suppressed, quite oppressed and in *The Better Man* Anita Nair tries to explore the issues like rape, male domination and betrayal in marriage with the story of Anjana. *The Better Man* is about a bachelor who returns to his village where memories of the past start to haunt him as his father was quite overbearing in his treatment to his mother. Nair uses bold imagery to portray on one hand the rich and vivid life of Kerala and on the other the male dominated social set up. Meenakshi and Anjana are the two living women characters in the novel. Child-hood soul mate of Mukundan, Meenakshi is relegated into some faint memory of Mukundan's mind after he leaves Kaikurrissi. Although she has been brought up in a world that teaches women to depend on men, she learns that she is ultimately alone. Although the desertion she endures is not intentional, she must bear the brunt of circumstances that are not her choice but are rather imposed on her by the patriarchal society in which she lives. Usually women are depicted as the oppressed through the stereotypical representation of their being weak, vulnerable and sexual objects of the male's desire.

Anjana: At the crossroads

Anjana, in the novel *The Better Man* was brought up in a liberal atmosphere by her parents. She is happy in her world of independence which gives her a profound sense of self fulfillment. When her age turned twenty seven her independence is lost in the name of marriage. Anjana, twenty-seven years old and a lonely woman, feels resigned to the idea of a state of eternal spinsterhood: "She had become, she thought, with a little bitter smile, one of those old maids destined to remain at home. Unloved, unwanted, unfulfilled. Long in the tooth, with sunken cheeks and vacant eyes." (Nair: 223). However, in her desperate attempts to get settled, with the aid of a marriage broker a marriage comes through. Soon after her marriage she finds her husband incompatible. In her married life she endures several injustices perpetrated by her husband. In the days of her earlier married days she tries a lot to impress her husband, Ravindran but she couldn't. She wants to give the best to him but he was not interested in her. Anjana consciously or unintentionally imitates the perfect woman because of her conventional bringing. From her early childhood, girls are trained to stay pleased in their married lives under any circumstances, and

thus fit in these ethics in her psyche. Whenever Anjana is ready for a casual conversation Ravindran feels irritated and leave the place at once. In spite of his actions she is ready to perform her duty and all that she wants to know about the likes and dislikes of her husband. Her husband's home signifies a place of meaningless where she feels a stranger in the bed beside her. She is eager to lead a healthy life with him but it is mere a dream for her to achieve. She longs for freedom and love in marriage, but it breeds pain, misery and fury. She develops hatred to all the things around her, even to herself. She feels that she has been victimized in the name of customs and practices.

In the world of Anjana, marriage is used traditionally. Apparently communication in the Indian society marriage brings together man and woman under one roof, but she skins over the sexual relationship. She conveniently gives up the fact that every relationship, of course, sexual relationship also incomplete without the involvement of emotional relationship. There was no fine exchange between them. Her marital relation with her husband is marked by loneliness and improper communication. The novel also cross-examines the environment of the relationship between Anjana and her husband and the nature of their married life. Their relationship is affected adversely by their incapability to understand each other. Due to lack of communication the growing 'silence' between them, their marital life grows unsteady and dismal. For his lack of confidence he violently attacked Anjana. On watching the terrifying behaviour her father raised a voice against him:

When I gave you my daughter's hand in marriage, it was with the hope that you would love her. Cherish and protect her for the rest of her life. If all you intend to do is hurt her, and made her unhappy, then there is no need for such a relationship. My daughter can manage very well without a husband like you. If you ever hurt my daughter again, I'll throw you out of this house. Do you understand?' her father told Ravindran. (Nair 2001:232)

Emergence of Emancipated woman:

Finally, Anjana breaks the traditional Indian consciousness

and creates the world of her own. Anjana's emergence from her unsuccessful marriage, with the determination to live as a free individual, is an assertion of her personal freedom. She meets Mukundan and falls in love with him. She finds in Mukundan everything which she had been searching for in Ravindran. Mukundan does not ignore her presence or over ride her thoughts, but instead helps her to regain her freedom of herself as an individual, a human being with her own identity. In Mukundan's company she realizes that she has to free herself from her unhappy married life. When Anjana, proposed her wish to Mukundan, he said:

'Anjana', Mukundan said. 'You must listen to me. I know you think I am a good man. a gentle man. Someone you can depend on completely. I don't know if I am that man you make me out to be. My mother begged me to rescue her and take her away. But I didn't. I was afraid of my father, and so I made excuses. If I had done as she asked me, perhaps she might be still alive. That is the kind of man I am. A weak and undependable creature. Do you want to be part of such a man's life?' 'All of us have our weakness, but we seldom have the courage to accept them. Or even declare it as you have done now. To me, that makes you braver than anyone else. I Love You. My love tells me that this is right; you are right for me.' (Nair, 244-245)

New Woman, a Blend of Tradition and Modern Elements:

Anjana is a blend of both traditional and modern elements and she wants uniqueness and autonomy. Unable to get recognition of her identity from Ravindran, she shapes out a new lane for herself. Anita Nair seems to be deeply concerned with women's freedom as Anjana wants to stand on her own wishes and liberty. It is Anjana's longing for gratification and stillness that urges her to take divorce from her husband. Only after a long struggle, Anjana turns out to be a woman who can make choices, take decisions and makes up her mind to start life anew with Mukundan from whom she can get what she longs for-love, care, affection and understanding. Finally Anjana's positive attitude towards life, work, financial independence, and self-identity helps her to go ahead in her life with hope and optimism and she proves that

women can achieve autonomy. Anjana finds her voice and establish her identity. She has also created her gender identity and found a significant way of life with Mukundan. It shows that the novel does not end in depression but ends on a note of hope. Review in *The Hindu* said "Anita Nair not only has a wonderful knowledge of life in the village, but shows an almost Dostoevskian feeling for the undercurrents of consciousness, as Mukundan seeks and finds redemption." (Review: 2001) Dhanyasree M, writing in *OneIndia*, says "This novel is a must read for anyone who wants to know the true pulse of Indian life."

Meenakshi: Oppressed but not broken:

When dumped by Mukundan, Meenakshi seeks solace with a Kathakali dancer Balan, whom she marries. Thus, Meenakshi dwindles into a memory Mukundan preferred not to dwell upon. "Thinking of her aroused many emotions, chief among them guilt. When they met later, she too had dismissed their adolescent fumbling as a part of growing-up process. There was no bitterness, no references to the past, no dredging up of forgotten promises." (Nair: 55) Meenakshi and Mukundan had also shared some intimate moments before the latter left Kaikurrissi. But on his return, Mukundan observes a transformed person. She had donned a new role in life. Meenakshi had become a Naxalite. Armed with books on revolutions and driven by the mythical powers of Stalin and Lenin, Meenakshi had pledged to cleanse the earth of bourgeois vermin. And her first target of attack was Achuthan Nair:

Mukundan's father, her uncle. Feudal landlord. Tyrant. Master of oppression. She and her group incited the labourers to rebel. When that didn't work, haystacks were set ablaze; cows let loose in ready-to-be-harvested paddy fields and irrigation ditches gutted with mud. To them Achutan was the system, and these were some ways of upsetting what he represented (Nair: 56).

Emergence of Stronger woman:

Meenakshi's failed marriage with Kathakali dancer Balan makes her a lonely figure. To diminish her loneliness, she finds solace in Naxalism. She emerges a stronger woman. She rejects the sympathy of relatives and neighbours. Being more educated than

the other women in the village, she takes control of her child by running a crèche authorized by the panchayat. She runs the crèche until her son Mani is old enough to go to school. Then she gives it up and sets about becoming a shopkeeper. In the process of lending an ear to the woes of troubled women of her village she acquires a reputation for sagacity and wisdom. There is a streak of steel within her when she takes the toughest decision to forgive her husband and look after him when he returns as a decrepit old man. This can be compared to Saru in Shashi Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terror*, where Saru tries to reconcile with her husband Manu and the novel ends with a tiny hope of resettlement. A sense of guilt sweeps Meenakshi off her feet. She is willing to forgive her husband for deserting her.

Meeting Mukundan does bring a ray of hope which proves to be short-lived, as he is more concerned about his reputation and position in the affairs of the village. Towards the end of the novel, Mukundan visits Anjana to plead with her to forgive his trespasses and accept him again. Anjana warns him of the consequences, "The Villagers won't approve of it. Or me. You will be kicked out of the committee. They will ostracize you. You won't be invited to anyone's wedding or housewarming or be included in any of the village's activities." (Nair: 355). Generally, there are two types of roles played by women characters in Indian fiction: conventional and unconventional. Both the types become objects of sufferings. Anjana plays the role of the unconventional where she stakes her reputation and reconciles with Mukundan. Through the myriad characters and their experiences in the novel one can easily perceive the changing image of Indian women.

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Exploring Manju Kapur's Custody using feministic lenses

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Abstract

“All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players:” (Shakespeare William, 'As You Like It') This stands true of Manju Kapur's 'Custody'. She has tinted a very vibrant and vigorous picture of life so touching that everybody can sense that they have undergone such experiences at some stage in life. Indian middle-class society has been the soul of her stories. Here too, she catches everything that happens with the passage of time in a middle class family - the politics of arranged marriage and its consequences, its effect on the minds of innocent children etc. The aim of this paper is to explore this novel using feministic lenses.

Keywords: infidelity, sexual abuse, infertility, adoption, divorce, custody.

Manju Kapur's 'Custody' has a very vivid and lively picture of life so much so touching that everybody can feel it is his/her's own story. Indian middle-class society has been the soul of her stories. Here too, she catches everything that happens with the passage of time in a middle class family - the politics of arranged marriage, infidelity, sexual abuse, infertility, adoption, divorce and battle on custody of children etc. Manju Kapur's every novel has the backdrop of an important historical event. Custody is no exception to it. It springs up in the environment of globalization and economic depression. The winds of Indo-Pak, Kargil war also blow in the novel. In such a scenario, Manju Kapur, not only impartially

presents the life account of Indian middle-class family but also drives some lesson for adults regarding the custody of children. If viewed, with the feminist perspective, the protagonists in custody are today's post-modern women who do not surrender to the age-old customs and traditions of patriarchal society but go beyond husband and children to explore freedom in life, to establish independent identity. Predominantly, Kapur puts forth two facets of feminist perspective in the novel first the infidelity of her first female protagonist, Shagun. Second, the infertility of the another female protagonist, Ishita. Kapur presents the hollowness of modern life as it is seen in the relationship of Raman and Shagun, Shagun and Ashok Khanna, Raman's boss and Ishita and Suryakanta. She very skillfully uses the instrument of marriage to present the story of four adults and two children, Arjun and Roohi. Kapur elaborates the tension and problems as the evil consequences of divorce. The whole family system crumbles and falls into pieces with the curse of divorce. Shagun is married to Raman along standard lines. She the beauty and he the one with brilliant prospects. Then Shagun comes into contact with Ashok Khanna, Raman's boss, a corporate man who is infatuated by her beauty. "In her colouring, her greenish eyes and her demeanour, she was a perfect blend of East and West." (Kapur *Custody*. p.04) Shagun is also tempted by his loving remarks and his elegance, and crosses the boundaries of the sacredness of marriage and indulges in sexual transgression. The novel opens up with that sexual scene between Shagun and Ashok Khanna. But since she is a married woman she has to suffer from her extra-marital love affair. She has to worry about being caught. Her mother entreats her not bring shame to the family she says: "You think all wives love their husbands? But they stay married. You are so idealistic, you don't think about the long term. What about the society, what about your children?" (p.79) But Shagun who loses her individual identity in her 'stupid early marriage' tries to explore it in her extra-marital relation with Ashok. This affair attributes an ecstatic experience and makes her confident, self-reliant, powerful and independent. She does not yield to the norms and customs of the society but strongly shows her power to win the problems so as to get felicity in her new relationship. She derives power from exploration, interpretation

and empowerment of the female sexuality experience that takes her to self-affirmation and self-recognition as an individual. With the delight of love Shagun revolts for freedom which was long denied to her. She struggled to get freedom she wanted but it was at the cost of her happy married life and her children. The new life was like a paradise for her: "She sank down next to him; she knew she would have a happiness she never had before. If she were to die tomorrow, it would be as a fulfilled woman." (p.113). Shagun listens to her heart and seeks divorce from Raman and thus thwarts the sacredness of the institution of marriage which is more than sex and individual freedom in India. Kapur marks the rapidly changing time, so winds of changes are often found in her novel and her protagonists are strong embodiments of changes.

In her novel, Kapur explores that as soon as the woman begins to grow as an individual, it is the institution of marriage first which starts colliding. The woman has now moved to the center and has been regarded as the backbone of the social set up. Now in this novel, Kapur utilizes the sexual freedom as an instrument of revolt to thwart patriarchal values and norms. Through Shagun she depicts a strong female character who can celebrate her sexuality and re-appropriate its generative principle through a deliberate violation of patriarchal morals. She chooses sexuality as her fighting area of pleasure and agency where she is empowered to use her body for herself. She challenges the male-dominated and patriarchal workings of surveillance and control over women bodies. Shagun's rebellious aptitude is the consequence of the oppression and suppression of the patriarchy right from her childhood. She doesn't like to be a silent sufferer and compromise with the situation and fate. On the contrary, she fights to get what she wants. Kapur is a keen observer of women psychology that is why she presents her female characters with all their moods and colours and equally treated them without any partiality in the novel. In the novel, the domestic dispute becomes cruel and rude and it is the innocent minds of the children which are crushed in the adults' battle of custody. The two adorable children, Arjun who is the xerox copy of her mother, Shagun and Roohi, who looks like her father, Raman are "torn between two mothers, two homes, two countries." Just with the one sliding of the curtain aside, the dirt and hatred of the

upper middle class's drawing room is clearly visualized. The concept of family stigma and social property is kept at the background and Shagun's infidelity is not scandalized. Kapur has revealed the selfish and ignoring sides of the parents. How the ruthless parents can't understand, acknowledge and respect the innocent minds and of the children is authentically pointed out by Manju Kapur. Both the children of Raman and Shagun are separated from each other. Shagun gets Arjun and Raman gets Roohi.

In *custody*, there is another female protagonist, Ishita who is diagonally opposite to the character of Shagun. She has been deprived of her rights and privileges by her in-laws. Ishita's life story exposes the shallowness of married life where a woman is tortured and stigmatized because of her infertility and the fact that she can not give the lineage to the family. She is subjected to severe mental torture and no one supports her. The climax is that even her husband who had announced his concrete love for her doesn't support her and takes his parents side. Kapur has portrayed the Indian conservative mother in-law in the form of Ishita's mother in law. She is the typical mother- in law who represents the Indian patriarchal society where daughter is treated as a daughter and daughter-in-law as a daughter-in-law. Being a woman she should have shown sympathy for Ishita's condition but she makes come true the proverb 'woman is woman's worst enemy' she makes a detailed discussion with the doctor and confirms that it is not her son who is impotent but daughter-in-law who is infertile. Kapur points out the ruthless nature of mother-in-law who does not understand and respect the same kind of gender. In this kind of feminism we find that woman works as a agent of patriarchal system who dominates another woman. In fact, infertility is culturally and socially constituted in such a deep influence that even though the problem affects a couple, it is woman who has to bear burden and harassment. Woman's status is identified by the fact whether she is able to give birth and rear children or not.

Ishita has been criticized as 18 months have passed and she is not pregnant. She moves from healer to prophet, herbalist to hospital searching some solution and found the fault 'severe

blockage of her fallopian tubes'. She has to undergo negative individual experiences. SK.'s family starts regarding her 'incomplete' 'worthless' woman. She feels lack of identity. Her mother-in-law is unwilling to waste more money of her and Ishita muses painfully, "Had there been something wrong with S.K. they would have moved heaven and earth to get a son's defect corrected. In an ideal world, the same resources would have been put at the disposal of a daughter in law. But this is not an ideal world." (p.68) Finally, infertility leads her to divorce and divorce fills her life with anguish, misery, depression, dejection, gloominess and sense of failure. After the tensed and bitter life taste, Ishita rebuilds her self-esteem with the help of her native family. She starts a new fresh life taking her maiden name. Ishita overcomes her biological inability and sprinkles her motherly love and affection on Roohi, a mother-abandoned girl. When she meets divorced Raman, a bond of love is established between the two broken hearts. Ishita who as an individual has denied her sexuality for long, has suppressed her passion for sex, exercises her desire and experiences some erotic moments with Raman. Raman gratifies the physical needs of her female body. Her motherly passions are fulfilled as she experiences the emotional attachment with Roohi. Kapur writes: "she thought of the little arms around her neck, her weight on her lap, the smell of her breath. For those moments, in the car she had allowed herself to feels she was the child's mother" As Ishita's and Raman's bodies and hearts merge in each other they get married in a court and start a new fresh life leaving behind the better memories of their past failed marriages. Ishita herself chooses her life partner and tastes the marital and motherly bliss in her new life. The true mother in herself emerges when she confidently expresses her feelings before the Judge in court: "Ever since my marriage. I have put her welfare above everything. I think of her as my flesh and blood. If anybody is like a stepmother it is this lady. To be a mother you need a heart." The judge makes some questions to the child and finally, Ishita is rewarded by the possession of Roohi to her. Noteworthy thing is that her custody is not given to her biological mother but to her loving stepmother, Ishita.

Thus, Manju Kapur doesn't confine her women within the four walls of the family and traditional value. Women like Shagun

revolts against married life and enjoys freedom. Ishita, on the other hand, revives her life by marrying Raman achieves fulfillment in life. Kapur wants to show us that woman like Ishita also exists in today's world who believe in spreading the fragrance of love in the family, heartily accepts the guardianship of other children.

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Immigrant Psyche in Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant*

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Abstract

Literature often provides social proof. Through novels, society can be viewed, which can give an insight into its culture. Immigration is a fused journey experience of oneself to another country. Migration separates one from their mother land towards an alien land, where it is marked by new culture and new adjustments. Immigrant psyche highlights the interface of the traditional culture within the culture of an adopted alien land and bring about a transformation in the inherited tradition and culture of the immigrant. The novel depict an immigrant looking back to her mother country with pain and nostalgia and an immigrant who shares the common grievances of their experiences and loneliness to those the new settlers who are provoked by a firm urge for migration. The present article focuses on the experiences of Indian women migrating to alien land after marriage. Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* is the best work to show the internal emotions faced by women on a new land. Nina, the protagonist, represents the pathetic condition of women in abroad. The protagonist fails to adjust in the new environment as she feels alienated from their culture and society. She almost becomes secluded from the normal life. Manju Kapur had beautifully carved the shapes of the characters that even a normal reader feels the presence of their problems as the personal grievances. This paper is an attempt to show how the immigrants suffer in the new countries, as depicted in Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant*.

Keywords: Immigrant, culture, migration, alien land, environment, emotions, psyche.

Manju Kapur, a feminist writer, who takes up the issues, which modern women face while playing various roles at home and in society without attaining any personal gratification and fulfillment. Manju Kapur has written five novels *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *The Immigrant*, *Home* and *Custody*. All the social activist movements preach about the rights of the women, but Manju Kapur clearly shows the struggle for identity of the female in the technologically advanced modern period. Manju Kapur's first novel *Difficult Daughters* won the Common Wealth Writers prize (Eurasia) in 1998. *The Immigrant* published in 2008 is her fourth novel. Her first three novels and fifth were set in the backdrop of North Indian cultures and in and around Delhi whereas her fourth novel is set in western country, where Kapur did her M.A in Halifax.

Immigrant psyche shows the interaction of traditional culture within the culture of an adopted alien land and bring about a change in the inherited tradition and culture of the immigrant. The immigrant experience is a composite one made up of collectivities, multiple journeys and border crossings. Economic positions, personal skills and political relationships between country of origin and of adoption are shaped by experiences.

Migration that leads to separation may be seen as rebirth, rebirth in a new place/city/country marked by a new culture, different flora and fauna, new adjustments and so on. But even if "Migration is reincarnation" it takes memory back to the earlier birth even as the migrants have to "build a new world only to die in hope and dread". The consequences of the separation is that the migrant infuses Indian cognition in all beautiful things, that is, he makes sense of all the present experiences in terms of Indian structures. He finds them everywhere. The welcome baggage of Indian reality that he carries with him as migrant enable him to interpret and recognize contemporary alien experience. This is the experience he makes sense of through Indian structures. If he sees ocean, he compares it with Indian Ocean. Apart from this intrinsic

cognitive belonging, there is also a good deal of similarity, search and naming to establish affinity.

In Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* Nina stands as a testimony to the actual status and the condition of Indians living as immigrants in alien countries. Manju Kapur has portrayed the dilemma of Indian woman in other land and tries to lead her protagonist with the fusion of East-West culture.

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* is story of two immigrants, Nina and Ananda. Nina, teaches English literature at Miranda House. At the age of 30 she married to Ananda, who lives in Canada, wants to marry an Indian girl. Nina goes to Canada as an immigrant and her journey of life starts in a totally new environment. At the end of the novel, she becomes a new woman, totally different from what she was before her marriage in India. Many factors are responsible for changes in any immigrant personality. Immigrants change their personality because they face pressure of postcolonial ideology; without changing themselves, they can't live in the developed country. They unconsciously follow the norms and cultures of colonizers and start forgetting their own cultures. Those immigrants who belong to those countries which were colonized in the past, even after their independence, follow the colonizers. The colonized behave in a way the colonizers have programmed them. They willingly accept the superiority of colonizers and their own inferiority. This is known as culture cringe.

Ananda has to settle in Halifax after his parents' death in an accident. His mother's brother forced him to come to Canada because he has settled in Halifax for past twenty years. In India he will not be able to recover from this loss. In Canada he can make a fresh start because this country is full of opportunities. Ananda's sister came from Agra to see him off "Remember if you don't like it, you can always come back" (p.18).

On 15th August, Ananda landed in Halifax, his country's day of independence. His uncle received him and asked from him, "Why do you think that there is such a brain drain in India? He demanded India does not value its minds – unlike here. Otherwise you think we are not patriots? But there even the simple task of daily life can bleed you dry" (p.18).

As Ananda walked in Canada he finds empty space and he started thinking and comparing this with India:

“Where are the people?” he asked,

“They will come – once we enter the city. But don't expect many – the whole country has barely 20 million – and Halifax only 80,000.

Now 80001.”

Ananda was used to the hustle bustle and crowd of India but there he was find no crowd in Canada

so he was feeling strange.

“Where are the people?” repeated Ananda.

Always the first thing to strike our countrymen, laughed the uncle 'You'll get used to it'. (p.19).

The immigrants have a double-identity, which means that they start perceiving the world through the consciousness of colonizers as well as through their own vision, which is provided by their native cultures. Ananda is a perfect example in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*. One becoming a psychological refuse means that one is not able to feel at home even at his / her own home. Nina suffered in this way at her early time in Canada when she comes to Canada with her husband Ananda to lead a life of happiness with the status of an immigrant in the midst of the native Canadians.

Nina remains rooted in her Indian way of living and thinking. Being traditional to the core, she finds very difficult to change herself to the western style of living. She also wants her Ananda to be every inch an Indian in his way of living. She expects him to be a loving and loyal husband as an Indian. But Ananda, being an Indian Canadian, is westernized in his way of eating, dressing, moving with all women freely and even having sex with them. Moreover, he has adjusted himself to Canadian eating habits and so he has the habit of eating non-vegetarian food. He wants to be a Canadian in Canada and so he is Canadian in everything. There is no wonder when such an Indian wants his Indian wife to be a Canadian like him in all habits. If Nina's status as the wife of an

Indian born Canadian is to remain intact, she has to change to her husband's way of life lest she should be in great predicament. The immigrant suffers from social invisibility and feels inferiority. To end it, he / she starts dressing up like the Westerners. Nina goes to Canada with lots of saris but she could not wear them due to the colonial mentality. She starts wearing jeans instead of salwar-suit and saris. She gives up her own dressing style and accepts theirs.

Nina had still had reminiscences of Indian life style and meals. She has taken special pickle which her mother gave to her and she secretly carried to 10,000 miles. Nina thinks that Indians become immigrants slowly because they are not among those who have fled persecution, destitution, famine, slavery and death threats. She further explains,

“These immigrants are always in two minds. Outwardly they adjust well. Educated and English speaking, they allow misleading assumptions about a heart that is divided. In the new country they work lengthy hours to gain entrance into the system, into society, into establishing a healthy bank account” (p.123).

Immigrant psyche has very deep effect on Nina as a wife because she cries and feels homesick because of her loneliness. She starts passing her time in reading books.

“It has been a month, and she was keen to set down roots that would make her feel more at home. In India these relatives had seemed peripheral, more tourist than family. Now her perception has changed. She wanted to be close to them” (p.132).

The Indian political scenario of 1975 to 1977 in the novel, as a background, has very beautifully fused by the novelist. This scenario is the most talked matter for the Indians living in Canada. Nina finds difficulty in arranging her Indian clothes in Canada. The novelist has very beautifully described this situation,

“As immigrants fly across the oceans they shed their old clothing, because clothes maketh the man, and new ones help ease the transition. Men's clothing has less international variation, the change is not so drastic. But women who are used to wearing western clothes find themselves in a dilemma” (p.152).

In Canada Ananda was busy in his job but for Nina it was very difficult to pass her time. Although she has been a teacher in Delhi University but she would not be able to get a job there because she was not qualified. A mechanical life with western food could not attract her. She had no other activity other than reading books or watching television. At last Nina enrolls in a Library and continued her education in Library science. Nina could understand Ananda's situation when she was invited to his uncle Dr.Sharma's house. 'So this was the scenario that lay behind Ananda's reticence. Her heart filled with tender hurt on her husband's behalf' (p.133). She was not used to non vegetarian. Ananda doesn't say no to his friends or uncle when they invited her to dinner. They say she needs to adjust to the new culture. But naturally it takes some time for her to taste a new food which she was not at all used to for many years. Ananda could become a Canadian soon as it was easy for him to adjust to the western ways. Nina had to change her dressing style to the western style. Her old Indian sarees and dresses made her to look different from others in the new country. She passes her time by hearing the report on Kumb Mela in India which happens after twelve years.

"The words reverberated through Nina, though she was as much a stranger to the Kumbh Mela as anyone in Canada. Educated, secular and westernized, she had never had anything to do with ritual Hinduism" (p.175).

Ananda also enjoyed this description even hearing from Nina. Ananda was surrounded in his memory when he attended Kumbh Mela with his mother and father.

"But he remembered something. Getting up when it was still dark, shivering on the river bank, the sound of cunch shells, his father carrying him as he waded into the freezing water, his mother holding his sister's hand, people all around in the growing pale of morning" (p.176).

Nina felt the same vein of feverish memory about her father and mother.

"Yearning for home did strange things to the mind. Even though she despised cheap nostalgia, the way she has reacted to the Kumbh Mela was proof that living in a

different country you became a different person" (p.177).

Nina was not satisfied with her married life and she had extramarital affair with Anton. At this stage she started thinking about India where husbands were not expected to meet one's entire needs and there was no force on man-woman relationship – love – fulfillment. For an immigrant, it is very difficult to balance between two cultures and he or she keeps swinging like a pendulum from one culture to another from home country to immigrant country.

Satendra Nandan puts it in his essay on *The Politics of Dispossession and Exile*, "What then is writer's enigma of survival? Initially, it is an outrage of more horrendous fates of people elsewhere. One is dislocated from one world, but is connected to so many others. Suddenly they become closer to one's own. The writer tries to find new ways of being human, new ways of redefining his humanity, new ways of recognizing his inseparable humanity with others." This is indeed, remaining rooted and defeating the challenges of displacement.

Manju Kapur completes this novel with this Nina's statement:

"Perhaps that was the ultimate immigrant experience. Not that any one thing was steady enough to attach yourself to for the rest of your life, but that you found different ways to belong, ways not necessarily lasting, but once that made your journey less lonely for a while. When something failed it was a signal to move on. For an immigrant there was no going back. When one was reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home. Pull up your shallow roots and move. Find a new place, new friends, a new family. It had been possible once/ it would be possible again" (p.334).

The immigrants face problems of languages, custom, cultures, tradition, values and attitudes. They face discrimination on the basis of their skin colour, clothes, festivals, personality and on many more things. Due to the colonial impact they lost their own ideology and accepted the West as their own. There is a need of a serious discourse on the issue of immigration, its impact on colonized countries, and, most importantly, on the immigrants who

suffer a lot.

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Desire, Reality and Fantasy in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract

Desire means longing for something and no protagonist of Morrison is untouched from this desire. We can witness the burdens of burning desires in the most characters of Morrison. For Morrison's women who are labeled in this way, the mad phase is one through which they make a rediscovery of their feminine difference and thus resolve their inner complexities and confusions, and come to terms with bewildering circumstances. The poignant story of Pecola, her total surrender to the white power structure, is however not Morrison's final word in the novel. The problems of the African – American women seem more glaring and stark as we are taken in by the language and images through which Morrison depicts the problematic.

Keywords: Desires, Afro-Americans, beauty, culture, and magic realism.

Morrison's characters want to fulfill their desires in real world but due to social, geographical, economical and racial circumstances they cannot reach to their original desires, therefore they search the world of fantasy in which they do not have any limitations of thinking and behaving. They can live as they wish. They can create what they want. They can achieve what they desire. In this way they go too far from reality and wander in the world of imagination where, their troubled, suffered and dominated soul gets relaxation. To fulfill desires in fantastical world is the safety

wall for the Afro-Americans which prevent them from insanity. When the desires are very powerful in which fantastical elements dominate real elements, they go beyond insanity. This chapter studies the strong desires of Morrison's characters and their journey in the real and fantastical world.

The protagonists in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Song of Solomon* and *Paradise* are seen either to have split personalities with one half queer in some way, or to undergo a phase of madness; they are different from others and are therefore stigmatized as 'abnormal.' According to Shoshna Felman, what patriarchy "tries to eliminate under the label of madness is nothing other than feminine difference" (qtd. In Meaney 73). For Morrison's women who are labeled in this way, the mad phase is one through which they make a rediscovery of their feminine difference and thus resolve their inner complexities and confusions, and come to terms with bewildering circumstances. Though their responses, in this temporarily demented state, are emotionally exaggerated beyond all reasonable proportions, this provides relief to tensions and saves them from succumbing to total insanity which the situation warrants.

Morrison in her first novel *The Bluest Eye* states that "A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by evil of fulfillment" (162). This line is a pointer to the conflict, the tension and the trauma that follow an unfamiliar desire of Pecola. Pecola Breedlove is a little black girl who is dissatisfied with world around her. She is born into a society that is confused as it shuns its own cultural values and craves for self gratification in the culture of the whites. In the novel, this tendency of the society finds its symbolic expressions in Pecola's quest for blue eyes which represents the western ideals of beauty. Such strong desire results in the suffering and anguish of the blacks. In the *Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison weaves together scenes from an underground whose inhabitants suffer as much from confused social directives as they do from utter poverty. The exploration of this world of victimization gains from the fragmental form of the book, for life is essentially fragmented when seen through the eyes of any single individual.

"The concept of physical beauty as a virtue is one the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of the Western world" (*Behind the Making* 89), says Morrison. In *The Bluest Eye* it is "this deliberate perpetuation by the larger society of a physical Anglo-Saxon standard of female beauty as a measurement of self-worth" (Mckay 172). That plays havoc in the life of several characters. According to this belief, women who are not Anglo-Saxon, who do not have fair skin and blue eyes are not beautiful and hence are inferior. Both Pecola Breedlove, the adolescent Afro-American girl on whom the story is centered, and her mother Pauline Breedlove are victims of the prevailing social standards of beauty encountered by them from the toy shops which sold little blonde-haired, blue eyed, white dolls, through the week end matinees to elementary school primers.

In her portrayal of Cholly, Morrison deconstructs the popular notion of Aristotle, Charles Darwin, Schopenhauer and so on, about the father as a big and strong male, the head of the family. Abandoned by his mother on a junk heap, rejected by his father for a crap game, and taunted and humiliated by white men during his first sexual encounter, Cholly is small, black and helpless. In the frequent fights with his wife he behaves like a coward. His feelings of aggressiveness at the white superiors get metamorphosed into alcoholism and gambling. In a drunken stupor, the distinctions between the feeling of love and revulsion, real and unreal, guilt and pity, self and other break down. Beset by his uncontrollable and contrary emotions he rapes his own daughter. The text suggests that Cholly physically violated Pecola while the others had already violated her spirit. The fact that Cholly had impregnated his daughter is established in the first chapter of the novel itself. But the following chapters elude any clear-cut explanation for this shocking deed. Perhaps he wanted to assert his masculinity. It could be that never having known any sort of nurturing love himself he did not know how to express it. The opposing perspectives presented by different narrators reveal how they are struggling for their identity and specialness.

At school Pecola's teachers ignore her. Her classmates ridicule and taunt her. Even her friends Claudia and Frieda are

unable to communicate with her. Denied by her parents, teachers and society who make her the scapegoat of their own false convictions, Pecola consoles herself by eating her favorite candy with the picture of the blue eyed Mary Jane on the wrapper. In eating the candy she somehow fantasizes that she is eating the blue eyes. “the desire for blue eyes is part of the inverted quality of her world; in wanting blue eyes Pecola wants, in fact to be white” (de Weener 406). No one would then dare to insult her. Her desire for blue eyes is so unbearably strong that when the conjureman promises it to her she breaks her last tenuous grip with reality. This leads to a total collapse of the centre of herself. Her self thus becomes a subject that Foucault describes as both constituted and constituting. She imbibes into herself the surrounding negating racist world causing the explosive encounter between the self and the other and its consequent rupture and fragmentation. The text thus defines Pecola's subjectivity as the self that is no self. Morrison foregrounds the horror of the psychophrenic Pecola conversing with the other self who assures her that she is the girl with the bluest eyes and hence the most beautiful girl in her town.

No one loves Pecola except her father who expresses his tenderness for her in distorted manner by raping her. When drunken Cholly sees his daughter bent over the sink washing dishes, a mixture of emotions surge through him. Cholly violates her body as the others have violated her soul. Pecola's desire for blue eyes intensifies and a neighborhood sheer Soaphead Church helps in bringing about that 'miracle'. But the result is ironic because it is only by descent into madness can she be convinced that her eyes are the bluest of all. Pecola does achieve what she has set out to, but at the expense of her sanity. Pecola craves for love and happiness and holds her brown eyes responsible for her misery. She strongly believes that if her eyes were different, that is to say beautiful, may be Cholly would be different, Mrs. Breedlove and the entire world too. Pecola's desire for blue eyes disturbs her ability to perceive and comprehend reality. It becomes an obsession with her and results in hallucination. She dislocates herself from reality and believes that her desire for the ideal of the white romantic myth of blue eyes has become palpable, that she has really acquired the bluest eyes, which is impossibility. Convinced by the Godman, Soaphead Church, that

God has granted her the blue eyes she most fervently sought, she merges into the self she has imagined. The dividing line between the self and the other dissolve for Pecola and she steps over into madness.

Rituals are very much a part of the African – American folk tradition. They help the women reach an understanding of their own lives and refrain from self destructive activities. The problems of the African – American women seem more glaring and stark as we are taken in by the language and images through which Morrison depicts the problematic. She goes beyond the depiction through her master style of using magical realism.

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Exploring the theme of Assimilation and Integration in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Abstract

One of the major concerns in Postcolonial Literature is the problem of displacement and its consequences. Uprooting from one's own culture and land and the agonies of re-rooting in an alien land are depicted in many postcolonial works. This paper is an attempt to discuss the postcolonial dilemmas faced by the characters in Kiran Desai's novel *The inheritance of Loss*. They often face the problem of identity and alienation and become frustrated at the end. Even when they come back to their own country, like the Judge in the novel, they develop a sense of distrust and anger. They are in a state of confusion from which they will find it difficult to come out. The paper focuses on the postcolonial experiences of Jemubhai Patel, the Judge and Biju, the son of the Judge's cook who eventually supposed to have found out happiness in the reunion with his father, though he has lost all that he earned from his brief time in America.

Keywords: Post-Colonialism, integration, assimilation, culture, alien etc.

Ever since Post-Colonial literatures have come into existence, the writers were trying to create a new form of fiction within the English language by incorporating new images and above

all new rhythms. One of the major features of postcolonial texts is the concern with place and displacement, shifting of location and resulting in "the crisis of identity into being" Often, the protagonist of a post-colonial work will find himself/herself in a struggle to establish an identity; feeling conflicted between two cultures – one his own native culture and the other an alien culture. Therefore, a central theme in post-colonial writing is the transformation of the native into something other than himself – a Westernized native, or at least one who is in a crisis regarding his/her own cultural identity. Here, there is always a tension between wanting to belong to the new society yet wanting to retain the culture of the old one. The characters in Desai's *The inheritance of Loss* are in such dilemmas. The novel addresses these issues in a direct and poignant way. It is not merely a matter of adapting to a new environment, or adjusting to new customs, or learning a new language. It is much more profound, a displacement far reaching. It is an agonizing process of alienation and displacement which may create an imbalance that can profoundly affect a person's feelings, thoughts and ideas.

Jorge Luis Borges' poem "*Boast of Quietness*" is used as an epigraph for the novel and it acts as an ode of powerlessness of the poor and those treated inhumanely. It speaks of those who are going back and forth between cultures and homeland as characters in the novel, like the Judge (India and England) and like the cook's son Biju to America and then back to India. Many people seek a better life outside their own country and the poem wonders if they ever arrive at whatever destination they think they seek. The longing for another culture other than their own makes them feel alienated and displaced. In Borges' poem, boasting and quietness are oxymoron and the poet creates images that are richly layered with meanings:

I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn't expect to arrive ("*Boast of Quietness*").

Borges' poem deals with the universality and timelessness of human condition whereas *The inheritance of Loss* focuses more on specific people living with specific historic and cultural backgrounds.

Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* focuses primarily on Indian culture and how it has both integrated with and influenced Western culture. The result of cultural clash is clear in the fiction. We see that the two different cultures coincide peacefully without dominating the other. It is clearly visible that the individuals are the creation of their environment. All the characters in the novel are suffering from the problems of their past. Their past dominates on their present. They are unable to come out from the nostalgia of their past. When each of the characters in the novel encounters a foreign culture, their experiences vary, but are mainly negative, which is sadly quite realistic. Every experience shows again that the past identity carries with them will always influence their view of others. It clearly states that the culture should not mix completely with the language, though culture and language both are interconnected.

Kiran's *The inheritance of Loss* is a multifaceted novel which revolves round the essence of race, ethnicity and cultural identity. It chiefly focuses on integration, assimilation, influence and bifurcation between Indian culture and Western one. There is a great confrontation of different societies creating trepidation and resentment in the novel. It is unambiguous that the two cultures always coincide serenely, but without dominating the other. The novel illustrates the clash of two absolute cultures and its consequences. It is fact that world is replete with the thoughts of prejudices and people are treated and separated differently due to the difference in class, culture and race. It is set between two main places: Kalimpong, India and New York City. Though the novel is set principally during 1980s, it recurrently weaves in and out of a variety of time frames as far back as the 1940s. The one character is retired Judge who lives with his granddaughter Sai in a crumbling old Scottish mansion named Cho Oyu during crucial political period in the terrain region of Kalimpong. Mutt, Judge's beloved dog, accompanies him and his faithful cook was the source of interaction. Desai has clearly stated that people are the product of environment. The society plays a vital role in the development and mould of the character in any human being and so is happening in the novel. Biju, the cook's son, is frantically struggling to survive in

New York as an illegal immigrant. He does not have green card to stay in the city. He is trying to hide identity by changing his job from one place to another. It suggests that Biju is the victim of helplessness and need. He does the illegal work to stay in the foreign city due to being the slave of situation. The society is accountable to make him reach at such place.

Globalization today brings culture together, encouraging ideas and traditions from one culture to mould and unify with others. Though there are a number of aspects of this mixing that are positive, it can also stir up hatreds, causing new obstacles and resentments. The characters the Judge, Sai, Gyan(Sai's boyfriend), Noni and Lola(Sai's tutors) and Biju all have experiences where their identity comes in contact with a foreign culture. Unfortunately, each of these experiences results in a strong negative reaction, illuminating the division between cultures that still exists today.

In modern age, due to the advancement in technology of audio-visual, different cultures are continually confronted with one another. When separate cultures congregate sometimes they basically bounce off each other, but often they begin to amalgamate even though this may be unconsciously done. There are no longer many examples of accurately chaste cultures that have not adopted at least some foreign ideas and traditions. Sai and the Judge, for example, without more ado, think of American films and actors instead of popular Bollywood movies. Sai is the haunting character in the novel. She is the granddaughter of the Judge. She has been schooled in Western style, so she has the standard of living in English culture. Sai speaks English as her first language instead of a more indigenous Indian language. The cook has a fetish for modern western appliances. The mist, therefore, also represents this idea of globalization and integration among different people all over the world that has blurred the division between cultures.

Though the novel has a number of characters, yet it is concentrated on a central theme, instead of a central character. One of the characters is Jemubhai Patel, the Judge, who is easing his loss from the past incidents in the present time and is trying to make his

future peaceful and sublime. He was born in a peasant family and was living at the village-like outskirts of pilphit. While his father kept procuring counterfeit witnesses in the court, thus helping the distortion of the very basic and significant institution of his own nation, he was himself being imperceptibly indoctrinated by the supposedly philanthropic mission school which perhaps readied him for the use of the imperial machinery of the Raj. Such English education combined with the compelling presence of haughty and smug Raj administration somehow proved a unblemished combination which moulded him into a dislocated alien unable to connect with anything native and Indian and more than willing to cross over the English rank and file. His stay in England during 1940s was one of the extreme loneliness and humiliation where 'he retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man and it crushed him into a shadow'.

In England nobody was to accompany him- no real friends, no one to help, no one to support, he was helplessly alone. He was hated by Englishmen, so he became so introvert that he despised himself, his skin and anything that made him Indian. He tried to whistle obsessively and sprinkled powder to glaze his face complexion. The Judge also 'envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians both' (131 *The Inheritance of Loss*). The Western education transformed him completely which caused him so much pain and suffering. In the obsession of English education, he tried to become as English as possible, and hated anything Indian. When Jemubhai went to clear the ICS exam, he never opened himself up to the human world; instead like a dead bud, withered and died unknown, unacknowledged and unheeded. The moment he mounted the ship, he had conquered and won over and like a trophy went to the English. The chasm between him and his family suddenly became monstrously large:

Jemubhai looked at his father, a barely educated man venturing where he should not be, and the love in Jemubhai's heart mingled with pity, and pity with shame.

His father felt his own hand rise and cover his mouth: he had failed his son (37 *The inheritance of Loss*).

Here it is crystal clear that Jemu's lopsided education turned his mind unsympathetic and disdainful. His father's illiteracy appears to him piteous and shameful as if it were the only thing required to judge a man. Even after returning India, the Judge despised his wife. He was extremely offensive towards his wife. He violently rapes her after she steals his precious powder puff 'to teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame he had learned' (186 *The inheritance of Loss*). Ultimately he sent his wife Nimi back to her family where she gives birth to a daughter before she commits suicide. He is neither European nor Indian and becomes an immigrant within himself. So the Judge experience with the English is too much harsh which shows how extremely destructive the clash between cultures can be.

Biju is the protagonist in the novel. He belongs to a poor family. His father is a cook at Jemubhai's home. Despite earning from dawn to dusk, they could not save money for their rainy day. They have hard days in India. So Biju's father sent him to America on a tourist visa, but the intention was different. Biju was sent to earn money to improve his father's economic condition. He stayed there illegally. In New York, he finds himself in a strange world, a world where there was no sympathy, no fellows, no one to encourage. He passes his days changing jobs, bearing pathetic condition, and attempting to dodge the immigration authorities of the United States. Since he has stayed there illegally, he is forced to work on a very low wages. He experiences extreme servitude to his employers. He has fed up his illegal life there. He is now unable to bear the mean behaviour of his employers. At one point he becomes so much frustrated from his life that he makes a pathetic request to his present employer, Harish-Harry to sponsor him for a green card:

Without us living like pigs, said Biju, what business do you have? This is how you make your money, paying us nothing because you know we can't do anything, making us work day and night because we are illegal. Why don't you sponsor us for our green cards? (188 *The Inheritance of Loss*)

Biju is desperate to procure green card to return home. He is crying for India and its soothing familiarity. America has generated a profound chasm in him. When Biju telephones his father in India, his memory turns live about the atmosphere in Kalimpong where his father resides:

He can feel the pulse of the forest, smell the humid air, the green-black lushness; he could imagine all its different textures, the plumage of banana, the stark spear of the cactus, and the delicate gestures of ferns....(230 *The Inheritance of Loss*)

On the contrary, the cook mistakenly imagines that Biju is earning a lot of money which will give me every comfy and facility. But the reality is that Biju is struggling to remain even alive being an illegal immigrant.

On the one hand, Biju is exploited by his employers on his undocumented status. On the other hand, his neighbours force him to reconsider his beloved country's relationship with the wider world. When he was working in hotel, Biju has interaction with the people of diverse cultural backdrop.

Biju was sent to New York by his father to make a better life and become a 'fine-suited and booted-success' (90 *The Inheritance of Loss*). He suffers through years working as an illegal cook at one scruffy restaurant after another. Biju, like the Judge, is met with unfriendliness and discrimination from other higher-class cultures.

So the characters Biju and Jemubhai are easing their loss occurred in the past.

The story of Biju is a heart-touching narration by Kiran Desai. He is the representative of shadow-immigrants. As Shubha Mukherjee writes, "No doubt, people from different countries have settled in alien nations but their hearts and souls are left behind in their far off motherlands. Physically they accept the situational change but emotionally they hate everything alien" (40 *The inheritance of Loss - The Biased and Unfair Globalized World*). Sushilkumar Sindhedkar writes, "Biju confronts the same questions that Judge Jemubhai Patel had confronted 50 years ago in England. Jemubhai was haunted by such questions - why have I

come to a foreign land? What would be the benefits after suffering so much? After all, what is happiness? Shall I be really happy and contended? Would there be the pleasure in having been educated abroad? Why should the Indian Society think that prestige lies in foreign education? Why should the Westerners humiliate us? Is it true that Indian Culture, Indian dancing, singing are inferior to the Western Ones? What is progress?" (64 *Of Human Breadth and Wisdom: Kiran Desai's The Inheritance of Loss*). Due to globalization, people visit different countries for fulfilling their dreams and opportunities which they offer. But their hearts always remain with their homeland. This creates a type of cultural invasion, which gives birth to concepts like 'exile'.

It has been a trend with Postcolonial writers namely, diasporic ones, who live in a foreign locale, but still retain their countries' passport, to shuttle characters in their works between their homeland and a foreign country. Kiran Desai has also done something similar in *The Inheritance of Loss*. The characters of Jemubhai Patel and Biju are portrayed in this vein. They travel abroad for education and for earning a livelihood respectively. As a result, they experience a reality which wouldn't have dawned on them had they not made that decision to leave their country of origin. Postcolonial writers also portray subaltern characters in their homeland, either women, children, low in caste hierarchy or economic scale, or minority people (less in number). By writing about indigenous people of their homeland, the postcolonial writers create an alternative history (different from that of the colonizer's) and seek to re-create national identity. This identity is established through cultural representation of characters. Kiran Desai has done it well in *The inheritance of Loss*.

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Muffled Voices of Women in Anita Desai's select Novels

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Abstract

Anita Desai through her themes, brings forth the images of women's confinement and lack of freedom and raises pertinent questions regarding the role and status of women in the society. They undergo doubts, frustrations, disillusionment of their own and stumble their ways towards solution of their own. As a woman she projects the introvert characters who develop an acute sensitivity which makes them recoil from the society, leading to emotional disaster and withdrawal from the mainstream. Their struggle lies in not trying to bend others even they themselves do not bend but they are intent on carving out an identity of their own in the society. Women in her novels are the personification of new woman who has tried hard and still struggling to throw off the weight of inhibition which she has been carrying since ages. She has tried to change the image of traditional Indian woman to a modern one who does not shrug off her responsibilities but carries it along in a more refined and dignified way. They are regenerated, isolated and dominated by the patriarchal set up who questions the age-old customs and wants to seek herself free towards a new individuality.

Keywords: Frustration, inhibition, new identity, struggle, new individuality.

English language and Literature is one of the largest speaking language in the world. Indian English literature holds a key position amongst the others. Awareness on the writer's part has

compelled these writers to write about the present crisis that surrounds the fairer sex from all sides and engulfs them. The individual need, the self confrontation and the identity formation, are some of the issues that results in gulf - like loss of communication, alienation, identity crisis, desperation, fear, agony and frustration. They rebel and refuse to succumb to the society and their accepted norms. They face life and face it with remarkable strength making way for others to follow their footsteps. The hidden and suppressed world of these women comes in full light and the female Indian sensibility can be fully established.

Through her themes Anita Desai brings forth the images of women's confinement and lack of freedom and raises pertinent questions regarding the role and status of women in the society. She tries to concern herself with the groping problems of women whether physical, emotional or intellectual and aims to find a solution. She has embarked her journey portraying and projecting the emotions, alienation and quest in the world of women to attain an identity and individuality of their own. Anita Desai's preoccupation with the Indian Woman and their reactions to the far changing situations in Modern India distinguishes her from other characters. Her protagonists are constantly in conflict with the society who in turn is full of violent reactions to the situations they belong.

Her works clearly suggests that the Modern life with all its spectacular achievements and progress is doomed to disorder and destruction unless it considers and nourishes the tender feelings of woman who forms the nucleus of the society. She forces her characters into all situations so that they show strength to protest, to overcome obstacles and integrate with ever changing expectations and conditions. They undergo doubts frustrations, disillusionment of their own and stumble their ways towards solution of their own.

Virginia Woolf had advised the woman writers to "kill the angel in the house" that angel being the drudge who cooks cleans and looks after the family members before they start writing. Desai has not done this, her female protagonists at least the Indian ones, function within the parameters laid out for them in the society, yet,

register their protest and achieve growth in a dignified manner in the suffocating patriarchal enclosures.

As a woman she projects the introvert characters who develop an acute sensitivity which makes them recoil from the society, leading to emotional disaster and withdrawal from the mainstream. Her novels are not meant to explain theories of philosophy and psychology but the involvement for the upliftment of women who is seen as the worst sufferers highly suppressed and oppressed by the society and deals and deals with them in the form of trapped married couples who are unable to adjust to the traditional social fabrication of the society. They are not average people but have been driven into despair and so turned against or made to stand against the general current. Unable to fully defy traditional patriarchal norms of society these women characters attempt to realize and preserve their identity not only as woman but also as human being. Their struggle lies in not trying to bend others even they themselves do not bend but they are intent on carving out an identity of their own in the society.

The protected life of Monisha in "Voices in The City" is ashamed of herself. "Generations of women behind the barred windows in half dark rooms spending centuries in household works" acutely focus on the stagnancy of the prevailing custom. A true picture of the feminine world against which Monisha protests and reacts is as follows:

"Lives spent on waiting for nothing on men self centred and indifferent and hungry and demanding and critical waiting for death and dying misunderstood always behind bars. Those terrifying black bars that shut us in the old houses in the city." (p 115.)

Her awareness to this fact encourages her to make silent protest against the changing current the established values and all the fine discretion between high and low right and wrong. She has been robbed off her art ambitions of a career of a designer. She grows more and more aware of the stifled cry of protest of utter dismay of her own voice and of their other similar thousands of women. In Jiban's crowded house she feels tormented and longs to be alone:

“Alone I could work better and I should feel more whole. But less and less there is privacy. Even my own room, which they regarded at first as still bridal, now no longer is so... But I could wish they would leave me alone, sometimes to read.” (p.138)

She feels trapped and is desperate to release herself from this captivity. The diminished dingy situation of the physical world drains every drop of life from her. Though she is uncommunicative her suicide is a confession of protest through her reactions, she disregards the idea that women place themselves in bondage to men whether in marriage or out. Her protest is violent and finds death more welcoming than life itself. She definitely knew that she was going to tread upon a path where the fear of unknown was very strong but equally compelling was her desire to explore and expand her horizon.

The author is not against the ideology by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in society. Rather what she hopes through her protagonists is the need for the female to break free from the shackles of their traditional positions and see their own need for self-fulfilment as more important than the duty of sacrificing themselves for the family.

Sita, in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* offers a compromising link between the prose and passion of life. She questions herself whether she would be doing an act of creation by giving birth – or she would be destroying what is perfect, pure, whole and safely contained in her womb. The confrontation leads to transformation and she understands that the inner urge of human life is to create to generate to make alive to bring forth something and in this she becomes aware of being a human and individual. Her protest proves that it is very difficult for a woman, however, modern she may be, to get rid of the situation she is once placed. In spite her dislike to the ways of the world, she has to resume her journey- to the role of wife and mother for the betterment of human relationships.

Sita represents the countless woman who are assertive and bound to live an assertive life and possess immense potential to face the future, their muffled voices are to be heard. Sita has indeed

passed the phase of sulking, rebelling and whinning and has trained herself to stand for her own self, to awaken her sensibilities and her complacency.

Bim in “Clear Light Of Day” bright, head girl in school accepts life as a challenge and disregards the accepted luck of woman to marry and be merry. She is very ambitious and has a way of looking differently towards life. Whereas Tara the younger sister presents a complete contrast who accepts the fervour of change and likes to be changed. The title is very much suggestive of clarity. The light is the light of emancipation of liberation of whole class of women to sweep over the darkness of ignorance of oneself and the family of fuller values and dignity encircling from generation to generation. She protests and separates herself from the rest moves to a secular place of her own choice within a circle containing all time past and future in it. She refuses to play the role of sex object and submissive wife and becomes in a sense a liberated woman.

Nanda Kaul in “Fire on the Mountain” the wife of Vice Chancellor of Delhi University tries to recoil from all contacts and yet attempts to reach out to others. Nanda the oldest and her granddaughter Raka the youngest of Anita Desai's protagonists take self destructive isolation as an alternative. Raka's setting the mountain on fire is her rejection of the world which has lost its meaning and does not make any sense. It is a protest against the essential beliefs and values of traditional upbringing accorded to girls in Indian society to be properly geared up to get married to a suitable boy chosen by their parents.

It is true optimistically, those circumstances, have changed and a phase of transition has set in for a new woman. The new woman is discovering and rediscovering herself in the process. She is confident enterprising and self assertive in all aspects. Now is the right time when she rises herself from all these bondages and sets her 'Self' free from all bondages. Anita Desai's characters are no exception as the characters rebel and rise and raise their opinion in no less weak words but with great will and determination. The woman in Desai's novels have emerged victorious over their struggles and tried to overcome the conflicting dilemmas surrounding their life. Her novels are more realistic than idealistic,

who rejects the lack of choice of femininity and affirm their muffled voice into a strong voice in their own rights. The projection of such female characters reflect their predicament, their constant conflict between their will to disinherit their dominant tradition and their resistance to do so.

Thus Anita Desai has experimented by depicting the changing attitude which is relevant and prevalently describes the attitudes and sensibilities that are constantly changing from traditional to liberal socio cultural ethos. Women in her novels are the personification of new woman who has tried hard and still struggling to throw off the weight of inhibition which she has been carrying since ages. She has tried to change the image of traditional Indian woman to a modern one who does not shrug off her responsibilities but carries it along in a more refined and dignified way. She tries to solve the larger issues of patriarchy and paves way to fight against social taboos and family restrictions. They are regenerated isolated and dominated by the patriarchal set up who questions the age old customs and wants to seek herself free towards a new individuality. They are allowed to tread the new found path and experiment the new Voice towards attaining their selfhood.

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A Journey of Cultural Reconstruction: Bharati Mukherjee's The Tree Bride

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the process of cultural reconstruction in an expatriate female psyche in order to clutch the roots of her motherland. Bharati Mukherjee have travelled and stayed extensively around the globe which, as a result gave her a hyphenated identity. It is always essential for an immigrant to trace his roots back to the culture he or she was born. So, Bharati Mukherjee has attempted to reconstruct the cultural history of her motherland through her ancestors. Her novel The Tree Bride is a sequel to her earlier work Desirable Daughters, where the protagonist of the former novel is also the narrator of the latter. In The Tree Bride, protagonist Tara lives a liberal life in America but in spite of this she wants to authenticate her cultural and racial identity by tracing back her ancestral roots in India and this is done by unearthing the story of her namesake ancestor Tara Lata Gangooly in pre-independence era. Through the image of Tara Lata, 'The Tree Bride', the new Tara living in America, reconstructs her past.

Keywords: Cultural, reconstruction, hyphenated, authenticate, racial

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the most well-known and influential writer of Indian diaspora. Her hyphenated identity as an Asian-American writer is very well projected in all her works. She has used women characters to express her immigrant experiences.

Her every novel is an attempt to depict the tortured psyche of women who undergoes a huge process of metamorphosis to reconstruct her cultural identity. Displacement is a word which is often considered synonymous to Bharati Mukherjee. Her hyphenated identity is the outcome of her multiple migrations since her childhood. Her journey from India to England, then again back to India, from India to America, then to Canada and then America, has molded her expatriate identity. She is an activist of civil rights, a renowned author of both fiction and non-fiction.

Born on 27 July, 1940, she has been honoured as the “Grande dame” of diasporic Indian English literature. Her father was a pharmaceutical chemist who migrated to different countries for his research work and business. Her parents always wanted her to be a writer and greatly influenced her in this direction. Her series of displacement began at a tender age of eight when her father decided to shift to London, and this continued even after her marriage. After her marriage with Clark Blaise, she migrated to Canada in 1966 and stayed there for 14 years with her husband and children. During her stay in Canada, she encountered racism and found nearly impossible living there. She strongly stated: “Over the years I spend in Canada 1966 to 1980, I experienced racial harassment in increasingly crude form...” (Blaise and Mukherjee, *Days and Night*, 302). This racial bitterness in Canada compelled her to finally migrate to America and settle down there for rest of her life.

Bharati Mukherjee's novels portray cultural differences, characters torn between their native culture and that of the migrated land. Her experience of migration, as a new woman, is the nucleus from where she writes. She has depicted migration discourse from a female point of view focusing on women who are forced to mutate, undergo complete transformation in order to be more acceptable in the new world. They are in a continuous process of cultural reconstruction struggling to be a part of the migrated land. It cannot be called a simple sense of nostalgia for their homeland; rather it is a need to reconstruct their native culture in order to cling to their roots. Her characters always travel between the old and the new world, the past and the present. In her novel *The*

Tree Bride, protagonist Tara lives a liberal life in America but in spite of this is she wants to authenticate her cultural and racial identity by tracing back her ancestral roots in India.

The very title of the novel *The Tree Bride* is used to communicate the cultural significance of her native land and status of women in that society. It is a sequel to *Desirable Daughters*, where the protagonist of the former novel is also the narrator of the latter. The former novel ends with a terrorist attack on Tara's house after which her husband Bish is severely burned and crippled. At this point *The Tree Bride* opens with a fire bombing scene of Tara's house in San Francisco by an Indian terrorist Abbas. At this traumatic point, her grandmother's stories of Hindu birth cycle floats in her mind:

The individual soul wanders in a dreamless state...in the windy realm of vayumandala waiting for its allotted time to reinhabit a living body...the soul persists. Fire cannot burn it, nor water drown it.... The cosmos is created, sustained, destroyed and recreated over and over again....(TB:4)

In this physical condition of Bish, Tara decides to reconcile her divorced marital relation and stay with him. This situation of distress works as a catalyst for Tara to trace her roots back in her native land. She does this by unearthing the life of her ancestor Tara Lata Gangooly in India. She is the 'Tree Bride' of the story. She was married by her parents at the tender age of five, but a terrible calamity befalls her when her fiancé dies on the day of marriage. Her parents then decide to marry her to a 'Sundari' tree with an intention to protect her from the traumatic fate of widow in Indian society. Since then she acquired this name *Tree Bride*. Tara's thirst to trace her cultural identity is quenched through the history of *Tree Bride*. She says: “some cultural habits never die”.

Tara also happens to be pregnant at this time and due to her inclination towards her native land, she is in search of an Indian gynecologist. Finally she finds Dr. V. Khanna, but interestingly this doctor turns out to be a White Woman with different racial features,

named Victoria Alexandria Treadwell, who is married to an Indian. She says:

Blood tests are like big thick novels, aren't they? ... They can tell us more than we need to know. The history of race, for instance. (TB:10)

Meanwhile Tara has started to pen down the history of her ancestors in the form of a book which makes her dive deep into the past. Eventually Tara comes to realize that there was some connection between Victoria's grandfather, Vertie Treadwell and her ancestor, Tree Bride. Vertie was a District Commissioner in Bengal from 1930 up through independence. The doctor gives some old papers to Tara which might help in her writing. Through these evidences of past she learns more about the condition of her native land in pre-independence era and also the role of her ancestor Tree Bride. She speculates:

Victoria Treadwell's grandfather must have known the Tree Bride. All stories of Mishtigunj touch, eventually on Tara Lata Gangooly. She is like the Ganges, draining all tributaries. (TB:27)

Her husband supports her in this endeavor by reinforcing the thought: "Nothing in the universe is ever lost" (TB:36). Among those papers Tara finds a paper cutting which declares the death of her ancestor Tara Lata in police custody. That newspaper cutting considered her a saint saying: "Mishtigunj Mourns Death of Tara Lata-Ma Famed Saint and recluse dies of heart attack in police custody." (TB:36) After going through these papers Tara learns history of her homeland and their struggle in pre-independence period.

The novel unveils a realistic picture of 19th century Bengal with its beauty, cultural richness, rituals and sufferings. The conditions of starvation, drought and the difference between customs of Hindu and Muslim living on the same land, projects the image of pre independence Bengal. These bits of information help Tara to reconstruct Tara Lata Gangooly and the Tree Bride comes out to be a courageous woman who participates in the freedom

struggle and gives shelter to freedom fighters. It is a custom in India to give gold to their daughters as a part of dowry, which Tara Lata used to help the freedom fighters in national movement.

She meets another character from Mishtigunj, a haji named Gul Mohammed who gives Tara more relevant information about her ancestors. On her visit to Mishtigunj, she visits the place where Tara Lata lived-the 'Mishti Mahal' on which it was written "Home of Tara Lata Gangooly (1874-1943), Freedom Fighter and Martyr, known to the world as Tara-Ma." (TB:59) Tara recollects all these scattered information to rebuild her past and their life.

The novel *The Tree Bride* reflects the common thirst of every expatriate to reconstruct the culture in which they were born. In spite of living in San Francisco, Tara longs for her Indian roots, culture and rituals. From Victoria's grandfather, Tara gets to know that her namesake ancestor died in police custody. It was a mysterious death and her body was never found. The administration declared it a suicide but Tara felt her presence, who pleaded her to perform the ritual of cremation in order to make her soul free from this world: "I am trapped in your world of mortals...Perform the rites." (TB:279). She herself describes how she died:

They loosed my body over the prison wall into the sewage ditch. I hovered above my corpse. It lay submerged in filth. Vultures ripped chunks off with their beaks. Starving dogs chewed my bones. I had no body but I felt the pain, and the shame. (TB:281)

Tara and her husband Bish decides to answer the plea and performs her last rituals in Kashi, in order to liberate her soul as a Hindu custom.

This novel is an attempt to showcase an immigrant woman's quest to reconstruct the life of her ancestors and through it unearth the culture and rituals of her native land. It is like a journey back to the culture of your origin through your ancestors. It is also a tribute to the resilient nature on Indian women irrespective of pre-independence and post-independence era.

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Man and Nature in *The Vegetarian*

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Abstract

The Vegetarian is a Man Booker award winning novel by the South Korean novelist Han Kang. The Novel was first published in Korean in 2007 in South Korea as *Chaeshikjueuija* by Changbi Publishers. Han Kang is extremely sensitive to the colour, form and atmosphere of a place. The present paper attempts to explore the response of human beings to the natural world and vice-versa and the technique used by the author in the portrayal of this relationship. *The Vegetarian* is a novel in three parts by Han Kang. A single resolution of giving up non-vegetarian food by Yeong –hye, the protagonist, astonishes all those people related to her. In response to the violence inflicted on her by her kith and kin and her husband, she alienates herself from the human world and in turn starts identifying herself with plants.

Keywords: alienates, violence, vegetarian, relation, trees, animals, dark recesses

The present paper attempts to explore the natural world, its actions and reactions with respect to the human world, the response of human beings to the natural world and the technique used by the author in the portrayal of this relationship. Empathy with the natural world developing as an after-effect of a dream, brings about a disastrous turn in the life of the protagonist Yeong –hye. A single resolution of giving up non-vegetarian food by the protagonist Yeong –hye, astonishes all those people related to her. In response to the violence inflicted on her by her husband, her father and her

brother she alienates herself from the human world and starts identifying herself with the plants. Her metamorphosis into a plant is an escape from the violence and tensions of this world into an unknown world. Because she empathises with nature, nature also gives her happiness and peace. However, her own sister In-hye doesn't feel so close to nature and nature also remains cold and indifferent to her. Hence, nature is benevolent to those who empathise with it and malevolent to other human beings who are indifferent towards it.

The recurring, vivid image of the trees with leaves emitting spring-time's green light from the beginning till the end lends unity to the whole plot of the novel. This image has its origin in the dream of Yeong-hye. However, it can be physically verified by her sister In-hye at the end of the novel when Yeong-hye is being shifted to another hospital. Han Kang paints an eerie picture by combining the vegetarian and the non-vegetarian world through the dreams of the protagonist. In her dream Yeong-hye enters into the dark woods where she comes across "A large bamboo stick strung with great blood-red gashes of meat, blood still dripping down." (*The Vegetarian* 12) To Yeong-hye the dream gives a vivid, strange and horribly uncanny feeling while it is nothing but a "crazy spiel" (VT 17) to her husband.

Han Kang has tried to drive home the idea that trees don't have a passive role in this novel. They seem to be trying to communicate something to the human beings. The narrative and descriptive style replete with psychological tension and conflict has been successfully employed to convey to us the hue and cry over a marginalized woman's decision to become a pure vegetarian in a violent, non-vegetarian world. The psychological explorations to find out the real cause of the abnormal behavior of Yeong-hye can be made by connecting her present vegetarianism with the killing and devouring of animals in the past. The act of killing animals and devouring them in the past weighs heavy upon her conscience. She remembers the killing of a dog by her father and inviting all the worthy people of the market for the feast. The horrible incident becomes etched in her mind forever. The horror of the torture inflicted on the dog by her father has been painfully narrated by

Yeong-hye. How the dog was chained to her father's motorcycle, how the dog went seven laps as her father drove the motorcycle with it, how the dog dangled loosely behind the motorcycle – the memories linger in her mind. She still remembers-

"The dog's four juddering legs. Its raised eyelids, the blood and water in its dead eyes." (TV 42) The description invokes such horror that it becomes difficult to differentiate between man and animal in such a situation.

Strange reactions of different human beings are observed on the matter of someone becoming a vegetarian. According to the executive director's wife if people turned vegetarian for health reasons or for religion, it was acceptable. However, it was considered to be beyond comprehension and utterly disgraceful when people became vegetarian just because they personally hated eating meat. These debatable socio-cultural sentiments of the general people of South Korea for whom non-vegetarianism is a more normal way of living, find expression in this novel. The sentiments of empathy for the dead animals and giving up meat eating is considered to be an abnormality and subversive act in the Korean culture. (VT 41)

Many Korean traditions have been associated with the animals. According to one, the tying of a singed tail of the same dog to the wound is the traditional cure for dog-bite. Another saying is that for the healing of the wound caused by dog-bite one has to eat the same dog. Ironically, after getting cured physically, Yeong-hye remains spiritually wounded throughout her life.

The author takes us to a strange world of fantasies. Yeong-hye goes deep into her self formed world of fantasies. She believes that if she abnegates from eating meat she would not get those nightmarish dreams. However, it doesn't work. Yeong-hye's obsession with plants is carried to such an extent that she wants to make love to the sunlight, to the wind.

The recurring image of the "Flaming Trees" creates lot of suspense in the novel. This part of the novel is in direct contrast with the previous part in which her brother-in-law artistically paints bright coloured flowers on her body and is fascinated by the beauty

of her body. The extent of happiness of Yeong-hye with the artificial flowers can help us in measuring the depth of her love for real plants and flowers. Vegan world in any form fascinates her. The floral bodies of her brother-in-law and Yeong-hye entwined together creates a union of images that are “somehow repellent and yet compellingly beautiful”. (TV 113) At such moment the artist inside the brother-in-law wonders if they would “seem like one body, a hybrid of plants, animal and human?” (TV 113) While at some places there is a merging of human body with that of a plant, at other times we notice the human body adapting animal characteristics. When Yeong-hye's father tortures her and forcibly pushes a lump of meat into her mouth she revolts and howls like an animal. In the second part we read-

“The sunlight coming into the room was bright. Her disheveled hair wrapped around her head like an animal's mane, while the crumpled sheet was coiled around her lowered body. The smell of her body filled the room, a sour, tangy smell with notes of sweetness, bitterness, and a rank animal musk.” (TV 116)

In-hye, her sister does not feel the same about nature. Through the technique of juxtaposition the author shows how the two sisters respond differently to the violence of the human world. While Yeong-hye gradually gravitates towards the vegan world, In-hye keeps her hold on the thread of her life and does not succumb to the pressures of the patriarchal world. She learns to move on in adverse weather even when “the raindrops drum against her umbrella, so forcefully it seems they might rip through the material.” (TV 123)

The black spaces between the trees hidden by the shaking leaves beaten with rains symbolize the dark recesses of the human mind where it is difficult to reach; humans who are victimized and shaken in life due to the violence inflicted upon them by other human beings. Yeong-hye's transformation into a tree becomes conspicuous into the last part. When she is missing from the hospital, the nurse finds her sitting in an “isolated spot deep in the woods covering the mountain slope, standing there stock-still and soaked with rain as if she herself was one of the glistening trees.” (TV 125) The image of Yeong-hye sitting amongst the trees like an

ascetic is exactly contrasting with the image of her fretting and fearing sister In-hye in which she is putting wet flannel on her son's forehead. While Yeong-hye sits fearlessly in the woods In-hye feels that the tree flickering in the rain, the black rain, black woods, black mountain slopes –all of them appear like a dead person or a ghost. Rain is an ill-omen that occurs in many places and becomes a harbinger of discomfort and struggle in life for In-hye. In-hye watches the streaks of rain falling through the window with an indifference. The sight of late June woods is disconcerting to her.

“There is something battened down about the woods like a huge animal suppressing a roar.” (TV 124)

The rain brings dreariness and desolation everywhere. Grey colour has been aptly used to symbolize the sorrow and the loneliness of the patients in the psychiatric hospital. Grey walls seem to symbolize the sadness of human beings and inside them are locked the patients with “grey faces.” (TV 134) The rain makes the patients feel claustrophobic. It takes away the liveliness of the patients. There is an element of mystery and wonder which hovers above the images of nature. The four hundred year old zelkova tree spreading its innumerable sunlit branches seems to be “communicating something to her.” (TV 135) Rain has brought a negative effect upon this otherwise brightly shining tree. It is stupefied, quiet and refrains from sharing its thoughts with someone else. The zelkova with trembling leaves has been personified as a human being. The ghostly image of Yeong-hye in the background of quiet landscape has something mysterious and sinister about it. Yeong-hye whispers to her sister- “Sister...all the trees of the world are like brothers and sisters.” (TV 144) At other place also we read about the trees as living creatures –“They just stood there, stubborn and solemn yet alive as animals, bearing up the weight of their own massive bodies” (TV 170)

The juxtaposition of the white bird and the black bird images is significant. The white bird represents In-hye who is about to escape from the harsh realities of this violent world but is forced to make a come-back owing to her love for her son Jee-woo. Yeong-hye has no thread to hold her back to life and her succumbing to the violence of this world and her escape from it have been symbolized

by the flight of the dark bird. The dark clouds are the dark, unfathomable recesses of her mind where no one, not even her loving and caring sister Yeong-hye can reach. At one place Yeong-hye blames her sister for not taking her along with her while soaring to great heights. It is not only Yeong-hye's complaint against her sister but also the complaint of all isolated women against all the other women for not helping them out. As Gloria Steinheim puts it-

“If we're by ourselves we come to feel crazy and alone. We need to make alternate families of small groups of women who support each other, talk to each other regularly, can speak their truths and their experiences and find they're not alone in them, that other women have them, to... It makes such a huge difference.”
(Web)

Yeong-hye's response to nature reminds of Byron's pleasure in the pathless woods-

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more, (Web)

On the contrary, her own sister In-hye doesn't feel so close to nature and nature also remains cold and indifferent to her. In-hye cannot understand what the waves or the trees “clustered together like green flames in the early morning half-light, had been saying.” (TV 169) In-hye draws no warmth, comfort, mercy from the trees. Nature has refused to accept her.

While Yeong-hye begins to identify herself into a plant, her sister tries to detach herself from such thoughts. The headstands of Yeong-hye are furthering her move of escaping the real world of human beings; of shifting towards the vegan world and becoming one with it. In-hye in her confusion, sometimes compares Yeong-hye to an innocent child and at other times she feels that her sister's voice seems to resemble “a distorted animal sound.” (VT 136) Psychologically, the confusion of perception results in confusing and contrasting comparisons of a single person into a plant, an innocent child and an animal.

Flying birds, butterflies, moths, flies become a symbol of flight from the harsh realities, the horror, the cruelties and the violence of human life. Hence nature becomes a medium for expressing the inner desire of escape for the tortured human beings. Ironically, such sentiments cannot be understood by people like In-hye who are so much engrossed in the humdrum of modern and materialistic life that they are not able to connect themselves to the signs and symbols of nature. She is able to make superficial comparison of her husband's skinny body to that of a sorghum stalk but cannot understand the deeper meanings of his paintings in which he keeps on deliberately inserting images of flying birds or insects. Had she understood the deeper implications of those flights, she would have understood the depression of her husband. Her husband's joy and enthusiasm at the imagination of flowers, or still better, butterflies springing from the footsteps of his son and similar images cannot be felt or experienced by In-hye. (VT 149)

To conclude, we can say that Han Kang has successfully woven a world of humans, animals and plants, interchanging their forms and trying to communicate something which cannot be understood by ordinary human-beings. What connects the protagonist to the natural world? What is the signal sent by the zelkova tree or the recurring trees emitting green lights? The dark mysteries of human mind, the dark spaces between plants and animals remain inaccessible to the ordinary human beings. Sometimes expert doctors, or even science, fail to explore these dark, mysterious zones in man and nature and understand the relationship between man and nature.

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Exploring the theme of post- colonialism in Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines*

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Abstract

The Shadow Lines is an attempt by Amitav Ghosh to show the Blurring of lines or borders between East and West, castes and religious beliefs through an unconventional post-colonial novel which shows the colonised travelling and moving to and from the coloniser's territory. But the instigation or the impetus to present such a world sans boundaries, ironically enough, comes through a personal experience of communal riots. Like Ghosh's first novel *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines*, too revolves around the diaspora of East Pakistan after the partition.

Keywords: Post-colonial, history, trauma, partition, boundaries, tradition.

The conventional Indian novel in English reinforces the classical notion of discrete cultures and a world full of distinctly marked divisions. Amitav Ghosh confesses: "Within a few months I started my novel, which I eventually called *The Shadow Lines*, a book that led me backwards in time, to earlier memories of riots, ones witnessed in childhood. It became a book about the meaning of such events and their effects on the individuals who live through them." (Bhattacharjea, p204). But *The Shadow Lines* breaks the convention in the very beginning. 'In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father's aunt, Mayadebi went to England with her husband and son, Tridib,' (Ghosh: *The Shadow Lines* p1) The novel

makes the natives of the colonised country, the travellers who go to England, the country of their colonisers, whereas in a conventional colonial novel the westerners are made to travel to India, a country with an ancient fixed and a self-contained culture. Robert Dixon speaks about the way *The Shadow Lines* is different in its approach from conventional post-colonial novels.

"The central fact of travel in this Indian family's experience immediately demands that we modify our expectations about Indian culture and the way it is depicted in English novels about the Raj. Furthermore, these Indians are going abroad in 1939, the year Britain declared war on Germany. Classical ethnography assumes that the culture of the western observer is a stable and coherent point, from which to observe native society. Ghosh undermines the notion by depicting Britain at war with Germany, so that partition takes place against the background of an equally unstable Europe. The parallels between England and Germany and India and Pakistan-effectively undermine any distinction between East and West, colony and metropolis, and point to similarities and continuities that cut across these differences."

The narrator's family are Hindus who fled from their home in Dhaka and Calcutta after the formation of East Pakistan. When Europe itself is completely shattered due to the Second World War, they become friends with the Prices, an English family, obliterating the cultural divide, and making the English family experience the horrors and participate in the very climactic event in the life of the Indian family. The metaphor of travel as a means of bridging boundaries and bringing about cultural crossings is carried out throughout the entire time span covered by the novel and through all the variegated characters. The plot of the novel revolves around these two families the Datta Chaudhuris of Bengal and the Prices of London and the narrator's relationship with them. The lives of these two families are constantly intersecting and intertwining and it's the unnamed narrator who weaves the various threads together. Mrs. Price's father who initiated the long relationship between theirs and the narrator's family lived in India before independence. The narrator's very eccentric uncle Tridib, went to London and lived with the Prices during the war. The narrator, who remains an

anonymous 'I' throughout the narrative, is Tridib's alter ego and he also continues this pattern of dwelling in travel. The history of London had been made alive to the narrator, through the stories Ila used to tell him and Tridib, who believed in inventing every place in one's imagination. The narrator is writing shortly after his arrival from England, where he too becomes involved with the Prices. The core of the whole story is the tragic incident of Tridib's murder in old Dhaka by an angry mob, where they went because of the grandmother's background in East Bengal. The three persons who play a significant role in the life of the narrator are his uncle Tridib, Ila, and his grandmother. But it's Tridib who exercises the greatest influence on the narrator and helps him evolve into adulthood where he's able to discard all restricting boundaries and is able to invent places in his imagination. The political, regional and linguistic lines become blurred, as the narrator's consciousness and memory become an organizing place, where the lives of three generations of his family are woven together, as are the cities in which their lives have been acted out: Dhaka, Calcutta and London.

The metaphor of travel as a means of bridging boundaries and bringing about cultural crossings is carried out throughout the entire time span covered by the novel and through all the variegated characters. Mrs. Price's father, who initiated the long relationship between theirs and the narrator's family, lived in India before independence, and is a type of travelling Englishman who left his home in Cornwall to travel widely in the Empire: in Malaysia, Fiji, Ceylon and finally Calcutta. The narrator's very eccentric uncle Tridib, went to London and lived with the Prices during the war. The tradition is followed by the narrator who also dwells in travel. *The Shadow Lines* is an apt revelation of the fragility of partition, borderlines between countries and the cartographical lines which claim to separate people and communities. He gives the metaphor of the looking glass to these borderlines wherein every populace sees its own image reflected in the land on the other side of the border. It is the collective consciousness and the memory of common historical events that transcends the boundaries of nations and brings people of different countries together. The novel illustrates how the two cities of Dhaka and Calcutta are separated from the countries they are geographically a part of, and binds them

in the narrator's consciousness through a common suffering. This is the reason why the narrator, Robi and Ila crave for a different kind of freedom, a freedom from memory that haunts them.

This urge for a freedom from memory is in strong contrast to the narrator's grandmother's conception of freedom which she would once have even killed, to attain. During her student days she too had wanted to earn some glory by helping the terrorist organisations who were fighting for the country's freedom, by running errands for them or even cooking for them and washing their clothes. But the futility of these political boundaries is realised by Tha'mma at Tridib's death. Dhaka was her place of birth and as a young girl she had thought of fighting for the freedom of East Bengal. But the very people and nation for whom she had been willing to sacrifice herself are the cause of her sorrow in 1964. The struggle against the British in Dhaka had been motivated by feelings of nationalism towards Bangladesh. But in 1964 that very loyal group of people, coming from India in the embassy car become the enemies to be hunted and killed. Novy Kapadia aptly points out:

“By exploring connections, distinctions and possibilities, Amitav Ghosh shows that in a changing world, different strands of nationalism and ideology will exist and even compete. The force of nationalism and ideology will exist and even compete. The force of nationalism in the quest for freedom or ideology is often a source of violence. So the 'Shadow Line' between people and nations is often mere illusion. The force and appeal of nationalism cannot be wished away (so easily), just as death by a communal mob in the bylanes of old Dhaka.”

Ila presents a conception of freedom entirely different from that of the grandmother, a freedom which is more individualistic and personalised. Ila despises everything Indian and tries to seek an identity for herself in a foreign land. Ila spends her entire life travelling across the world but in the end finds herself lonely and miserable without a sense of belonging anywhere in the world. She feels herself an alien to the conservative Indian culture and tries to find herself by identifying with the west. She marries Nick in this search for roots, who ill treats her and is unfaithful to her. In the end she tries to find solace with the narrator and Robi, members of her

own family. The Prices and Datta Chaudhuris contact which brings together Tridib and May is another study of a connection where borders dissolve under the weight of mutual love and compassion. A romantic relationship develops between Tridib and May, rising above the 'shadow lines' of nationality and cultural boundary. This affectionate and empathetic relation between the two families at a time when the two countries were pitted against each other is the main theme of the novel.

Although Ghosh's characters globe trot from one part of the world to another jumping not just political and physical boundaries but also psychological divides, the novel is divided by him into two parts, 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home' overlooking the identities of nations. But Amitav Ghosh's characters move in so many directions that ultimately the identity of a distinct and discrete homeland becomes blurred and the world where no boundaries of race or caste are acknowledged, becomes one big home and the real home lies in one's memory and consciousness away from all lines. The concept of 'Home' is further problematized in the second part of the novel when the narrator's grandmother returns to visit her paternal home in Dhaka in 1964. But this homecoming is full of ironies and complications. His grandmother wants to bring her uncle back from East Pakistan, the land of their Muslim enemies, to her home in Calcutta – but Dhaka is her birthplace, the home to which she goes back. Grandmother, in the novel represents the classical conception of cultures. She feels nostalgic for the old world when there were marked divisions politically as well as culturally.

Tridib, throughout his life span has always desired a freedom from arbitrary borders and distinctions and the consequent increase in hatreds and mutual rivalries and a return to a true world full of harmonies and affection. Making narrator as Tridib's alter ego Tridib's relationship with May, where Tridib expresses a desire to meet May at a place where there's no history, no culture, a place that is neutral, is carried forward by the narrator. The meeting of East and West is symbolically presented in the scene when Tridib meets his death, or in May's words sacrifices himself to achieve a state where people stop believing in these lines and borders not just physical but also psychological. It was because of

this mental barrier of hatred between people of same geographical location but different religions that May a foreigner is safe amid such brutal violence.

The Shadow Lines has widely been hailed as the most important post-colonial fictional work of contemporary Indian writing in English. It imbibes all the major post-colonial concerns of our age viz, the search for identity, changing relationship with the coloniser wherein the native travels to the coloniser's land instead of the conventional oppressor coming to the ruled colony; the use of the individual's memory and the collective consciousness of the community to understand the country's past and a language coloured by vernacular usages. The post-colonial world witnesses a change in the attitude of the colonizer as well, a factor rarely acknowledged in post-colonial literatures, but consciously indited by Ghosh through the character of May. When May comes to Calcutta, she greets Tridib by hugs and kisses, a mistake she becomes conscious of very soon, as she notices people jeering at them. Later Tridib meets May at the Queen Victoria's memorial, a place that belongs to India as well as England.

The cultural interaction between coloniser and colonised comes to the fore initially when Ila shares her experiences and yearbooks of international schools, with the narrator. The narrator realizes the real discrimination behind the glamorous picture portrayed by her; when he shares some of Ila's stories with May, later on. But the narrator's visit to England, years later, shows a very pleasant change in the attitude of the people of England. This positive change however, escapes Thamma who despises all that is western. The grandmother thinks Ila's western influence will corrupt her grandson. Although she deeply admires the spirit of nationalism in the west and the sacrifices made by them to attain their freedom, but Ila according to her, loves the west for the personal freedom that it affords. The grandmother wants India to achieve a cultural nationalism which would join the entire nation into a single independent entity. She initiates her students to cook food of different states of India so that they become aware of the diversity and unity of Indian culture. The Grandmother wanted the Indians to overcome their awe and longing for the European

culture. But May, partly because of her ill understanding of the Indian culture and partly in an effort to display superior western social virtues, becomes the cause of Tridib's death. Not just Tridib in his supreme sacrifice, but the post-colonial desire to assess one's culture by the standards of the western cultures is also evident in the constant comparison the young narrator makes between himself and Nick Price. Despite May's keen desire to understand India, she is unable to avert the disaster of Tridib's death. Similarly Ila's efforts to be a part of the western civilization also meet with disaster.

The Shadow Lines portrays two types of post-colonial characters: one includes the elite class of Mayadebi and Shaheb, and the other like Ila who live in close contact with the West. They want to be a part of the colonizer's world. In *The Shadow Lines* the idea of nationhood, freedom and feminism go hand in hand. Ghosh's chief concern with the erasure of borders and boundaries is a direct questioning of the concept of nationhood. The idea of freedom also has different connotations for different characters. While the narrator's grandmother is full of patriotism and nationalist fervour against the colonial power, Ila pines for personal freedom in a post-modern context. A perusal of the novel with a feminist perspective would require a study of the concept of nation and freedom as perceived by the various characters. Another factor, conspicuous by its absence, in Ghosh's novel is the female bonding or the conventional sorority of women bound by common suffering. They are all isolated from each other, none finding solace in each other's company. Ila, and the grandmother never get along. The narrator's mother, Ila's mother, Mayadebi, all are too absorbed in their own worlds, to interact with each other. Ila doesn't understand May – they have nothing to do with each other its only May who finds some comfort and solace and that too with the narrator, a male.

The Shadow Lines is not a conventional chronological narrative. For instance the use of significant device like division into 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home' is used to structure and organise the novel. Thus, *The Shadow Lines* imbibes the themes of feminism, and nationalism while making use of unique narrative technique based on memory. But the novel stands out for the introduction of Ghosh's favourite concern and a revolutionary one too, of the futility

of borders and divisions and emphasis on the need to dissolve these physical boundaries.

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Understanding “Being and Belonging” in Boman Desai's Novels: *The Memory of Elephants, Asylum, USA and A Woman Madly in Love*

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Abstract

Parsee writers have carved a distinct literary identity of and for their community at the global level and have made people aware of the problems and culture of this community. Boman Desai is a Parsee Zoroastrian and as a person whose ancestors were forced into exile by the Islamic conquest of Iran, he was in Diaspora even in India. Desai's fiction deals with memory and with the re-enactment of his past experiences mapped on a shifted, superimposed, fictive topography. The characters in Desai's novels especially his first two novels, deal with the complex questions of going back to the community past. He has strived to spell Parsee patois in diverse hues, their being and belonging.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Immigrant, Alienation, Distress, Identity crisis

A tiny community of the Parsees has proved its survival, adaptation and peculiar uniqueness through the centuries. It is the community which proudly marks its existence, its contribution to the overall progress of the society and their own cultural identity. Parsee people are 'Persians' who follow Iranian prophet Zoroaster. They immigrated to India due to religious maltreatment by the Muslims.

One cannot ignore the Parsees for their considerable and significant contribution to various facets of national life in the Indian subcontinent. Many Parsee writers have carved a distinct literary identity of and for their community at the global level and have made people aware of the problems and culture of this community. The route of Parsees in Indian writing in English was started a century ago with Behram Malabari, the poet, who was also among the earliest Indians to start writing in English. The famous anthology of poems of Behramji Malabari entitled *The Indian Muse* in English Grab was first published in 1877 and the later publications are a set of twenty-six drafts in Gujarati and *The Eye of English Life* with his reflections on the English life.

The 1980s and 1990s was the period to witness the rise of Boman Desai, Dina Mehata, Firdaus Kanga and Ardashir Vakil. All the concerns of the community - funeral rites, the existence or non-existence of ethnic anxieties, declining population, inter-faith marriages, late marriages, urbanization, attitude to the girl-child, modernist, alienation, vs. traditionalist attitude to religion and brain-drain – are aptly delineated in the works of Parsee authors, and focus on the isolation in the urban scenario, dilution of values, marginalization of the Parsees in the recent years and the influence of massive commercialization on the Parsee psyche.

Parsees have always been conscious of their difference. They are inbred, they claim not be Indian, insisting on their Persian ancestry – Persian, not Iranian, and they have their own special religion. Most of them, in fact, claim to feel more for Queen Victoria and the British Royal Family than they do for the Indian constitution. This is why Parsees have been writing novels that deal with the knotty problem of who they are and why they feel foreigners in India an estranged abroad.

Boman Desai: A Parsee Writer

Boman Desai was born on March 4, 1950, grew up in Bombay, educated in United States and raised in a Parsee family in Bombay, but has spent most of his life in Chicago. He moved to Chicago in 1969 for his studies at the University of Illinois. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Masters in

English. He lives and works in Chicago now. He has worked in various capacities including farmhand, bartender, dishwasher, short-order cook, secretary, musician, bookstore clerk, telephone operator, auditor and teacher. He began writing in 1976. He is a winner of Illinois Arts Council Award, 1990 and also the Stand Magazine award. He paints intimate portraits of the Parsee Community in his books. He can type 80 words a minute without a single typo. And he's done all this to support himself as a writer. Little did Mumbai boy Boman Desai know, when he left the country some years ago to study architecture, that he would spend so much time and energy just to do what he really wanted to do that is writing.

Boman Desai is a Parsee Zoroastrian and as a person whose ancestors were forced into exile by the Islamic conquest of Iran, he was in Diaspora even in India. Like other Parsee writers, his writing is informed by this experience of double displacement as a recurrent theme in his literary works. Boman's historical situation involves construction of new identity in the nation to which he has migrated and a complex relationship with the cultural history of the nation, he has left behind. He dramatizes the pangs of alienation that finally led to the fruits of adaptation, in India and abroad for the Parsees. Adaptation in India and expatriation in Canada are similar in function, though they are dissimilar in their levels of historicity. It is the Parsee who is the narrator in his fiction and Bombay life is seen, reflected on, and commented upon from a Parsee point of view. Boman, therefore, successfully evokes a sense of loss and nostalgia in the immigrant's experience and the alienation of Parsees in India.

Though he sees himself as part of the group of Indian-English writers, he thinks that such categories are incidental. He believes that he is a Parsee and therefore he writes about the Parsees. He uses his Parseeness as a "Springboard into other cultures". (Das: 2001)

His Novels

Boman Desai is an Indian expatriate writer, and with that territory comes certain predictability in terms of storytelling style and choice of themes, of the crucial element of memory, of a world lost or altered, the jet-set concept of transnationalism and of course

of nostalgia. As Desai shuttles between two major cities of the world, between the relationship of a man and a woman that cuts across half a generation, certain elements that are key ingredients to the making of a successful novel are omnipresent – friendship, yearning, sadness, marriage, love and all the allied recipes that accompany them. Much of Boman Desai's fiction deals with memory and with the re-enactment of his past experiences mapped on a shifted superimposed fictive topography.

His first novel, *The Memory of Elephants* (1998) is a poignant portrait of the Parsee Community in India. His second novel, *Asylum, USA* focuses on the religious, ethnic and cultural differences that shape the Parsee identity. *A Woman Madly in Love*, his third novel, is about a Parsee woman who starts out a journey blindly, but then her experiences transform her and take her closer to her real self. The characters in Desai's novels, especially his first two novels, deal with the complex questions of 'being' and 'belonging' by going back to the Community's past.

The Memory of Elephants speaks about the question of Parsee identity and Parsee Diasporas. The hero Homi lives in confused and unsettled world over which his invention, the memoscan, forces its own order. The memoscan gives him the memory of elephants and perspective of the universe. The novel depicts the Iranian past, pre-colonial Indian period, the colonial years, the American migration, Bombay and the present India. But Homi fails to move across his cultural difference and the stubbornly conserved monotheistic religion.

The Memory of Elephants is a good tautological case in point as it is a bold experiment in Indian fiction in general, and in Parsee fiction in particular. There is a movement backwards, into time and space, thus the novelist dexterously reconstructs the racial past glorified by the Zoroastrian history. By emerging triumphantly from the maelstrom of a person and racial crisis, Homi, becomes confident of his own salvation as well as that of his race, which is on the verge of extinction. (shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in)

Much of Boman Desai's fiction deals with memory and with the re-enactment of his past experiences resulting in a blend of autobiography and fiction. *The Memory of Elephants* is a true case

in point. The Protagonist, Homi alias Hormus Seervai, is a Parsee from Bombay. He is a research student in the USA where he invents a machine called memoscan. Using this machine he could rewind his memory that he wishes to retrieve. He recollected memory of his love life, his community and slips into the collective unconscious where he talks to his ancestors. This resulted into a semi-conscious state, short-term memory, and totally at the caprice of an unalterable past. His memory takes him back to the 7th century, when Arabs conquered his ancestor's native land 'Persia', now called as Iran, and they were forced to leave it. They acquired shelter in India, which has now become their home. Memoscan shows him the lives of three generations of his family and as a result produces a long story of 19th century England, Hong Kong, Scotland and finally India. There are six main characters in the story. In addition to the character of Homi, there is Rusi, his younger brother, his parents and his two grandmothers, who mark out the personal, family and professional lives of the Parsees, a tiny yet important minority of the upper-class Bombay society. Bharucha observes:

Elephants concerns itself most directly with the question of Parsee identity. It focuses on all four elements of this identity – religion, ethnicity, history and consciousness of elite status (Bharucha, 76).

The memoscan goes on intertwining the past into the present and characters of Homi's family become superimposed on those of Arabs and Persian soldiers. Homi's consciousness becomes the viewpoint where the personal and the cultural memories merge. The novel highlights the issue of Parsee identity and racial history through Homi's memory. Depicting the identity crisis of a modern Parsee who does not know where his 'home' is. When Rusi talks about Homi's discharge from the hospital, Homi's innocent question shows this dilemma of the community, "Home? Where? Aquihana or Bombay?" The answer that Rusi gives is: "Tomorrow, Aquihana – in a week, Bombay." (21) Bombay, i.e. India and Aquihana, i.e. USA are both their 'homes' but none of them is comfortable for the Parsees. The pain felt due to displacement, loss of home and the feeling of being in exile is still carried on with the second displacement after arriving India.

Homi's memory scan is so intense that the narrative gets

hold of the required amount of a vision. Hence, there is an element of incredibility, though only initially, in Homi's perception of reality. Homi soon overcomes the problem of hallucination and understands what Bapaji says to him:

The first time Bapaji "spoke" to me she said, "Are, Hormus, my lost-in-America-grandson, this is your Bapaji speaking, not your mamaiji – or are you too much American now to remember what little Gujarati you so eagerly learned from me?" (28).

Homi identifies her at once by her sarcasm. Homi and Rusi spoke English with everyone who could, Hindi with everyone who couldn't. Bapaji could speak Hindi but she strictly spoke in Gujarati with her grandsons. Homi thinks that she should have learnt English if it meant that much to her to speak with her grandsons. Homi is often confronted with the clash between his Parsee identity and the Indian identity. His mother's westernized family characterizes the Parsees based in USA and is distanced from the Indian reality.

Bharucha comments:

This is not as paradoxical as it sounds. Membership in a wider identity does not necessarily exclude the narrower identity. In fact, only those like Bapaji, who fully belongs to the narrower ethnic identity, can assimilate best into the macro level identity. Homi's Bapaji, the strong lady, a Parsee rooted in semirural Gujarat, is the 'guide' through the intricate maze of the collective unconscious. She is not just Homi's past, she is the Parsees' Indian link, she is symbolic of those first Parsees who had made a pact with Jadav Rana to embrace the Gujarati language, Indian dress and customs... (Bharucha, 1994:77-78).

Through this novel Desai seems to convey that the Parsees living in the western countries have disassociated themselves from their origin. For recovering their identity they need to return to their pasts. It is difficult for them to survive in today's globalized community without recovering their culture. The end of the story captures the essence of the narrative; the ancestors of Homi appear to bless him. He is overjoyed: "I had done it; I'd brought them all together in one place at one time, made a whole of the scattered

pieces"(406). Homi's victory lies in connecting his origin with present. The brief zigzag movements of the memoscan gives Homi a stance that helps him discover all the sides of his identity, the various diasporas of the Parsees. The writer has tried to reconstitute the fractured identity of the Parsees into whole and integrated one.

Boman Desai's second novel, *Asylum, USA* (2000), illustrates a diaspora consciousness in terms of spaces. A diaspora consciousness, James Clifford argues, is constructed both positively and negatively. This novel is about a young student, Noshir Daruwala who goes to America from India for studying engineering as many students are going to America for higher studies these days.

Boman Desai's all the novels deal with, in some way or another, the Parsee community at large. The evocation of both the characters and the community are done in fine detail, both beautifully painted and expressively fleshed out.

As people can enjoy all kind of freedom in America Noshir could manage his American citizenship and green card by marrying a lesbian. He pays her for helping him in getting the green card. When he decides on this plan, he exclaims, "Everything was permitted because I had given myself permission. What a world!" (37). This liberalization of the mind progresses with generations. Noshir's parents could not easily accept this marriage but then they had to swallow the magnitude of this liberatedness. Just after marriage Noshir's bride, tells him "You know husband, you can bring girls home if you want to. I know, wife, I said" (41)

Noshir appears to be quite vulnerable in emotional matters. He learns his lessons of worldly wisdom the hard way. He comes to know of his position, assets and weaknesses only when he has been badly hurt.

Noshir is more than happy to get a divorce from his lesbian wife. As a green card holder he tries to protect himself. His lust to discover the Promised Land like other Indians or immigrants is to his dismay like curiously empty lessons learnt the hard way. Noshir finds himself lonely and without hopes, like all other characters who are with him on his lurching path from Bombay to USA.

His third novel, *A Woman Madly in Love*, is based on a real life incident of a woman betrayed in love by a boy half her age over 30 years ago. Desai said the seed for this story was planted in his high school years when one of his classmates started dating his teacher. The story shuttles between Chicago and Mumbai, spanning the years between World War II to the Eighties. Though a longish book of over 400 pages, but one does not feel its prolonged length due to Desai's deliberate and skilful construction of a well-paced and cadenced narrative. The rest of the story is his imagination, based on the notion that love knows no barriers. The novel explores at its core a relationship between Farida Cooper, an older woman and a younger man named Darius; with the treachery of her Joycean scholar husband a third strand.

The first years of marriage seems to prove her right, comfortably settled in her role as a wife of the fifties though she also works as a market analyst, imagining her career makes her a modern woman. Less deserving men get promoted ahead of her – but she doesn't mind, accepting the rationalization that they have families to feed and she has a husband to feed her if necessary. She also accepts that her primary responsibility is to bear children, but unfortunately suffers miscarriage after miscarriage, and for her fifth pregnancy quits everything including work, to focus on carrying the pregnancy to term.

Horace appears to have been a caring and thoughtful husband, but he is a Deconstructionist, in the habit of deconstructing everything – as he would say, extracting as much meaning as possible from every word and phrase, the better to understand the subject in question. Unfortunately, he applies the same penetrating analysis to his marriage and when Farida understands the full meaning of his interpretation she is humiliated and horrified enough to run from their house.

She escapes to Bombay, news of her father's death providing cover for her own horror, but though she appears on the surface as glamorous as before she is distressed enough to initiate her second big mistake we discover that apart from being able to write, Farida can also paint and hold down a mean Beatles' number in a night-club.

Farida's talents are shown as more than a little too good to be true, but her affair with the seventeen year old Darius; actually her student gets far too intimate to digest. Farida who is thirty four; a woman bountifully blessed and talented makes the gravest mistake, consequently leading to an even greater tragedy- Darius Katrak's death, forcing her to run back to Chicago from Bombay. Even in Chicago, Farida is close to the Parsee Community to which she and Desai belong. Desai shows that she cannot stray from her roots, her conservativeness, even though distanced geographically.

She is now thirty-five, ashamed of her past, and chooses finally a genuine independence, refusing help from both Horace and her family. The going is difficult in light of the luxury to which she has been accustomed, moving from mansions to the cramped quarters of a studio apartment, but she doesn't complain, working again as a market analyst, but also enrolling in a Master's program with a view to becoming a professor, and writing the novels she has long promised herself, so very different from the short stories for which she was paid so very well. A reading of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* reveals that her stories to date had been programmed by men on the editorial boards of magazines glorifying the fifties model of marriage which she has come to despise. After months of sporadic affairs and years of living alone she finally meets another man, but hardly sure of herself anymore succeeds only in making a fool of herself in his presence. These solitary years providing a much-needed and well-deserved retribution, teaching Farida that age has little to do with maturity, and the truth of Gloria Steinem's dictum, that she has become herself the man she wished to marry!

Conclusion:

Parsee writings display the characteristic diasporic features like sense of loss, nostalgia and problems of identity in the host country. The subtle and not so subtle cross-cultural conflicts dot their books. The ethno religious aspects of Parsee life remain unexplored by mainstream writers. Desai like the characters in his stories seems to belong to different world and is not at home in any. This homelessness inspires him to continue his journey as a writer. He has strived to spell Parsee patois in diverse hues, their being and

belongingness. Parsee words are interjected easily into the text without interrupting the narrative flow and he does a good job of exploring lingual distinctions, both quaint and exasperating.

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Translation as Collaboration: Focusing on *The Vegetarian*

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Abstract

When Han Kang shared the Man Booker prize with Deborah Smith, the focus on translated writings again gained prominence. Three other translated novels had also been short listed. Comparative literature has consistently discussed the growing space of translated text but like never before World Wide Web, journals and media have devoted space to translations. Various forums have gradually begun to acknowledge that translations have finally come of age. Now issues of 'faithfulness' of translation or maintaining the originality per se are no more in limelight. On the contrary translations are being regarded as creative writing, which have a multidimensional contribution in the globalised world. This paper is evaluating Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* as a translated fiction and it has brought Korean literature into the limelight breaking socio linguistic boundaries.

Keywords: Source language, culture, translator, Korean literature, globalization.

In the increasingly global and multicultural world of ours, translations have become increasingly important. It has gained importance as an actual material practice and as a cultural phenomenon on critical parameters. The linguistic-cultural borders are being reached out due to increased human contacts for which there are three major reasons: trade, travel and the internet.

Therefore the necessity of translations has increased in the present century. Wikipedia describes translation as: "Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. While interpreting—the facilitating of oral or sign-language communication between users of different languages—antedates writing, translation began only after the appearance of written literature." (Wikipedia: web) The equivalence suggested by bilingual dictionaries also has its limitations because people do not say the same thing in different languages. Many things like gestures, facial expressions, social functions of meals, rites and rituals, individual identity or abstract notions, (the list is endless) vary so drastically in varied parts of the world, that is why difficulty in translation begins to emerge. The global acceptance and expansion of English has found the largest numbers of translations in this language. It is amazing to find that how writers by extension of cultures, have access to English and also find it conducive for writing. Many writers are writing in English today, as English is but one of a number of languages in which translations is being done and is opening avenues for many less known languages and cultures to become accessible.

Since 1980's, translation as practice and as theory has become central to Comparative Literature. "Traditionally, this was not the case: the discipline, founded largely in the United States by post-war European émigrés, devoted itself almost exclusively to the European languages and demanded that all texts be read in the original language" (Comlit: web). Gradually when literatures in non-European languages made their presence felt, the necessity of translation in research and also in teaching emerged, comparative literature became a discipline by itself. "Along with the practical turn to translation in Comparative Literature has come, not surprisingly, the critical and theoretical assessment of translation in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, cultural hybridity, post-colonial theory, and an emphasis on interdisciplinarity. With its interest in crossing the borders between languages, cultures, and national literatures, Comparative Literature is implicitly committed to performing and also to assessing theoretically the function and value of "translation" in the widest sense of the term" (Complit: web).

With the increasing number of journals, books and awards being given to translated literature one begins to feel that translations have actually arrived and the readers no more want to raise the question that how “faithful” is the translation, or does it live up to the original. Instead the detailing of the translator is being openly appreciated. The given opportunity to understand a foreign text in its cultural context is being acknowledged. This year's Man Booker International Prize, which was won by Deborah Smith and Han Kang jointly for *The Vegetarian* proves these new facets of translated text. Many forums like the Edinburgh International Book Festival organized in Edinburgh (13-19 August 2016) also highlight the prominence translations are gaining. Besides Deborah Smith, the other translators short listed for Man Booker International Prize were Charlotte Collins (translator of Robert Seethaler's *A Whole Life*, from Austrian) and Daniel Hahn (translator of José Eduardo Agualusa's *A General Theory of Oblivion*, translated from Angolan Portuguese).

The three novels on the shortlist are as varied as translated fiction can be. “Seethaler sets his novel in the Austrian alps and recounts the life of Andreas, a man of few words who leaves his village only once in his life when he is forced to fight in WWII; *A General Theory of Oblivion* recounts the story of Angola through Ludo, a Portuguese woman who bricks herself into her flat on the eve of Angolan independence to escape the outside world; Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is the story of a South Korean couple's life upset by wife Yeong-hye's decision to lead a more “plant-like” existence, eventually hoping to become a tree. The novel itself is an unusual construct, since the subtitle “a novel” — doubtlessly to ensure *The Vegetarian* does not end up being filed in the cookbook section — is an addition to the UK edition. The South Korean version is so-called “linked fiction”, as Smith explains: originally three separate novels, based around the same central character.” (EIBF 2016)

The various discussions in EIBF (many of them reported and discussed on the web) reflect upon the art and craft of translating, making it more comprehensive and user-friendly. Some major issues that seem to emerge are whether familiarity between the writer and the translator affect the translation? And

how easy or difficult is to translate the visual component in the language? All the three translators, who had been invited to the EIBF expressed their views on these issues. The familiarity which develops between them helps the translator to understand the mind of the writer or the process more comfortably. All three translators mentioned earlier, have translated multiple books by the said authors. The familiarity helps to strengthen the voice of the author in English, through the translator. Discussing the aspect of visual component, the translators unanimously said that they imagined the imagery and then translated it in English. Besides these technicalities, translation has been hyped due to prizes like the Man Booker International. They have helped in creating awareness of translated fiction. Besides public appearances of translators in literary festivals, award ceremonies, media etc help to promote their profession. It has also become big business for publishing houses as facts and figures prove.

“Fiction in translation is enjoying a rise in interest, according to a survey by Nielsen Book commissioned by the Man Booker. Nielsen's research revealed that sales of translated fiction have grown by 96 per cent since 2001, and the value of those sales has risen from £8.9m to £18.6m over the same period. Translated fiction accounts for only 3.5 per cent of literary fiction titles published in the UK, but it represents 7 per cent of overall sales.” (Rose: web)

Zeroing down to Han Kang's Booker prize is also a major victory for Asia's oldest and least known literary traditions into the global market. Korea has a literary history of 1,500 years. It is divided into classical and modern period. It was only in 1980's that Korean literature started being translated and became known to the English speaking world. Initially Korean films became popular and were translated not only in English but also many European languages. *Flowers of Fire* (1974), is regarded as the first anthologies which were published in English. To be able to evaluate and understand Korean literature it is important to trace its history and see how it is still reflected in the collective consciousness of writers.

Korean history has had a deep impact on the development

of its literature. Korean poetry and fiction were mostly written in imitation of the classical Chinese model until the end of the 19th century. Drama as a genre was not there. In the fifteenth century a very simple 'Hangeul' alphabet was invented to transcribe the polysyllabic grammatical structures of Korean and sounds of Chinese words. With the advent of Meiji Reform in 1960, the vistas to the modern Western world were opened. It was also marked by a vast programme of translation of European classical and modern writings. The Christian missionaries favoured the use of Hangeul as even the uneducated could also read. In 1910 Korea became a colony of Japan and the official language was Japanese. During this period the use of Korean in publishing was prohibited.

The Japanese annexation was a boon for educated Koreans as it brought them in contact with the wide range of World literature and philosophy. But the Koreans were being challenged to abandon their patriarchal, hierarchical, authoritarian Neo-Confucianism. Therefore the Koreans started using Hangeul for writing of modern fiction. In modern Korean writings the major themes were individual freedom and the generation gap. With the advent of education, women radically transformed their own self-perception. Fiction began to revolve around the 'New Woman' who desired to marry the man of her choice and live life on their own terms.

Korean writings from 1910 till almost to the 1980 have faced censorship from Japanese authorities, as Korea had a colonized status. Japan continued its efforts to restrict Korean publications and generate support for its war efforts. The social bifurcation reflected the monetary divide, as the rich Koreans received education from Japanese universities and the poor were generally daily wage earners at factories and mines. When the war ended Korea did not gain its independence in 1945 but the peninsula was insensitively divided by war allies between US and USSR. "For 36 years, Korean writers struggled to write in a language that was taught in no school and was overshadowed by the prestige of Japanese. The joy of recovering the right to write and publish more or less freely in their national language was accompanied by the questions about what writers should be writing about and about what constituted 'good Korean style'" (Voice: web).

The geographical division of the country did not correspond to the political opinions of the writers. All aspired for a new Korea and most of the thinkers and literati opted for the Northern side, though it did not prove to be socialist paradise, as they had dreamed. By 1953 when the War stopped Korea came to mean South Korea and everyone came to terms with the division of the peninsula. South Korea soon became transformed to an urbanized capitalist state. The fiction of the 60s and 70s defined the loss and uprooting that had taken place amidst violence and corruption. These portrayals were so disturbing that it was not clear to those who had not faced the partition. It was only post 80s that comedies, fantasies began to be seen in Korean writings. The voices which emerged depicted industrialization, changing social norms and values in modern Korea.

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* has again proved that Korean literature has potential in the overseas market. Han Kang was born in Gwangju, South Korea, and moved to Seoul at the age of ten. She studied Korean literature at Yonsei University. She is a remarkable storyteller who has written ten books of fiction and poetry in Korean. She is well travelled and speaks English. She gives institutes like the Literature Translation Institute of Korea the credit of popularizing English.

The Vegetarian (2015) is the first novel to be translated into English by Deborah Smith. Originally it was published as three novellas, nearly a decade ago. It was received as "very extreme and bizarre" in Korea, still its central novella "Mongolian Mark" received the Yi Sang Literary Prize in 2005. Kangs latest novel HUMAN ACTS (2016) has been awarded the Korean Manhae Literary Prize last year, adding to her numerous other accolades.(The White Review: web) Review by Chicago Tribune analyses *The Vegetarian* in a rather unique manner: "It takes a gifted storyteller to get you feeling ill at ease in your own body. Yet Han Kang often set me squirming with her first novel in English, at once claustrophobic and transcendent Yeong-hye's compulsions feel more like a force of nature.... A sea like that rippling with unknowable shadow, looks all but impossible to navigate – but I'd let Han Kang take the helm any time" (Chicago Tribune: web).

This is Han Kang's first novel to appear in English and it's a bracing, visceral system showing addition to the Anglophone reader's diet. It is sensual, provocative and violent, ripe with potent images, startling colours and disturbing questions, compelling the reader to read on. As Yeong-hye changes her diet, the language of the book shifts too. Deborah Smith's translation moves between the baffled irritations of Mr. Chong's first person narration in part one to the measured prose of In-hye's world, the dense and bloody narrative of Yeong-hye's dream and seductive descriptions of living bodies painted with flowers, in states of transformation or wasting away. Sentence by sentence, *The Vegetarian* is an extra-ordinary experience which is surreal and exciting.

Yeong-hye and her husband lived an ordinary and controlled life before nightmares began. But the dreams, images of blood and brutality torture her. It drives Yeong-hye to purge her mind and she renounces eating meat altogether. It's a small act of independence but interrupts her marriage and sets into motion an increasing grotesque chain of events at home. As her husband, her brother-in-law and sister each fight to reassert their control, Yeong-hye obsessively defends the choice that's become scared to her. Soon their attempts turns desperate, subjecting first her mind and then her body to ever more intrusive and perverse violations, sending Yeong-hye spiraling into a dangerous, bizarre estrangement, not only from those close to her, but also from herself.

It is interesting to evaluate *The Vegetarian* from the translator Deborah Smith's point of view as there are many interviews and comments by her on the web. Smith has previously translated Ahn Do-hyun's novel *The Salmon Who Dared to Leap Higher* and Han Kang's novel *Human Acts*, She also translated Han's most recent book *The Elegy of Whiteness*, which is set for publication in the U.K. next year.

In one of the interviews Smith speaks of how staying faithful to the spirit of a text was her priority. And the spirit that she tried to preserve in Han Kang's "The Vegetarian" was one of "tenderness and terror at the same time, never too far one way, always this very perfect balance," Translations are now regarded as creative writing

but the element of faithfulness persists. The issue of improving the translation has also been put to her. She replies that a mediocre book can be made to read better in a good translation. Smith also feels that there are no ideal theories or techniques of translations. Usually controversies surround on the qualification of the translators. Aware of this Smith who is a British national learnt Korean for six years before she began translating. She feels "Love of literature, patience and dedication are more important," are the most important qualifications. (Korea Herald: web)

English is gradually becoming the global lingua franca. Globalization has had an enormous impact on our lives and similarly translations are gaining increasing importance not only in literature but in commerce, fashion, pop culture and so on. Literary translations enhance the understanding between cultures. Readers are encouraged to explore further territories through such readings. Translations open wide avenues for learning from the perceptions of others and allow holding a dialogue, as a channel of understanding. Two different language systems or cultures become accessible to many or the strange but compelling novel like *The Vegetarian* would have been lost to the world.

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Reflections of Social Realism in Bapsi Sidhwa's Water

Vandana Bhagdikar

Abstract

Social realism is concerned with the interpretations of life with the aim of changing the existing reality in the society. An increasing desire of readers for a realistic understanding of different social problems, resulted in making the social realism novels popular. In social realism, the writer cannot use his imagination; he has to focus on observation of life as it is. Realism, in literature, is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. It is a style of writing that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life. This 'life as it is' is what realism is. In this literary approach of literature, the writer has to keep in mind the basic reality while narrating the story. It never allows the writer to make his reader believe anything by the force. Even the writer is not allowed to express their opinion and feelings. It should be the result of observation and not of personal judgment. Parsi- Pakistani writer, Bapsi Sidhwa is realist to the core. In all her five novels namely: *The Crow Eaters*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice –Candy man*, *An American Brat* and *Water* there is presence of the elements of realism. *Sidhwa's Water depicts the realistic picture of the treatment meted out to the widows by the society.*

Keywords: Social, Realism ,Reality, Treatment, Society

Realism, emphasizes the importance of the ordinary person and the ordinary situation, it generally rejects the heroic and the

aristocratic and embraces the ordinary working class citizen. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms defines realism in literature as , “a mode of writing that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life” (Baldick:184). Social realism is concerned with the interpretations of life with the aim of changing the existing reality in the society. An increasing desire of readers for a realistic understanding of different social problems, resulted in making the social realism novels popular. In social realism, the writer cannot use his imagination; he has to focus on observation of life as it is.

Sidhwa is realist to the core. *In her novel Water she demonstrates the elements of realism.* The patriarchal system of dominance and control has been portrayed in *the novel highlighting the predicaments of the Indian widows.* The theme of the novel is controversial and complex as it throws light on the age old tradition that victimize women. It is about the perplexity of widows in 1930s in India. In the entire novel, Sidhwa exposes the cruelties in the name of Hinduism against widows and how they were made to live in the widow houses. *The novel* discusses the most disputed issues including patriarchal system, religion, child prostitution but the main intention of the novelist is to show barbarous approach of others towards widows and how they are dragged into prostitution. The consequences of widowhood are brought forward through the stories of four widows: Chuyia, a child widow who brings life into the ashram; Kalyani, a beautiful young widow, who falls in love with a reformist law student Narayan, Shakuntala, a devout believes in the traditions who struggle to make sense of the realities that surround her and Madhumati, who is the head of the ashram.

The story begins with Chuyia, a six year old girl who lives with her parents in a village in the Bihar Bengal border. Right from the beginning of the novel Sidhwa tries to be a realistic novelist. She depicts how the mother's love, care and affection are limited to sons. Bhagya's (mother of Chuyia) affectionate nature towards her sons deprives Chuyia of her mother's love.

It is the unsaid law that a girl child has to help her mother in the household work. Chuyia is too young for this but as

per the orthodox culture she helps her mother, “Chuyia helped her mother pick up her brothers' soiled clothes for the wash and rolled up the bedding. She went to the back of the house to lay out the feed and fill the water bucket for the cow and its wobbly-legged calf” (17). At the age of six, she has a happy-go-lucky life where she wanders in the woods and searches gooseberries and leeches. Her carefree life suddenly changes when she is married to Harilal, a 44 year old rich and aged widower. In the modern century it's hard to accept this, but this used to happen few decades back. These mismatched marriages are not new to the people, that is why people take it very normally. When Bhagya , mother of Chuyia shows her concern about Chuyia's age to Somnath, Chuyia's father, a poor Brahmin priest, with this authoritative quote from the shastras he answers:

In the Brahmanical tradition, a woman is recognized as a person only when she is one with her husband. Only then does she become a Sumangali, an auspicious woman, and a Soubhagyavati, a fortunate woman”... A woman's body is a site for conflict between a demonic stri-svavahava which is her lustful aspect, and her stri-dharma, which is her womanly duty. (14)

When Bhagya questions, after Chuyia reaches the age of puberty that can HiraLal satisfy Chuyia's sexual desires it enrages Somnath severely because this topic is not allowed to be discussed so openly. In the childhood only the girls are contracted in their marriage, and what matters to the parents of the girl is the riches of their son- in- law, they are not concerned with the fact that whether the son-in-law is impotent to satisfy their daughter's physical needs. Sidhwa also criticizes the traditional values which thinks the only productive work of a woman is to get married and beget children.

As in the society men has the power of decision –making reflecting the patriarchal dominance and it is also evident when Bhagya learns about the match of Chuyia with HiraLal, in the hurted tone she says submissively, “it will be as you say-you are her father” (9). Being a mother she is unhappy about this wedding but she cannot do anything for her daughter. Somnath tries to convince Bhagya for Chuyia's wedding, he says that, “they don't want a dowry, they will pay for the wedding” (7). It shows that the parents of the

daughters pay heed to these things and not the happiness of their daughters. On the same night, she feels guilty and interrogates herself that why her daughter is not eligible for the affection and care which her sons enjoy. It suggests that the girls are not given the same love and care from their parents as they give to the boys.

After the marriage, as per the tradition, wedded pre-pubescent Chuyia continues to stay with her parents. As the news of her husband's death reaches to Somnath, Chuyia is taken on a bullock-cart carrying her dying husband, accompanied by her father and mother-in-law. She has to accompany his dead body to Varanasi, where he will be cremated at the Holy Ghats. After the cremation, like other widows she is expected to live in a widow's ashram. After the cremation at the ghats in Rewalpur, she is stripped of marriage markers, her red and green bangles and mangalsutra and is draped in a coarse homespun white cloth. Chuyia was informed that, "she no longer exists as a person – all because of the sudden death of a husband she had barely even met"(32).

Chuyia was not able to understand why she was left at the doorstep of a strange place (ashram) by her own father. When Chuyia's father tells her, "You are a widow now" (32). She innocently asks "For how long, Baba?" (32). We cannot expect a girl of eight years who is just not aware of marriage, to accept the widowhood. Ashram was a place where she was supposed to live in repentance till her death. Here the author observes how Chuyia's father reverts helplessly to the harsh reality of sending his daughter to a widow colony (vidhwa ashram), this proves that every human being is a victim of the violence and inhuman practice of widowhood.

Sidhwa describes the realistic picture of the ashram, the horrid place to live in. Inside the ashram all the widows are forced to shave their heads, wear plain white sari, and leave all their material possessions. They were supposed to have one meal a day. The plight does not end here, if they want to eat they have to perform every eight hour session of singing and dancing in temple then they are given a cup of rice and a fistful of lentils and on festival days they are

given paltry alms by temple-goers. For many widows, this is their only means of sustenance. A widow who is too sick to perform has to starve. The transformation in blemishing the body is enforced in order to reduce their attractiveness as women by prohibiting them from wearing the symbols of marriage (vermillion mark, bangles, marriage pendant) and, more deeply traumatic, having their heads shaven.

Chuyia in the new role of a widow is not allowed to touch non-widows. Her shadow is considered as "polluted", so it should not fall on anyone. The belief of the Hindus that widowhood was the direct consequence of a sinful past life, expected all the widows including Chuyia to spend most of her time inside the ashram, praying or fasting in atonement for whatever sins caused her husband's deaths. Eight year old Chuyia has to spend her entire life in the ashram as widows were not allowed to remarry. Her innocent question, "Where is the house for the men widows?" (81) This indicates the dual standards of the society. The novel exposes the hypocrisy of the society as the same thing was not applied to the widowers. The widows were not allowed to marry whereas the widower could keep mistress, was allowed to marry and even visit prostitutes.

Chuyia, in the ashram gets connected with Kalyani and Shakuntala. From the beginning only their presence enriches Chuyia's new life. They started making their lives more meaningful in the forced isolation from the world. Chuyia is always encouraged by Kalyani to have faith, "you must say the japa, Jai Shree Krishna 108 times a day and you will soon fly away home" (54). When Kalyani arrives in the ashram Madhumati favors her for growing hairs back because she wants to force her into prostitution. For this she is called as a 'fat cow' or 'beached whale' as she has turned a widow, Kalyani, into a prostitute only to meet the ashram's basic needs. When we see the orthodox socio-cultural history of Hindu society we understand the gloomy future of the widows like Chuyia and Shakuntala. Chuyia is not the only a sufferer, there are number of innocent girls like her who are forced to endure the pain of widowhood till their death in the name of customs and conventions in our orthodox society.

Social realism is also illustrated from the example of Madhumati. Madhumati, a fifty years old widow, is the ruler of the dilapidated ashram. She was brought to the ashram by Gulabi in a very traumatic condition. She was raped, when she became a widow. In such a pathetic condition she was saved by Gulabi. These sufferings made her a hard hearted woman who is cruel towards her own sex. A soft- hearted person was converted into a hard- hearted person, as Madhumati recalling her past says, "I was the true queen bee. I had a kind heart then. I asked my father for money and never spent it on myself; I gave it all to the beggars and widows" (69).

The complete change in the personality of Madhumati suggests that life was not so simple for widows. As a widow, she had asked her in-laws for her share in her husband's property, in return, she is raped by her brothers-in-law and was thrown in the jungle. When she was brought in the ashram her physical and mental condition is not good. The head of the ashram helped her to recover. And after her recovery she was dragged into prostitution by sending her to a client. When she becomes the head of the ashram she continues with the tradition and sends Kalyani to the clients. This shows the attitude of the women. The women only become the enemy of the women. Love and affection which is deprived to the widows of the ashram is shown to Mitthu, her parrot. The point to note here is that even a parrot is respected more than a woman.

The third example taken into consideration is of Shakuntala. With the description of her character we get an insight into the social conditions of the widows, their plight and sufferings. Shakuntala, after her marriage to a young widower, is a target of her mother-in-law. She fails to fulfill the basic requirement of marriage i.e. "reproducing sons". If a daughter-in-law is barren, all the eyes are on daughter-in-law but no one questions sons on their impotence. When she reaches the age of thirty her husband expires leaving Shakuntala without any role to perform (that of wife and producer of sons). She is not only eyed as responsible for her husband's death but also as a threat to her husband's family. As a widow she also comes to the ashram. These widows are not considered to be fit in the society. They are now a symbol of bad omen. Shakuntala is stopped by the priest when she goes near to the

wedding place and sent away from the scenario. On another occasion, when Kalyani and Chuyia go after the puppy and pass by the shops, the customer remarks, "they shouldn't allow widows to run around like this. They bring bad luck to our business" (60).

With the support of Sadananda, Shakuntala is able to discriminate true faith from blind superstition. And her thinking gradually widens relating to the Hindu Orthodox laws. She is able to break the shells of the ideal upper caste Hindu Widows and becomes the force to bring changes in the widow's house. With a brave and fearless heart she sets Kalyani free when she is locked away by Madhumati. She also dares to save Chuyia by handing her over to the care of Gandhiji. Thus signaling the change in the nature and attitude of the widows.

Begging and starvation – the two most predominant characteristics are also reflected as a part of realism. The character of Bua, another widow, who is from the landowner's family, is thrown out of the house at the age of thirty-five, when her husband dies. Even at the age of seventy, she has to sing for a cup of rice. The inhuman practice of giving one time meal a day to the widows was there, to make the matter worse, just to collect a cup of rice and a fistful of lentils they have to sing Lord Krishna and Radha's names during every eight-hour session of singing and dancing

The question of survival of the widows is described through the character of Kalyani. Kalyani, a beautiful looking girl of six, is married off to the highest bidder, a man of sixty. After her husband's death as per the tradition her head is shaved. When she arrives in the ashram Madhumati favors her for growing hairs back because she wants to force her into prostitution to meet the ashram's basic needs. When Kalyani meets Narayan who is follower of Gandhiji and wants to marry a widow (Kalyani), she has new hopes in her life. When Madhumati comes to know about this she says, "Shameless! You'll sink yourself and us! We'll be cursed. We must live in purity, to die in purity" (144).

Here a paradoxical view is presented, Madhumati considers marriage of a widow as impure but the same woman forces Kalyani into prostitution. When she learns about the marriage she gets

worried because Kalyani financially supports her to run the ashram, she shouts, "and how we survive here, no one can question. Not even God" (144). This shows that the most pathetic issue of the widows- is survival of their life, for which the widows are battling with the hardships of life. Despite all odds and opposition Narayan and Kalyani decides to marry. But when Kalyani comes to know that he is the son of Seth Dwarka Nath, who is one of her clients all her dreams are shattered. She drowns herself.

When Kalyani is dead Madhumati lost the source of her income, so she decides to send Chuyia as the next harlot for Narayan's father. Shakuntala wanted to rescue Chuyia. But her efforts failed. When she reaches at the shore, she meets a traumatized Chuyia. Shakuntala hears about Gandhi's visit at the railway station; she runs through the crowd to be blessed by Gandhiji. When the train departs, she runs with the train asking people to take Chuyia under the care of Gandhiji. She sees Narayan, and hand over Chuyia to him. Chuyia with the help and support of Shakuntala gets liberation from the clutches of widowhood.

The rich people know very well that the poor widows in order to earn livelihood will easily get involved in sexuality. But then also the blame lies on the widows as they are considered threats to the society. It is clear in Bhagya's soliloquy that, "a woman's sexuality and fertility, which [has been] so valuable to her husband in his lifetime [is] converted upon his death into a potential danger to the morality of the community" (24).

It is the reason that widows get discarded from the society. The men take advantage of their weak position and use them to satisfy their sexual lust as Stefano Mercanti describes, "within the patriarchal system, which has prevailed over most of recorded history, there is rape, wife battering, incest, and other structural forms of violence designed to maintain men's domination over women" (Mercanti:165). The society which is governed and outshined by male- chauvinists treats woman like a commodity. Child marriage, widowhood, prostitution- are the problems inflicted on women. All these problems are depicted by Sidhwa as the unfortunate part of Indian social history.

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Poetry Section

Looking Out of the Window

Sujata Chakravorty

She looked out of the window
Her li'l son looked back to wave
He was about to board the school bus
Dressed neatly in his uniform
He was the apple of her eye.

She kept looking at him...

A li'l girl held on to her father's hand
Clenching the fingers tightly
As she was walked to school
Dressed neatly in her uniform
She too was the apple of his eye.

Playing in the neighbourhood fields
Her pig tails flying in the air
Laughter used to fill the evenings
Friends, fun and frolic filled her life
Life was carefree.

The girl grew up...
Old enough to walk to school unassisted
Bold enough to take decisions
Brave enough to fight the world
The years flew by.

Memories kept fleeting past
Fond memories of parents, siblings

The growing up together
Learning, fighting, making up
Finally, moving out to another sphere.

In her mind's eye
Images flashed by
Memories flooded her mind
Time stood still
Or so it seemed.

A knock at the door!
There stood the apple of her eye
Back from school
To find her still at the window
Where he had seen her in the morning.

Looking out of the window...

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Life's Cry

(Composed on 22nd September, 2005 following floods in Mumbai,
and terrorist attacks on America)

“O! Terrible!” “Too terrible!”, Life cried.
Thy ferocious face has horrified.
Tongues, at least, could utter their immense grief;
But, the speechless world, only suffered, had no relief.

Eyes had to eye undesirable sights.
The drama futile of their attempts
To save man and matter, man's several fights;
Yet, Life resumes while nothing invites.

Thou have frequented thy heartlessness.
It's obvious, one does comprehend.
We are grateful to you, so far, for your tenderness;
Grant our ultimate urge, now, please, don't drag the end.

To be motherless, childless, and friendless
Is, now, far beyond our strength.
You need lead our life to know our helplessness
And experience our plight to measure its measureless length.

Yet, in helplessness, we pray to you, the Supreme Power.
Eyes might be crushed to witness another flood and falling Tower.
Shower your mercy, O Merciful!
Make your disordered world again beautiful!

Kapil K. Gajbhiye

Immortal Bond

It then matters not
If you and I are far apart
Since there's an immortal bond
That your and my hearts have
Stealthily formed
The day one our eyes met.

Can you, for a fleeting, moment forget
The time when I was young
And you too were a fresh fabulous maiden
Like lovers in the dark
Before the dawn met?

Can you forget the quivering
Of thy lovely lips,
Leaving thy simple speech strange
But my heart never failed
It to comprehend?

Can you forget, the dawn,
The early morn, and the day whole,
The evening time and the night's role
When our eyes would search
For each other's glance : their eternal bliss?

Can you forget, the presence of the friend like a foe,
When thou were eager to utter
And my heart to hear
Those wonderful words
That every lover doth desire?

Can you forget, I was able read your countenance
And feel on you the time's pressure
That thou had had at that moment;
And you turned out to be too ruthless
To refuse my pure proposal,
Only to crush all the hopes
Of my humble heart?-

Do you know almost a decade has passed since then?
Can you imagine the pace of each
Moment like an age
That left me slain slowly
Moment by moment?

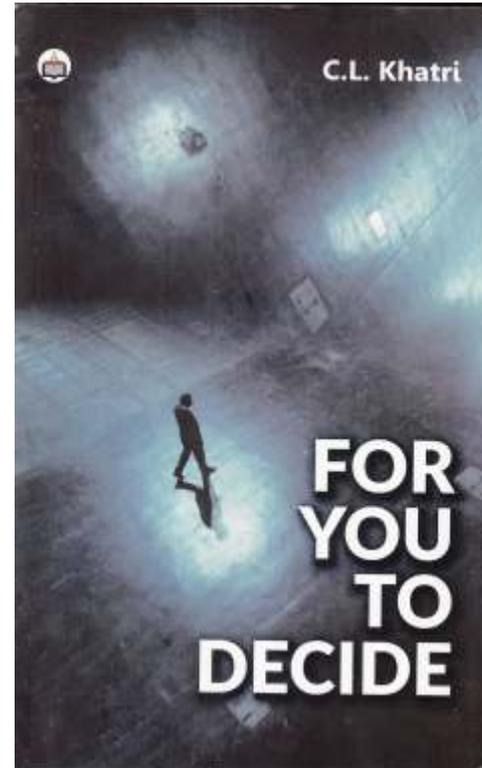
If time can heal the wounds
Why are mine still so fresh?
How do I remember?
But, can you really forget?

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Book Reviews



Book Review

For You to Decide, Dr C.L.Khatri, Authorpress, New Delhi, India, 2016, pp 82

Book Review by Dr Shubha R Mishra, Associate Professor & Head, Dept of English, Dr Madhukarao Wasnik PWS Arts & Commerce College, Nagpur.

Dr C.L.Khatri a teacher by profession has made a name for himself in the world of Indian English Poets with his fourth collection *For You to Decide* (2016). His earlier collections are *After Kargil* (2000), *Ripples in the Lake* (2006) and *Two Minutes Silence*

(2015). His passion for poetry is obvious and persistent. The poems in the fourth collection span through various facets of human relationships, personal experiences, satires, degradation of values and anecdotes. Each poem has something different to offer. The whole collection, beginning with the title is like a challenge for the reader to decide their take on the shared experiences.

The first poem 'Mask' reminds one of Eliot's famous lines "To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet", from Alfred J Prufrock. Khatri describes the mask not as a temporary transformation but one's other self. The line:

"I couldn't keep you concealed
in the crammed wardrobe of deceits."

The powerful imagery which comes across is striking and later it rightly conveys that it is only on the funeral pyre that we get rid of all our masks, which we have been wearing all our lives.

'For You to Decide' is the representative poem of the collection. It satirizes the human rush against time and continuous lust to achieve landmarks and leave imprints where none are required. The poet raises questions like: Can the ancestral parental house be patented? Can granny's tales be archived? Can trailing tongues mummified? Can the nine *rasas* be programmed or babies sold in markets?

The collection has a group of short poems like 'Flames Within', 'Unresolved Sensation', 'Suck my Sap', 'Muse' seem to be focus on the narrator in a personal manner. Their short length and simple personal experiences make them very enjoyable. In the poem 'Muse', the poet seems to be annoyed with critical acclaim and also being constantly evaluated through parameters. He rightly feels that "The best speaks the least".

'Justify the Death' is another poem which touches the reader with multiple symbolic political undertones. The poem begins with the death of "khadi clad" who are sacrificed for political vested interests. In the second stanza it describes the common man and also the women who lose their lives and identity in political gatherings in the "Gandhi maidan" and political voices cunningly

gain from the layman's pain and loss. Since time immemorial, scapegoats have been found through whom death has been glorified. If women were killed, speeches of empowerment seem to only rub the "green wounds" of those left behind. The poignant poem has long-lasting satirical undertones which reader tends to ponder on.

Khatri has a knack of using imagery from the collective consciousness of Indians to put forth his point of view emphatically. In many of the poems such references immediately conveys the bigger picture to the perceptive reader. In the poem 'Winter Tree', the tree standing like the "helpless as *Bhismpitamah*", in the poem 'The Bliss of Beauty', reference is made to "quiver of *Kamdev*", 'Poetry want to stand with You', the deflowering is connected to "Nirbhaya's cry paint". All these reflect upon the innate Indian sensibility of the poet which finds instant connection with the collective consciousness of the reader.

The collection is completed with three liner poems, some of which have powerful imagery.

A Hurrican of light
Sweeping across the land
Schizophrenic eyes.

Writing short poems by itself is an art which is not everyone's cup of tea. Each of the three liners make a statement on an issue or reflect upon a powerful observation.

Audience is dozing
Readers have slept
A poem to spark the flame

Last part is a collection has Haikus which interestingly reflect upon different aspects of nature. Some of them seem to combine imagery from nature to some mundane human concern. The poetic imagination of the poet reaches new heights through these short poems.

Sensex in bottom

Brown, yellow leaves in autumn

Off season discount

The collection “For You to Decide” has an interesting collection of poems. Many of which can be interpreted in multiple ways. They appeal to the reader for their suggestive symbols and imagery. Many metaphors used are rooted in Indian culture and lifestyle. Khatri is now an established poet and has contributed in preserving culture and values of India.

Time Travel - Lord of the Files



This novel's title is inspired from the literal translation of the name Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils in the Bible. The novel being referred to is William Golding's first novel 'Lord of the Flies', which since its publication in 1954, has been widely regarded as a classic, worthy of in-depth analysis and discussion in classrooms around the world. The book is like no other and reading the book can be a

harrowing experience. It deals with some of the most depraved instincts of society and shows us that even the most seemingly innocent of us are only a step or two away from total cruelty and savagery. However, it was met with little interest from the publishing companies to whom he sent his manuscript. In an interview to *The Guardian*, Golding's daughter Judy Carver recalled her cash-strapped father struggling with many rejection letters.

Even Faber and Faber, the London-based publishers who brought out the book, were hesitant at first, publishing it only because new editor Charles Monteith was so passionate about the story. They even went so far as to not discuss the title within earshot of its literary advisor, acclaimed poet T.S. Eliot.

Eliot allegedly first heard about 'Lord of the Flies' via an offhand remark made by a friend at his social club. In his biography 'William Golding: The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies', John Carey recounts that Eliot's friend warned him, "Faber had published an unpleasant novel about small boys behaving unspeakably on a desert island." In the end, Faber's fears were unfounded; the poet loved Golding's novel.

'Lord of the Flies' was at first a commercial flop, selling only 3,000 copies before going out of print in 1955. But by 1962, the novel had sold over 65,000 copies and was required reading at many colleges.

Golding was spurred into writing the novel from his experiences in World War II. He was horrified by what war

revealed about people's capacity to harm their fellow humans. He was appalled by what happened in the Nazi concentration camps, and by the way the Japanese treated their prisoners, by the consequences of the British and American mass bombing against civilians - and even by what he himself did as a naval officer.

During the war the British justified all the destruction they wrought on the grounds that they were right. However, Golding questioned this smug assumption. He gradually learned to see all human nature as savage and unforgiving: he knew that circumstances could force a good and decent man to become bad and cruel.

One question that Golding had to frequently answer was why there were no female characters in the novel. To this he replied that a group of boys were more like "scaled-down society" than a group of girls could ever be. He added that his reply was not meant to offend women and he did not want to sound as if women were not equal to men. In fact, he thought women were foolish to pretend they were equal to men, because the truth was that they are far superior and had always been so!

Contributed by
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