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# oenacle

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 Madhukarroa Wasnik 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. Collaborative literary and academic activities are conducted under the banner of “Cenacle”. The Departments of English of all the 3 colleges are bound by an MOU. They also publish 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. An overview is being given.

In Sept 2010, a National Conference on “Mediation: Literature and Films” had been organized under this banner at Rajwada Palace, Nagpur. 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 related to the field of literature and cinema. A souvenir was also released during the conference.

In Oct 2010, a Symposium had been organized to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> 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 61<sup>st</sup> All India English Teachers’ Conference had been organized in collaboration with AESI (The Association for English Studies in India) at Chitnavis Centre Nagpur. The topic of the conference was “Emerging Trends in English Language and Literature”. 516 delegates from all over the country had attended the conference. It provided a vibrant platform for academic discourse.

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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, which has now become a regular feature.

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.

The 7<sup>th</sup> issue was an open ended one. There were 12 research papers on different facets of language and literature, 3 selected poems and a book review. Lord of Flies was the topic for the section Time Travel.

The 8th issue (Jan-Dec 2018) is special because since now the Journal is recognized by the UGC and also has a web presence. All the previous copies are also available on its website.



## *Editorial*

English has become a multi-utility language which is widely used all over the world. There are multiple new trends in language and in literature, which continue to make the language richer. So also teaching and learning in English is also continuously changing. In humanities the study of language and literature is an academic exercise, but it is expedient for students and scholars to be conversant with the present trends. With the World Wide Web, each day series of new things are developing, which are contributing in multiple different ways to enlarge this area of study. Some specific, more recent areas of study are: literatures in translation, confessional and travel writings, comparative literature, adaptation studies, cultural identities and gender studies are just few of the facets of these ever increasing worldwide phenomena. Similarly we are constantly in the middle of language changes which even the phoneticians and linguists take time to fathom. Subtle linguistic changes continue to happen almost every day. Earlier there was a clear demarcation between spoken and written form of language. Now the expressions used in casual speech imperceptibly seems to creep into written or print medium. Modern trends cannot be generalized as they vary as per the focus area.

The present issue has assorted papers which highlight the variety of criticism on different issues, right from translations to feminist studies and many other subjects. Kiriti Nakhare in her paper titled, “When bodies become instrument of protest” analyses marginalization in a rather unique manner. She takes some very well known examples from Literature to prove her argument. Aasha NP's research article on the impact of translation on literature highlights various facts about translation which affect the language. She discusses some of the theories of translation in the backdrop of the process.

**Postcolonial literature** often addresses the problems and consequences of the **decolonization** of a country, especially questions relating to the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated people, and themes such as racialism and colonialism. Abhishek Upadhya's paper “Decolonizing the

Bilungsroman: Nation and Self in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, provides an insight into decolonization. He also explains the concept of Bilungsroman and applies it to Rushdie's novel.

More and more regional interpretations are being done in English to provide greater visibility to regional writers. Shiraz Khan interprets Kedarnath Agrawal's poems highlighting the socio economic and psychological realities, which have originally expressed in Bundeli. She highlights the richness of Bundeli literature through her analysis. Supanth Bhattacharya also explores *desi* crime fiction in his intriguing article titled "Kaunduit wither Desi Noir Fiction". He examines crime fiction writers and their famous Indianised characters.

In post modernism, relationships have undergone a noticeable change. Vinod Shende in his paper titled "Man-Woman Relationship in Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple*" discusses gender disparity in Black culture, focusing on Alice Walker's seminal writing. Archana Gupta and Urmila Dabir's joint paper describes how history and literature are intricately connected and are essential studies to interpret human experience and gain from the culminated knowledge. The paper provides insight into the historical context of Mahesh Dattani's play "Final Solutions".

Displacement and identity crisis are two prominent trends in modern literature. Priti Singh discusses these trends in the framework of Khaled Hosseini's well acclaimed novel *The Kite Runner*. While GR Hashmi explores Manju Kapoor's *A Married Woman*, a postmodernist novel to discuss women's issues in general and of the characters in particular. Varsha Chavhan and Varsha Vaidya also evaluate literature from a feminist lenses and their paper is interestingly titled as "Men's Credit and Women's Literature". Culture is a complex phenomenon. Jyoti Tripathi and Vandana Bhagdikar's joint paper titled "Cultural clash in Bapsi Sidhwa's: *An American Brat*", on one hand analyses the novel and on the other highlights the conflict between western and eastern culture.

Literature is no less prone to inequality than any of the other forms of artistic expression. Therefore gender disparity has been frequently debated. Swapnil Dahat's paper "Probing female characters expedition through history in Amitav Ghosh's selected novels", explores female characters in the backdrop of nationalist movement and modernization. On another level Megha Ramteke's paper on

Gender Performativity highlights a less explored aspect of the bigger area of Gender Studies. She chooses Elizabeth Gaskell's story to put forth her contention.

Cultural clashes from a diasporic point of view is being focused upon in the next paper titled, "Negotiating Cultural Clash in Bharti Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and *Desirable Daughters*" jointly written by Kanchan Joshi and Urmila Dabir. Issues of cultural disparity, due to migration have been discussed elaborately. Reema Kharabe nd Vandana Bhagdikar's joint paper evaluates Mahesh Dattani's play from a feminist angle. Issues of marginalization of women and trauma they have been aptly discussed. The next article discusses the notion of alienation which is an integral part of the school of critique and thought known as Modernism. Renuka Roy in her research titled, "The Theme of Alienation in JM Coetzee's *In the Heart of Country*", discusses the cultural struggle of the apartheid.

Cultural studies are an innovative interdisciplinary field of research that investigates how 'culture' creates and transforms individuals and societies. Priya Wanjari's paper glorifies Indian cultural facets by highlighting differences in two different writers namely Shashi Tharoor and Chetan Bhagat. The next paper highlights one of most recurrently adapted writer, Shakespeare. Shakespeare's plays have been providing people from all over the world with a means of saying what they feel. Shubha Mishra's article discusses how Indian cinema has incessantly adapted Shakespeare. Indian cinema has made Shakespeare as their own and assimilated it with its own cultural agenda.

Manju Kapur's *Immigrant* again finds focus in Vandana Bhagdikar's and Swati Hasoriya's joint paper. Issues of identity have been discussed, in feminine consciousness in detail. The last paper discusses the issues of ethnicity, in the writings of the well read novelist Bapsi Sidhwa. Bhagdikar provides a new insight into how closed communities deal with issues of marriages to preserve their traditional perceptions.

The first issue was a general issue with papers on varied topics. The second issue focused on "Gender Issues and Female Consciousness in 21<sup>st</sup> 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 sixth 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. The seventh issue was an open ended one. Now we present the eighth issue. There is vast variety in the papers of this year's issue. We had a great time collecting and editing the papers, and we hope you will enjoy reading them. Cenacle has also gone digital. All the previous issues are now on its website.

The editors would also like to acknowledge and thank our contributors, who have believed in us. We would also like to thank our colleagues, subscribers and well wishers, who have helped in many ways. Words of gratitude are due to Astha printers and Tripad Mishra for the cover design and creating its web presence.



## CONTENTS

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	<b>Page No.</b>
1) When bodies become instruments of protest... Kirti Y. Nakhare	01
2) The Impact of Translation on Literature Aasha N. P.	10
3) Decolonizing the Bildungsroman: Nation and Self in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children. Abhisek Upadhyay	20
4) Translating Socio-Economic And Psychological Realities of Bundelkhand: Poems of Kedarnath Agarwal Shiraz Khan	33
5) Kaundunit – Whither Desinoir Fiction? Supantha Bhattacharyya	41
6) Man-Woman Relationship in Alice Walker's The Color Purple Vinod R.Shende	49
7) Insight into the history through the context of Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions Archana A Gupta, Urmila Dabir	57
8) Displacement and Identity Crisis in Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner Priti Singh	66
9) Exploring Manju Kapur's A Married Woman using Feministic Lenses G. R. Hashmi	74
10) Men's Credit and Women's Literature Vishnu M. Chavan, Varsha V.Vaidya	82
11) Cultural Clash in Bapsi Sidhwa's: An American Brat Jyoti Tripathi, Vandana Bhagdikar	88



12)	Probing the female characters expedition through History in Amitav Ghosh's selected Novels	94
	Swapnil. R. Dahat	
13)	Deconstruction of Socially Constructed Gender in Elizabeth Gaskell's The Grey Woman through the Lenses of 'Gender Performativity'	102
	Megha D. Ramteke	
14)	Negotiating Cultural Combating Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine and Desirable Daughters	111
	Kanchan Joshi, Urmila Dabir	
15)	Women Represented as Marginalized in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani	119
	Reema Kharabe, Vandana Bhagdikar	
16)	The Theme of Alienation in J. M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country	129
	Renuka L. Roy	
17)	Portrayal of Indian Culture in the Novels of Shashi Tharoor and Chetan Bhagat	137
	Priya D. Wanjari	
18)	Locating Shakespeare in Hindi Cinema	149
	Shubha R Mishra	
19)	Inter-community Marriages a Hindrance in Preserving the Ethnic Purity in Bapsi Sidhwa's An American Brat	157
	Vandana Bhagdikar, Swati Hasoriya	
20)	Quest for Identity in Manju Kapur's The Immigrant: A Double Dilemma	163
	Vandana Bhagdikar	

## Poetry Section

21)	- Of Curves and Lines	169
22)	- Catharsis, of Sorts	170
	Supantha Bhattacharyya	
23)	- Blessed to be Human	171
24)	- A Saga of Intolerance	172
	Manjushree Sardeshpande	
25)	- Annandale --- A Memoir	174
26)	- The Real Heroes	175
	Priti Singh	

## Book Reviews

27)	Why I am a Hindu – Tharoor Affirms and Reclaims his faith	177
	Supantha Bhattacharyya	
28)	Love and Jihad in Home Fire	180
	Ms. Pooja Swamy	

## Time Travel

29)	Time Travel - Lord of the Files	183
	Dr. Gurushree Ramesh	



## When bodies become instruments of protest...

Kirti Y. Nakhare

### Abstract

Self abnegation and abstinence by controlling senses are common methods used by yogis to pursue yogic practices. Similarly, physical bodies are also used to attain other goals. They could be sites of oppression and perpetration of violence. The body of a subaltern could simultaneously be a site of resistance and protest and to inflict pain. When other avenues of expressing protest fail, the body is used to 'stage' protest. Literature is replete with examples of protest. The epics offer several instances, be it Amba from the Mahabharata consigning herself to flames or Gandhari wilfully wearing the blindfold, are age old examples of expressing disagreement by inflicting pain on one's own self. The disrobing of Draupadi, on the other hand is considered an act of violence carried out at the Kuru court. These instances of violence, resistance and protest find resonances in literature, albeit with a twist. This paper will deal with instances from the epic that have inspired literary works which in turn have shaped real life protests.

Keywords: Subaltern, Resistance, Protest, Oppression, Physical body.

*The Mothers of Manipur*, is a real life account of twelve Imas (Meira Paibis) the brave mothers in the trouble torn state of

Manipur who registered protest through their bodies. The text is about the resilient people of contemporary Manipur. The book is not a mere collection of biographies. The protest that took place in 2004 continues to resonate to this day

### About the AFSPA

The AFSPA (Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and the Disturbed Areas Act was promulgated to address the Naga insurgency, but ended up causing a rash of armed rebellions against the Indian State. "If the proliferation of armed rebellion was on one side of the peculiar consequences of militarization, the slow but sure erosion of civic values and sensibilities was another." (Barbora, 224)

Manipur was brought under the AFSPA in 1980, AFSPA added to the insurgent tendencies across the state, underlining the growing alienation of a large swathe of Manipuri society from the country. The Malom massacre of November 2000, resulted in the death of ten innocents at the hands of security forces. It led to a little known woman Irom Sharmila on to a hunger strike that went on for sixteen years acting as a 'rational being acting on my conscience' (Philipose, 15)

Irom Sharmila's turning her body into a weapon of resistance was a precursor to the defiant disrobing by the Imas in front of the Kangla Fort four years later. Sharmila found solace in the firmly bonded matriarchy of the Meira Paibis who for long were planning to protest against the brutal AFSPA.

The Meira Paibis (*The Women Torch Bearers*) of Manipur turned their bodies into sites of struggle. The silence on rape and other forms of sexualized violence perpetrated by the army was finally given a voice by courageous Manipuri women narrating their horrific tales of assault.

The preposterous demand of the Indian Army to rape them reminds one of the *Kounter Me* of Mahasweta Devi's *Dopdi*.



Mahasweta Devi's well-known short story *Draupadi* dealt with army atrocities against women in the country's Naxalite areas. Coincidentally this short story was staged and directed by late Kanhailal which featured his wife Sabitri Heisnam as the protagonist. It could have inspired the Kangla protest. The work took on a new meaning after the 'naked protest'.

The trigger for the protest at Kangla

The trigger for the Meira Paibis was the broken and mutilated body of Thangjam Manorama, with gunshot wounds caused by the Assam Rifles for no apparent fault of Manorama. Seeing the ravished body compelled the Imas to think of a new language of resistance, as the old ways of protest suddenly seemed redundant. It was as if their own, older bodies had to become that of Manorama's and 'offered' to her persecutors.

The frailness of the body was pitted against the enormity of the project. The Imas through their protest proved that frailty was only in one's mind. The 'Mothers' of Manipur proved that the same physical body that bears the pain of parturition could bear the self inflicted pain of nakedness to fight against perennial atrocities carried out under the guise of maintaining law and order. Aptly, Ian Burkitt in *Bodies of Thought* looks at the body as, "source of our collective experiences and a site of opposition to established power relations." (Burkitt,6)

The body is the basis of our being. The same body is a collective experience when it stands united against the established authority. The Imas firmly believed in this. This also finds resonances in the epics. The body as an instrument of protest is found through several instances in the epics. Be it Gandhari's wilful blindfold, Draupadi's refusal to tie her hair after the showdown at the Kuru court. Karna's generosity in tearing his divine *kavach and kundal* could also be seen as an anti-establishment move, a way to prove his greatness through the pain inflicted on his body.

Amba's austerities and the final consignment to flames can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to escape from her physical form. This was her way to seek revenge and protest against Bhishma and Salva, who forced her to take radical steps as they couldn't provide her with the justice she deserved.

Ekalavya's sacrifice is an example of extreme devotion. The infliction of immense physical pain comes out of mental fortitude. The sacrifice of the thumb is symbolic of *sharanagati* complete submission to the guru. However, if seen in a different light it can be interpreted as physical protest against the system that doesn't give importance to merit.

The controversial book *The Hindus* by Wendy Doniger reveals the employment of another narrative strategy. Doniger in *The Hindus* while dealing with Ekalavya's thumb, situates the myth of Ekalavya in the present day and traces the role he plays in the lives of contemporary dalits. Ekalavya's thumb is symbolic of the mistakes of the past. Interestingly, Doniger has strung together several Dalit voices, whose creations are acts of subversion.

For Trymbak Sapkale the finger is akin to a fulcrum, he asks Ekalavya to give his cut off finger that would act as a fulcrum to move the earth:

"Ekalavya!  
The round earth.  
A steel lever  
In my hand.  
But no leverage?  
O Ekalavya,  
You ideal disciple!  
Give me the finger you cut off;  
That will be my fulcrum."

On the other hand the belief of a Dalit Poet, that history would have happened differently if Ekalavya wouldn't have given his thumb... and using it to gain water rights for Dalits on the Ganges River:

“If you had kept your thumb  
history would have happened  
somewhat differently.  
But...you gave your thumb  
And history also  
Became theirs.  
Ekalavya,  
Since that day they  
Have not even given you a glance.  
Forgive me, Ekalavya, I won't be fooled now  
By their sweet words.  
My thumb  
Will never be broken.”

Dalit anger is evident through these short pieces as also the urgency to reclaim lost power. The Dalits have appropriated him and used him to drive home a point scathingly.

In the Ramayana, Rama making his wife go through the fire trial 'literally' is inflicting pain on the physical body of Sita. The mental scars are way beyond mention.

Through these examples one can believe as David Hoy suggests that the possibility of resistance lies in considering ways in which the body has been lived differently. Our current mode of embodiment is only one of several that have been viable in other times or other places. He suggests that “If the body can be shown to have been lived differently historically (through ethnography), then the body can be seen to be “more” than what it now has become”. (Adrian,<sup>1</sup>)

Through various examples from the epics and contemporary times, one can safely say so. The radical stance adopted by the Meira Paibis was something they themselves were unaware that they were ever capable of. It is the ultimate sense of protest and anger that pushes one to one's limits in 'making' the body 'do' more than it ever had.

Catherine Bell believes that ritual often has a role as a “process for social transformation, for catharsis, for embodying symbolic values, for defining the nature of the real, or for struggling over control of the sign.” (Bell, 89)

The Meira Paibis appearing naked was akin to a one-time-ritual. A 'ritual' that was essential to seek justice. So was probably Draupadi's refusal to tie her hair.

'Ritual' when not thought in the classical ritual form. Ritual can have a profound impact on ordering behaviour. Normally, when we think of a 'ritual' it is in terms of the classical religious form. Such rituals are fixed and rooted in tradition, so not particularly useful for the purposes of resistance. However not all rituals follow this pattern and a number of groups create intentional rituals for specific purposes.

Like the eco-pagan practice where the sacred body is integrated in political strategies of resistance. The body becomes a 'tool of resistance' and the protestors 'literally embodied their feelings and performed their politics'.

The fact that the Meira Paibis presented themselves naked as 'one' body displaying solidarity with each other and with Thangjam Manorama. Here the Meira Paibi's bodies performed their politics. By appearing naked they empowered themselves and tried to radically shake authorities in the socially conservative Manipuri society. These were ordinary women most of them were vendors in Imphal's Ima Keithel (Mother's Market) who transformed themselves into an unstoppable force.

Despite palpitations of the heart, fits of dizziness, insomnia, failing eyesight, the planning for that action had to be meticulous: inner garments had to be removed leaving only the *enaphi* and *phanek* to make the act of stripping swifter, jewellery had to be tied in bundles utmost secrecy was to be maintained. The sanctity associated with the Manipuri convention that bestows power on the phanek, a garment that strange men cannot touch without being cursed for life.

“Deliberately exposing their bodies, the women simultaneously asserted their right to their own bodies. Rejecting the masculinist definition of women’s bodies as attractive or unattractive, available or unavailable, they moved into an entirely different paradigm.” (Mehrotra, 224)

The symbolism of stripping that was in focus here was not just of clothes but of human flesh. Exposing their naked bodies in front of the Kangla Fort was the culmination of a phase of mental disquiet.

Justice denied-The ground reality:

However, no justice was meted out to Manorama, the Assam Rifles refused point blank to cooperate with the enquiry. Those who perpetrated the assault were not even identified. The army vacated the Kangla Fort and AFSPA was withdrawn from seven assembly constituencies within the Imphal municipal area these were the minor scraps of concessions thrown at protestors.

Every day brings its share of army intrusions into homes. The picking up of innocents, encounter deaths and daily patrolling remain very much a part of Manipur’s everyday reality. The comparison between the Ima’s protest, Dopdi’s refusal to clothe herself and Amba’s self immolation is representative of the fact that when pushed to the wall the body loses its ‘gendered presence’, existence of the body is reduced to a breath, that defines life. The breath that matters and which when taken away could pose problems to authority.

Another question that is posed by the editor Pamela Philipose is whether the Meira Paibis are caught in a time warp? To which she suggests it is time to re-imagine their role as social activists. Also as political scientists have argued, “It is the institutionalization of a more humane and feminized worldview that will most effectively lead to the kind of conflict resolution most compatible with the wider agenda of a truly transformative politics.” (Chenoy, Vanaik, 137)

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## The Impact of Translation on Literature

Aasha N. P.

### Abstract

The relationship between literature and translation has always been problematic. Translation generally means the transfer of linguistic and cultural codes from one language to another. But translation is not an inert activity and the translated work is not something static. The study of translation, when done right, can disprove the myth of a text’s unchanging identity. It can invite us to consider how a text’s complex, multiple, and shared origins are often mirrored only through translations. Translations, more than rendering the original text in a new language, capture hidden shades of meaning. A translation is not merely the process of transferring cultural codes from one language to another; it is a kind of transplantation also. The significance of translations is that they can make the dreams of a world literature that is not dominated by Western interests come true.

Keywords: Translation, Eurocentrism, Culture, Destruction, Facilitator, Choice of the Translator,

### Introduction

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, translation is “the expression of the meaning of speech or writing in a different language” (1631). In his seminal text *The Translation*

*Studies Reader*, Lawrence Venuti discusses the various kinds of power translation has. Translation has a lot of power in shaping the national identities of foreign cultures to the world. It has the power to solve racial or ethnic conflicts. It can also maintain “literary canons”. Regardless of these powers, Venuti ultimately believes that the violence of translation is inherent in its processes. This violence is almost inevitable and it can materialize any time during the production of a translated text, depending on the specific cultural or social movements that might be occurring. Therefore he defines translation as an act of violence. He calls it “the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language culture” (197).

The present article tries to investigate the impact of translation on literature. It delves into the history and evolution of translations in general and discusses why translations have become so popular in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Whenever there is mention of translation, it is worthwhile to remember that the speaker is referring primarily to works translated into one or other of the European languages, most importantly English. Although works get translated into provincial languages, they are really few in number. However, when such translations take place, they provide a bridge between Eurocentric imperial interests and indigenous counterstrikes.

Translation can be defined as the semiotic and cultural exchange between the source and the target text. The text that is translated is called the source text, and the language that it is translated into is called the target language. The product is sometimes called the target text. Translation involves a risk of spilling-over of idioms and usages and stylistic nuances from the source language into the target language. Translation in Sanskrit and Arabic is ‘tarjama’ which means ‘definition’. This meaning, when applied to Arabic translations of Greek epics, helps us uncover tendencies to define, analyse and explain things in detail. Other

words used for translation stress its importance as a form of storytelling. In the Nigerian language Igbo, the words for translation are ‘tapia’ and ‘kowa’. Tapia comes from the roots ‘ta’ which means to ‘narrate’ and ‘pia’ which means ‘destruction.’ The combined meaning is that translation is a kind of creative destruction. In Igbo therefore translation is an activity that stresses the importance of the translation as narration, allowing for destruction and change rather than a one-to-one reconstruction. These examples imply that the words for translation in languages throughout the world are not actually synonyms of translation. They have a wide range of semiotic associations that diverge from those evoked by the English word. Ironically, the Chinese term ‘fanyi’ or the Arabic term ‘tarjama’ cannot simply mean ‘translation.’ They do not have the same Western associations for translation as a process of transference or carrying across. They mean definition, destruction and many other things besides.

Translation theory aims at applying general principles of the translation process in relation to the process of actual translation. Translation theories can be divided into three main categories: 1. Translation theories based on Source-oriented approaches 2. Linguistic translation theories 3. Recent translation theories.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B. C. until the last century, all theoretical frame works developed under source-oriented approaches were concerned with what a translator must or must not do. The principle focus was on the closeness to the source text as regards both meaning and form. In other words, the translator needed to reproduce the text, in all its aspects, as a target text.

Etienne Dolet of France is the one who devised one of the first theories of translation. He established five essential principles for translators which can be classified under Source-oriented theories. The translator must fully understand the sense and

meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities. The translator should have a perfect knowledge of both Source Language and Target Language. The translator should avoid word-for-word renderings. The translator should word in common use. The translator should rearrange words appropriately to produce the correct tone.

At that time, translation was absorbed into the discipline of linguistics. That means that it was conceived as a branch of linguistics, and not as an independent science. These theories became headed as linguistic studies rather than as translation studies. During that time, translation theory was regarded as a part of linguistic communication based on "Information Theory". This theory defines language as a 'code.' During communication, speakers or writers encode what they want to say and the listeners or readers, who share the same code, would decode it. Therefore, translation is a special case of communication because sender and receiver do not share the same code; the translator recodes the message from the sender into the receiver code. The main issue of translations to sustain the original message despite that there is generally no one-to-one correspondence between the signs of the two different code systems.

These theories were also basically source-oriented, normative, and synchronic and focused on process as in the previous period. At last, in the last three decades of the 20th century Translation Studies started to become an autonomous science. James Holmes, an American poet and translator coined the term 'Translation Studies' for this new scientific approach. He stated that the main intention of Translation Studies is the development of a full and comprehensive translation theory.

Douglas Robinson in his book *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche* states: "We are currently in the middle of a translation studies boom: all around the world new programs

are springing up, some aimed at the professional training of translators and interpreters, others at the academic study of translation and interpreting, most at both" (56).

### Analysis

In order to assess the impact of translation on literature, it is important to review the history of translation in different languages. According to George Steiner, the history of translation is divided into four periods. The first period starts from Cicero and Horace to the time of Alexander Fraser Tytler. The second period extends up to Valery and from Valery to 1960s becomes the third period and the fourth period begins from 1960s onwards.

The unofficial history of translation dates back to the period when Livius Andronicus translated Homer's *Odyssey* under the title *Odusia* into Latin in 240 B.C. Livius' translation anticipates the methodology of translations that followed it, extending into the present. Where as Livius translates freely in some places, in others he is more liberal with the wordings, trying to capture their essence and not straining himself overmuch. His translation of the *Odyssey* has great historical importance. Before his time, the Mesopotamians and Egyptians had translated only judicial and religious texts, but no one had translated a literary work. Livius' translation made the Greek epic accessible to Romans and contributed positively to the literary culture of Rome. This project was one of the best examples of translation as an artistic process. Livius strove to preserve the artistic quality of original and as there was no tradition of the epic in Italy before him, he became a trail-blazer for many others. Later Quintilian, Cicero, Horace, Catallus and Younger Pliny tried their hand at translation and perfected it. Cicero and Horace differentiated between word-for-word and sense-oriented translations.

The most significant turn in the history of translation came with the Bible translations. The Bible continues to be the most



translated book in the world. The fascinating story of how the Bible was translated into English in its present form actually dates back to at least a thousand years. The efforts to translate the Bible from its original languages into over 2,000 others have spanned more than two millennia. Although John Wycliffe is often credited with the first translation of the Bible into English, there were, in fact, many translations of the Bible centuries before Wycliffe. Towards the end of the seventh century, the Venerable Bede began a translation of scripture into Anglo-Saxon. St. Aldhelm translated the complete *Book of Psalms* and large portions of other scriptures into Old English. The Bible was first translated from Vulgar Latin into Old English by select monks and scholars. Such translations were in the form of literal translations. Very few complete translations existed during that time. Early modern translations of the Bible are those which were made between 1500 and 1800-- the period of Early Modern English. This was the first major period of Bible translation into English language. It began with the dramatic introduction of the Tyndale Bible. Tyndale is also unique in that he was the first of the Middle English translators to use the printing press to help distribute several thousand copies of this translation throughout England.

The seventeenth century saw the birth of many influential translators such as Sir John Denham, Abraham Cowley, John Dryden and Alexander Pope. Dryden translated works by Horace, Juvenal, Ovid, Lucretius and Theocritus, a task which he found far more satisfying than writing for the stage. In 1694, he began work on what would be his most ambitious and defining work as a translator, *The Works of Virgil*. His final translations appeared in the volumes *Fables Ancient and Modern*, a series of episodes from Homer, Ovid and Boccaccio, as well as modernized adaptations from Geoffrey Chaucer with a fair sprinkling of Dryden's own poems. *The Preface to Fables* is considered to be both a major work of criticism and one of the finest essays in English. As a critic and translator Dryden was

essential in making a variety of foreign works accessible to the public. Pope, who was fascinated by Homer since childhood, announced in 1713 his plans to publish a translation of *The Iliad*. His translation appeared between 1715 and 1720. It was acclaimed by Samuel Johnson as peerless— a feat which no age or nation could hope to equal. With the help of William Broome and Elijah Fenton, he also translated the *Odyssey* in 1726.

In the eighteenth century, the translator was compared to an artist with a moral duty both to the work of the original author and to the receiver. Moreover, with the development of new theories on translation, the study of translation started to become systematic. Alexander Fraser Tytler's volume of *Principles of Translation* (1791) is a case in point. The other exponents of this period were Samuel Johnson and George Campbell. Tytler's treatise is important in the history of translation theory. It states that the translation should fully represent the ideas, style of the original and possess the ease of the original composition. During the century translators strove for the ease of reading, omitting whatever they did not understand in the text or whatever they thought would be boring to the reader.

At the end of this century, much interest was shown by the British East India colonial administrators in the languages, literature and culture of their subjects, and the discovery and the translation of ancient Indian works was highly encouraged. The 18<sup>th</sup> century scholars argued that translators should have the contemporary reader in mind while translation and convey the author's spirit and manner in a more natural way.

The nineteenth century was characterized by two conflicting tendencies--the first considered translation as a category of thought and saw the translator as a creative genius, who enriches the literature and language into which he is translating and the second saw him as a facilitator who renders the source text into

the target language. This century saw an abundance of translations from a variety of languages into English, like the translation of Goethe's work from German into English, and the translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam—a collection of poems—from Persian into English. Samuel Taylor Coleridge a major writer, critic and poet translated Goethe's *Faustin* 1821. For many years Dante Gabriel Rossetti worked on English translations of Italian poetry including Dante Alighieri's *La Vita Nuova*.

In the twentieth century translation began to be viewed as a highly subtle activity, involving a translator who was skilled not just in the use of two languages but also in the cultural differences that make translation a challenging job. Ezra Pound saw translation as a factor that can and should influence literatures. The important point Pound makes is that the translator is a giver of life. Texts that are not translated do not live on. Translators could again be seen to be mediators, as they always had been, but they were now again allowed to have an agenda that differed from the requirements of mere accuracy.

The work of Antoine Berman Philip Lewis and Lawrence Venuti, among others, is notable in the field of 21<sup>st</sup> century translation. Nowadays most translations strive to remain loyal to the original, relying on footnotes where there might be alternative translations or textual variants. In case where a word or phrase admits of more than one meaning, all the possible interpretations are given, allowing the reader to choose one. According to Terry Eagleton, reading translations requires the use of a wider perspective, one that allows us to see what is “held at bay” by the practice of reading great works of literature “in isolation” (44).

### Conclusion

According to the 21<sup>st</sup> century theorists, the main job of the translator is to bring out the beauty of thrills, sensations, and feeling

from the main language and to create the same rhythm in the translated version. The translations should be spontaneous in readability and delivery, and original in writing. The performance of a translator would depend also upon his ability to introduce clarity in the text.

Translation is eventually the transfer of message from one code to another. This implies two things: that there is a ‘message’ and that this message is independent of the code. Literature is the exploitation of the creative resources of a language. A careful distinction must here be made between ‘literature’ and the ‘content of literature’. The content of literature is what usually gets transferred in translation. Hence it follows that a literary text, by its very nature, cannot be translated since its ‘message’ is not independent of the language in which it is encoded. This is the theoretical paradox inherent in all literary translations.

However, many other theorists defend the concept of good translations and remark that good literature is the one that can be ideally translated. A translator therefore needs to read “into” the work, discovering the different shades of meaning before attempting to translate. Translation, when done correctly, can take a text to newer levels of meaning and beauty. It is the choice of the translator that ultimately decides how ‘violent’ the differences in translation are.

The scope of translations has expanded massively in recent years. Throughout history, written and spoken translations have played a crucial role in interpersonal communication and in providing access to important texts for scholarship and religious purposes. As world trade has grown, so has the importance of translation. If it had not been for translations, many important texts would have remained unknown outside the English-speaking world.

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## **Decolonizing the Bildungsroman: Nation and Self in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.**

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### Abstract

Rushdie not merely chutnifies the English language in his novels, he also chutnifies recognizable European literary forms and amalgamates them with indigenous narratological traditions. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie uses the Bildungsroman form to chart the young man Saleem Sinai's coming of age in a society trying to find its identity after freeing itself from colonial shackles. Saleem's life is inexorably handcuffed to the history of India by virtue of the coincidence of his birth with that of the birth of independent India on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947. Saleem with his magical powers tries to embody all of India's voices. However, Saleem fails in his quest for a coherent identity and assimilate into society. Rushdie adopts the coming-of age structure of the Bildungsroman in order to parody the genre's dominant structure of search for stable identity, assimilation into society and self-actualisation which is difficult in the context of the hybridity of culture obtained in postcolonial societies like India. This paper explores how Rushdie decolonizes the genre by subverting the realism and the development framework of the Bildungsroman framework by taking recourse to magic realism and the structure of the anti-bildungsroman. Rushdie's chutnification of generic forms

symbolises the fragmented consciousness and identity of the postcolonial subject.

Keywords: Postcolonial, Bildungsroman, Identity, Conflict, Colonial, Language and Chutnification.

Who what am I? My answer: I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each "I," every one of the now-six-hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow a world.

(Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*)

Salman Rushdie is not only the most famous of the postcolonial writers but also the most postcolonial. Rushdie's fame rests not merely on his Booker Prize in 1981 for his book *Midnight's Children* and its being adjudged the *Booker of Bookers*, in 1993, and his controversial essays but also for several non-literary events such as the issue of a death-fatwa for his book *Satanic Verses*. The prominence of Salman Rushdie as a postcolonial writer is attested by the fact that an authoritative compendium of postcolonial studies *The Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffins draws on one of Rushdie's essays for its title. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie adopts the coming-of-age structure of the Bildungsroman in order to parody the genre's dominant structure of search for stable identity, assimilation into society and self-actualisation which is difficult in the context of the hybridity of culture obtained in postcolonial societies like India.

The term Bildungsroman is used today as a label for novels that focus on the development or education of its central character.

Etymologically, the word comes from German, and is a compound of two words "Bildungs" meaning "building or formation" and "Roman" meaning "a novel." The form was originally a peculiarly German novelistic form that was the dominant form of the German novel in the eighteenth century— a form which is preoccupied with the idea of Bildung or education of the protagonist. According to James Hardin, the Bildungsroman is "the early bourgeois, humanistic concept of the shaping of the individual self from its innate potentialities through acculturation and social experience to the threshold of maturity" (Hardin 26). In other words, the form embodies the protagonist's quest for identity, a desire for full development of the potentialities of the self, and maturity. A successful Bildungsroman entails a reconciliation of the conflict of between individual and society through a compromise of values.

There are conspicuous parallels between the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bildungsroman and *Midnight's Children*. The novel presents a young man coming of age in a changing society. As in the former, a traumatic event in Saleem's life sends him on a journey of self-realisation. The traumatic event is the ten-year old Saleem's realisation that his biological parents are not the Sinais but Vanita and Wee Willie Winkie, who are both dead. The Sinais begin to privilege his sister over him when they learn that he is not their biological son. Saleem is haunted by his sudden loss of identity. He is no longer a Sinai, nor is he Muslim which he has believed himself to be till now. He is unable to accept his new identity and causes him to fail. His failure to accept this new history causes Saleem to abandon the element of his life that marks him as extraordinary, his ability to communicate telepathically. The indifference of his foster Father and Mother makes him lose interest in assembling the *Midnight's Children* Conference. He struggles to find a place in the Sinai family and increasingly loses interest in assembling the *Midnight's Children* Conference.

The events in the novel do not lead to any recognition or realisation on the part of Saleem except of his realisation of the impossibility to find meaning, coherence, and cohesion in the narrative of India's history as well as his own. Saleem is bestowed with many magical powers by virtue of his being born at the hour of India's independence. One of them is the unique ability to get inside the minds of powerful people and listen to stories across the nation of India. Saleem is able to literally see the world through different eyes engrossed in their identities. Saleem confronted with a group of language protestors explains his experience, "I contented myself with discovering, one by one, the secrets of the fabulous beings who had suddenly arrived in my mental field of vision...I plunged whenever possible into the separate, and altogether brighter reality of the five hundred and eighty-one".

Saleem's ability to experience the world from the perspectives of others should enable him to form connections across individual narratives and reach some sort of coherence. This however doesn't happen and Saleem is unable to deal with the chaos of individual narratives and diverse identities. Saleem is not only caught on the threshold of youth and adulthood, he is caught in between religions and social classes. This diversity of perspective and experience rather than enriching his understanding fragments his perception of the self, nation and text. Saleem's identity progressively becomes an amalgamation of cultures that mirrors India's diverse population, eclipsing his own identity and blurring his understanding of reality. Saleem's loss of religious and class identity is the triggering event which sends him on the journey of self-discovery. Saleem not only fails to unite the diverse identities and narratives of India but also fails to reach a coherent understanding of his own identity and story.

Saleem is destined upon his death to break into as many pieces as there are citizens of India. Saleem Sinai embodies India within his individual self. The concept of a single individual

representing a teeming, diverse, multitudinous nation like India encapsulates one of the novel's fundamental concerns: the tension between the single and the many. The conflict between individual and society of the Bildungsroman structure takes the form of the conflict between singularity and multiplicity. The give and take relationship between Saleem's individual life and the collective life of the nation suggests that public and private will always influence one another. Throughout the novel, Saleem struggles to contain all of India's voices within himself. He tries to weave his own personal story with the stories of India. This attempt leads to his eventual disintegration and collapse at the end.

Allegorically speaking, the conflict of the single and the many inside Saleem Sinai reflects the tension between the single and the many which characterises India itself. India is an incredibly diverse nation in terms of geography, climate, languages, culture and religion. India is an incredibly diverse nation. India recognizes twenty-two official languages and its population practices religions as varied as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism, among many others. Indian culture too is an amalgamation of many cultures which have had its influence during over the millennia of its evolution. Although, unity in diversity has been the ideal of the Indian ethos, coming to terms with India's sprawling diversity has proved difficult for some communities and individuals. India's partition into the Islamic nation of Pakistan and the secular, but Hindu dominated India is the most prominent instance of the failure of efforts to contain and unify the diversity of India. Saleem Sinai's Bildung is allegory of the failure of the unification of the diversity of the Indian nation.

Saleem Sinai is symbolic of India's diversity and plurality by virtue of his mixed bloodline, ambiguous class affiliation, eclectic religious influences and telepathic transgression of language barriers, multitude of experiences and sensitivities. Saleem represents the assimilative and inclusive impulse of Indian culture.



In contrast to the language protestors of Bombay, the supporters of Pakistan and Indira Gandhi represent desire for singularity and purity which breeds intolerance and incites violence and repression. Saleem Sinai's *Midnight Children's Conference* is a model for pluralism and a testimony to the potential power inherent within coexisting diversity, which is a natural and definitive element of Indian culture.

*Midnight's Children* embodies the *Bildung* of not only Saleem Sinai but also the nation of India. Saleem Sinai, is thus, a metaphor for India in the novel. Handcuffed to history by the coincidence of his birth with the birth of the modern nation of India, Saleem Sinai is India and India is Saleem Sinai. The many selves and many parents of Saleem mirror the multitudinous intricacies that is *India* herself. India which was born at midnight on 15 August 1947 had offered hopes and dreams of equality, justice, fraternity, democracy and socialism which has been enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of India and was visible in Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech. Saleem Sinai and India failed to live up to the hopes they offered at the time of their birth. The novel which charts the development of India in its first six decades of its existence and shows that it has failed to its ideals which it had set out to achieve and has failed to achieve maturation as a nation.

One of the foremost theorists of Postcolonial Studies, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" expresses her concern for the complicity between postcolonial studies, informed by European theories, and neo-colonialism. It is argued by some critics that the arcane nature of the language of contemporary criticism which stems from European, and especially, French theories, such as deconstruction and Foucauldian theories of discourse, constitutes a neo-colonialism of texts of the third world. The same charge is made against postcolonial writers writing in English language and those adopting European literary forms. The allegation is that adoption of colonial

language and literary forms reinscribe, co-opt and rehearse neo-colonial imperatives of political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural erasure. A similarity exists regarding the persistence of the colonial language in the erstwhile colonies of European imperialist powers.

The suspicion and uneasiness regarding the use of colonial language is poignantly expressed in James Joyce's novel *A Portrait Of the Artist as a Young Man* by Stephen Dedalus during a conversation with the Dean of Studies in Chapter 5:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.

The passage exemplifies the unrest, uneasiness and turmoil of writing in a colonial language. During the preceding conversation, the dean, who is English, fails to follow the meaning of what "tundish", and assumes that it is an Irish word. Stephen's new awareness of the borrowed nature of his language has a strong effect on him, as he knows that language is central to his artistic mission. By the end of the novel, Stephen acknowledges that Irish English is a borrowed language, and resolves to use that knowledge to shape English into a tool for expressing the soul of the imprisoned Irish race. Joyce's remaking of English language for expressing the consciousness of the imprisoned Irish race is akin to Rushdie's "chutnification of English" to express the fragmented consciousness of the Indian nation.

As the decolonisation process unfolded in the 1950s, a debate about choice of language erupted and vexed authors throughout the world. Some Postcolonial writers have concluded



that the colonizers' language is permanently tainted, and that to write in it involves a crucial acquiescence in colonial structures. This apprehension is expressed by the African author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o who claims that language is a carrier of culture and plays an important role in hierarchies and systems of oppression. Thiong'o does not consider English to be an African language and says that African authors should be aware of the fact that when they write in English they are contributing to the expansion of, and dependence on, the English language.

Bill Ashcroft et.al in the the Post-Colonial Studies Reader explains the controlling aspect of language which has vexed many postcolonial writers:

Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language. The control over language by the imperial centre-whether achieved by displacing native languages, by installing itself as a 'standard' against other variants which are constituted as 'impurities', or by planting the language of empire in a new place-remains the most potent instrument of cultural control. (*Postcolonial Studies Reader*, 261)

A different solution to the problem of writing in a colonial language is expressed by another African author Chinua Achebe in his essay "The African Writer and the English Language." In this essay, Achebe discusses how the process of colonialism – for all its ills – provided colonised people from varying linguistic backgrounds "a language with which to talk to one another". English becomes for Achebe "the one central language enjoying nationwide currency" by which he can communicate across Nigeria which was not possible in any of the indigenous languages and dialects as they lacked nationwide prevalence. Thus for post-colonial writers like Achebe, who use English language to suit their creative purpose, English is no longer a coloniser's language for it has become a tool of decolonisation.

The use of a colonial language to write about African and Indian subject matter comes with several setbacks such as descriptions of situations or modes of thought which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life. Faced with such a situation, a postcolonial writer can adopt two methods. He can attempt and contain what he wants to say within the limits of conventional English or he can try to push back those limits to accommodate indigenous modes of thoughts and manners of behaviour. Most postcolonial writers, like Achebe, writing in English have adopted the latter path and have extended the frontiers of English. In *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, by altering syntax, usage, and idiom, Achebe transforms the English language into a distinctly African style.

Although the problem of writing in a colonial language vexed many authors writing in English in India, it was Raja Rao, among the Indian novelists, who first grappled with this problem in the preface to his magnum opus *Kanthapura*:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I used the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.

After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life

had gone into the making of theirs. We, in India, think quickly, we talk quickly, and when we move we move quickly. There must be something in the sun of India that makes us rush and tumble and run on. And our paths are interminable. The *Mahabharata* has 214,778 verses and the *Ramayana* 48,000. Puranas there are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us – we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story telling. I have tried to follow it myself in this story. (Rao 5)

In Kanthapura, Rao set about making the language of the oppressor one's own, and conveying—through its serpentine sentences, quaint vocabulary, and its tendency to consistently veer away from the plot—the sights, sounds, smells, flavours and tempo of Indian life. Rao's aim was to produce a work that is Indian at heart, yet in English. It was a vision document for the future of Indian writers writing in English.

This decolonization of English initiated by Rao was vigorously carried forward by G V Desani in *All About H. Haterr* and Salman Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* who really supplanted the "Englishness" of their English with "Indianness." In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie undertakes the "chutnification" of English, or the creation of a hybrid language to "de-colonize" English. "Chutnification" is used by Rushdie himself in the text of *Midnight's Children* (Rushdie 459). He uses the term to express "the feasibility of the chutnification of history; the grand hope of the pickling of time". "Chutney" is an Indian side dish prepared with a mixture of fruits or vegetables with sugar or salt to be had with food. It is extremely flavourful and supposed to add extra zing to the food. Similarly, all the linguistic, historical and other technical experimentations that Rushdie includes in his novel add the extra

punch to the narrative. This word itself is coined in a similar manner (chutney + fication) adding the English suffix 'fication', thus meaning "process" to the Indian word "chutney". Rushdie's linguistic experimentation includes coinages and experimentation with words and phrases, inclusion of direct translations from the regional Hindi/Urdu dialect in to English. Rushdie takes the language popularized by Hindi cinema with its street-slang, fast pace, melodrama, romance, and action, and fuses it into his narrative to render a surprisingly modern, energetic view of India. The underlying hypothesis behind this chutnification is the belief that identity is a construct, which is the result of linguistic determinism because it is the linguistic reality, which controls and constructs the processes of epistemological constructions and ontological realities.

Like language the question of form has perplexed postcolonial writers writing in English from the very beginning. The use of a colonial literary form within a postcolonial context is apprehended as an unconscious redistribution of an imperialist mode that will in turn "re"-perpetuate the ideology of a Eurocentric vision which "claims to be universal and general". The postcolonial writers respond to this apprehension by using primarily indigenous forms, supplemented with European-derived influences, rather than as working primarily within European genres like the novel and merely adding to them a degree of exotic indigenization.

Peter Barry, in his book *Beginning Theory*, discovers a patterned transition regarding the use of European literary forms in the evolution of postcolonial literatures and divides this transition into three phases. The first phase is the 'Adopt' phase of colonial literature, wherein the colonial subject writing in English due to his unquestioned acceptance of the authority of European models as it is and aims to write masterpieces which fit entirely to the European tradition assuming its universal validity. In the 'Adapt phase, the postcolonial writer tries to adapt the European form to postcolonial

subject matter assuming partial rights of intervention of the genre. The final phase is the 'Adept' phase, wherein the postcolonial writer declares complete cultural independence and remakes the form to the specifications demanded by the postcolonial context without any reference to European norms. The transitional phases of postcolonial writing mirror the phases of Bildung of the protagonist in a Bildungsroman. In the first phase the postcolonial writer is a humble apprentice like the immature protagonist of the Bildungsroman to develop into a master of colonial language, similarity to the maturity of the protagonist in the Bildungsroman.

Rushdie not only chutnifies the English language in his novels, he also chutnifies recognizable European literary forms and mixes them with indigenous narratological traditions. Rushdie, thus, decolonizes the genre by subverting the realism and the development framework of the Bildungsroman framework by taking recourse to magic realism and the structure of the anti-bildungsroman. Rushdie's chutnification of generic forms symbolises the fragmented consciousness and identity of the postcolonial subject.

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## **Translating Socio-Economic And Psychological Realities of Bundelkhand: Poems of Kedarnath Agarwal**

**Shiraz Khan**

### **Abstract**

The region of Bundelkhand holds a very prominent position in the history of the world. Its glorious past with the martyrdom of Jhansi ki Rani and rich cultural heritage starting from the Gaharwal dynasty, Chandelas, Bundeli Rajputs to the Marathas could be seen in its diverse traditions, art and architecture. For the last few decades the region of Bundelkhand is under the wrath of nature in the grip of draught and famine. Poverty and hunger are major problems of this region. Every year innumerable death and suicide take place due to debt and poverty. The progressive writers of Bundelkhand have portrayed this plight of Bundelkhand in their poems and other works. One of the prominent poet of Bundelkhand Dr. Kedarnath Agarwal has depicted socio-economic and psychological realities of the people of Bundelkhand in his anthologies – ‘Phool Nahi Rang Bolte Hai’ and ‘Yug Ki Ganga’. He has translated the agony, sighs and sorrows of the people to the readers. Few of his major poems are translated by Paramjeet Singh in English. I have tried to analyze the literal and conceptual translation which is done by Paramjeet Singh with the title – ‘When We Are No More’, ‘The Inheritance’ and ‘Along the River Ken’.

Translation basically is a process of transfer, transmutation and transcreation which is significant for cross- cultural mutuality and cross-cultural symbiosis.

Keywords : Historic Region, Cultural Diversity, Bundelkhandi, Transmutation, Cultural Symbiosis.

The Bundeli literature has always been infused in the rustic admostphere of its rural life. We find a diversity of culture in every part of Bundelkhand. There have been eminent poets who belong to Bundelkhand like Tulsidas, Maithlisharan Gupt, Isuri, Dr. Vrindavan Lal Verma, Mahakavi Keshav Das, Mahavir Prasad Diwedi and Dr Kedarnath Agarwal.

Kedarnath Agarwal’s poetry translates the socio-economic and psychological realities of Bundelkhand. Dr. Kedarnath Agarwal belongs to the district of Banda. He belongs to the category of progressive writers. His first collection of poems was published in March 1947 titled *Yug Ki Ganga*, which is a valuable document in understanding the history of Hindi Sahitya. His poems are infused with sensitivity and insight. They are painted in the rustic admostphere of the region of Bundelkhand. The poems are rooted in the culture and traditions of the region and present a true picture of the people of Bundelkhand.

Looking at the historical, cultural, and economic background of Bundelkhand we find it is a historic region in central India, which now included in northern Madhya Pradesh State, comprising the hilly Vindhyan region, cut by ravines, and the northeastern plain. Steep, isolated hills rising abruptly from the plains have provided excellent sites for castles and strongholds of Bundelkhandi mountaineers. The Dhasan, Tons, Ken, and Betwa rivers, in deep, ravine-fringed channels, are of little use for irrigation, though the Betwa River has been dammed and provides water for irrigation and hydroelectricity.

The Gaharwars, the earliest recorded dynasty of Bundelkhand, or Jejakabhukti, were succeeded by the Pratihara Rajputs (warrior caste). The latter were supplanted about 800 BC by the Chandelas, who by the 11<sup>th</sup> century held sway over a large territory between the Yamuna and Narmada rivers. The Chandelas were overthrown in 1182 by Prithviraja, ruler of Ajmer and Delhi. After a period of ruinous anarchy, Bundela Rajputs (for whom the country is named) began to settle there in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. They surrendered to the forces of the Mughal emperor Akbar. With the decline of the Mughals, the Marathas extended their influence and in 1792 were acknowledged them as lords of Bundelkhand. Bundelkhand thus is a rare confluence of rich cultures.

Bundeli, also called Bundelkhandi, is the main language of Bundelkhand. However, there are many local variations. Local dialects and sub-dialects are known as *Tirhani* (Tirhari), *Gahora*, *Jurar*, *Aghari*, etc. In the western portion of Hamirpur district, a peculiar speech form known as *Lodhi yon ki boli* is used. Hindi is the lingua franca in urbanised areas, and among educated people. All local and regional newspapers are in Hindi. Urdu is spoken by around 5% of the population in Banda, Jalaun and Hamirpur districts.

Bundelkhand with its rich historical architecture mythology and inspiring stories holds a prominent position in the world. Its palaces, temples and samadhis are beautiful examples of creative mind and craftsmanship. It was a seat of power and prestige. Today the reality of Bundelkhand is completely different from its glorious past.

For the last few decades the region of Bundelkhand is under the wrath of nature in the grip of draught and famine. Poverty and hunger has snatched away prosperity, health and livelihood of the people. The living condition of women and children is miserable. Children are worst affected by hunger and malnutrition. Every year

countless deaths and suicide take place due to hunger and debt. The poor farmer who ploughs day and night to feed us remains hungry. Hunger and the resultant pain, agony, sorrow, sighs of the people of Bundelkhand find expression in bundelkhand literature.

Target Text by Parmjeet Singh

Original Text by  
Dr. Kedarnath Agarwal

When We Are No More.

(*Phool Nahi Rang Bolte Hain*)

When we are no more

The fields will remain

And the mustering thick on these fields

The Clouds will remain.

Giving life and quenching the thirst,

And making the earth rich and productive.

The leisurely floating tresses of the dark sable  
clouds Will remain

When we are no more

The sports, the merriment

And the women will remain

And full of thrill and joy

And hovering over the red lotus

The drones will ever remain

The bestowers of a surfeiting joy

Lost in revelry

And making the earth rich and beautiful

The red limbs in the fluttering drapery will remain.

हम न रहेंगे

तब भी तो यह खेत रहेंगे।

तब भी तो यह खेत रहेंगे।

हम न रहेंगे

तब भी तो यह खेत रहेंगे।

इन खेतों में धन लहराते

शेष रहेंगे

जीवन देते

प्यास बुझाते

माटी को मधमस्त बनाते

श्याम बदरियां के लहराते केश  
रहेंगे।

हम न रहेंगे तब भी तो रतिरंग

लाल कमल के साथ,

पुलकते भृंग रहेंगे

मधु के दानी मोघ

मनाते

भूतल को रससिक्त बनाते

लाल चुनरिया में

लहराते अंग रहेंगे।

The opening lines stresses the idea 'Man is Mortal'. The poet in the original has described the land and its people, hopeful despite the hunger and despair. The word 'shyam badiyan' denotes the colour black symbolic of the darkness, the melancholy of the people of Bundelkhand. The personification of 'Bandiya' - cloud in the feminine gender suggesting the fecundity (srijanatmak) of the river. The juxtaposition of hope and grief in the same image adds to the



complexity of the poem. Water that the clouds hold give life, quench thirst and make the earth ecstatic. There is a veiled allusion to thirst for rains and the deaths and suicides of farmers. A suggestion of hope that nature will regenerate itself but the word 'hum' (we) is the assertive voice of the people of Bundelkhand. *Mati ko madhmast banate* – the earth becomes rich and fertile in the rains. The word *rati-rangs* refers to the colour of divine love.

In the next lines there is the celebration of joy by the bestower of honey the lotus. *bhatal ko rassikt banate* means the lotus is blessed to bestow honey to innumerable honey bees. The lotus is not partial or biased. *bhatal* refers to earth, *rassikt banate* means drenched/dissolved/coated/merged in sweetness. The colour red is symbolic of various attributes. *Lal Chunariya* refers to the newly wedded bride, the chuneri of the wife, a sister or a mother. Dr. Kedarnath Agarwal belongs to a group of progressive poets. This poem also represents the passion of sacrifice, a feature of progressive poetry. The tone of the poem also conveys hope for the future.

Target Text by Parmjeet Singh

*Ken kinare, patthar baitha gum sum*

Along the river ken

Along the river ken

Crossing its legs

The stone site quite silent.

The snake is waving

in the air all silent.

The water is licking

The stone all silent.

Greeting stunned the traveller

Watches all this-all silent

Another poem *Ken Nadi Ke Kinare* portrays the socio-economic, psychological reality of bundelkhand. It starts with the

personification of the stone to let nature express itself. The stone its silence along the river Ken. Ken is the river of Banda the hometown of Kedarnath Agarwal. The word which the translator has taken as quite whereas in my opinion 'Lost in silence' would have been a better one. There is also an example of under translation as the translator has skipped the lines *patthar sek raha hai gumsum*. The next line 'snake is waving in the air all silent' should have been 'the snake is slithering all silent'. There is also the personification of the Sun which names the entire stony area warm. The translator has skipped these lines. The stone that is licking the water shows it is summer season and the silence portrays the drought in Bundelkhand as the water is not flowing, it is silent.

Everything is quite. Even the traveller has been depicted as fearful. The translator could have used some other word for Sehma instead of stunned. There is also no mention of a word greeting s in the original poem. The meaning the poem conveys is that pain is voiceless. There is no voice to protest.

The translations of the poems of Kedarnath by Paramjeet Singh fails to convey the cultural ethos of the poem. There is over translation and under translation. The translated poem (Along the River Ken) fails in leaving any sustained impact on the minds of the readers yet it is an effort to translate the feelings of the people of Bundelkhand beyond its boundaries.

### The Inheritance

*yug ki ganga* translation by Paramjeet Singh

Target Text by Parmjeet Singh

At the death of his father,

The son

Of a starving farmer has --

The debris of his house,

The broken cot and a few

Yards of land all barren,

Original Text by  
Dr. Kedarnath Agarwal

पैतृक सम्पत्ति

जब बाप मरा तब यह पाया

भूखे किसान के बेटे ने:



A sole of a country made shoes.  
 A small broken goad to drive  
 The bullocks with,  
 A cracked scuttle, a smoking pipe  
 Constantly leaking.  
 A pair of tongs made of thin iron sheet,  
 And rivalling against the mound  
 Of gold  
 A swelling heap of rubbish before  
 His door,  
 The staggering debt of the money lender  
 That he can never pay off with his  
 All efforts -  
 All these he inherits from his father:  
 And leaving these he has white ants,  
 Ticks, moths and bugs  
 To live with him in his dingy cell.  
 Its not all : he gets hunger  
 Far more keen than that of  
 His father.  
 With a hollow stomach, he roams  
 About  
 Keeping his mouth spread open.  
 What Independence means for him?  
 Or how wag the things in a free Country?  
 How is he concerned with all this?

The life of the people of Bundelkhand, their struggle, their sorrow and pain is depicted in the poems of Kedarnath Agarwal. There is a personification of nature in most of his poems. We find a symbolic representation of village women in his poems. His other anthologies *Yug Ki Ganga* portrays the *virasat* – the inheritance of a farmer. It is a true picture of the present scenario of Bundelkhand. The poem starts with the word death – of a father who died because of hunger. The situation in the two lines is clear that the father had no food to eat. The things that the son inherits is the debris of his house. The broken cot and few yards of land barren. Which means

घर का मलवा, टूटी खटियां,  
 कुछ हाथ भूमि-वह भी परती  
 चमरौधे, जूते का तल्ला,  
 छोटी टूटी बुढ़िया औगी।  
 दरकी गोरसी, बहता हुक्का,  
 लोहे की पत्ती का चिमटा।  
 कंचन सुमेर का प्रतियोगी।  
 द्वारे का पर्वत घूरे का,  
 धनिया के स्पर्यो का कर्जा  
 जो नहीं चुकाने पर चुकता।  
 दीपक, गोजर, मच्छर, माटा-  
 ऐसे हजार सब सहवासी।  
 बस यही नहीं जो भूख मिली  
 सौगुनी बाप से अधिक मिली।  
 अब पेट खलाये फिरता है।  
 चौड़ा मुँह वाये फिरता है।  
 वह क्या जाने आजादी क्या है?  
 आजाद देश की बार्ते क्या है?

the darkness and no future sustenance. The sole of the shoe denotes that only the sole is there the shoe is torn off which is symbolic to life that has no hope. The villagers do not have the basic amenities and the support system. He has a broken scuttle, a smoking pipe constantly leaking denoting the disintegratedness of their lives. A pair of tongs denotes the hunger- a thing now not in use. The poet does not mention the path before the house, he mentions rubbish. The curse of debt is what the farmer's son inherits from his father, the curse of thousands of suicides that take place every year in Bundelkhand. The atmosphere is not serene it is full of ticks, moths and bugs. The farmer's son inherits hunger that will remain forever as there is no hope and the land has become unproductive.

Translation as a process of transfer, transmutation and trans-creation abridges the gap of the nations. Translation in this sense has assumed tremendous significance both as a channel of cross cultural mutuality and cross-cultural symbiosis. When seen in the totality of a multitude of intercultural contacts

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## Kaundunit – Whither Desi Noir Fiction?

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### Abstract

Crime fiction is burgeoning in India. While established writers are experimenting with plot structures and eccentric detectives, many new writers are also being published by reputed publishers. However, the popularity of the genre is not in sync with the increasing number of titles. Romantic and mythological works continue to top popularity charts. Writers and publishers are hopeful of a revival in the fortunes of the form in the distant future. Adaptations in various visual media could play a supportive role.

Keywords: Noir, Crime fiction, Whodunit, Hardboiled, Mystery, Thriller.

Although it is unquestionably the most popular of literary genres, it is not always the most respected. “The iconographic elements of the hardboiled world (private eye with a whisky bottle in a filing cabinet, femme fatale, rich – and usually corrupt – clients) remain as surefire a combination today as when they were fresh minted, despite a million parodies. And the image of the lone investigator cutting through the polished surface of society to reveal the decay beneath has an existential force that makes most crime fiction seem trivial. This is a world in which female sexuality is often a snare and a delusion, plunging the hapless protagonist into a hazardous world of carnality and danger; and while the structure of society (manipulative politicians, brutal police) may seem callously

efficient, the classic pulp novels present a world in which all is illusion – and fate can randomly destroy the protagonist (Forshaw 2007: 33-34).”

Until the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium, British writer H.R.F Keating’s Inspector Ganesh V. Ghote (*The Perfect Murder, Under a Monsoon Cloud, The Body in the Billiard Room, Dead on Time, The Iciest Scene, The Sheriff of Bombay, Cheating Death, Doing Wrong, Asking Questions, Bribery, Corruption Also, Breaking and Entering* etc.) had been the best-known Indian detective: bumbling, constantly at loggerheads with a corrupt and inefficient bureaucracy but delivering results with surprising accuracy. Ashok Banker (*The Iron Bra, Murder & Champagne, Ten Dead Admen*), Kalpana Swaminathan (*Piggies on the Railway, The Page Three Murders, Monochrome Madonna* – with Kasthuri Kumar as one of India’s earliest female crime solvers), Shashi Warriar (*Night of the Krait, The Orphan, The Sniper, Hangman’s Journal, The Homecoming*), Mukul Deva with his spy-military thrillers (*Time after Time, Lashkar, Saleem must Die, Blowback*), et al, had also experimented successfully in this genre in the Nineties and Noughties, as had Vikram Chandra with his Sartaj Singh magnum opus *Sacred Games*.

However, around 2011-2012, Anita Nair with her much acclaimed Inspector Gowda thrillers: *Cut Like A Wound, Chain of Custody*, Piyush Jha with his Inspector Vikraar crime bestsellers: *Mumbaistan, Compass Box Killer, Anti-Social Network, Raakshas: India’s No. 1 Serial Killer*, Madhulika Liddle with her seventeenth century historical mysteries featuring the Mughal nobleman-sleuth Muzaffar Jang: *The Englishman’s Cameo, The Eighth Guest & Other Muzaffar Jang Mysteries, Engraved in Stone, Crimson City*. There was a virtual explosion following these early precursors. Most publishers now have a crime category, and some even a separate imprint for crime — Blue Salt launched by Penguin in 2013 and Harper Collins’ Harper Black last year (Gupta).

Incredibly, even an annual Crime Writers' Festival had materialized in 2015 and is in its fourth edition now, providing greater exposure to this genre. Alluri discovered a slew of authors who are making every imaginable experiment with the genre today within an easily recognisable Indian milieu (Alluri). They are not only coming up with innovative plot structures, but also creating memorable detectives like: Jane De Suza's Gulabi (*The Spy Who Lost Her Head*), a village woman who comes to Bombay in quest of a suitable boy but becomes a detective; Zac O'Yeah's devious yet likeable Hari Majestic (*Mr. Majestic, Operation Sandalwood, A Hero for Hire, The Tout of Bengaluru*); Vaseem Khan's honest retired cop Ashwin Chopra in the Baby Ganesh Detective Agency series (*The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra, The Perplexing Theft of the Jewel in the Crown, The Strange Disappearance of a Bollywood Star, Murder at the Grand Raj Palace*); Ankush Saikia's whimsical Arjun Arora (*Dead Meat, More Bodies Will Fall, Remember Death*); Tarquin Hall's 'most private investigator' Vish Puri (*The Case of the Man Who Died Laughing, The Case of the Deadly Butter Chicken, The Case of the Love Commandos, The Delhi Detective's Handbook*), Jerry Pinto (*Murder in Mahim*), Madhumita Bhattacharyya and her maverick lady detective Reema Ray (*The Masala Murder, Dead in a Mumbai Minute, Goa Undercover*).

Many other non-professional writers, like Vivek Rao (*Shot, Down*), Amitabh Pandey (*Himalayan White, Himalayan Hazard*), Aditya Sinha (*The CEO Who Lost His Head*), Praveen Swami (*Gold Flake*), graphic artist Arjun Raj Gaiind (*A Very Pukka Murder, Death at the Durbar – the Maharaja* (Sikander Singh of Rajpore) Mystery series), RV Raman in his white collar mysteries (*Insider*), Abheek Barua (*The City of Death*) as well as acclaimed Tamil writer Ambai (*As the Day Darkens* – featuring protagonist Sudha Gupta), have found reputed publishers like Hachette, Harper Black, Pan Macmillan, Juggernaut to showcase their forays into this genre with a fast increasing mass appeal.

Strangely, despite this rush of Indian crime novels, there has not been a correspondingly significant groundswell in readership (Gupta,web). "Mythological and chick-lit genres have actually produced hits. That hasn't yet happened with crime," says R. Sivapriya, executive editor at Juggernaut, which published both Barua and Swami, and is admittedly big on crime. Swagat Sengupta, chief executive officer of Oxford Bookstores, agrees "Crime writing by Indian authors is picking up but is still slow when compared to other genres like romance or mythology." Diya Kar Hazra, publisher, Pan Macmillan India adds that "only two Indian authors feature in Nielsen Bookscan's Top 20 writers in the genre — Ashwin Sanghi and Satyajit Ray". But from the evidence above, it is evident that the lack of a viable market has not deterred a new generation from taking to and experimenting with crime/noir novels, or experimenting with the genre. "There has been no paucity of interesting submissions since we began looking for them," Sivapriya comments.

But if the genre is yet to take off in India in readership — globally it remains, perhaps, the biggest category of genre fiction, accounting for 30 percent or more of book sales — some explanation needs to be found for the publishers' bullishness on the genre (Gupta,web). Kanishka Gupta of literary agency Writer's Side, has a theory: that it is actually because many of the commissioning editors themselves are fans of the crime genre. Hazra offers a different explanation: Crime fiction, in her view, is one of the most exciting, challenging and daunting genres to pull off. "Writers today are much more willing to push the envelope, try something new, and they're a lot less inhibited about being unabashedly commercial. Perhaps there is a more relaxed attitude to 'literariness' now. A writer can take pride in telling a good, well-plotted story for leisure reading." "The fact that so many of those writing in this genre have day jobs, and don't need to rely on their writing for a living helps," says Rao. "It means they can experiment,

take chances.” Quality, however, remains an issue, he says. The demand is there: there exists a large community of readers for whom it is easy to get hold of a foreign title. They now have options to read Indian narratives but until the quality of supply goes up, there is no reason why they should (Kapur,web).

Crime fiction and dark thrillers deal with disquietingly serious subjects. And perhaps that is why they are both not as high on the priority list an average Indian reader as say, a romantic/historical/mythological novel may be. Novoneel Chakraborty - whose *Stranger Trilogy* is a well-acclaimed noir series - explains: “Dark thrillers, inherently, require the prowess of the mind and commercial fiction in India, unfortunately, comes with the baggage of being casual reads.” Perhaps what’s deterring Indian crime fiction from becoming a commercial trailblazer is the absence of a figure like Stieg Larsson. Scandinavia, after all, already had well-established crime fiction writers when Larsson’s *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* stormed into the picture and changed the game forever (Forshaw,web). Anita Nair, who has delved into the disturbing world of crime with *Cut Like Wound* and *Chain of Custody*, believes that the genre is in its early stages in India (Ganguly). “Crime fiction is still in its primary stage in India, the chances of it going global like Scandinavian noir will happen when characters and issues written about have greater dimensions than just the usual run-of-the-mill crime scene. We will have to wait and see if that will happen.”

Mythology-thriller novelist Ashwin Sanghvi, who recently collaborated with crime maestro James Patterson on *Private India*, is also optimistic about the future, “World over, the top ten titles typically are crime fiction. I think it’s a matter of time that it will catch on in India. We have to also understand the fact that commercial fiction writing is only ten years old in India . We’ve not had the necessary amount of time to evolve. I believe in the next two or three years, it will become one of the dominant categories in the

bestseller space.... Crime fiction as a genre is in the space that mythological fiction was about eight years ago. Today, it’s romance and mythology that are popular. Crime fiction is very low on the pecking order. I believe that in two to three years, we will see a spurt in crime fiction novels and find it to be a dominant genre” (Ganguly,web).

Along with these practitioners, a surge in the popularity of the genre in the near future may also be hoped for by connoisseurs and critics alike, especially with their enthusiastic espousal by new readers groups which are proliferating both online and offline in cities and towns in the last few years. Film, television and webseries versions of these edgy, stimulating narratives would also undoubtedly add to their wider recognition and acceptance.

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## Man-Woman Relationship in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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### Abstract

Suppression of women in black culture is a burning issue and women of the black continent are not only oppressed by Whites but also by the Black men. Therefore it is a need of time to go through the actual inter-personal relationship between man and woman. Every black writer speaks of the worse condition of Black slaves but some of them like Morrison, Naylor and Walker focus on the inhuman torture received by the black women by their own men. The paper aims to examine the man-woman relationship in the novel with minute details and how each other's personality affects the relationship.

Keywords: Suppression, Subjugation, Culture, Black-Slavery, Oppression, Man-Woman relationship, Identity.

Subjugation of women is a product of patriarchal system that is prevalent in our society. A patriarchal social system that does not value a female, except as a sexual object and as a laborer. She is treated as a second sex from ages. Modernization is even not successful in bringing the gap between the sexes. Her statue is changing, no doubt, but it is not up to the mark. This is about the women in general but the predicament of black women is worst.

Alice Walker, one of the leading literary personage, tries to gain the platform in American fiction, voices the predicament of black women through her novels. She is recognized as one of the leading voice among black American Women writers. She has produced an acclaimed and varied body of work, including poetry, novels, short stories, and essays. Her works are praised for their insightful and riveting portrait of black life in particular, the experience of black women in sexist and racist society.

Alice Walker admires the struggle of black women throughout history to maintain an essential spirituality and creativity of their lives and the achievement serves as an inspiration to others as she says, "We must fearlessly pull out ourselves and look at and identify with our lives the living creativity some of our great grandmothers were not allowed to know" (What in name, Web). Her most famous work that earned her prestigious Pulitzer Prize is *The Color Purple*. Walker examines the estrangement and violence that have marked relationships between her black men and women. The paper aims to examine the man-woman relationship in the novel with minute details and how each other's personality affects the relationship.

The portrayal of man-woman relationship is not new. It is as old as the novel itself. Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding on the one hand and D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner on the other, have been primarily concerned with this fundamental relationship. An analysis of the novel *The Color Purple* reveals that the novelist tries to redefine the man-woman relationship with changing family values. Man-woman relationship being the central subject of literature appears to be inexhaustible and the changing times and changing social situations have served to bring out its amazing diversity and infinite variety. This writer tries her best to find out this relationship in terms of mutually fulfilling relationship and



have its foundation understanding and mutual respect. The hidden and suppressed world of African American women comes in light in her novel.

The novel discusses the relationship between the married and unmarried couples, the transformation in their relationships and the social, conventional and psychological factors which affect the relationship. The novel chronicles the life of Black American girl Celie, a poor, barely literate black woman in the South who struggles to escape the brutality and degradation of her treatment by men. She writes letter to God in which she tells about her life, like her roles as daughter, wife, sister and mother. In the course of the story, Celie meets a series of women who shape her life. Nettie (her sister), Shug Avery (the Blues singer and her husband's lover) who introduces Celie to her own loveliness and sexuality and reveals to Celie a God who is not, "the big and old and tall and grey-bearded and white" (*The Color Purple*, 202) instead an expansive God of trees, air birds, God who "love everything you love" (*The Color Purple*, 202). The novel chronicles the life of a poor and abused black woman who eventually triumphs over oppression through affirming female relationship.

#### Alphonso(Pa) and Celie

Social and personal prejudices affect the man-woman relationship a lot. As Pa and Celie are not husband and wife but circumstances lead them to live a conjugal life. From the very beginning alienation in relationship is marked, Alphonso, Celie's step father poses as a child molester. Celie is fourteen years old victim abused by her own father. Being the step daughter of the family, she mutely bears the atrocities led by her father. Her mother has just given birth to a child but gets ill after delivery. Being tired of waiting for sex he starts raping his own step-daughter Celie. She finds herself helpless and accepts the life full of violence. She gets impregnated by him and even forced to quit school. Her mother dies

when Celie is pregnant for second time. After each birth, Pa takes the child away and Celie guesses that he had sold them to another family. In this connection Neeru Tondon and Nidhi Kapoor aptly point out, "The black male who does not and cannot withstand with oppression turns his frustration on his wife and children. The male with no identity of his own indulges in violence". (quoted in Ray/Kundu, 72)

Being Black Pa is also not an exceptional case, his behavior results in Celie's predicament. Her situation worsens after the death of her mother. She is forced to take care of the children of her family. Pa marries secondly but continues to rape Celie. The picture of male carved on her mind is that of a cruel being that results in losing her natural inclination towards opposite sex. She loses her interest in male. Conversely, she develops a phobia for super sex. Pa is responsible for her worse condition as he threatens her not to reveal the sexual relationship to anyone except God, he says, "you better not never tell nobody but God" (*The Color Purple*, 1). As a downtrodden victim of her step-father Celie sacrifices herself and offers herself to Pa. the relationship ends automatically after her marriage to Albert.

#### Albert and Celie

The relationship between Albert and Celie is marked by a drastic change from negative to positive. As Pa is depicted a crooked villain in the novel the character of Albert brings a positive change into his personality towards the end of the novel. It automatically brings a change in relationship. There is long age gap between the two, Celie's father marries/sells her off to a person of his age as a careless father. Marriage doesn't provide her a rescue from her earlier life. Being a typical patriarchal black male he proves himself as an oppressive husband and a total disappointment. He beats her like animal and never enjoys the sound relationship because the picture of wife carved on his mind is that, "wives like children, you

have let them know who got the upper hand. Nothing can do that better than a good sound beating" (*The Color Purple*, 37).

The estrangement in this relationship starts from the very beginning as Albert loves Shug and wants to marry her but his father opposes the marriage and Albert has to choose Celie, as he wants a child caring machine and useful for house-keeping. He accepts her even when Pa informs him that she is not chaste. As he is not at all interested in her accepts her just to dominate. His psychological violence against Celie is that he continuously meets his beloved without any disturbance and continuously hates his wife. Moreover, he brings Shug at home when she is ill and orders Celie to nurse her. He uses every possible means to hurt her. Celie makes her dehumanization while living with Albert. In her letter to Nettie (her sister) she accepts her predicament, "It all I can do not to cry. I make myself wood. I say myself Celie, you a tree." (*The Color Purple*, 23) the foundation of the marriage is not firm as it is an adjustment, just to obey his father.

Having a patriarchal mentality moreover negativity for Celie he ties a nuptial knot with her. On the other hand, Celie a submissive and docile being, only knows to survive, says, "All I know is stay alive" (*The Color Purple*, 29) thus, two different temperament leads to a crack in relationship. Powerless black men under slavery tend to violence towards their women and naturally build up their mentality to be an oppressor. As they are oppressed by the Whites and naturally turn towards the weaker sex which is easily available to them at their home. They find the outlet for their frustration and become a woman molester.

Towards the end of the novel Celie is fortunate enough to transform the relationship into an equal level. A confidence and positive change in Celie brought by Shug leads her to express herself. When she comes to know that Mr \_ (Albert) is hiding her letters from her beloved sister Nettie, she curses him of impotency

and a wretched death. His guilty conscience leads him to undergo into a positive transformation that he enjoys and contributes her in her new business. NeeruTondon and Nidhi Kapoor say in this context, "Celie also overcomes a bond of fear and revulsion for Mr \_ . She forms a bond of platonic friendship with Mr \_ and they start relating to each other a human beings rather than as a man and woman" (quoted in Ray/Kundu, 72). Thus negativity in relationship turns into positivity.

#### Harpo and Sofia

This relationship too undergoes from estrangement to harmony. The difference is that Celie is submissive but Sofia is stubborn and knows what she wants from life. Harpo the son of Albert is brought up with patriarchal mindset where male are the cruel oppressor. Harpo is compelled and instigated to treat his wife with cruelty by his parents. His father compels Harpo to dominate because of his male ego and Celie instigates him to dominate Sofia because of her jealousy for Sofia's being strong. Sofia has come from the background where she rebels with her father and brother. Sofia loves Harpo but rejects his love at the cost of her freedom, she says, "... I love Harpo ....but I'll kill him dead before I let him beat me" (*The Color Purple*, 38). On this one of the Black critics Indira Bhatt opines, "The novelist portray man-woman relationship based on love but here too the man is weak though he wants his wife to be submissive Sofia doesn't take things lying down. Here is a woman who fights for her rightful and dignified place in life." (quoted in Dhawan, 81)

The opposition from Sofia makes Harpo bend, he comes to know that futility of a woman should be treated with respect to the futility of male ego. He is sorry for Sofia's plight and realizes that too was responsible for her sufferings. Swain and Das observe, "Because of the way women have opposed them, they reevaluate their own lives, come to a greater sense of their own wholeness as

well as the women's and develop relationships with the women on a different and more fulfilling footing" (quoted in Ray and Kundu, 84). By the end of the novel one finds him helping Sofia in domestic chores and taking care of children. Hence, the relationship is successful and ends on a positive note.

Beside these relationships Walker has presented some harmonious relationships as well. The relationship between Samuel and Nettie is harmonious though Nettie is his second wife. Nettie is fortunate that after the death of Samuel's first wife she gets a loving husband, a caring father and devoted missionary, Adam, the son of Celie and his wife Tashi's relationship is harmonious one. They love each other spiritually. He is ready to scar himself to match his wife's facial tattoos which she is ashamed of. The relationship between Jack and Odessa is also an example of successful relationship. Jack helps Celie in her business and she finds the qualities of good husband in him for which she was crazy. The relationship between Mr\_ and Shug is harmonious initially. She goes back to her husband and determines to mend the relationship between Mr\_ and Celie when she comes to know the futility of her relationship with Mr\_. Shug creates a space for Celie and an opportunity to Mr\_ for reconciliation.

In a nutshell, the relationship depicted in the novel are marked by the violence that Walker's women seek refuge in same sex relationship. Throughout the novel strong female relationship is observed like Celie and Shug which helps her to assert her 'womanism'. Apart from that man-woman relationship is too an important aspect of this novel which cannot be neglected.

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## **Insight into the history through the context of Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions***

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### **Abstract**

Literature has the potential to enrich everyone's lives in many ways. Study of literature can take us beyond the limited experience of our lives to show us the lives of others, giving us experiences we may not face in our own lives and the play *Final Solutions* is one such literary piece which deepens our understanding of our history (history of partition of India), society and our individual lives. Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* is a play on religious communalism between the two religious communities, the Hindus and the Muslims; which has existed in the country since the partition of India. The play is the fusion of the past and the present of the Indian sub-continent, and still is contemporary revealing the unchanged condition of Hindu – Muslim rift since the partition in the Indian context.

**Keywords:** History, Religious Communalism, Partition of India.

Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* is a play on religious communalism between the two religious communities, the Hindus and the Muslims and its effect at the level of society and also at the individual level. The script of the play was ready in 1991, and Dattani

was preparing to launch it in December 1992 at the Deccan Herald Theatre festival in his hometown of Bangalore (now Bengaluru), India. But in December riots broke in several parts of the country after the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, the incident called as Ayodhya dispute. The organizers of the festival thought it prudent to ban the premiere of the play as its theme was based on communalism between the two religious communities namely the Hindu and the Muslim. The play was then performed on 10 July 1993 at Guru Nanak Bhavan, Bangalore.

The background to the plot of the play is built on the Ayodhya dispute and the *rath yatra* L. K. Advani undertook and ended with nationwide incidences of communalism between the Hindu and the Muslim community. The communalism between these two religious segments of the society has its roots in the partition period of India and has been continuing since then. Ayodhya dispute is a commonly used term for Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute at Ayodhya. On September 25, 1990, L. K. Advani took off a *rath yatra* from Somnath temple on the agenda of building the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. The *yatra* started from Somnath temple and was planned to end in Ayodhya. Somnath in Gujarat was chosen as the starting point of the *yatra* because of its past and for the same reason Ayodhya was chosen. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni attacked Somnath temple in 1024 to destroy the temple and its idol. In an attempt to protect the idol some 50,000 Hindu defenders who sought to defend the dignity of their sacred temple lost their lives. This temple was reconstructed three times by the devout Hindus, as Muslim invaders repeatedly destroyed it (Khan, 65). The *rath yatra* was supposed to reach Ayodhya on October 30, 1990. But this could not happen because in Samastipura on October 23 Advani was arrested by the then Chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP), Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav. Some 150,000 supporters were also arrested by the government of U.P. Still thousands of activists reached Ayodhya and attempted to storm the mosque. These events

caused further Hindu-Muslim riots to break out across the country, in which hundreds and thousands were killed. The purpose of the *yatra* was to support the agitation of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and its Sangh Pariwar affiliates to erect a temple to the Hindu deity Rama on the site of the Babri Masjid.

The play *Final Solutions* opens with Daksha's reading out from her diary. Hardika is shown seated on the same level. The stage for the action of the play to take place has three spaces. Horseshoe- or crescent- shaped ramp with the ends sloping to stage level dominates the stage. Most of the actions of the Mob/Chorus take place on the ramp. The Mob/Chorus comprise of five men and ten masks on the sticks. There are five Hindu masks and five Muslim masks. The player 'wears' a mask by holding the stick in front of him. Within the confines of the ramp is the house of the Gandhi's with just wooden blocks for furniture in the drawing room, but there is a detailed kitchen and a *puja* (prayer) room on an elevation, upstage. On another level of Gandhi's house is a room with a roll – top desk and an oil lamp converted to an electric one, suggesting the period is the late 1940's. This space belongs to Daksha/Hardika. Hardika, the elderly woman in Gandhi family and Daksha, the young bride of fifteen are the same person. Daksha when was married in Gandhi family at the age of fifteen, was given a new name, Hardika by the Gandhi's to match with her husband's name Hari.

In the play Gandhi's are the middle class Hindu living in present day Amargaon, Gujarat. The family is shown to have four members, Hardika (who was earlier known as Daksha), her son Ramnik, his wife Aruna and their daughter Smita. Javed and Bobby, the two young Muslim men who seek refuge in their home from Hindu mob during a communal riot. The cause of this riot is discussed in the next paragraph. The tension that arises between these six characters in the play during a single night forms the crux of the play.

A *Rath yatra* procession was passing through the lanes of the Muslim inhabitants of the city. During the procession damage was caused to the idols of God in the *yatra* and to the *rath* (chariot) and the *poojari* (priest) was stabbed to death with a knife. As a result curfew has been imposed on the city. The Gandhi family is safe in their house. Smita is seen worried for her Muslim friend, Tasneem, who stays in Muslim girls' hostel. It's the night time when two Muslim boys, Javed and Bobby, knock their door for protection from the violent Hindu mob outside. Ramnik Gandhi gives shelter to the two young Muslim men in his house. Though, both Hardika and staunchly religious Aruna objected to this. For Hardika, presence of the two Muslim men in Gandhi house reminds her of her memories of partition of India and Pakistan and the events that happened in her life at the time. Hardika (then Daksha) lived in their ancestral home in Hussainabad along with her parents during the period of partition. She along with her mother was waiting for her father to return back home. There were loud noises outside which grew louder and louder. Suddenly stones hurled towards their house and the windows broke, one by one. They both got scared and hid themselves in their *puja* room, mother was holding the idol of Lord Krishna and praying for the safety of Daksha's father. Petrified Daksha is shown to have lost faith in God then. A stone hit the gramophone table destroying the entire collection of records of Shamshad Begum. Noor Jehan and Suraiya. For Daksha her collections of love songs are broken. She expresses about this in the play thus, "The songs of love that I had learnt to sing with. Those beautiful voices. Cracked. . ." (Act - I). The word cracked symbolizes the division of India into India and Pakistan. Daksha closes her diary and Hardika picks up the diary and speaks directly to the audience, "After forty years...I opened my diary again....Yes, things have not changed that much." (Act - I)

Daksha's father was murdered in the communal violence. Daksha lost her father in the riot and also she lost her collection of



gramophone records. Most noteworthy is her loss of faith in her family God. The play through the character of Daksha/Hardika gives an insight into the violence during the partition, which resulted in loss of life and material and making the people live in terror. The terror of their experience haunts the survivors of the partition throughout their life, and Daksha/Hardika is an example of that in the play.

There is another reason for Hardika's resentment against the Muslim boys. Hardika had stealthily developed friendship with Zarine, a Muslim girl staying close to her in-laws during the late nineteen forty's. Because of her associations with Zarine, she had to suffer ill-treatment from her husband, Hari. Therefore looking at Javed and Bobby she immediately develops dislike. As per her, these Muslim men have pride in them. Extending help to them will make them feel lower than the people of Hindu community; they will hate Hindus and will try to bring damage to them. This pride of them will destroy her family. (Act - I). She has sound reason for that from her past life experience.

Hardika/Daksha had secretly developed friendship with Zarine, without the knowledge of this relationship to her in-laws during her early phase of married life. She went to Zarine's house, and was welcomed there. They listened to the songs of Noor Jehan, themselves sang with the song of gramophone record song and danced. But the damage Hardika's husband, Hari and father-in-law had brought to the shop of Zarine during the riots then resulted to the end of their friendship between them. Hardika was unaware of the fact then. She comes to know of it only towards the end of the play in Act-III through her son Ramnik. But Zarine and her family were fully aware of Hardika's husband and father-in-laws misdeed and she takes the opportunity to show Hardika that she is not that innocent as she thought of herself when she visited Zarine's house to enquire about the details of their shop. Zarine along with her

mother and sisters was having meal. She made Hardika sit with them on the same table. Hardika could not tolerate the smell of food and vomits then and there. She expected Zarine to help her, but instead she looked at Hardika with scorn. On the contrary to this fact, Hardika came to know that her husband and father-in-law were willing to buy their burnt-up shop, but Zarine's father wanted more money for it. Thus Hardika is filled with discontentment for Zarine's father and her family. She considers them to possess false pride. "What wretched people. All this fuss over such a small matter. I hate people with false pride. As if it is their birthright to ask for more than they deserve." (Act - III) Hardika gets the impression that her family is willing to help Zarine's father, but they are unwilling for that.

Because of her associations with Zarine and her family, Hardika was abused verbally as well as physically by her husband. For that reason she developed hatred for Zarine and her family and she never visited Zarine's house then after. This is an example of cordial relationship between the followers of the two religious communities; but the riots developed animosity between the people of these two communities; out of selfish motives in this instance.

The pride Hardika supposed Zarine and her family had, the same pride she observes in the two young men, Javed and Bobby, and she is shown to oppose Ramnik's extension of shelter to them as she feels their pride will bring destruction to her family. (Act - I) "All those memories came back when I saw the pride in their eyes." (here 'their' refers to Javed and Bobby) "I saw the pride in their eyes! I know their wretched pride! It had destroyed me before and I was afraid it would destroy my family again!" (Act - I) She has the feeling that Muslims do not deserve help from Hindus; as it makes them feel lower than the Hindus, make them realize they are in minority in the country, which they do not like. "They don't want equality. They want to be superior." (Act - I) Views of Multani can aptly be

noted here, “History is evoked and used by almost every character on stage, as a justification/ rationale/ excuse for each fresh outbreak of violence. This justification may be overtly political, overtly personal or thinly disguised between the two.”(111)

Thus, the play gives an insight into the history of the partition of India into India and Pakistan, a glimpse of the social conditions then, the trauma of the people living during that phase of country. With the three generations of Gandhi family, Dattani outlines the approach of the members towards the Muslims. Hardika, who has lived the period of partition, has hatred for the Muslim community, if not in general, but in particular, for the family of Zarine which is evident from her conversation with Javed.

Javed : ....Today, if something happens to my sister, can I blame you?

Hardika : What happens to your sister doesn't concern me!

Javed : It doesn't concern you?

Hardika : She deserves it! Your sister deserves it! Zarine deserves ... (Pause.) What did you say your sister's name was?

Javed : Tasneem.

Hardika : Oh! I thought it was Zarine. (Act - III)

In this conversation Hardika, swayed by her bitter memory of Zarine, catches herself and connects herself with the present. Ramnik Gandhi, the second generation in Gandhi family, who was involved in bringing the destruction to the business of Zarine's family along with his father, is shown to have guilt ridden existence. He wants to repent his guilt by being good to the two Muslim men, offering them shelter in his house in spite of all the oppositions from his mother and wife, asking his wife to offer water and milk to them; and also a job in his shop. The college going Smita, daughter of

Ramnik and Aruna, is totally indifferent to this rift between the Hindu's and the Muslims, probably because she has not lived the period of partition, and has not lost anything in the riots, like Daksha/Hardika, or Zarine in the play or does not have any guilt ridden existence like her father, Ramnik Gandhi. To quote Multani here, “History is present throughout the action of the play, sometimes repeating itself directly, through statements made by Daksha/Hardika, sometimes indirectly through situations of violence which have been enacted before, and are all too frighteningly familiar.”(111)

The play thus, is the fusion of the past and the present of the Indian sub-continent, and still is contemporary revealing the unchanged condition of Hindu – Muslim rift in the Indian context. Literature has the potential to enrich everyone's lives in many ways. Study of literature can take us beyond the limited experience of our lives to show us the lives of others, giving us experiences we may not face in our own lives and the play *Final Solutions* is one such literary piece which deepens our understanding of our history, society and our individual lives.

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## Displacement and Identity Crisis in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Priti Singh

### Abstract

Postcolonial literature is prominently characterised by place and displacement. It is here that the special post colonial crisis of identity comes into being, and is essentially integrated with the two major concepts of home and identity. One of the most enduring legacies of modernity is the homelessness – the sense of alienation and identity crisis it creates. According to postcolonial theory place does not simply mean landscape. Rather place in postcolonial discourse is a complex interaction of languages, history, and environment. Similarly identity is also complex and fluid and inevitably hybrid caused by the collision of cultures, ethnicities, and language among other factors. In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, displacement constitutes a complex pattern of not only physical displacement but also psychological and cultural displacement.

Keywords: Postcolonial, Displacement, Home, Identity, Culture.

Khaled Hosseini's widely received debut novel is a poignant tale of love and growing up, set against a very tumultuous and disturbing period of Afghan history. "The novel has, at its core a sense of loss, of displacement, of the ineluctable distance between the present and the past." (Hosseini, 2003) The events of the story happen between the years 1970 and 2002. Afghanistan is a very

heterogenous country, its ethnic population includes the Pashtuns, the Tajiks, the Hazaras, the Baluchis and the Turkoman people. Kabul has a slightly cosmopolitan population. Afghanistan has 22 languages of which the Dari and Pashtun are recognized. Out of the six ethnic groups the Hazaras are Shias while the others are Sunni. Afghanistan came into political attention following the coup of 1973, when king Zahir Shah, who was at the helm since 1933 was overthrown by his own cousin and former Prime minister Muhammed Daod Khan, in a bloodless coup. Soon after assuming power Muhammed Daod's government started removing all the officials who had inclination towards Marxist ideologies. In April 1978, he was also overthrown by the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) with the help of the Army. The PDPA was sympathetic to the left and tried to bring about social and political reforms, which included the abolition of religious and traditional customs. This resulted in the alienation of the tribals, and religious institutions incited them to challenge the government thus declaring a Jihad against the Afghan state.

The Soviet Army finally withdrew in 1989, but Afghanistan remained under the PDPA for three more years. In 1992 in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR the Mujahidin finally won and Afghanistan was converted into an Islamic state. After the Russian withdrawal, there was fierce infighting among rival militant groups which rendered Afghanistan into an unsafe place to live in. Thereafter, in 1996, some Pashtun supremacists came together and took control of Afghanistan. They were the Taliban. The Taliban suppressed the infighting but being hardcore Sunni fundamentalists, they soon became very unpopular, because they massacred Shias and Hazaras. Their fundamentalist laws not only prohibited music and dance, but also put a restriction on women's rights.

The *Kite Runner* written by Khaled Hosseini, is a famous novel

for its devastating and painful, honest depiction of identity, betrayal, displacement, deception and atonement. The narrative portrays the journey of a boy escaping from his haunted childhood while torturing himself with his own contrition. In *The Kite Runner*, both the personal as well as the political history seem to merge together. The story begins with Amir, the protagonist recollecting his childhood days in Kabul, prior to the soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The narrator and his father, Baba flee Kabul in 1981, two years after the Russian troops rolled in, in 1979. The journey out of Kabul describes the pain, shock and fear of dislocation and displacement. Hosseini's vivid description recreates the intense disorientation and terror of the experience. They had left their beautiful house without telling even the servants, for one never knew who was an informer. Their journey is fraught with danger and uncertainty. From Jalalabad, the truck that is to take them to Pakistan does not arrive and they have to escape in a fuel tanker, it is so cramped that some like Kamal don't survive the journey. The last thing that Baba does before leaving Afghanistan is significant.

Baba fished the snuff-box from his pocket. He emptied the box and picked up a handful of dirt from the middle of the road. He kissed the dirt. Poured it into a box. Stowed the box in his breast pocket, next to his heart. (TKR 105)

For Baba leaving Kabul must have been especially hard. Here was his home and it defined who he was. "Everyone agreed that my father, my Baba, had built the most beautiful house in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, a new and affluent neighbourhood in the northern part of Kabul. Some said it was the prettiest house in all Kabul". (4) When they finally reach Pakistan, the magnitude of their loss is even felt by Amir who is now eighteen: "My eyes returned to our suitcases. They made me sad for Baba. After everything he'd built, planned, fought for, fretted over, dreamed of, this was the summation of his life: one disappointing son and two suitcases". (108) This loss of personal belongings indicate a loss of identity and

erasure of status. Immigration particularly is accompanied by loss of physical and psychological moorings. Indeed when markers of identity like home or family are lost, it is little wonder that the immigrant is eager to claim his identity in the land to which he has migrated.

They settle in Fremont, California, in an area called Little Kabul. "A prominent feature of diaspora is that a strong sense of connection to a homeland is maintained through cultural practices and ways of life. Among these, culinary culture has an important role to play in diasporic identification". (Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture) Here they find a thriving Afghan diaspora comprising of former Generals, doctors and professors. Their Afghan presence is in every pore of their being. Even though the original Afghanistan from which they had migrated no longer exists yet in the words of Said, "it lingers on their memories as an imaginative geography and history". (173) They try to recreate their homeland in their new space. Thus Afghan music is played in the aisles of the used goods section of the flea market every Sunday, potato bolani or qabuli was cooked, they had their own traditional clothes and stuck to their traditional social customs. Their Afghanistan had become a part of their Afghan imaginary to which they could never return. However, their craving for plenitude and fulfilment that such an image signifies creates an endless desire in them to return to their roots. The story line shifts between Afghanistan and California as Amir with rare honesty tries to go over the past twenty- six years of his life.

Amir experiences physical as well as psychological displacement. According to Homi Bhabha, "a new cultural identity is gained by changing and absorbing the influences of other culture. It means an individual needs to absorb the new culture in order to adapt and form a new identity". (88) Physical displacement compels Amir to adapt to his new environment in America, and psychologically, it is a consequence of a single event in the past. The

event had been so traumatic that he says, "I became what I am at the age of twelve". (TKR,1) Immediately we are transported to the peaceful streets of Kabul prior to the Russian invasion. Amir the son of a rich Pashtun and Hassan, a Hazara, the son of his father's servant are inseparable, roaming the streets and flying kites. Amir, the narrator and protagonist, grows up as a child who is uncertain about his own identity and struggles to discover his "real" self. At first, Amir's goal is to gain the acceptance of Baba, and through that, he may be able to find his true self. But in reality, Amir's dedication to gaining Baba's acceptance leads him astray from finding his true self and creates even more confusion for the young boy. Amir's friend and servant, Hassan, helps Amir actually discover Amir's real identity, both in adulthood and childhood. Amir even claims that Hassan is his guide to his identity when he says, "I thought of the life I had lived until the winter of 1975 came along and changed everything. And made me what I am today" (TKR,2). In an interview, Hosseini admits "I have very fond memories (of a pre Soviet era Afghanistan) of my childhood in Afghanistan". (1) But this idyllic childhood is shattered when Aseef the local bully brutally rapes Hassan. Amir comes looking for him but stops short when he sees the scene:

I stopped watching, turned away from the alley. Something warm was running down my wrist. I blinked, saw I was biting down on my fist, hard enough to draw blood from the knuckles. I realized something else. I was weeping. From just round the corner, I could hear Aseef's quick rhythmic grunts.

I had one last chance to make a decision. One final opportunity to decide who I was going to be. I could step into the alley, stand up for Hassan - the way he had stood up for me all those times in the past - and accept whatever would happen to me. Or I could run. In the end I ran. (TKR,68)



This incident scars Amir for life. He falls in his own estimation. What makes it worse is that Hassan does not hold him responsible, doesn't even mention it to Amir. One probable reason could be that Hassan is not conscious of being a Hazara, and his sense of duty and loyalty is so ingrained in his identity of who he is and what is expected of him that it never occurs to him that Amir has let him down. Haunted by guilt and shame at his cowardice, Amir cannot face Hassan. Another thing that disturbs Amir is the feeling that his father loves Hassan more than him, and he feels that if his father were to know that he had failed to stand up for Hassan he would fall further in his father's eyes. Amir's escape to the U.S.A was therefore a relief, Kabul for him had become a city of ghosts "a city of hare lipped ghosts". (TKR,144) Hall differentiates between two kinds of entities. One he calls an identity of being which is eternally fixed in some essentialised past, the second one is an identity of becoming, where ones identity changes in accordance with the changing position of a person in history. (225) So while it is quite clear that Amir's second identity is dynamic, evolving as he grows, his essentialised identity is fragmented, fraught as it is with memories of his cowardice, coupled with the knowledge that in his father's eyes he is second best. He can never get Hassan out of his mind. Just how visceral the trauma is can be gauged from his reaction to the following words his father says on his graduation day. "Then Baba rolled his head toward me. 'I wish Hassan had been with us today' he said. A pair of steel hands closed around my windpipe at the sound of Hassan's name. I rolled down the window. Waited for the steel hands to loosen their grip". (TKR,141). The words reveal that neither Amir nor Baba can forget their past just by relocating. Angelika Bammer states that cultural displacement refers to the experience of millions of people who have been separated from their native culture through physical dislocation... or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture. (xi) And the experience of cultural displacement may result in unhomeliness

and a fragmented identity. Therefore, when Rahim Khan, his father's friend asks for his help to rescue Hassan's son Sohrab, Amir hesitates, unwilling at first to risk the identity he has carefully constructed in his new place. "I had a good life in California, pretty Victorian home with a peaked roof, a good marriage, a promising writing career, in-laws who loved me. I didn't need any of this shit" (TKR,195) Ultimately however, he cannot refuse the chance to redeem himself.

He returns to a war torn Afghanistan. Amir's visit is not only a temporal and spatial displacement from his carefully constructed self, but when Rahim Khan tells him that Hassan was actually his half-brother, Baba's illegitimate son, his very identity is problematised. The self that he had carefully constructed threatens to disintegrate. He tells Rahim Khan, "What can you possibly say to me? I'm Thirty- eight years old and I've just found out my whole life is one big fucking lie!" (TKR,195). In Kabul he had never called Hassan his 'friend' but after he brings Sohrab to the U.S.A he adopts Sohrab who is now his half nephew. When his father in law expresses concern over what people might say about a Hazara boy living in his daughter's house, Amir protests. "And one more thing, General Sahib, I said, 'You will never again refer to him as Hazara boy in my presence. He has a name and his name is Shorab'. (TKR 315) Amir is slowly beginning to reclaim his past. Amir's fragmented identity slowly begins to heal when Sohrab gradually learns to trust him.

A brief reading and analysis of the text shows that displacement, be it a consequence of armed conflict, cultural hegemony, or economic and social inequality, gives rise to a feeling of inadequacy in the displaced persons, which manifests itself in inappropriate social behaviour.

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## Exploring Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* using Feministic Lenses

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### Abstract

Manju Kapur has dealt with feministic topics in almost all of her novels. Here the novel taken for exploration of feministic views is 'A married Woman'. In this novel, Manju Kapur's protagonist is Astha, an educated woman, upholding modern way of life and breaking the age old taboos in the journey of her life. Like in many of her novels, Kapur has also mentioned an historical event of Babri Masjid demolition as a metaphor for her protagonists married life.

Keywords: Feminism, Education, Modernism, Self-identity, Lesbian.

*A Married Woman*, the second novel by Manju Kapur can be studied at the feministic level, since it deals with feministic issues. Manju Kapur in one of her interviews discloses:

I am a feminist. And what is a feminist? I mean I believe in the rights of women to express themselves in the rights of women to work. I believe in equality, you know domestic equality, legal equality, I, believe in all that. And the thing is that women don't really have that – you know even educated woman, working woman. There is a trapping of equality but you scratch the surface and it is not really equal. (Goel Mona, 4)

The novel provides an alternative and an answer to how a woman can keep her house and her individuality intact without challenging and destroying the fabric of her married life. Astha, a young woman of middle class family, is the only daughter of her parents. Her God fearing mother, Sita 'believed in the old ways'. Being educated Astha doesn't believe in that while her father 'believed in the new. Her daughter's future lay in her own hands and these hands to be strengthened by the number of books that passed through them" (p.2) He identifies her 'Potential' and encourages her for competitive study. In contrast "She was well trained on a diet of mushy novels and thoughts of marriage. She was prey to inchoate longings, desired almost boy she saw" (p.8). Whereas her parents want her to study to the eligibility level of the requirement of marriage.

Manju Kapur believes that women need more than bread, butter and physical comfort. They need emotional attachment, education, economic independence etc. They have search for self-identity and they explore space in relationship. They are tossed in the conflict between tradition and modernity. Right from the age of adolescence, Astha is in search of a true love. She is infatuated by the beauty of Bunty and becomes lovelorn for him; she can't eat, sleep or study. She is bold enough in love. He doesn't think it necessary to find out what happened to her in so many days. She strongly revolts against the patriarchal traditions of the society. She doesn't like the ways woman shown up in front of the suitor so she refuses to come in front of a suitor. She locks herself in bathroom. She accidentally encounters Rohan, the suitor. But on the matter of marriage he was not serious. He only played with her emotion and body. With the growing of their meetings, her anxiety also grows because Rohan doesn't ensure her that their love will be turned into marriage. She was deeply, impatiently in love with Rohan but he loves her only to get rid of her finally.

Astha establishes many relationships with different people, all the while searching for her identity. Her relationships with her

boyfriends Bunty, Rohan and husband Hemant are all the ways of looking for that one perfect soul mate. This search ultimately takes her to one of her own kind, another woman; Pipeelika Khan with whom she establishes a secret but deeply satisfying relationship, a lesbian relationship. Initially, Astha is seen chained by her middle-class values, traditions and conventions. But she is bold and doesn't believe in outdated tradition. As soon as her relationship, with Bunty and Rohan is faded, it leaves a sad yearning in her heart. Kapur has presented a bold woman in the form of Astha who doesn't believe in traditional ways of showing up a girl in front of a suitor. She like love-marriage but her lovers have deceived her, exploited her. There was no way but to enter into an arranged marriage. After marriage she wants to be economically independent so she accepts a job of a school teacher. It seems that Kapur always emphasizes on the education and the economic independence of women. Astha longs for an independent identity. She always longs for career and economic independence. She is deprived of a career in journalism. In this society, a person is judged by his capacity to earn money. Astha is always looked down upon by her husband. Her job is a time pass for him. Gradually, she gets the bitter fruit of a married life. Her taxing teaching job divides her between his family and school. Her children feel happy with their grandparents and at home she has to fall back upon her loneliness. This feeling of marginalization and neglect has an evil effect upon her.

Mishra has rightly commented "Astha's married life suffers pangs not only because of her self-indulgence but also because of the callous treatment given to her by her own people. Her mother hands over the money received from the sale of her plot to Hemant. Hemant invests this amount without Astha's consent. His financial deals are expedited without Astha's wishes she registers no sense of belonging and establishes a bond with loneliness which is her comrade" (Mishra,207)

Being an educated lady, Astha wants independence of thought and action. She longs for economic independence. She joins the school and shows her sincerity as a teacher. Despite her taxing and busy work as a teacher, she never fails to care the children and home works. According to Amartya sen, in India, “family arrangements can still be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care” (Sen, 236)

In *A Married Woman* we observe the roots of traditions and convention not only in the society but in Astha’s “MBA, foreign returned” (33) husband. He is found craving for a male offspring. When Astha informs him that the onus of bearing a male child depends upon the man and not the woman, “It is not in our hands, at least not in mine. It is the man’s chromosome that decides the sex, and with two sisters in your family, it may be a girl. I have read about these things” (61) he is annoyed at the results of having an educated woman as a wife. “Astha sat stunned. What kind of fool had she been to expect Hemant to understand? She had a good life, but it was good because nothing was questioned. This boat could not be rocked.” (99)

Manju Kapur has raised the question of woman in the novel by sketching Astha in all her moods and hues. A devoted wife to her husband, she is a docile daughter-in-law and a careful mother. There is no denying the fact that the females of the new generation crave for more space Kapur has tried to assert more voice to her female protagonists. Astha expects from her husband not only his physical participation but also his emotional attachment, but he is busy in erecting his successful business and future of his family and doesn’t want to be a soul mate for his wife. “Somewhere along the way Hemant’s attitude to Astha changed. She told herself it was only slightly but it oppressed her.” (66) The conflict grows in Astha and emerges in the form of frequent migraines and then a growing distance from her husband. Astha feels torn by the demands of her marriage, growing children, juggling a job, pressure at home, and

the attitude of non-understanding and an unresponsive husband. She thinks of resigning from the school but the realization comes to her that “She too had changed from being woman who only wanted love, to a woman who valued independence. Besides there was the pleasure of interacting with minds instead of needs” (72). Her small salary gives her satisfaction and economic independence. Astha attempts to fight her growing loneliness by sketching the paintings and writing poems, but her poems and sketching are not appreciated by her husband.

It is the political turmoil of the Ram Janmabhoomi – Babri Masjid that proves to be a turning point in Astha’s life. Manju Kapur advocates for the equal participation of women in political developments and culture consciousness of the country. Astha’s active participation in rallies and demonstrations led by Sampradayikta Mukti Manch is an example of it. Kapur is par-excellence in the art of characterization. She depicts the inner subtlety of Astha’s mind very skillfully. She very effectively mixes the personal with the external. She presents the political turmoil with the same fervour and graphic details as she depicts Astha’s actions and her inner conflict.

In her novel, Kapur as a feminist has emphasized on the issues in the context of patriarchal, inter-religious marriage, family bond, man-woman relationship, co-existence of past and present in the socio-political background. In this novel too the heroine has explored the space in relationship. She has presented her female protagonists as victims of biology gender, domestic violence and adverse circumstances. She is very sensitive to the issues like communal tensions, communal violence and degradation of human values in the social trauma and political turmoil of the 1990. The demolition of Babri Masjid episode works as a metaphor in the novel. The nation falls apart owing to religious differences and the dynamics of power politics. A marriage falls apart owing to differences in relationship which somehow can’t be bridged. In this

confused scenario, Astha as a politically awared painter who is now a part of Samprdayakta Mukti Manch goes to Ayodhya.

It is difficult for Astha to convince herself that Aijaz had lighted a flame of longing in her heart. Her nights are woven with his admiration and her days coloured with their mission on Babri Masjid. He admires Astha and she too finds him a tender man with a vision and mission. Aijaz Akhater Khan proves to be quite demanding on Astha's time. It awakened her to a new kind of sensation. Astha is unconsciously searching for a new soul-mate in Aijaz. Aijaz to some extent succeeds to dispel the illusion inculcated in Astha to adhere to her 'Status' in the world as a woman. "Suddenly she glimpsed possibilities, suddenly her life seem less constricted" (115) In Hemant's view this is in contrast to the male-identified ideals of women. It is not digesting for him to hear talk on politics: "Please keep to what you know best, the home, children, teaching. All this doesn't suit you." (116). The awareness in political matters provides Astha an access to the world which is beyond the confines of an unhappy marriage. It is a way of expression of internal protest, voice under the coverage of external matters. Somewhere her identity her self-concept, her sense of autonomy and direction were getting lost. This was the right answer. Now "She wants to say yes, I have done it, I have sold my first painting, I have achieved something." (148)

After the murder of Aijaz, Astha meets Pipeelika Khan the widow of Aijaz Akhatar Khan Pipeelika is a strong woman and has a different view about life. She takes initiative and drags Astha into a secret lesbian relationship. Astha gets that soul mate in the form of Pipeelika. Through Astha-Pip relationship, Kapur has shown that the true union in love meant not only the meeting of two bodies but also of souls, sentiments and ideologies. The subtleties of sex are enjoyed in exchanging and not in offering which Indian women make to their husbands as a part of their marital duty.

Manju Kapur is the first Indian feminist to introduce the lesbian love as an important question to be discussed by the advocates of women rights. "Lesbian feminism has emerged during 1970s considering heterosexism as moot point, which causes women's oppression" (Poonam Srivastava, "Garden of Eve: Feminist Literary Theory and Sigmund Freud Delhi 2004. P.9). On the ground of the critical principles of lesbian theory, Astha's relationship with Pip in *A Married Woman* can be regarded as the lesbian relationship between two women, even though Manju Kapur has not used the word 'lesbian' for either of them. But they enjoy being together; and they desire each other. There is a passionate sexual union between the two.

With the passage of time, Astha realized that any relationship, be it between a woman and another woman becomes demanding after a length of time. Pipeelika wants Astha totally devoted to her, but Astha can not divorce herself from her husband and family. The way she refuses Pipeelika's offer reflects her courage, boldness, and conscious of maintaining her Indian ethos. Ultimately Pipeelika leaves for the U.S.A. and the relationship breaks up. Thus Astha comes back to her old life. Astha's reconciliation with her married life is very much a part of Kapur's claim of being feminist.

Thus, Astha, the protagonist in *A Married Woman* is Manju Kapur's modern woman. This modern woman is educated, conscious, introspective, economically independent who wants to establish her own identity. Kapur has revealed her strong emphasis for women with zeal and enthusiasm to suggest that a married woman's work is not as a housekeeper and child bearer, she is not only for home and hearth but she has her duties to be performed beyond husband and children. Kapur's woman does not hesitate to violate the current social codes if necessary. Kapur has strong convictions about feminism. She believes in the equality of the sexes and in the equal rights for both the sexes. Kapur has shown that, it is



the woman herself who can change her situation. In this male-dominated society, women have to struggle hard to establish their own identity. It is the woman herself who has to come out as an individual and seek for her space in relationship. She explores the inner awakening of woman, inner-self of woman. Her revolt is against male-dominance, patriarchy and her cry is for identity, equality and a democratic way of life where women are treated like human beings on par with men. Kapur wants to prove through her heroines that a woman should be aware, rational self-reliant, strong-determined, strong-willed, self-controlled having faith in her inner strength. Kapur also has strong conviction that until woman overcomes the handicaps imposed by society, outside and inner situation, the human race will not have its full potential. Thus, *A Married Woman* shows Kapur maturing as a feminist in Indian writing in English.

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## Men's Credit and Women's Literature

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#### Abstract

Domination of patriarchy at all levels to establish the facts in the very feminine psyche that it is masculine rationality that has always privileged reason, order, unity and lucidity and that it has done so by silencing and excluding the irrationality, chaos, and fragmentation that has come to represent femininity. All negative qualities have been attributed to woman kind and whatever is positive men have taken credit of belong to men. This patriarchic system is male dominating and one sided. This has done great harm to woman kind during the study and research work by feminist scholars this is come to their knowledge that patriarchic system of male domination is rooted in the tradition of the past and that such heritage of women's subordination blatantly mistreat and devalues half of humanity. This the reason that even in literary circles or academic lines represent only the views and values of one small select group of men who agree that those who are not in their own image are not worthy of recognition or that they are available for exploitation.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Femininity, Humanity, Feminine Sensitivity, Modern Faminism.

#### Introduction

In view of Dale Spender this created the division of good and

bad, rich and poor, dominant and subordinate these are merely socially constructed channels and the implications of such division extended far beyond the confines of woman writer; they affect women, man and the whole society. Very philosophically but very realistically and very pathetically Virginia Woolf through creative medium *A Room of One's Own* (1929) where she made the connection between women's cultural poverty and women's material poverty. While telling the importance of 'Room' Dr. Anupama Deshraj writes: 'A Room is in itself luminous proof of a mind which has been able to synthesize its anger and frustration into a compelling balanced work of art. Transcending special pleadings of any sort, the book is an immensely civilized document speaking to the common humanity shared by everyone' (Deshraj, 72). Rasmi Gaur writes: women are frequently represented in literature by men, but even the most famous heroines 'represent what men desire in women, but not necessarily what women are in themselves –when one sex is dependent upon the other it will endeavour for safety's sake to simulate what the dominant sex finds desirable' (3).

In this novel Woolf critically examined the problems which women experience and face. In fact, she advocated a balance between a 'male' self-realization and 'female' self annihilation. She is not in favor of the notion of separate feminist consciousness. She wanted no conflict between male and female sexuality. She intended an 'effect from confrontation with femaleness or maleness. She was a very conscious thinker about the most intrinsic and implicit feminine sensitivity and issues. In an influential essay 'Profession For Women', she considers the problems of women writers, particularly the writers of her period. In her view, women writers were imprisoned in the "Ideology of Womanhood" which fixes the ideal of the 'Angel in the house, besides this women were prevented talking about their passions and were disallowed to tell the truth about their experiences as a body. In the light of

inevitability of these obstacles she felt that to remove these obstacles is a must on the part of a woman and a woman can achieve this target only through the medium of writing and also by achieving social and economic equality with men and that in such condition women would be able to communicate themselves more freely. Though Virginia Woolf cannot be categorized as a feminist in the modern sense but she is an independent positive thinker of her period in area which is now called 'gyno-criticism'.

There are thinkers and writers even from men who have supported feminism and expressed through their writing pathetic condition in which women live like John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* 1869, and Frederic Engel's *The Origin of the Family* 1884, these books throw light on the problems of women's inequality in society and tendency of women's suppression and subordination at the hands of male in a given patriarchic condition.

The modern feminist women show exclusive focus in the writing of women whose works can be classified in the following manner:

- a) a work in the area of 'Women's Studies/ Feminism (research and studies in general about the problems of women in social, cultural, economic, linguistic and other areas.
- b) Women's writing, mostly literary and
- c) Feminist criticism.

Women's writing in the west has been effective medium of communicating due to high rate of literacy in western societies-and feminism in the west has its roots in book and literature but in countries like India which presents contrary scenario because there is strong oral tradition and high rate of illiteracy, as a results of these studies was confines mostly to urban areas and only recently the awareness if felt in the rural areas with the help of the influence of the electronic media, which has, in fact for the larger benefit of the masses revived the oral tradition.

In America, modern feminist criticism was inaugurated by Merry Elman's through discussion, in *Thinking About Women* (1968). Merry Elman threw light on the derogatory stereotype of women in literature written by men. There came almost a flood in respect of writing from the pen of female writers, since 1969, there has been an outburst and an explosion of feminist writings without parallel in previous critical writing.

The expressions and experiences written by women writer have reached amazing height as can be seen in the book titled *The Second Sex* by Simone De Beauvoir. It is a marvelous illustration of a woman's status in the whole structure of socio-cultural and linguistic manifestation clearly begins to us the status of woman is merely secondary, next to man or nobody to man. Beauvoir writes: 'Now, woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage.' (McCann and Kim, 37.).

On account of its full focus on woman is considered as most fascinating. The book is described as; 'The healthiest, headiest, wealthiest and wisest book that has ever been written on women' (New York Herald Tribune.)

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), makes a distinction between 'Sex' and 'Gender'. 'Sex' is determined biologically whereas 'Gender' is culturally, socially, psychologically constructed through sex-role stereotyping and prevailing historical conditioning. Millet argues that women as much as men responsible in perpetuating the sex role image. She explains the repressive role of the male and submissive role of the female. Clara Nubile writes by quoting the reference of Manusmriti as following: 'in childhood a woman should be under her father's control. In youth under her husbands,

and when her husband is dead under her son's. she should not have independence.' (Clara, 1).

There are many more books of the same tone and tempo reflecting women's pitiable conditions due to lack of justice and dignity given to woman. Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1972), Toril Moi's *Sexual Textual Politics* (1985). Germaine Greer's *Thinking About Women* (1979), Merry Elman's and Michele Bartlett's Marxist feminist presentation in *Women's Oppression today and Problems In Marxist Feminist analysis* (1980), and some of the influential works in general areas of feminism.

Even language has been exploited in manipulating the subordination of women. Books like Robin Layoff's *Language And Women's Place* (1975), and Dale Spender's *Man Made Language* (1981), focus powerfully and effectively and most convincingly on the gender bias in language. A Layoff's book discusses toll of women which show that women are unclear and uncertain about what they say. Dale Spender's book is pin pointedly clear and critical. In her book she points out that the masculine gender in English has not only been stable but also dominant. She compares words like:

Mister - Mistress (an illegal one),  
 Sir - Madam (a brothel keeper)  
 Governor - Governess (a tutor in a private house)  
 Courtier - Courtesan (a woman who takes payment for services 'rendered').  
 Wizard - Witch (indicating derogatory sense),  
 Dog - Bitch (derogatory and disgracefully).

She gives illustration of how feminine gender has been under estimated the above collection of pair clearly indicates the words of feminine gender indicate lesser value in each pair. The whole process shows semantic degeneration in words that denote the feminine gender reflects the process of control through language. Expressions such as, 'The proper study of mankind is man' A. Pope), 'Man is the measure of all things' Pythagoras), 'The child is the father of man' W. Wordsworth.),

All these expression plainly show that 'Man' is generic. All these expressions are not derogatory in but they reveal truth. The behavior of an individual and the condition in which 'he' lives, all these examples justify to include the study language in the study of relation between sexes. A host of a very powerful extremely influential writers like Élan Showalter's *Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelist From Bronte To Lessing*, (1989), and *The New Feminist Criticism : Essay on Women, Literature and Theory*, (1985), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Mad Woman In The Attic; The Woman Writers And The Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, (1979) Sara Mills Etal's *Feminist Readings / Feminists Reading*, (1989), and many others have very positively contributed to the growing area of women's studies and even further it is on the way to march fast in proportion with women in the total population.

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## Cultural Clash in Bapsi Sidhwa's: *An American Brat*

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#### Abstract

Culture is an integral part of the society, not merely teaching the way of living together in the community; but also influencing people in all times and all places. Bapsi Sidhwa is the doyenne of Pakistani literature in English. *An American Brat* was written after Sidhwa's immigration to America. It is the story of a young girl, Feroza, who undertakes the journey through three cultures-her own community Parsi culture, her country Pakistan's Islamic culture and the Western culture of the United States of America. Sidhwa in her novel has projected the issue of the various problems arising out of the cultural difference. Feroza is caught between two opposite cultures and finally decides to live her life as per her wish.

Keywords: Culture, Society, Journey, Community, Cultural difference.

Literature is a subsystem of a given culture. Culture is an integral part of the society, not merely teaching the way of living together in the community; but also influencing people in all times and all places. Every nation or community has a distinct culture and often within it there are divergent cultural groups. Though cultural diversity adds colour and variety to the human world, it also divides

people into numerous groups, causing estrangement in human relationships. Bapsi Sidhwa is the doyenne of Pakistani literature in English. She is the first Pakistani writer to have been published in the West. She likes herself to be described as a "Punjabi-Pakistani-Parsi woman." (Rajan). *An American Brat* was written after Sidhwa's immigration to America. It is the story of a young girl, Feroza, who undertakes the journey through three cultures-her own community Parsi culture, her country Pakistan's Islamic culture and the Western culture of the United States of America. Sidhwa in her novel has projected the issue of the various problems arising out of the cultural difference. Naila Hussain has raised a question about the theme of the novel; Sidhwa replies to it by saying:

Naturally, the book deals with the subject of the "culture- shock" young people from the subcontinent have to be content with when they choose to study abroad. It also delineates the clashes the divergent cultures generate between the families "back home" and their transformed and transgressing progeny bravely groping their way in the New World. (Hussain,19)

The novel commences in late seventies and is set partly in Pakistan and partly in the USA. As Islamic fundamentalism is growing in Pakistan, Feroza's parents think that she should be saved from being further influenced by the Islamic orthodoxy. Her mother Zareen is perturbed, because Feroza is becoming more and more backward, every day. Zareen says:

I went to bring Feroza from school today. ... In the car, she said: "Mummy, please don't come to school dressed like that." She objected to my sleeveless sari blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her. (11) They feel that Feroza should go to the USA during the summer vacation. "Travel will broaden her outlook; get this Puritanical rubbish out of her head. (14)

Feroza's journey to America not only prepares her for alien

culture but it also enables a fair evaluation of both the societies that she is connected to. Feroza's journey to self-awareness begins with her flight to America; practically it turns out to be a journey from innocence to experience. The flight of the plane symbolizes the shift in culture and tradition. The cultural bias comes along with third world tag at the passport counters, where she is quizzed on different things. She was quite new to such unfriendly dispositions: "It was Feroza's first moment of realization she was in a strange country amidst strangers....." (54)

She screams: "To hell with you and your damn country. I'll go back." (58). It shows the contrast between two opposite cultures. Manek, her uncle introduced her to the new world culture. He was a student there and, therefore, had great knowledge and experience of New York. Manek is a consistent reminder of her *desi* behavior.

Feroza who was deprived of freedom in the patriarchal Parsi society in Pakistan now dares to question and revolt against the tradition that bound her to her community. She surrenders to the charms of America, and enrolls in a University, where she adopts the American life style. The shy and conservative Feroza turns into a confident and self-assertive girl acts, talks and dresses like an American girl, learns to drive and shed her inhibitions to drink and dance with her fellow friends. All Parsi customs are blown to dust within some days by Feroza. Feroza, takes the reins of her life in her hand as she decides to lengthen her stay and join a college in America. She even changes the way she dresses from traditional salwars and dangling earrings to a modern pair of jeans and t-shirt.

Novy Kapadia in *Expatriate Experience and Theme of Marriage in An American Brat* points out:

The paradox here, of course, is self-evident. It adds to the irony that exists throughout the novel. The Gingwallas fail to realize that the journey to the USA will broaden Feroza's thinking and open up further avenues



for her. She will become “modern” in the truest sense of the word. By thinking for herself, she will challenge traditional views, static orthodoxy and grow beyond the confines of community and the norms of a patriarchal society. Bapsi Sidhwa shows that the journey to the USA was supposedly a learning process but instead it makes her “too modern” for her patriarchal and seemingly liberal family. So, in this novel of self-realization, the self-awareness that Feroza Ginwalla acquires ironically isolates her from her Parsi heritage. (Kapadia: 188)

As Feroza dilutes herself in the new society, she finds herself completely changed person. She decides to take up a job as a waitress on the insistence of her friends. While in the sub-continent, women are supposed to live within the four walls of the house, she chooses her way after being thrown into American culture, though she is uneasy at every moment of her stay in America, yet she hates the womanish life of talking about babies, husbands and sisters-in-laws, etc.

Bapsi Sidhwa has discussed theme of love, marriage and the consequent complex issues. When the protagonist expresses her thought about marriage to her uncle Manek, she tells him about David despite he being Jewish in origin, she has a mind to marry. Manek says thoughtfully: “It all seems wonderful now, but marriage is something else, our cultures are very different. Of course, I’m not saying it can’t work, but you have to give it time. We’ll keep touching on the phone, seeing how it goes?” (263) The cultural consciousness makes Manek think twice about such a marriage proposal. He has spent his life in American culture, when it is the time for marriage, he returns to Lahore. It is noted that he marries a Parsi girl called Aban which shows that he does not want to part with his culture at any cost.

Now it is Feroza’s turn to face the dilemma. Her letter to her family, to seek permission from her parents to marry David, an

American Jew and the man of her heart, causes flutter in the family. It is an attack on the Parsi culture. Her family in Pakistan is both agitated and shocked. Zareen flies to Denver to dissuade Feroza from taking a step that would lead to her being ex-communicated and expelled from the faith. The parents are also concerned that such a marriage would bring shame upon the family’s honour.

The family’s opposition to Feroza’s impending marriage represents the predominant traditional view of the Parsi community to such inter-community marriage. Zareen, when she looks at David and finds him a suitable match, has doubts about the rigid code of her community. However, Zareen’s plan succeeds; David becomes conscious of the dissimilarities between the two cultures. She must protect her daughter from him by hook or by crook. She consents to their marriage but wants it to be a regular wedding. She describes specifically the details of the Parsi wedding rituals and customs to David. He realizes that Zareen’s offensive is not personal but communal. David tells Zareen that a Jewish wedding is an equally elaborate affair: “My parents are not happy about the marriage, either. It’s lucky they’re reformed Jews, otherwise they’d go into mourning and pretend I was dead ... I belong to an old tradition, too.” (298). Such anger shows that Zareen has succeeded in causing estrangement between him and Feroza. The migrant Feroza adjusted herself well to a different culture and “there would be no going back for her.” (317) The novelist tells us: “From her visit to Lahore, Feroza knew she had changed, taken a different direction from hers. Their (of the inmates the family) preoccupation with children and servants and their concern with clothes and furnishings did not interest her ... Although the sense of dislocation, of not belonging, was more acute in America, she felt it would be more tolerable, because it was shared by thousands of newcomers like her.” (312)

In the beginning of the novel we find Feroza struggling with

herself and the new society, but towards the end of the novel there is a transition in her character. She becomes more mature and firm in whatever stand she takes. Despite of a broken relationship with David due to cultural differences, Feroza decides to get married in future only with a person whom she will be able to love truly even if he is a non -Parsi. She decides not to bother much about her community and its value system since she believes in caring the true essence Zoroastrian faith in her heart. She decides to settle in America and continue her life in a multicultural, multiethnic place. Bapsi Sidhwa in her novel thus provides excellent ground for the contesting claims of cultural differences and clashes.

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## Probing the female characters expedition through History in Amitav Ghosh's selected Novels

Swapnil. R. Dahat

#### Abstract

In literature, authors give life to their characters but since Amitav Ghosh is an anthropologist along with a writer and since he writes realistic fictions and sketches out characters within the parameters of realism as he is bounded by the historical events within which he narrates his story. So the question arises if the female characters in Ghosh's books namely *The Hungry Tide*, *Sea of Poppies*, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Glass Palace* make their own history or is it a history which is being imposed upon them by the patriarchal society and the norms set by the variegated culture and tradition.

Keywords: Tradition, History, Females, Commoditization, Boundaries.

During this period, we can see how men represented the outside world where the nationalist movement and modernization was taking place and the women represented the inner core which was completely segregated from the outside world which drastically contributed to the factors responsible for them to lag behind their male counterparts. This is how the identity of Indian women has been established over time. It is reflected in every aspect of their

lives ranging from clothing to eating habits etc. Even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when education became an important aspect in the lives of women new: criteria were introduced to curtail their freedom.

The time stage in which the female characters in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* are living can be considered the beginning of the timeline which we will focus on. The narrative is based preceding to the Opium Wars between Britain and China so the events mentioned in the book can be estimated to take place during the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century or beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The female protagonist Deeti represents a class of woman from this period that was scarcely able to meet its pecuniary ends and yet did not let mislay their traditional ideals. The obsession to work shoulder to shoulder with the men folk can be taken note of. It is also worthy to note that history and traditions go hand in hand in their regular lifestyle. We can see that Deeti's life revolves around "laying out a freshly-washed dhoti and kameez for Hukam Singh, her husband, and preparing the rotis and achar he would eat at midday...after she'd bathed and changed, Deeti would do a proper puja, with flowers and offerings" (3). Here, we see that she manages her household and also has the responsibility of taking care of her child and as well as looks after the fields. She is customized in such a way that she cannot see beyond this. Deeti has internalized the ideology that performing all these household chores and also the labor in the field is part of her relationship with her husband and she has to perform these as part of her duties towards her in-laws. Even after eloping with Kalua and marrying him, she still cannot get out of the traditional boundary which has been installed within her from her birth. She tries to initiate comparable ethnicity within Munia, a young girl who travels together with her in the Ibis (ship). Here we can also see the traditional customs of owning property is being used as an excuse to exploit a woman. Upon the death of her husband, her brother-in-law, Chandan Singh, tried to forcibly arrange her Sati rites for his own benefit. Here we can see the

commoditization of females from the historical period itself. The reason for Deeti being forced to burn herself alive is not a religious one. The actual reason it during that time a woman committing the custom was hyped and certain amount of gifts were placed near her pyre, by which the immediate family members would be benefitted. Thus, Chandan Singh makes use of a traditional custom which happened for a different motive and changes it accordingly for his own monetary gains.

In *The Glass Palace* Amitav Ghosh cooks a tasty pickle where he adds real historical events, historical personalities and imaginary characters altogether which adds spice to his work. A massive amount of Indo-Burmese history is being enclosed in this book. Our chief focal point in the paper will be to trace the augmentation and expedition of the important female characters of the novel. Queen Supayalat has been portrayed as a very tough personality by the author. For instance, she is revealed to go on a carnage extravaganza murdering all the probable heirs to the Throne of Burma to protect her husband. It is significant to note here that this occurrence of arrangement of massacring eighty-ninety potential heirs to the throne of Burma by Queen Supayalat is taken from history of Burma. The culpability for the Anglo-Burmese war which led to the fall of the Burmese empire is placed on her as she is exposed to be the one who did not want to give up to the British demands. Even in her émigré she is made known to be clutching on to her age old traditions. No matter how small it might seem but here we can see that a fallen Queen is still standing tall against the powerful British Empire in her own defiant way. Her pursuit to not let go of history and traditions gives her this power to confront the mighty British. One can see that a queen and a prisoner share similar feelings and they are causative to the development of nationalist history even though they might not be conscious of it. Uma is shown as a woman who wants to be someone more than just a tradition bound wife. She has a apparent vision of what she wants

in life and she is prepared to jeopardy everything she has to achieve it. She dissolves her marriage once she feels disgruntled in it. She travels from Rangoon to London to America and back to India. This broadens her line of thought. On her part, Uma does not consider in being a living history but making it which she lastly achieves by becoming a significant member of the Indian Independence League. However, she does not remain abstained from traditions completely. The truth that she was a widow might have been one of the main reasons that blocked the entry of another man in her life – “because they knew that I was a widow, I think the men looked to me to be a kind of ideal woman, a symbol of purity – and to tell you the truth, I didn’t much mind” (224). As for Dolly, she wants live in a monastery - to lead a life of contemplation and rumination etc but she could never get out of the traditional norms of family. Tradition imposes upon her a responsibility that she has to take care of her children at least till they are well settled in their lives.

In the novel *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh sets it in a period between the early 1900s to the late 1900s. Here the unspecified narrator’s grandmother, Tham’ma is a knowledgeable woman. “She had taught in a girls’ high school since 1936...But over the next two decades the school had grown into a large, successful institution...For the last six years before she retired, ..[she] had been its headmistress”(115). Tham’ma is a component of such group of women who went outside their homes to make careers but still remained ideologically within the set norms of the society. Hence, she objects vehemently to Ila’s lifestyle of living autonomously in England in a negative manner: “It’s not freedom she wants, said my grandmother...She wants to be left alone to do what she pleases: that’s all that any whore would want. She’ll find it easily enough over there, that’s what those places have to offer. But that is not what it means to be free” (79). A particular segment of people can also remark that her condemnation of Ila’s way of independent living is her agony on herself for not being able to enjoy that sort of freedom

that Ila does. Tham’ma represents an assemblage of women on whom age old customs and tradition has such a deep influence that they continue to abide by it no matter what the outcome. She is well-read, sovereign and bold but her outlook seems very partial. She forms an estimation about someone by just looking at the facade rather than stirring into profundity and analyzes on the core values. She had an unfathomable revulsion of the young men who spent their time at the street addas and tea-stalls around the corners. She has many gallant thoughts as mentioned by the narrator of *The Shadow Lines*. Ever since she heard those stories, she had wanted to do something for the terrorists, work for them in a small way, steal a little bit of their glory for herself. She would have been content to run errands for them, to cook their food, wash their clothes, anything. But, of course, they worked secretly; she didn’t know how to get in touch with them, and even if she had it would have been twice as hard for her to get in, because she was a girl, a woman. (39) However, she could never carry out these notions of her into accomplishment. The era and the traditions that were in vogue at that time did not allow her thought process to occur or materialize. However if we compare her character with the character of Uma (*The Glass Palace*) we see that she had the power to explore and contribute to the freedom of the country which Tham’ma could never do. Amitav Ghosh takes care to attribute traditional characteristics of Indian woman to May Price, a westerner in *The Shadow Lines*.

The era depicted in the novel *The Hungry Tide* is the present phase of the timeline i.e. it showcases the modern world. There are four main female characters depicted in the story. Each of the four important feminine characters existence seems to orbit approximately around an historical occurrence which has left a significant impact on their lives. It has been observed that most of the elder characters were more traditional bound, but here, however, Nilima, who is the oldest female character is revealed as

the most determined character in the story. She ridicules and breaks the conventional outlook of treating Indian women as Goddesses. She does not readily agree to negotiation and let goes of her dreams for the sake of sustaining a group of refugees who are lastly massacred. She is the governing individual in the family unit and of course the decision taker too. Her judgment of not helping the people of Morichjhapi somehow wrecks her domestic life as her husband tends to become more isolated after the massacre: I simply cannot allow the Trust to get involved in this. There's too much at stake for us. You're not involved in the day-to-day business of running the hospital, so you have no idea of how hard we've had to work to stay on the right side of the government. If the politicians turn against us, we're finished. I can't take that chance (214). As a consequence she gets more and more implicated with her work than her family life. Kusum is the next female character whom we cannot classify in terms of contemporary or conventional. She has an inopportune childhood as her parents meet regrettable ends - her father being killed by a man-eater and her mother being tricked into prostitution. She boards a train to town to escape from the vicious clutches of Dilip, the scrupulous man who had sold of her mother and now was after her for the same reason. Here she meets the benevolent Rajan whom she marries but her happiness is short-lived as he is killed by a running train. Kusum is ill-educated but her opinions she holds about life are far more better than that of a qualified and cultured person: 'Saar,' she said...' the worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements...' "This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by the people all around the world.", (262)

Kusum gradually becomes an element of ancient history where she fails to make a mark on the Indian history nor the world history. The main cause for this was the cover up done by the

Government of India who tried its level best to hide the massacre to save its tainted face before the world. In case of Nilima, her life is affected by history, but in the case of Kusum she became a component of history which ultimately takes her life and meets a tragic but contented death. A lot of similarities can be seen between Piyali Roy and Moyna even though their lives are miles apart. Piya is a cetologist who visits Lusibari to carry out research about a rare river dolphin. She is born to Bengali Indian parents but brought up and educated in America. Moyna, on the other hand, is a local nurse and aspires to be a doctor and wants to educate her son so that he can have a better life. Piya had a troubled childhood and she may have taken up the employment of a scientist so that the research work kept her away from her home especially after the death of her mother. She hires Moyna's husband Fokir as her boatman. As the story moves towards its conclusion, we perceive that they are swept by the tide to Jarjontola which inadvertently also happens to be the last place where Kusum traveled to before being killed in the Morichjhapi confrontation. Fokir loses his life in an endeavor to save Piya from the upturned boat. History repeats itself here as both mother and son meet their tragic ends in a common place. Piya decides to settle in Lusibari as she feels that she is conscientious for Fokir's family.

It has been observed that it is apparent that history and conventional thought play a very significant role in determining the life of the female characters. They are either continuously trying to get a hold on it or trying to let go of it. On one hand, we have characters like Moyna, Nilima and Uma who are trying to revolutionize the established identity which has been enforced upon the Indian women through the passage of history. On the other hand, there are characters like Tham'ma, Dolly, Deeti who are stuck within the dichotomy of *Ghar-Bahir*. Times have changed but new factors form part of the shadow lines which divide women's interior and exterior surface.



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## **Deconstruction of Socially Constructed Gender in Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Grey Woman* through the Lenses of 'Gender Performativity'**

**Megha D. Ramteke**

### **Abstract**

A Victorian woman novelist, Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Grey Woman* has always been critiqued as a Gothic ghost story that belies the feminist element in it. Only a few critics have brought to the fore the feminist aspect of the story. Gaskell's female characters always based on real lived experiences and consciousness; the characters of Anna and Amante also one hand bring forth the reality of the fake identity construed by the male dominated society and culture while on the other hand subverts that very identity by upholding their natural identity carved out by themselves. This 'gender identity', according to Judith Butler is not something that pre-exist but the 'performance' assigned appropriate to male or female by society and culture, the repetition of these stylized acts and their transmission from one generation to another generation constructs 'gender'. This paper is a humble attempt to bring to light the deconstruction of this socially and culturally constructed gender in this short story with the help of Butler's theory of 'Gender Performativity'.

**Keywords:** Gender, Gender Performativity, Society and Culture, Feminism, Deconstruction.

Elizabeth Gaskell's (1810-1865) *The Grey Woman* is considered as a Female Gothic story based on French folktale with a Blue Beard twist. The Gothic nature of the story overlaps its 'feminist palimpsest' and reiterates the old belief of Gaskell's being a docile woman writer and conformist of the domestic Victorian ideology. But beneath the mysterious suspense of this story one finds an ardent feminist stratagem that aims at exposing the falsity of socially constructed gender through the character of *Anna* and bringing forth an identity devoid of socially attributed gender prejudices through the character of *Amante*. This deconstruction of socially constructed gender identity in this story has been brought to the surface with the help of Judith Butler's theory of 'Gender Performativity'.

In the essay "Performativity Acts and Gender Constitution" (1998) Judith Butler brings forth a theory of Gender Performativity. Butler bases her theory on the combination of Phenomenology and Feminism as both the theories study the lived experiences and consciousness. She argues that Gender is not naturally constructed but rather the 'repetitive stylized acts assigned by the society and culture appropriate to male and female constitute the 'gender'. She believes that repetitive 'performance' of these acts by a body attributes it a 'gender identity' which is not natural and this binary frame of gender categories, the subject and the other, is operated by the 'power'. She questions,

What configuration of power constructs the subject and the other, that binary relation between men and women and internal stability of those terms? What restriction is here at work? Are those term untroubling only to the extent that they conform to a heterosexual matrix for conceptualizing gender and desire? (Butler viii)

Butler brings into question the very term 'woman' itself which is a social and cultural signifier of a female body and destabilizes this binary frame. She urges that instead of defining

'woman' feminist should "focus on providing an account of how power functions and shapes our understanding of womanhood not only in the society at large but also within the feminist movement". (Butler 31)

In Gaskell's *The Grey Women* through the performative acts of two female characters namely *Anna* and *Amante* which are contradictory to each other brought to the fore the binary frame of gender and at the same time destabilizes these gender categories of 'subject and other'. She appears to challenge the possibilities of Sex, Gender and Sexualities which are socially permitted and therefore projected as natural and introduces new possibilities that are more "flexible, free floating, not caused by other stable factors (Butler 3) This is executed through the character of *Amante* by dispensing her with such performative acts which are not recognizable and permitted by society and culture to a female body. But because of changes in dress and acceptable physical activity and appearance of *Amante* her sex remains undisclosed, "Life was ebbing away fast, and they had no resource but to carry her to the nearest hospital, where, of course, the fact of her sex was made known." (Gaskell 39) The choice of dress is also essential in a gender construction as *Salih* brings out a wardrobe analogy in which she argues that "One's gender is performatively constituted in the same way that one's choice of clothes is curtailed, perhaps even predetermined, by the society, context, economy, etc. within which one is situated." (*Salih* 56) The hollowness of the whole social construction of gender identity is exposed through the character of *Amante* and it shows that how "the society inscribes on our external physical bodies our internal gender and sexuality". (Theory of Gender Performativity)

Butler discusses that performativity is not the 'automatic or mechanical' but imposed by the social norms and deviation from these norms and choice of performance that is not permitted by the society or culture to a male or female can threaten the 'social

recognition' of a person that is felt as a need to survive or live in the society. This need makes a person to perform his gender without being conscious of it. Anna appears to be conforming to this power play of sexes and this socially constructed gender role as a motherless female in a patriarchal social structure; conforming to the male's control over female's sexuality, identity and gender performance and this gender performativity is realized throughout many aspects of her life.

According to West and Zimmerman, "Gender is an emergent feature of social situations both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society." (West and Zimmerman, 126) Marriage is one of such social arrangements through which 'binary asymmetric gender' is maintained. It is a very crucial site of the power play. The set acts of performance which is transmitted from generation to generation appropriate to a 'man' and a 'woman' in a marriage makes 'woman' a personal property of 'man' as Maureen Reddy aptly says that marriage is, "woman's Primary vocation devoid of education for that, go into it blind, without much knowing about the man, into prison." (186) Anna is also submissive and docile to the marriage enforced upon her by the patriarchal family and after betrothal nobody has any right over her except her future husband. Her choices and decisions are influenced and manipulated by the society. Anna doesn't love Monsieur de la Tourelle but she is forced to marry him because she didn't show any repugnance to him. She is not given a second chance to think as she says, "What could I do but hang my head, and silently consent..." (Gaskell, 13) When she expresses her will to go back to her father's place and not to marry Mr. Tourelle, it is considered an act of dereliction. Her father takes her wish as the "The fancy of a silly girl who did not her own mind, but who had now gone too far to recede." (Gaskell, 14) Such a marriage is a social and cultural site of producing the binary gender

that projects a socially and culturally created meaning, identity or reality that eschews the natural identity or reality that is generated from her mind.

In contradiction to the gender performativity of Anna, Amante's choice of performative acts differs from the 'normality' as being defined by the society. The Norman character Amante's performance of acts makes her egress from the frame of gender binary of 'man' and 'woman'. She creates an identity that breaks the link between gender, sex and sexuality and destabilizes the gender categories. She seems to be undoing "restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life." (West and Zimmerman, 128) Amante's deviation from the stylized repetitive acts or performativity giving birth to a natural gender identity that is threatening or deconstructing the socially and culturally constructed gender and identity bringing the very identity as a 'woman' into question. She becomes 'more human' in terms of nature than 'human' in terms of society's "disciplinary regim". She moves from "viable life" to "livable life". (West and Zimmerman, 127) She demystifies the gender role and sexuality.

"The gender woman' and gender 'man' remains contingent and open to interpretation and "resignification". In this way Butler provides an opening for subversive action. She calls for people to trouble the categories of gender through performance (Butler 3). Amante seems to be an answer to this call. Although Amante is a 'female' by sex but her disguise as Anna's husband and change in her attire makes society identify her as a 'male' and her bodily performative acts creates her gender identity as 'man'. The selection of dress, behavior, looks and actions all are construed by the society and culture with power in its play but Amante undoes this gender construction and puts up a threat to the hegemony of the gender 'man'. Amante leads to the subversive action in order to resignify and reinterpret gender and she troubles the categories of gender through her performativity.

As opposite to the character of Anna, Amante refuses to act as a timid and weak person. Timidity is a behavioral feature generally attributed to the gender called 'woman' by society. As Anna says,

I was timid from my childhood, and before long my dread of his displeasure, conquered my humour...I was afraid of everybody (I do not think I was half as much afraid of things as of persons), Amante feared no one. She would quietly beard Lefebvre, and he respected her all the more for it; she had knack of putting questions to Mr. Tourelle, which respectfully informed him that she had detected a weak point...and with all her shrewdness to others, she had quite tender ways with me. (Gaskell, 16)

The male servant showed disrespect to Anna but Amante was caring towards her. Instead of being envious or disrespectful to another woman who is hierarchically in a better position, a feature that is a part of gender performativity inculcated by cultural and hierarchical structure of society but Amante shows female solidarity. As Anna says that the women servants were "all hard and impudent looking, and treating me with a semblance of respect that had more of mockery than reality in it." (Gaskell, 17)

After discovering the true nature of Mr. Tourelle's vocation as one of the chiefs of the robber gangs, the Chauffeurs and Anna and Amante overhear the talk between him and other robbers about the murder of Sieur de Poissy and how Mr. Tourelle murdered his previous spouse, Victorine. Amante takes a decisive role of action and makes her mind to be gone away along with Anna.

Amante creates an identity that seems to be a combination of the performative acts assigned to a 'man' as husband and at the same time those acts attributed to a 'woman' as a mother. She takes care of Anna as a child, "If madame will still be guided by me –and, my child, I beg my child to trust me." (Gaskell, 37) Even when Anna gives birth to her baby girl Amenta's motherly love for the child

surpasses that of Anna's as she herself says, "the faithful Amenta's delight and glory in the babe almost exceeded mine". (Gaskell, 37) Amante who is a female by sex but male by appearance and performance dismantles this division of gender.

In the shelter of an old woman, with her presence of mind and shrewdness, Amante makes the old woman keep the secret from her husband of their stay at her place. She very deftly makes ladder of the rope which was lying coiled among other things in the garret to drop them down the ten feet or so. She wore an old suit of a man's clothes, cut her own hair to the shortness of a man's, made Anna clip her black eyebrows as close as though they had been shaved, by cutting up old corks, she altered both, the shape of her face and her voice to a degree which was impossible to believe. While Amante is active with all her wisdom, brains, and creativity together at work, Anna remains "like one stunned." (Gaskell, 29) Amante dyes Anna's hair and complexion with the decaying shells of the stored up walnuts, blackens her teeth, and voluntarily broke a front tooth to suit the disguise. She makes a bundle of old clothes to preserve their character as husband and wife, stuffed a hump on her back and thickened Anna's figure.

Amante "boldly announced herself as a travelling tailor, ready to do any odd jobs of work that might be required for a night's lodging and food for herself and wife." (Gaskell, 30) Here again Amante threatens the gender restricted work demarcation; on one hand as a girl she helped her father in the work of tailoring, on the other hand as a husband she is working as a tailor to earn bread and butter for her dependant. Anna admits that she has seen only one thing in Amante in the moment of utter terror that is 'courage' while Anna was "on the point of giving way and throwing herself weakly upon her neck". (Gaskell, 32) 'Woman', a gender, that is always 'the other', 'the weaker', is dictated to remain under the protection of 'man' in the male centric gender binary. This unconsciously done

performative act of being weak is undone by Amenta as she was “conscious of a power of protection” (Gaskell, 37) she possessed and Anna did not.

Butler also believes that heterosexuality is also socially and culturally constructed through performative repeated stylized acts like masculine gender and heterosexual desire in male bodies. “Sex is not an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or static condition of the body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize “sex” and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms” (Butler 1-2). Gaskell seems to break this link between gender, sex and sexuality through the relation of Anna and Amenta as husband and wife and hints at possibility of free play and flexibility of these three terms.

Gaskell’s *The Grey Woman* ends on a pessimistic note as the character of Amante with a naturally generated identity dies and Anna with an identity that conforms to the normality of gender signified by ‘woman’ and construed by society and culture remains alive and is put under the protection of Dr. Voss, a ‘man’ as if reiterating the forcible social and cultural norms. The flexibility and free play of sex, gender and sexuality in terms of performance, desire and choices of action and behavior subverts the male centric power structure of society and therefore these possibilities are curbed through the death of Amante.

Gaskell’s woman characters are based on the realistic representation of female experience, and feminine consciousness of female reality. Through realistic delineation of the characters Gaskell creates a close affinity to the functioning of life with their psychological, emotional and intellectual impulses. This focus on real experiences and consciousness of a ‘female’ makes Butler’s theory of ‘Gender Performativity’ an apt tool to analyze this story. In spite of the pessimistic end of the story Gaskell hints at “the

elimination of the oppression of women through the elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles”. (Theory of gender performativity)

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## Negotiating Cultural Clash in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine and Desirable Daughters*

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### Abstract

Bharti Mukherjee is an Indian diaspora writer. She has written particularly about assimilation, adaptation of displaced emigrants. She focuses on the cultural disparity, ethno cultural tussle and finally acculturation with foreign beliefs. In this globalized world people migrates with their cultural baggage which sets them apart from other societies. The protagonists of *Jasmine and Desirable Daughters* experience the cultural differences, ethnic disparity and undergoes a sea change to get into the mainstream of America. Both the heroines bring changes in themselves and put all efforts to be recognized as immigrants. They have completely assimilated with alien culture. However loss and nostalgia are the main features of emigrant status. The ingrained values and customs pull them towards their own cultural faith. The main characters of the novels adopt the dominant culture while retaining some of their native cultural traits. Under the process of transformation, Jasmine and Tara alter themselves as well as foreign inhabitants. They never cry over the 'dislocation' rather celebrate their stay in culturally different land. Ultimately assimilation is the need for peaceful survival. The adoption of progressive things and the transmission of some valuable cultural

integrity into the host societies can be a step ahead towards establishing harmony.

Keywords: Culture, Ethnicity, Dislocation, Assimilation, Emigrants, Immigrants, Harmony.

Bharti Mukherjee is a well acclaimed Indo-American, Indian diaspora writer. She is a writer of 'Third world literature'. She has written about emigrant experiences, their struggle for assimilation and to be one with new land. She herself has undergone the feeling of 'displaced' or 'outsider' though she has migrated in her childhood to many places with her parents. She considers herself as an American writer, and not an Indian expatriate writer. She has recorded the experiences of migrated people, their discomfort, longing for their motherland, humiliation and so on. She has predominantly dealt with racism, cultural displacement, ethno cultural tussle and finally acculturation of characters with foreign culture to get into the 'hybrid culture'.

Today, world has become a global village wherein 'dislocation' and 'relocation' is a common feature. In this globalized world people of different region migrate for various reasons with their cultural baggage. Displacement, migration, immigration are apparent traits of this era which creates cultural diversity, plurality and multiculturalism globally. Ethnicity and Culture are social concepts which differentiate people as 'us' and 'them'. Cornell and Hartmann explains ethnicity as "groups share a common identity-based ancestry, language, or culture. It is often based on religion, beliefs, and customs as well as memories of migration or colonization" (Gendered innovations, web). In modern sense it is based on ancestral lineage, language, traditions and religion. Ethnicity and culture are interrelated. Culture is a distinct feature of the social group which set them apart from other societies because of their values, language, manners, food habits, status, religion and thinking. It is noticeable that "culture can be treated as the collective

programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from other" (Hofstede,45). Ethnicity and culture shares some similarity, ethnicity has many cultural traits without which it is incomplete.

In *Desirable daughters* and *Jasmine* we can see the protagonists Tara and jasmine undergoes the traumatic process of acculturation in search of their position in an alien country. Jasmine and Tara both represents the clash of cultures, struggle for the survival, eventually the migrant's identity ends up as an immigrant integrated into the host culture. Jasmine the Indian born Punjabi girl of seventeen leaves her own country in search of answer to her husband's dream. Jasmine's journey is replete of turns and twists which indeed tests her metal to become Indian immigrant. Jasmine is born in a poor family in Hasnapur whose life is a string of blind beliefs, fatalistic fears, rituals, superstitions and customs. The story opens with astrologer's prediction of widowhood and exile for her. While fighting with him she gets a star shaped wound on her forehead to which she proclaimed 'third eye' like lord Shiva through which she sees better future for her. Rightly she shows daring to change her fortune. Her love marriage with Prakash proves to be a turning point as she has come out of old age dogmas and starts dreaming economic life at foreign country with their own business venture 'Vijh & Wife'. She adjusts immediately with urban life by leaving old traditions at village, learns peculiarities of modern world and accepts her new name 'Jasmine'.

After the death of Prakash, Jyoti-Jasmine illegally lands in America where she is raped by Half-face, disrupts her chastity and leaves her as a nameless victim. In turn she murders him like kali, Goddess of strength for his heinous act and continues her journey to follow the dream of her husband by taking a trip to the Florida International Institute of Technology, Tampa. Jasmine, being bold and intelligent, diligently marks the socio-cultural disparity. However, she appreciates novel things but her trust in God is

unshakable as jasmine carries deity "I keep my sandalwood Ganapati hidden in my purse, a god with an elephant trunk to uproot anything in my path" (JM,102). This shows her Indian consciousness is still alive.

She observes the cultural transformation and appreciates the positive side. After seeing widows who are self-sufficient, independent, helping and happy like Mother Ripplemeyer and Lillian Gordon, Jasmine thinks of Indian widowhood back in Hasnapur, "Mataji and I were alone in the widow's dark hut, little better than Mazbis and untouchables" (JM,96). At the age of seventy six Mrs. Ripplemeyer wears Younkers pantsuit and curl her white hair by Madam Cleo. While in Hasnapur "a woman may be old at twenty-one" (JM,15). She discerns variation between 'native culture' and 'host culture'. She admires their positive attitude towards life and societal norms which allows women breathe free air.

With Lillian Gordon she walks towards her Americanization. She starts wearing T-shirts, blouses, sweaters, cords, maxi skirts and becomes jazzy unlike Indian women. She struggles throughout her journey to change her identity from 'emigrant' to 'immigrant'. In Claremont, being a 'care-giver' to Duff, Jasmine becomes financially independent, self-sufficient and confident. There she learnt concept of adoption "as foreign to me as the idea of widow remarriage"(JM,170). She feels honored with the respect she gets from her employer and compares the position and treatment given to the servants in India. She approves the encouraging side of western work-culture, considering all work is reverential. Similarly Tara, in process of westernization starts calling her husband by his first name 'Bish', and starts wearing western outfits.

When Wylie leaves Taylor for another man Jasmine doesn't like her American idea of 'real happiness'. Though rooted in American soil her inherent values never leaves her. She never forgets her own food while appreciating and enjoying the pork

rather she gives place to Indian food in the western kitchen. In the same way Tara also cooks Indian food as well as western delicacies.

Jasmine and Tara are alike. Both of them put away the notions of chastity and purity to follow the American codes of pleasures. After marriage Tara migrates to America and grasp the cultural drift between age old dogmas and modern advanced country. Tara has thrown away the traditions which she has followed strictly in her early life, by divorcing her millionaire husband Bishwapriya Chatterjee. Even Jasmine becomes bold enough to live-in with Bud Ripplemeyer without marriage and expects a baby. Tara always live in periphery and carried out conventional roles with Bish. In America she accepts change and assimilated with host culture. Enthralled by western freedom Tara dumped her old values and starts following the American beliefs:

This is the life I could afford; it's even the life I once expected. I could imagine any number of Atherton families, Bish's friends, coming here for the weekend, flooding the courts and riding paths, steaming away the hours in a hot tub, loving every precious minute and being loved in return by such a gracious host, but I could not imagine Bish enjoying it. (DD,75)

Her dream of American life is not fulfilled, so starts living with her son Rabi in San Francisco and Andy, the live in partner. Tara's arrange marriage is an adventure for her American friends they comment "oh, Tara, you're so brave!" and question her "how could any woman, even a nineteen- year old, submit to someone else's choice, even a loving parent's?" (DD,26). Though Americanized, Tarais like any other Indian mother who becomes panic for Rabi and wants to discipline him. She cannot think of him running away from home and tells Andy "We're not that kind of a family! Boys from good Indian families don't run away!" (DD,92)

Tara has assimilated to become a part of mainstream culture but ingrained original values cannot be detached. She is

disgusted with the scene of girls and boys standing on roadside, smoking and acting vulgar. She is not even ready to accept the idea of illegitimate son of her Didi Padma because she still believes in virginity before marriage.

Padma, at first rebellious, now leading a typical Indian life in New York as a 'multicultural performance artist'. She has become a classic figure in U.S by following her original customs and traditions. She is a fashion icon on Indo-American channels for migrated Indians. She is steadfast Indian who follows her own cultural traits and criticises Tara for acting too 'American'. Padma socialise with Indians than foreigners and creates mini India without giving away completely to host culture. In this regard Avtar Brah says: "Not all diasporas inscribe homing desire through a wish to return to a place of 'origin'" (193). Tara and Padma both have struggled to accustom with distant culture but their methods are dissimilar. Tara becomes truly 'immigrant' by accepting the bitter truth of her 'gay son' without complaint, while Padma remains 'emigrant', creates mini India to preserve native culture and turns her back to her own son.

Jasmine becomes westernised as she comes out from old age customs and starts thinking for herself. At the end she decides on her own wish – the life with Taylor, is truly modern and sensible. Tara also returns to Bish and to her homeland to search her roots without giving herself to social pressures- is a liberation from old traditions which America taught.

Migrants can't get away from their own culture, language and food, they indulge themselves in eating Indian food, read Punjabi newspapers and Hindi film magazines. It is hard for migrants to live with host culture which results in 'ghetto existence' in alien land. They feel the Indianness while celebrating festivals, relishing food and in sharing the same dialect. Flushing as well as Jackson Heights turns into small India by retaining the Indianans

shows the strength of community. Padma and Nirmala are happy with their ethno-cultural associations. It results in superficial acclimatisation with host culture which makes them incomplete in their attempt.

Jasmine and Tara are the model of willing dispersion who tries to be a part of alien culture. Initial willingness, excitement brings modification in them. The protagonists have brought change in them to get into mainstream culture but at the same time they are instrumental to introduce Indian culture in distant land. As the time passes one starts recalling his own roots, which has been never cut down completely and tries to preserve it. In a way they work as an ambassadors for cultural transmission. Loss and nostalgia are the key points of 'emigrant' status but these two central characters take conscious efforts to merge in the 'dominant culture' while holding 'native culture' in a way. In a globalised world the notion of universal brotherhood is flourishing, 'cultural globalization' is one aspect which allows immigrant to lead life peacefully in a foreign land. It removes 'otherness' and accepts the person as a member of community. One thing is common in both the characters that is acculturation rather than resistance of it. Under the process of transformation, Jasmine and Tara alter themselves as well as American inhabitants. They never indulge in nostalgia rather celebrate their stay in culturally different land and experiments with the life giving opportunities.

Jasmine and Tara doesn't detest Indian values completely, rather appreciates family values, intimacy in relationships but disregard Indian old age dogmas. Assimilation is the need for peaceful survival, by adopting progressive things they create 'hybrid-culture', a fusion of eastern and western culture. It is a give and take relationship which flourishes with mutual understanding, love and cooperation. Bharati Mukherjee has shown the land of America, is ever accepting and accommodating everyone and promise the better survival. She

shows through her writing that 'continued existence' is probable with construction of different cultures and places. Her novels enlarge the cultural understanding with varied aspects like multiculturalism, transnational, up rootedness and re rootedness - the agonies and the contentment. Despite of cultural conflicts one can overcome the hurdles with optimistic attitude and make this world his abode, as it is rightly said by great Saint Dhnyaneshwar "he Vishwachi Maze Ghar" which assures harmony and universal peace with the power of 'unity in diversity'.

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## **Women Represented as Marginalized in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani**

**Reema Kharabe  
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### **Abstract**

Mahesh Dattani, the most dynamic of the dramatist of the age has been voicing the plight of the women section which is the integral part of the society through the mainstream drama connecting directly to the conscience of the people spreading the social message of equality, compassion, and liberty. Age long woman has been a subordinate to man in matter of status and gender roles given her to perform. Dattani the promoter of woman's liberation has shown woman in different scenario facing many facets of injustice regarding the decree of conducts, gender perceptions, and idealism implemented in their life. Dattani's plays depict the constant struggle between the female consciousness and patriarchal order. We find in his plays the issue of gender discrimination which is the cause of injustice giving importance to gender roles and opportunities for one's success. Gender bias is such rooted in the blood that even the mother is under pressure of the patriarchy unable to give right judgment to her female child. Dattani had depicted that the girl child and woman faces the double trauma of gender bias and the very ugly reality of abuse, which is on the red alert in the society and in the range of familial relationship. This paper will attempt to study the women as marginalized as represented in the plays by Mahesh Dattani.

**Keywords:** Marginalized, Plight, Submissiveness, Patriarchy, Docile, Trauma.

Woman being the soul of the society, her consciousness, her shortcoming, her desires, her values, and the treatment she receives are some issues debated and discussed in the literature worldwide. Indian society where patriarchy holds its power from ancient age demands specific duties of women, strict norms of morality and codes of conduct to achieve respect and recognition in family and apparently in society. Male chauvinism altered and diminished her values, dreams, and wishes. The institution of marriage in patriarchal society makes a martyr out of a woman who serves nothing but as a subjugated housewife, dutiful daughter-in-law that shattered her dreams and aspirations.

Female leads in Dattani's plays are often victims of the patriarchy; they are discriminated and abused. In the play 'Bravely Fought the Queen' Dolly and Alka suffers from their male counterparts and from their mother-in-law who in fact is the oppressed woman of the past patriarchy. 'Where There's a will' portrays Sonal Preeti and Kiran in their circumstances of life where their dreams and aspirations moulded by the codes of conduct laid by the societal norms. *Tara* is another story of a girl who victimized by society and family in respect to the status and treatment given to her. It is the story apparently of any girl child in this male preferred Indian society. In the story, mother 'Bharati' torn between the societal norms and her love for her own girl child. 'Thirty Days in September' represent another set of mother and daughter- Mala and Shanta - who had faced the brutality of abuse in this demoralized world where they have to showcase their morality in the manner of submissive silence in the range of familial relation. *Final Solutions* represents Hardika in her life journey in the supervision of her father-in-law and husband. *Dance like a Man* exhibit Ratna and her struggle to achieve her dreams with the



traditional views of her father-in-law. *Seven Steps around the Fire* describes Uma's hunt for her Ph.D project simultaneously balancing her personal life amidst the not so liberal society. Thus, this paper discusses the portrayal of women in the context of victimization, gender discrimination and their assertion in the patriarchal set up of the society.

*Bravely Fought the Queen* is the drama in which three generation of victimization is portrayed. The first drama taken into consideration is *Bravely fought the Queen*, it is the drama depicting the women of Trivedi family as marginalized of their status as women, wife, daughter-in-law and mother. The play questions the patriarchal code where the men breach all the values and morals and the upshots are the part for the women making their life more miserable. It is a confined household story where three generations of women fall into the ditch of patriarchal treachery.

The first being Baa- the matriarch of her daughter-in-laws is the first generation of victim. Baa had a tyrant husband who had married her just for the sake of money and would always hit her and her two sons. She endured the oppression to the extent that she had lost the distinction of time and acquaintance. She cannot differentiate time and her own daughter-in-law Dolly. Dolly the protagonist of the play represents second generation of sufferings had a same fate as her mother-in-law. She had been a prey to her husband and her own brother. Jiten had married her for the sake of money. He has been using her for cashing money from her brother in the name of investment. The married life had no meaning as he was a tyrant and brutal himself. The deception, which her brother Praful made that their father who had not been divorced deceived their mother and so their marriage was not a legal one, was out when dolly was at the crucial month of her pregnancy. In addition, because of the bad deeds of her father and brother she had to suffer the angst of the patriarchs - her mother-in-law and her husband.

The conversation takes place after this cruel act, upshot of this tyranny was a culmination of pregnancy, and a premature baby girl is born handicapped. Her husband was also a cheat and had a degraded version of view towards woman. He regularly satisfies his physical needs outside marriage and thinks it to be all right. He says that the woman is just to satisfy man. "Jiten: it's a regular thing for Nitin and me. Driving out. Picking a couple up...where is the whore?.....bring her in...she'd better be a good piece. Otherwise, I'll take it from your salary." (Dattani CP, 287-291)

"Man considers it as normal male behaviour to satisfy his desires at both the emotional and the physical level outside marriage while at the slightest hint of any deviation other part which may not involve sex, man turns violent and hostile towards his wife and starts pursuing her." (Arora, 61)

Alka, the other female lead representing the second generation too has been subjugated by all the male members of the family by her husband, her brother, her brother-in-law and by the matriarch mother-in-law. She had been deceived at the hands of her own brother to marry Nitin, as he was his homosexual partner. At the point when Nitin comes to know that he can get his name on the will, he tells his mother that he is ready to abandon Alka. The consequences of this ongoing deceit is that Alka gets the habit of indulging herself in drinks to forget the pains and Dolly imagines a fascination for the imaginary Kanhaiya the nephew of their cook.

The third generation is Daksha the granddaughter of Baa and daughter of Dolly and Alka. She is the third generation of victim of this society before her birth as her life has been distorted by the evil thinking of her father and misconceptions of her grand-mother. She is born as a spastic child and has to spend her life in Ooty in a physiotherapy centre. Woman in the patriarchal society is bred like a bonsai plant as Lalita in the play states the formation of a bonsai plant. Bonsai in the play reflects the claustrophobic and restricted

world of women, it shows the limited growth of women in all spheres of life. "You stunt their (bonsai plants) growth. You keep trimming the roots and bind their branches with wire and ...stunt them. .... You've got to make sure the roots don't have space to spread.....you can shape their branches into whatever shape you want - by pinching or wiring the shoots" (Dattani CP, 244-246)

*Tara* is the story of a girl child who has denied the natural rights of her body and the opportunities, which would have made her life easier to live in. Bharati mother of Tara and Chandan - two Siamese twins with three legs, got into the hypocrisy of the prejudiced world and preferred that the third leg, which supports the girl child, given to the boy child. To give the third leg to Chandan was the decision manipulated by the secret meeting between Tara's mother Bharati, her grandfather, and the doctor. Mr. Patel was not included in it. However, he didn't protest too when he was told. After the surgery went wrong, the third leg was not accepted by the boy child, it was thrown out, and Tara had to go to dialysis regularly and needed a kidney to survive. She was even neglected in the will of her grandfather and was rejected the opportunities given to Chandan. She was shocked to hear the ugly secret of discrimination, heartbroken Tara out pour her anger for her mother who had adopted a role to help and save her from every trouble. "Tara: and she called me her star!" (Dattani CP, 379)

"The idea of a complete girl child and an incomplete male child is so shocking that sacrifice of the girl child is acceptable than a handicapped male-child." (Das, 55)

Bharti apart from Tara too being the victim of the society. Her life is a strong battle against the destiny, which she herself has mistakenly chosen, may it be the decision of love marriage against the will of her father and in-laws, the birth of Siamese child and discriminatingly giving the third leg to a boy child, which belonged to the girl. The faulty decision and a guilt-ridden conscience made

her do every single effort to give a simple and normal life and opportunities to her girl child Tara. However, it is always hindered by Mr. Patel who was also frustrated from life and angry with Bharti. Her decision to donate her kidney to Tara was not appreciated by him and cancelled.

*Dance Like a Man* portrays an aristocratic father-in-law controlling lives of his son and daughter-in-law. The patriarchy has entangled the gender roles of the artists and subsequently destroyed the married life of Ratna and Jairaj. Both dancers of Bharatnatyam art wants to spend a life of artist but the ambition of Ratna is every now and then being crushed; be it to learn the divine art from the aged devdasi or from the gurus who would come to educate them. Amritlal Parekh the patriarch bribed her to continue her practice of Bharatnatyam if she helps him to curb the interest and practice of her husband Jairaj. Both Ratna and Jairaj had to pursue their carrier they have to compromise on various facts in which the one is very serious to lose their own son Shankar who was in care of a babysitter who gave him an extra dose of opium.

*Where There's a will* is the play where we find patriarchy at its greatest height. Women in the house are all governed and manipulated in their day-to-day activities by Hasmukh Mehta when he is alive and after his death by the power of his will. Sonal - wife of Hasmukh is all devoted to him. She is very devoted and submissive but her husband had a disrespectful behaviour towards her. He thinks very low of woman as a commodity to use by man. "Hasmukh: why does a man marry? So that he can have a woman all to himself? No. there's more to it than that. What? Maybe he needs a faithful companion? No. if that was it, all men would keep dogs..... I've got a loving wife who has been faithful to me like any dog would be. She has given me a son, which is what I wanted from her in the first place." (Dattani CP, 474-475)

He sees his soul mate as his life's tragedy and justifies his

marriage as unsuccessful because of his wife Sonal. "Hasmukh: then when I was twenty-one, the greatest tragedy of my life took place. I got married to my wife, Sonal..." (Dattani CP, 464)

Sonal is rewarded by her husband for her submissive and docile attitude with disloyalty by keeping a mistress of his own and in defence justifies her shortcomings. "Hasmukh: I soon found out what a good for nothing she was. As good as mud. Ditto our sex life. Mud. Twenty-five years of marriage and I don't think she has ever enjoyed sex. Twenty-five years of marriage and I haven't enjoyed sex with her. So what does a man do? You tell me. I started eating out... Yes, A mistress! It didn't take me long to find her. She was right there in my office. An unmarried lady." (Dattani CP, 472-473)

Kiran is another woman represented as mistress of Hasmukh. She has been a witness of victimization of her own mother and sisters-in-law by the males of her house and being the one by her husband. She accepts the reality of the world where a woman had to take a job of a mistress just to fulfil the basic necessities of life. The strong hold of patriarchy had left the woman to deal with the fake egos of the males and falling prey to it generation to generation.

*On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* is a play depicting another marginalized section of homosexuals who too had treated woman as a commodity to use in need. Kiran sister of homosexual Kamlesh is been used by him to serve his own end. Kamlesh loves Prakash who lost to the expectations of the society wants to project as a straight person chooses Kiran as his soul mate but consciously hurts Kiran who had just been out of the broken marriage.

Kiran is a woman who had gone through a hard time in her marriage and finally her brother saves her getting divorced from her husband. She loved her husband very much but in return, she got humiliated every time. She had a hard time from her ex-husband as we come to know, "Kiran: I had to get away from him. To escape

from those fights at night. And the nightmare wouldn't end. The humiliation of explaining to friends or neighbours.... That the black eye was from banging my head against the door. Or the broken rib was from a fall... it was the cigarette burns on my arms I couldn't explain, that finally made my brother call the police... they arrested him. Oh no, justice doesn't last for very long. He was free the next day. His parents bailed him out. And my parents wanted me to ...adjust! My brother helped me with the divorce proceedings." (Dattani CP, 77) However, she in her life gets disappointment as her faith delved when she comes to know about the reality of Kamlesh and Prakash. "Kiran: I wanted to feel loved by a man. In whichever way he wanted to love me. And I met you. And you did show love. And you continue being the same... man.... Typical, you said." (Dattani CP, 107)

*Final Solutions* are a very sensitive story here too woman finds herself marginalized. Daksha is always under the supervision of her husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law. She is strictly advised what to do and what not to. Often a woman gets beaten up, called names and restricted to go anywhere without permission in the patriarchal set up while a male crosses the limit of moral conduct and is not been questioned. Daksha is always bullied to show her ignorance in matter of social behaviour and trade and ask to act according to their whim and consent. To keep the relation intact she had to obey disregarding her instinct. "Daksha: no. what are you saying Hari? It is not true! It is just not true! Kanta is lying. She lied to you! I did not touch their food! (recoils as if she has been hit.) ah! Don't hit me! (angrily.) don't do that! I swear I didn't eat anything! Aah! Stop that! Stop it! All right. I won't go there again. Please, leave me alone. (crying.) please! Stop! (lies on the floor, sobbing.) (Dattani CP, 222)

*Thirty Days in September* is the story pertinent to the society where this hideous crime of child abuse is evident. In this

story two generation - mother and her daughter is being exploited. Mala the protagonist is the daughter of Shanta, both are abused by a family member who is no other than the real brother of Shanta. Immorality is being hid under the veil of morality and to be a respectful resident of a society, Shanta had to be silent and tolerant enough to see her daughter abused by the same abuser. It had destroyed the childhood of Mala and made her frustrated in her youth. She is temperamental and the value of trust and confidence is shaken which makes her insecure. In her youth, she is involved in such sexual pleasures and seeks approval of her uncle in everything. Her behaviour is guilty in eyes of society. She could not connect with them and her relationships would last just about 30 days. To add to her adversities, she is deserted by the parents from the fear of social set up. She hopes that her mother would save her but she finds no hopes. "Mala: I am not talking about a bad dream! I am talking about the time when uncle Vinay would molest me. When I was seven. Then eight. Nine. Ten. Every vacation when we went to visit him or when he came to stay with us. You were busy in either pooja room or the kitchen. I would go to papa and cry. Before I could even tell him why I was crying he would tell me go to you. You always fed me and - and you never said it but I knew what you were saying to me without words." (Dattani CP, 26)

Uncle Vinay was not the only person who molested mala, to add to her agony her cousin was also there. In our society woman is first used as a commodity to quench male lust and then he frequently demoralizes and humiliates her to do the same thing and after a long survival, she quits, as she is unable to cope up to the torture. "Mala:... he made the advances. He found out from uncle.... Why don't you believe me? He told me that I was uncle's reference! Those were his words! 'your uncle Vinay has given me your reference!' uncle told him Ma! I didn't do or say anything to him. He came to my room! Once he said uncle's name, I just couldn't stop him!" (Dattani CP, 28)

Shanta is another victim of the incest from her own brother Vinay. She is abused before puberty, after her marriage, when she had a child and after her husband leaves her. Shanta full of remorse when she recalls the physical exploitation in the past and the subconscious mind makes her feel guilty about it. Exploitation at an early age made her unresponsive to the love of her husband terminating their marriage...

The age is heading towards 21<sup>st</sup> century but still we find the traces of women being marginalized by being a victim of patriarchal set up of society, male chauvinism, gender discrimination, and child abuse. I have tried through this paper to reveal the daring effort of Mahesh Dattani who through his plays gave vent to the pent up feelings asking this society to be more social towards woman.

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## **The Theme of Alienation in J. M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country***

**Renuka L. Roy**

### **Abstract**

J.M.Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* features the racial and cultural struggle in the apartheid period in the South Africa. Coetzee delineates the setting of the colonial rule in the African farm where the white Afrikaner overseer Jakob Johhanes is ruling over the black slaves in his farm. His feeble and lonely child, Magda, is the protagonist of the novel. The novel is in the form of a collage of the fragmentary experiences of Magda. The prime feature of Magda's character is her acute sense of alienation, her feeling of being unbecoming socially, linguistically, politically and economically in the setting. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand Coetzee's masterpiece as a piece of art and the paper also tries to unfurl the character of Magda as the victim of racial and patriarchal dominion of the land.

**Keywords:** Apartheid period, Fragmentary experiences, Alienation, Racial and Patriarchal dominion.

John Maxwell Coetzee is one of the most renowned White South African author. He has twice received the booker prize and he is also the recipient of Nobel Prize in literature in (2003). Coetzee's literature is characterized by the features of racial and cultural struggle in the apartheid period which can also be found in the

writings of Alan Paton, Nadine Gordimer, Chinua Achebe and Morrison etc. Coetzee writes about the people in the land and beautifully delineates the conflicting cultural situations through his creative writing. The most prominent elements like racial conflict i.e. the strife between the 'Black' and 'White' and post-colonial political anarchy form the major theme of his writing. In this paper, an attempt is made to understand Coetzee's master piece as a piece of art and the paper also tries to unfurl the character of Magda as the victim of racial and patriarchal dominion in the land.

J.M.Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* gives a unique experience to the readers owing to its' intense, hypnotizing, dream-like, claustrophobic mood' as described by Ewa Dynarowicz M.A. in her article titled "Narrative Strategie in J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*: Commentary on the ( Post) Colonial Guilt". Coetzee uses certain stylistic and devices which makes the reading of the novel at once obscure and challenging. The novel consists of two hundred and sixty six fragments; the style of writing is thrifty, containing precise sentences. As a result the reading of the novel is like viewing 'snapshots of reality flashing in Magda's mind.' (M.A., Ewa, p.02)

The novel is set in the apartheid period in the South Africa. Coetzee delineates the bleak setting of colonial rule in the African farm where the white Afrikaner overseer Jakob Johhanes , *Baas* is ruling over the slaves working in his farm. He lives in a huge stony mansion in the style colonial architecture along with his daughter, Magda. She is a feeble, insane and lonely child. Magda, the protagonist of the novel, is an Afrikaner woman who is telling her story by collating the fragmentary experiences of her life. She is trying to recreate those events and attempting to understand her present condition. It is extremely difficult for the readers and the reviewers to come upon a coherent and unified theme of the novel with conventional beginning middle and the end as the entire narrative is an outcome of her confused mental condition. The



readers are not sure which part of the story is true and which one is completely imaginary as Michela Canepari-Labib rightly mentions in her article titled "Money, Sex, Language: The Concept of Exchange in J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*". He writes about the glimpses of the ambiguity prevalent in the plot in the following words,

Amongst, these the most important are her mother's and her father's death and the sexual violence she claimed to have suffered... Magda tells us that her mother died in childbirth (2), but in other passages she claims to have been looked after by her before she died (7), and although Magda describes how she killed her father (11), after a couple of pages she refers to him as though he were still alive (16), only to "kill" him again a second time (61) and narrate, later on in the text, how the man sickened irrecoverably, thus finally ascribing his death to something other than her murderous instinct (79).

The central story is about an Afrikaner spinster Magda, who is residing in a huge farm house in some African desert farm in 'Karoo'. At the beginning of the story, we are deluded with the expectation of reading a story of modern day post-colonial 'Cindrella'. Magda is an oppressed, aging maiden who is unhappy due to her father's forbidding and coercive nature and the overbearing presence of a big and voluptuous step mother. She expresses the desire to have a sensuous life of a normal maiden. She states: "Do I feel rich outrage at my spinster fate? Who is behind my oppression? Who is behind my oppression? You and you, I say, crouching in the cinders, stabbing my finger at father and stepmother." As a result, Magda leaves a life of an oblivious and escaping maiden. The advances made by her step-mother for developing any friendly relationship with Magda are equally inhospitable to the readers as to Magda. It justifies the evasive nature of the protagonist at the beginning of the novel. The result of

this unfriendly atmosphere in that forlorn farm house is that she starts referring herself as 'the grim widow-daughter of the dark father' (30) quite contrary to the fact that she is the daughter of a white overseer.

The prime characteristic features of Magda's life that we come to acknowledge are her acute sense of alienation, her feeling of being unbefitting socially, linguistically, politically and economically in the setting of which she, herself, is a cruel outcome. She represents some of the major characteristic features of post-colonial white woman who faces acute alienation and estrangement in the land where their ancestors have once ruled. Magda's mother dies early in life and leaves her vulnerable daughter in the care of an insensitive hostile father. Magda was grown among the other slave children whose parents were working in her father's farm; she picked up their tongue but couldn't achieve proficiency in the same since she was not allowed to have frequent conversation with the other children. She confesses the fact that she is the prisoner of her stony monologue, her sickening solitude and her own inability to form communion with anyone. She writes: "Is it possible that I am a prisoner not of the lonely farmhouse ....but of my stony monologue? (Coetzee, J.M. 14) Julian Gitzen in her article, "The Voice of History of the Novels of J. M.Coetzee" assigns the reason behind Magda's forlorn sole and her alienation to her linguistic separation from the rest of the populace. She tries to develop a friendly interaction with her servant Klien Anne, to which the latter responds with unwelcoming dumbness. She says that Klein Anne is "...oppressed particularly by my talk... As for her words, they come to me with dull reluctance." (Coetzee, J.M. 113) Even Henrik would not speak to Magda normally, even after imploring him hard; she could hardly make him speak.

She is outraged with the fact that her father doesn't allow her to talk with the neighbouring children of the slaves and gives

emphasis on maintain distance from 'Hottentots', the term refers to Khoikhoi people (the people from Khoisan family) who were labouring under her father's whip. She is deeply moved to see her father's candid interest and preference to Klien Anne (wife of Henrik) for his sexual gratification. She is incapable of accepting the notion of Afrikaner colonizer farmer having an easy access to his slave's wife. He uses her as his concubine in exchange of a few bottles of rum for Henrik and small packets of candies for Anne. She is not only unhappy for her father's illicit relationships but feels a vacuum in her life due to his total negligence. Her longing to have a pristine relationship with her father and her natural infatuation for Herik result into a frustrating end. She writes about her personal experience as a daughter in the following manner:

To my father I have been an absence all my life. Therefore instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of this house I have been a zero, null, vacuum towards which all collapses inwards, turbulence, muffled grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful. (Coetzee, J.M. 2-3)

As a white overseer father, he never uses the pronoun 'we' to himself and Madga but he uses it in reference to himself and his coloured mistress. Ayo Kehinde in his article "Patriarchal Suppression and Neurosis: African Womens' Plight in J.M.Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* misinterprets the character of Magda as an African woman, But interestingly enough, he assigns the responsibility of her mental instability to the domineering patriarchal suppression in the island. He asserts the reason behind Magda's alienation is her status of a suppressed African woman in the phallogocentric society,

Magda's dilemma is also used to depict the alienation of African women generally. The patriarchal suppression and alienation have a negative impact on Magda's psyche. She sees herself as unfit and, as a consequence of

her experiences, develops emotional problems and becomes psychologically unstable. The text foregrounds symptoms of madness that emerge as a result of excessive patriarchal suppression. (Coetzee, J.M. 3)

Magda tries to maintain a detached and an alien pretense by keeping herself locked in her chamber which was at the farthest corner of her house. She prefers to maintain a self-imposed migraine and wants to enter into oblivious slumber than to enter into lively activities in the farm. As a woman she dislikes her own body and anxious about her own capability to attract a sexual partner, she is even doubtful about the capability of her body to bear a child. She fails to understand the power equation between the overseer master and the slaves. Soon after the murder of her father, we find Henrik (Black servant) is turning hostile and disobeying Magda. Henrik seems to hardly acknowledge Magda as their master; the 'Black' and 'White' power equation soon takes the more obvious and weird turn. Henrik becomes an overbearing 'Man' and Magda is turned into a naïve, sensitive and vulnerable 'woman'. The testimony of the same can be found during the event when Magda asks Henrik to enter into the porcupine's burrow before burying her father's mortal remains inside it; Henrik refuses to do the same.

Following the death of her father she tries to win over her servants. The huge antic stone building in which she lived, was built in the fashion of the colonial architecture. It was the symbol of the hierarchy of the master-slave relationship. Magda ought to have maintained her isolated superiority as a preserver of colonial legacy; instead, she steps out of her code. Magda subverts the existing order and allows Henrik and his wife stay inside the house. She allows Anne to wear her mother's dresses that she had long preserved in the closet. She states: "I would not be myself if I did not feel.... I am a conserver rather than a destroyer." (47). Soon after we heard about Magda is subjected to the sexual abuse at the hands of Henrik who forces Magda to the act with vengeance against her

father. He claims it as his due since she is incapable of paying them their wages.

As a representative of a white woman in the farms of black slave workers during the apartheid period, Magda remains isolated and exploited. She is completely neglected and subjected to the constant insensitive subjugation and domination from her father. She unsuccessfully tries to fill in the void left by her dead mother by showing promptness in the executing wifely duties for her father. In her attachment towards her father as a demurred and obedient child, we perceive a tinge of incestuous attraction. She describes, "When he came in hot and dusty after a day's work my father expected that his bath should be ready for him. It was my childhood duty to light the fire an hour before sunset so that the hot water could be poured into the enamelled hipbath the moment he stamped through the front door...Later this duty ceased; but when I think of male flesh, white, heavy, dumb, whose flesh can it be but his?" (p.10 Coetzee) Baas Jakob stands for the patriarchal upper hand in the novel. He is entitled to command the obedience of his sensitive daughter; he is equally capable of wielding his power to enjoy the sexual favor of Henrik's young bride. Magda's act of merciless hacking her father with a farm axe, which some critics claim to be imaginary, is a symbolic act of rebel to overthrow her father's phallocentric domination. Magda miserably fails to free herself from this suppression because soon after her father's death Henrik steps up and takes the power away from her.

Magda also faces in acceptance and detachment due to her racial and ethnic difference with the native African farm ladies. She tries to order her servants but they disobey her invariably. She attempts to win them over by descending down to their level by sharing their labour. This yields no result. Instead of gaining supremacy and commanding their favour, she is being perpetually neglected by her maids. Henrik sexually abuses her and leaves her in that isolated farm. Klien Anne occasionally sports her fortunate

position owing to the pride for her finer bodily grace and her connubial hold over Henrik. Amongst this power game, Magda remains an angst soul, seeking escape in blinding migraine or creating patterns of huge stones on the hills to draw attention of the passing helicopters. At the end of the novel, she is shown nursing her physically frail father, who is the symbolic representation of slackened colonial hold in the farm land of 'karoo'.

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## Portrayal of Indian Culture in the Novels of Shashi Tharoor and Chetan Bhagat

Priya D. Wanjari

### Abstract

India is blessed to have a diverse culture. The dynamics and varieties of our culture have remained very significant in Indian English literature. The intra-cultural and inter-cultural patterns of behavior recognize the universal elements in human cognition, emotion and perception. The young novelists of 21<sup>st</sup> century have made the Indians improve their inclination to reading. They have added a new flavor to literary tradition. Their novels are intellectual as well as emotionally charged. These novels can be called the cultural panorama of the country. The theme, the characters of their books give us the taste of Indianness. The conflicts and changing patterns of culture can be felt through the reading of these works. The present paper endeavors to present how two of the writers of new millennium mirror the Indian culture: Chetan Bhagat and Shashi Tharoor. Their set-up and characters are modern, they function in a modern environment; yet they reflect a strong faith in moral values and ethics which is timeless and relevant in all ages.

Keywords: Indian Culture, New Millennium, Moral Values, Ethics.

### Introduction

The readership of novels in India is gradually increasing by

leaps and bounds. This is because the writers today are using the language which is practical rather than aesthetic. The changing patterns of the culture are presented in a simple manner. There are many novelists who pen down social realities of Indian culture such as Vikram Seth, Sachin Garg, Nikita Singh, Kiran Desai, Ravinder Singh, Chetan Bhagat, Shashi Tharoor, etc. The paper focuses on two of the committed writers whose works hold the mirror of the contemporary period. Bhagat is considered as a youth icon. According to him, novels are perfect devices for both inspiration and entertainment and through which he disseminates his views and opinion about society and youth. His characters are taken from typical Indian households, to which every Indian can connect. Most of his books are based on real life events which describe today's Indian culture. Tharoor is also a well-known award-winning writer, having authored 15 best selling works of fiction and non-fiction since 1981, all of which are centered on India and its history, culture, film, politics. His first book, *The Great Indian Novel* is a fiction in which figures from Indian history are transformed into characters from mythology, and the mythical story of India is retold as a history of Indian independence and subsequent history, up through the 1980s.

Both Tharoor and Bhagat deal with the troubles, agitations and aspirations of the contemporary period. Their novels are the interpretations of the social scene around them. The fiction then converts the real world into the imaginary world and is understood subjectively. The photographic picture of the society in the novel describes the Indian culture today. In this way, it is obvious to expect from them the realistic and somewhat disillusioned picture of modern India. Yes, the novels are the struggle of survival in concrete jungle, but what is striking is that the characters listen to their inner voice, they stick to the ethics and moral values, they bear the names of Hindu Gods, and the themes of the novels are typically Indian. Both these novelists try to restore the feeling that we don't have to sacrifice traditional values at the altar of success.

Human ethics and values have remained at the center of Indian culture. One must indulge in righteous action and lead a life adhering to the frame-work of morality and ethics chalked-out by religion and society. In fast-paced race of modern world, moral values and ethics appear to be losing their significance. In an attempt to reflect the realities of life and society, the writers today are devoid of this firm foundation of Indian culture. Chetan Bhagat and Shashi Tharoor; on the contrary, stick to the ethics. They are such popular fiction writers whose novels reflect a strong under-tone of morality and ethics. Though their set-up and characters are modern, they function in a modern environment; yet they reflect a strong faith in moral values and ethics which is timeless and relevant in all ages.

#### Chetan Bhagat

At any rate, while the academic expert places Rushdie as progenitor of contemporary Indian literary fiction in English, the publishing expert appoints Chetan Bhagat, the same for commercial fiction.

Suman Gupta (Economic & Political Weekly)

Chetan Bhagat is so popular that Indian English fiction can be referred in two categories: Before Chetan Bhagat and after Chetan Bhagat. Traditional Indian English Literature is rich. It is the medium of cultural studies too. But the average Indian youth cannot enjoy reading it. With his first novel, *Five point someone*, Bhagat brought a revolutionary change in India. His easy-to-read, refreshing stories are concerned with the problems of youth. And yes, he suggests the solutions to them, too. In spite of dealing with the harsh realities of life; his works manage to retain the sense of pure humor. His simple style of language has struck a chord among the first-time readers. Before him, it was hard to make money in fiction in India. His success spawned a whole new genre of writers. His few noteworthy works like *Half a Girlfriend*, *Two States*, *One night @ the Call Centre* which have established a name for him.

Mr. Bhagat is deprived of scholarly attention. But the critics

have to admit that he talks to the youth of India and about the youth of India. According to a *New York Times* article: “Mr Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth or Arundhati Roy, but he has authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian youth facing the choices and frustrations that come with the prospect of growing wealth” (Greenlees, 2008). All who have written about Bhagat, in India or elsewhere, agree on this: the Chetan Bhagat “phenomenon”, in brief, has something to do with middle class youth in India, and something to do with India’s growing affluence and presence in a globalised world and consequently strengthened sense of national/local identity. He projects the angularities of the contemporary Indian society. At times, he finds faults with it. His characters try to negotiate the contemporary situations by gaining immediate success. They propagate the middle class and capitalistic values with a purpose to refine them. During the course of this journey, a subtle cultural transformation has been captured. This is seen in nearly all of his novels till date.

Through his fiction, *2 States*, Bhagat depicts complex and deeply rooted socio-cultural problems of multi cultural India light heartedly. He wants the readers to laugh at their follies, their prejudices and their wrong doings. He doesn’t attack them directly, but through fiction he attempts to make them to realize their faults and gives a chance to rectify their mistakes in their real life. The book finds a perfect opportunity of depicting the typical Indian mentality of not accepting inter-caste marriages and the tradition of still living in ‘age-old orthodox and impractical belief’. The book shows how the so called “Unity in diversity” tagged nation has so much diversity when it comes to inter cultural matrimony and love. Chetan Bhagat brings out the subtleties that exist in the lifestyle and outlook towards the life of people from different states. As Indian society is not liberal for mixed marriages between different castes, religion or geographies, this book takes us through the love and opposition from parents and relatives. This couple is from two different states in India and thus they face hardships in convincing



their parents for the acceptance of their marriage. They suffer because of generation gap, and cultural gap. From the cultural perspective, they believe they are the care takers of their culture. One can easily think of the greater complexities of Indian culture as are compared to the world around.

The story is narrated in a first person point of view in a humorous tone, often taking digs at both Tamil and Punjabi cultures. The novel ends with Ananya giving birth to twin boys. They say that the babies belong to a state called 'India'; with a thought to end inequality. 'Be careful,' she said as I took one in each arm. 'You are from two different states, right? So, what will be their state?' the nurse said and chuckled. 'They'll be from a state called India,' I said.

Chetan Bhagat's novels are bold enough to discover the meaning of life. His characters are not religious, but they are humble enough to learn lessons taught to them by life's problem. He listens to the voice of their soul, which they strongly believe in. In *One night @ call centre*, a phone call from God is an innovative element. No novelist has presented God using mobile phone to guide his devotees in the crisis. Herein God advises his friends-cum-devotees how to escape from the iron web of death. The phone call encourages the survivors to settle account with their boss. With the surprising call from God on Shyam's phone, Bhagat inputs the spiritual interlude in the novel. Actually, this is the call from the within of everyone. Shyam acts upon the call of his inner being and becomes the revolutionist. Through the novel, Bhagat touches the pulse of the younger generation and also delineated the ethical and righteous path of action or the *nishkam karma* as stated in the *Bhagvad Gita*. Bhagat has portrayed his characters as decision makers. Other writers of the past have delineated their protagonists who are subjected to the will of their parents or their boss. Unlike other writers, Bhagat advises the youth not to follow every word of their parents and the boss blindly. Revolutionary spirit of Bhagat thus appears in his comment:—Humanity wouldn't have

progressed if people listened to their parents all the time||. (P-103).... this also shows the changing culture in India.

*Five Point Someone* is a story of 3 friends who believe that each and every student is bestowed with unique qualities and CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) should not be the criteria to ascertain their future prospects. One who is a five pointer in college may reach the pinnacle of his career and set an example for all those who are striving to achieve success. The trio suffers ridicule of the teachers as well as the classmates. However, they take a vow to reform the patriarchal system of education. They dislike the teaching method, which is as old as the college itself. Bhagat grieves for the sterile dogmatism of the education system. He finds the professors bigotry not to allow any prolific change in the system. The man listening to the inner voice may suffer a big loss but finally emerges out victorious. For instance, all three friends suffer ignominy at college campus. All the teachers as well as the students take them for nuts, idiots and losers only because they under perform in the exams and notch five points something. But like others they are not muggers, they are freethinkers, true lovers of life, harbingers of innovative ideas, icons of liberty and precursors of the youth-calling-approach. They never lose confidence, work harder on the lube project and consequently their project is approved and they succeed to achieve big fame and name.

The striking feature of his protagonists is that each one is entangled in a web of challenges, to realize their goals, they have to face it all-religious politics, calamities, unacceptable love, their own mistakes, overcome the frustration of under academic performance, the stabbing pains of executive psychosis, face the monster of corruption, struggle to find their calling in an unfair society but they show a strong will to change the system and not succumb to it. Against all odds they keep their spark alive. Chetan Bhagat's characters seem to follow their writers motto, 'Don't be serious, be sincere.' Whether we talk about Ryan, Hari, Alok,

Shyam, Vroom, Priyanka, or others as Radhika, Govind, Eshaan, Omni, Vidya, Krish, Ananya, Gopal, Aarti and Raghav all epitomize the writers spirit to make change happen.

Shashi Tharoor

Shashi Tharoor expressed his idea of our country in one of his interviews, "India is not, as people keep calling it, an underdeveloped country, but rather, in the context of its history and cultural heritage, a highly developed one."<sup>(1)</sup> [En.wikipedia.org/wiki/shashitharoor](http://En.wikipedia.org/wiki/shashitharoor)

History and rich culture; these are the two things which he reflects through his fiction. He has emerged as a writer even during his college days. He is also the author of hundreds of columns and articles in publications such as the New York Times, Washington Post, TIME, Newsweek, and The Times of India. Some of his noteworthy works that have caught the attention of the contemporary readers are *The Great Indian Novel*, *Riot*, and *India: From Midnight to the Millennium*. By using simple language, he deals with the lives, incidents and psyche of the man of new generation. His characters revolt against the social set up of society. They manipulate and negotiate for propagating the common man's values. In approach, his works are literary fiction rather than popular one as compared to Bhagat, but his fictions give us the same taste of Indian culture and values.

*The Great Indian Novel* is a political satire. It indirectly portrays The Mahabharata as India's modern history. This novel uses the theme of great Hindu epic, the epic of Hindu mythology. All the characters are recast and reset in the context of the Indian Independence Movement and first three decades of post independence. Tharoor took the characters from History and the mythical story of India is transformed as a history of Indian Independence. The phrase "Great Indian novel" is an allusion to the long-standing idea of the "Great American Novel" and is also a pun,

roughly translating "Mahabharata" (maha "great"; Bharata "India"). The holy book of Mahbharata can be understood by each and every Indian, according to Tharoor, and can be used to represent Hinduism's greatest literary achievement and thus serves as an appropriate paradigm in which to frame a retelling of recent Indian history. The writer focus on the elder generation and their grand actions (e.g., Bhishma, Dhritarashtra, and Pandu) and as a result, less stress is given to the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

The Congress Party is represented as Kauravas by the author, Dhritarashtra, the old King is India's first Prime Minister, Nehru; while the chaste Kaurava pater family as Bhishma, generally referred to Gangaji, is Gandhi. Tharoor's Dhritarashtra is a father of a single daughter, Priya Duryodhani. In the epic, the oldest of the Kauravas is called Duryodhan who is hailed as the future ruler of the country, he suggests Indira Gandhi.

Another elaboration of the epic original concerns the five Pandavas themselves, as Tharoor moves to more direct allegory: Yudishtir thus symbolizes India's best political traditions, Bhim its loyal armed forces, Arjun an articulate press, Nakul and Sahadev the administrative and diplomatic services, respectively. All five Pandavas are also devoted to their common wife, Draupadi, who represents the "body politic", or Indian democracy and wilts visibly with the imposition of Duryodhani's "siege" -a reference to Indira Gandhi's State of Emergency from 1975 to 1977. Pandu, the non-biological father of the Pandavas, thus becomes Subash Bose, founder of the pro-Japanese Indian National Army; Karna, Kunti Devi's child by the sun, becomes Muhammad Ali Jinnah, first president of Pakistan, etc.

The book has the artistic and critical taste to show Indian culture in writing novels. It helps the students to get knowledge regarding the inspiring and motivating history of India. It also shows Shashi Tharoor's learnedness as a novelist and the use of Indian aspects in writing novels. It's an innovative attempt to find

out social-political orientation from different angles like theme, characters, use of Indian history, culture, use of myths, way of narration and techniques in writing novel. The writer always speaks through a character in his novels, but he never uses the first person narrative voice. In *The Great Indian Novel*, the author speaks through Ved Vyasa, who remains almost as a spectator or commentator. The writer laments for the loss of “Dharma” in modern times. Shashi Tharoor himself said in one of the interviews, “India has changed and keeps on changing, so any answers I give you today will be out of date in a year or two.” History becomes an extension or rather a replay of the binary opposition of ‘dharma’ and ‘adharma.’ To quote from the novel, “The struggle between dharma and adharma is a struggle of our nation, and each of us in it engages in on every single day of our existence. That struggle that battle took place before this election; it will continue after it” (2). This simplified normative model of the *Mahabharata*, when applied to Indian history, reduces the power struggle between Indian political leaders of post-1947 phase into a binary opposition between Kauravas and Pandavas; the former as saboteurs and latter as upholders of *dharma*.

*Riot- A love story* published in 2001 is a powerful novel set in and around a riot in India in 1989 about love hate, cultural collision, religious fanaticism, and the ownership of history. Posting the novel *Riot* amidst the morbid sectarian clashes in 1989 in North India, Shashi Tharoor explores the cultural diversity in Native India. Tharoor voices his assertive views on how culture is broken up due to the hatred between communities. The novel is set in 1989 when Ram Sila Poojan Programme was undertaken by Hindus to rebuild the temple in Ram Janma Bhoomi which led to the destruction of Babri Masjid in 1992. Tharoor reflects in length the pluralism in Indian varied culture that consists of a continuous play of history, culture and power. He deals with the multiple assaults on the Republic of India, such as language, religion, caste and class and

how they play a significant role in breaking up Indian culture into individual entities.

Through an interesting love story, he spins out potent social commentary and a broad historical analysis. It is the question and mystery who killed an American student ‘Priscilla Hart’ having the age of twenty four. She was a highly motivated, idealistic American student who had come to India as a volunteer in women’s health program. Like Tharoor’s novels, this novel is experimenting with narrative form, he chronicles the mystery of Priscilla Hart’s death through the often contradictory accounts of a dozen or more characters, all of whom relate their own versions of event surrounding her killing.

The quest to understand India is another key point in the book. India holds multiple identities and Tharoor upholds that India can thrive only if it appreciates the myriad cultures and histories contained within its borders. Different ideological dispositions put up new different histories in accordance with race, gender and class. Priscilla Hart is unable to make herself feel free with the culturally constructed forms of Indian knowledge, beliefs, codes and customs. Each contradictory identity has been constructed with an “imagining of history”. As the riots arise due to the clash in identities, she too gets destructed in the riots. She is an alien intruder into the alien culture of India and the land and its alien culture torsions swallow her up. Riots prove that cultural collisions can be severe manifestations of danger and destruction that a new history eats up the history already created so far. India is a secular country and is a confluence of all religions in the world. India has four major religions and “is home to every faith of mankind with the possible exception of Shintoism,” Tharoor says. Particularly in *Riot*, Tharoor challenges the prejudiced view of many Indians that only Hindus are Indians and he accuses that this concept is contradictory to Indian nationality. Stressing this, Tharoor presents people of almost all major religions in the novel

*Riot*: Gurinder Singh, Superintendent of Police (a Sikh), Lakshman, a Magistrate (a Hindu), Ram Charan Gupta (leader of Hindu chauvinists), a Hindu fanatic, Professor Mohammed Sarvar (a muslim), Priscilla, a 24-year-old American scholar and volunteer of HELP-US, (a Christian). Even though most of the people follow Hinduism which accounts for 82%, the minorities are not neglected or suppressed.

It is dedicated to all those people who feel ashamed to be Indian and have grudges against Indian cultural and social values. Tharoor has done his best at pointing out the situation and the history of unrest existing between two-religions and a love story of cross-cultural beings. Shashi Tharoor affirms and enhances Indian cultural identity through his novel by reflecting on pluralism and openness in India's kaleidoscopic culture.

#### Conclusion

Culture, from Arnold's point of view is the study of perfection that leads us "to conceive of true human perfection as a harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and as a general perfection, developing all parts of our society". (Arnold, 63). Both Bhagat and Tharoor's works are embodiment of culture, if it is to develop all sides of humanity and society. In his nonfiction 'What Young India Wants', Bhagat has remarked:— ....what I think is of the greatest importance is that all of us should have solutions and opinions on the issues that affect us all....We want a nation that is rich, respected and has a good place in the world. We want a society with good values. (180-181) Tharoor also aims to broaden the understanding of Indian culture and historical heritage in the postcolonial era. He has tried to build a peaceful society through his works. His novels have depicted Tharoor's love for his homeland being a responsible citizen of India. His Great Indian Novel offers us a journey to Mahabharat, the epic. Bhagat has a strong belief in the Almighty, Indian culture, ethics and moral values. His protagonists listen to the inner voice. They bear the

names of God Krishna: Shyam, Krishna, Hari, Govind, Madhav, and follow the ethical path of action. The novels not only portray the problems and doubts of the day but also offer viable and ethical solutions to it with artistic excellence. The novelists deserve the fame for catching the nerve of young generation and serving the society through their literary reformatory messages.

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## **Locating Shakespeare in Hindi Cinema**

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### **Abstract**

Often Shakespeare is regarded as a legacy of British colonialism in India. When the connection between Shakespeare and Indian cinema is looked into he seems to be the most popular screenplay writer! Shakespeare can be seen in a very different light when we go deep in this connection. Other related issues of language, adaptations, popularity and assimilation also are evaluated to get the whole picture. The paper evaluates the history of Indian films to evaluate how deeply Shakespeare is embedded in its multiple nuances. The issues of adaptations and plagiarism have also been discussed. Shakespeare also comes to the aid of the academia through films as a teaching aid. Finally the question of relevance of Shakespeare in the contemporary world has also been looked into.

**Keywords:** Relevance, Colonialism, Adaptation, Plagiarism, Regional, Masala and Assimilation.

The relevance of Shakespeare can best be seen through the Hindi Cinema. In the post colonial stage, why do we need to relocate Shakespeare? It is amazing to find that so many researches are being done on the multiple adaptations that have come from his 37 plays. He is an integral part of the modern trends in literature. This paper is trying to trace how Shakespeare blended in the Indian languages, got assimilated in Hindi cinema, related issues of adaptations and its modern relevance. The byproduct of the adaptations is its use by the

English teacher at the classroom level. All these issues when discussed point to the fact how Shakespeare is still relevant.

Colonialism brought Shakespeare to the Indian subcontinent, though to make the time line more clear he lived at the time when India was being ruled by Akbar. The British introduced English, which became a shared language among many linguistic groups of postcolonial nations. Its malleability allows communication and cultural exchange. The colonial education system was filled with western texts, including Shakespeare. By the end of 19th century Shakespeare had been translated, adapted and assimilated in many Indian languages. This sustained its marked presence in India. There is a long list of writers who adopted and were influenced by Shakespeare. Some of the eminent ones are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Girish Chandra Gosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Jaishankar Prasad, Hariwanshrai Bachchan, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Vrinda Karindikar, Laxminath Bezbarua and Masti Vyankatesh Iyengar. Shakespeare became diffused into various regions in India and emerged as a discipline.

There were in many ways in which structure, thematic presentation, characterization, genre were absorbed in Indian literature and culture. Now the most obvious aspect of this assimilation is that it has got over its colonial hangover. In the early productions of Parsi theatre in nineteenth century, the bard was treated in a cavalier fashion living up his plays. As translation studies, Cultural studies and Comparative literature developed, Shakespeare was looked upon for inspiration. From Elizabethan Shakespeare he became Indian Shakespeare. Many Shakespearean societies have been formed in Colleges, which by themselves have given fillip to it as a modern trend. Different types of theatre festivals have mushroomed which are named after him. One festival is called "Hamara Shakespeare" where his plays are explored in different regional languages. Often he has been referred to "Sheikhu Pir" or "Shakespeare Sheikh" the wise man. Poonam Trivedi points



out that “...Shakespeare’s Globe in London is currently showing off the global reach of Shakespeare by staging 37 plays in 37 languages, in India, with 22 major languages and some minor ones too having translated and performed Shakespeare, an almost equally rich spread of the plays and poems is to be found.”(theguardian.com)

Shakespeare is often regarded as one of the legacies of colonialism in India, but his popularity in Indian cinema has many socio cultural connections. Gil Harris compares Shakespeare’s craft and Indian concept of *masala*. He opines “...the profound resonances between Shakespeare’s craft and Indian cultural forms that converge on one concept: masala... Masala is an Indian concept. But it describes to a tee what makes Shakespeare’s plays-their styles, their idioms, their audiences, so distinctive.” (Harris Gil J. the Hindu.com). Hindi Cinema has banked upon Shakespeare right from its inception. In 1928 film *Khoon-e-Nahak* (*Murder Most Foul*) a silent film, was made by actor turned director K.B. Athavale. Next came *Khoon-ka-Khoon* (1935) based on *Hamlet*, which was directed by Sohrab Modi, seven years later. The legendary Sohrab Modi decided to cast himself as Hamlet with Saira Banu’s mother Naseem Banu playing Ophelia and her mother Shamshad Bai playing Gertrude! The film, *Khoon Ka Khoon*, was adapted by Mehdi Ahsan in Urdu and it was shot with two cameras while being staged as a play. (Ramchandran, Telegraphindia.com)

Some important regional adaptations inspired from *Merchant of Venice* are *Savkari Pash* (1925) in Marathi, directed by Baburao Painter. In 1941 *Zalim Saudagar* was made in Hindi, directed by JJ Madan. Then came *Gunasundari Katha* (1949) which was the first Telugu movie, which drew inspiration from *King Lear*. It was made in tune with Indian traditional values, into a full-length entertainer and succeeded in making the movie an astounding success. There is a long list of partial regional adaptations which I have not included.

Many adaptations that followed after the 50’s in Bollywood

make a long and interesting list. The most noted adaptation of *Hamlet*(1954) in Hindi films has been Kishore Sahu’s version where he cast himself in the lead role with Mala Sinha playing Ophelia. Naseeruddin Shah, who had seen the film said in an interview, “It was Mala Sinha’s first movie. The film was quite absurd, now that I think of it, but it was good that someone attempted it at least.” Incidentally, Shah was a member of the cast of the French TV film *The Tragedy of Hamlet* (2002) where he played Rosencrantz. (Ramchandran, The Telegraph)

Then came the film *Shakespeare Wallah* in 1965, directed by James Ivory. The story and screenplay were by Ruth Praver Jhabvala, the well known novelist. It was about a travelling family of English actors in India, who perform Shakespeare plays in towns across India. Madhur Jaffrey won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the 15th Berlin International Film Festival for her performance. The music was composed by Satyajit Ray.

Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors* inspired movies like *Do Dooni Char* (1968), *Angoor* (1982), *Bhrantibilas* (1963 Bengali), *Ulta Palta* (1997 Kannad), *Aamait Asal Eemait Kusal* (2012 Tulu Film), *Double Di Trouble* (2014 Punjabi), *Bade Mian Choote Mian*. Similarly *Romeo and Juliet* have inspired many films, some of which are partial adaptations, while some have taken only the theme and changed it to suit their screenplay. A common factor is that they have received great popularity: Some of them are: *Bobby*(1973), *Ek Duj Ke Liye* (1981), *Sanam Teri Kasam* (1982), *Qayamet Se Qayamet Tak* (1988), *Saudagar* (1991), *Ishaqzade* (2012), *Goliyon Ke Rass Leela* (2013), *Issq* (2013). None of these may be legitimate adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, but they definitely show how Shakespeare can be perfectly “Bollywoodized”.

Besides these other prominent adaptations are *Omkara* (2006) from *Othello*, *Maqbool* (2004), an adaptation of *Macbeth*. *Hamlet* has inspired, *Haider* (2014) and *Karmayogi* (2012). *10ml Love* from *A Mid Summer Nights Dream*. Vishal Bharadwaj’s

trilogy received rave reviews and he said in one of his interviews “Shakespeare is the greatest storyteller ever. His stories have layers of spectacular human drama. I think they can be adapted anywhere and in any language. I can live my whole life on Shakespeare.” Naseeruddin Shah, who has done Shakespeare on stage many times and has starred in both “Maqbool” and “Omkara”, said in an interview: “The roots may look lost but every big story in the Hindi film industry is from Shakespeare.” It will not be wrong to say that these adaptations have also helped in changing the taste of the Hindi Cinema viewer.

There are many probable reasons behind the popularity of Shakespeare, which has not only attracted the Hindi cinema but also many regional adaptations. One of the main reasons is colonial history which initially percolated through English became mingled in the popular culture. English was the “unavoidable leftover of colonization.” Elleke Boehmer in his popular book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* points out that Shakespeare’s tongue which is a, British cultural monument was broken up in unrecognizable splinters in different forms of English.(p201) Writers like R.K. Narayan emphasized that English to them is absolutely *swadeshi*! Similarly many of writers and producers from Bollywood were well educated and began looking at the Bard for inspiration. The second characteristic is that Shakespeare’s style of writing was full of wit and creativity. The use of imagery allows the reader to visualize the action. It was easy to incorporate Indian motifs and symbolism. It has so much variety of themes, characters and relationships that it can easily be adapted. The third major characteristic is that many Indian authors have extensively written about his plays in regional languages also. This helped in increasing the visibility of the original plays. The fourth factor is the commercial viability, which is another important characteristic due to which Shakespeare has found so much space in Hindi cinema. Indian theatre and Bollywood also share close ties, which is another reason for the sustained interest in Shakespeare.

Another related issue is how India’s film uses Shakespeare to tackle controversy. Poonam Trivedi opines, “There are so many ideas and statements in Shakespeare which can be used as a means for either dodging censorship or towards stating what might generally be considered offensive.” (Gua When Aparna Sen’s Bengali musical *Arshinagar* on Hindu Muslim divide, based on *Romeo and Juliet*, was released in 2016, she was also asked in an interview whether she was avoiding the Censor through Shakespeare. She replied “I don’t think Shakespeare necessarily helps us get past the censors. It all depends on the context of your story.” She also agreed that there might be stories that are considered political, which might be difficult to tell, can be expressed well through the lens of Shakespeare. (Parthasarthy, sage pub) Multiple interpretations of *Haider*, *Omkara* are also handy examples.

The issue of plagiarism is also closely connected with Shakespeare and adaptations. It is amazing that since 1928 Indian cinema is copying Shakespeare. It is often seen that Hindi cinema boldly takes ideas from Shakespeare without any proper acknowledgment. Some even call it a “free adaptation” in the credits. Directors like Vishal Bhardwaj have listed Shakespeare as source text but there have been many who have not. In an interview Bhardwaj said, “Shakespeare’s plays are out of copyright. Why do you think I keep going to them time and again?” (Telegraph.com) The Indianised story telling also changes the original setting to UP in *Omkara* and Kashmir in *Haider*. Similarly characters, lingo, relationships and many such aspects have been changed. Worldwide researchers and journalists have established count of how many times *Hamlet* has been remade, but where Hindi cinema is concerned, no count can be established. There has been blatant plagiarism of his plays, at times partially and many times wholly.

One thing Hindi cinema has helped out with is coming to aid of the teacher, teaching Shakespeare. Banerjee points out, “The canonicity and authority of a Shakespearean text pushes student into

a 'consciousness of menace', implicitly placing him in position of marginality." (Banerjee,57) Students are faced with "cultural alienation and pedagogic bullying" The teacher is faced with discoursing on a text to reluctant readers. Here the nativized representation in Hindi cinema comes to rescue of the teacher. The boring page by page paraphrase is made interesting by the subtext used in the cinema. Political strategies in *Othello* and practices of racism become clearer when students see *Omkara*. Similarly in *Maqbool* retelling of Shakespeare with local colour makes the understanding of the teacher and students more clear. "The younger generations of filmmakers are more prone to using Shakespeare to convey harder, and more political, themes, because we're no longer as stuck by any colonial hangover," (Parthasarthy, Web)

When Shakespeare is brought into the classroom through Hindi movie there is a transculturation. New things can be understood of the old text and new interpretations widen the scope of knowledge. There is also a type of cultural equality and cultural translation. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, "The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present." (Bhabha,23) This creates the cultural translation. Vishal Bharadwaj in his seminal movies *Maqbool* and *Omkara* turns *desi*. The adaptations, are not just turning the Elizabethan narratives into Hindiized versions but much more. The students are able to explore the subtext and interpret them in different ways and also help students understand the history behind the writing.

Coming to the last part of my paper, I would like to draw your attention to a question "Is Shakespeare relevant even today?" There are conflicting views. In the academia many University departments do not encourage research in Shakespeare, while many shun its inclusion in the syllabi. But it is important to understand that the multiple adaptations and interpretation of his plays or parts of it show that his plays are eminently flexible. The

emotions and issues of love, hatred, greed, ambition, jealousy, around which his plays are molded will always be relevant subjects. There is timelessness and permanence to Shakespeare's stories. They break all barriers of geography. *Romeo and Juliet* has been retold in so many different ways, and so many different times, still attracts storytellers. The varieties of versions are amazing as seen through the Hindi cinema. Therefore I rest my case by concluding that these infinite possibilities make Shakespeare still relevant.

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## Quest for Identity in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*: A Double Dilemma

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### Abstract

Identity is a state of mind that is granted by the interaction with the fellow beings in the society and also by the acceptance in the society. Manju Kapur is one of the renowned Indian woman writers. *The Immigrant* is again the noteworthy work of Manju Kapur. Discovery of one's true self is the key theme of the novel and refers to the aspiration for freedom and liberty achieved by individual as well as by a woman dwelling not only in between family and self but also who faced the traumas of cultural crisis of the alien country. The novel relates the story of an Indian couple – Nina and Ananda, revealing the issue of dislocation of Indian culture, diaspora and quest for identity and also the issues that surrounds their arranged marriage, Nina and Ananda's transfiguration of life as the immigrant. In the novel, the novelist has projected that how the protagonist after getting married is trapped in the double dilemma. She tries to adjust herself in Canada where she is caught between two opposite cultures and struggles to establish her identity.

**Keywords:** cultural, crisis, alien, immigrant, double, dilemma

Identity is a state of mind that is granted by the interaction with the fellow beings in the society and also by the acceptance in the society. The term was first used with regard to the issue of equality. Another characteristic feature of the quest for identity is an instinct

for survival. Survival does not only mean physical survival but the preservation of some human dignity, warmth and the ability to reach out and touch others. Manju Kapur is one of the renowned Indian woman writers, also is widely known as the Jane Austen of India. She exposes the ugliness of the society where woman is considered 'second sex', 'other', 'subject'. From the birth woman is taught in the process of being socialized to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology – male superiority.

Discovery of one's true self is the key theme of the novel and refers to the aspiration for freedom and liberty achieved by individual as well as by a woman dwelling not only in between family and self but also the traumas of cultural crisis of the alien country.

The novel relates the story of Indian couple – Nina and Ananda. It deals with the issue of dislocation of Indian culture, diaspora and quest for identity and also the issues that surrounds their arranged marriage, Nina and Ananda's transfiguration of life as the immigrant. The novelist has projected that how the protagonist after getting married is trapped in the double dilemma. She tries to settle herself in Canada where she was caught between two opposite cultures and struggles to establish her identity. As Shailendra Singh says:

“Manju Kapur's fourth novel *The Immigrant*, published in 2008, is a tale of middle-class, globalized individuals, whose spatial and temporal identities are in a state of constant flux as their lives become sites of contest between divergent cultural influences. The modern middle-class migrants, driven by a longing of professional utopias and affluent lifestyles, voluntarily abandon their homes, in the country of their birth, for establishing a home in their adopted country.” (Singh: 88)

The novel targets at investigating the issues of alienation, double dilemma and the quest for identity. In fact the issues of patriarchy and changing transnational lives among immigrant are *often formulated in such fiction. It reflects the loneliness and the search of self being focused on the world at large. The novel deals*



*about the alienated character like Nina. It is again the story of Nina, a thirty years old English Lecturer who is also struggling to settle somewhere but the question of her marriage is a hurdle in peaceful living of her mother life. In such atmosphere, Nina's question of herself automatically rises in her mind.*

Nina as an English teacher at Miranda House, New Delhi, lives in a one room apartment with her widowed Indian mind-set mother. To suppress her mother's constant obsession regarding Nina's impending marriage, both mother and daughter consult an astrologer. Her mother considers her as a burden, a liability, a responsibility to get her married off. Suddenly a marriage proposal from Ananda, a dentist in Canada comes to her. It is the first situation where she moves in dilemma on the issue of her marriage because she does not wish to leave her long attained career. But due to the compulsion of her mother and relatives, she has to marry Ananda.

After the marriage of Nina with Ananda, she sets towards west to start her married life in Halifax. She departs to Canada with her husband and she faces the problem to cope with the western culture and her struggles begin with the traditional way of living in India and about an adjustment in the style of living in Canada. She has a bitter experience in the plane itself as she was questioned by the authorities in an empty cubicle like a prisoner. To get accustomed with people and become familiar in alien scenario, Nina has to discard her saris and eventually graduates from salwar kameez to western dress. She is not comfortable in her western outfit initially.

In Canada, they spent a few days happily but later Nina starts missing her free and secured life of India. She does not prefer to sit idly at home. As she is a working woman, her inclination to do something in foreign land grows more. Before marriage she was identified as lecturer but things are different in Canada. She is no more a lecturer; she is identified as Nina Sharma and not by her individuality. Nina is alienated and dislocated from the Indian culture and also from her individuality. Nina's plight is aptly explained as:

“At present all she is, is a wife, and a wife is alone for many hours.

There will come a day when even books are powerless to distract.

When the house and its convenience can no longer completely charm and compensate.'

"Then she realizes she is an immigrant for life". (122)

She tries to conceive but that is not successful due to Ananda's sexual problem. She compels Ananda to consult a doctor but Ananda feels it as an attack on his manhood and making her more restless. There is an anguishing discussion between Ananda and Nina. She decides to become independent before having a child. She feels nostalgic and says, "I miss home-I miss a job-I miss doing things. I feel like a shadow. What am I but your wife?" (237)

She proposes to do job in library but Ananda assures her that it is not easy to adjust in a new country and after all it is very silly because she is starting a family. This view of Anand regarding woman's desire to become financially independent reflects Indian male tendency who is well-educated but still has typical thought process. Finally, Nina becomes busy with her library course and part-time job.

The women in the novels of Manju Kapur seek sexual autonomy as one of the means for their quest for identity. As a husband, Ananda is caring but he suffers from sexual problem. Whereas Nina wants to talk and find out some solution, Ananda tends to run away from his problem. Deeply affected by loneliness, Nina gets a job in the library. Meanwhile Ananda tries to resolve the problem of his sexuality, without telling his wife. Among some uneventful incident, both Nina and Ananda divert from their loyalty and indulge themselves in extra-marital affairs. After joining her Library Science course in the University in Canada, she comes in touch with Anton, her classmate. Lack of satisfaction from Ananda's side attracts her towards Anton who is married. For the first time Nina had a sense of her own self, entirely separate from other people, autonomous, independent. She feels it to be strange that her



extramarital affair did not make her feel guilty, not beyond the initial shock. As the novelist describes the new relationship:

“Library school assumed an excitement for Nina that she had not anticipated.

Everyone was so nice and friendly. By now she and Anton had fallen into a bantering relationship. They were both married and to keep things clear, she made frequent reference to his wife and her husband.”(249)

Ananda secretly goes to California to be cured from impotency. There he meets Dr. Hansen and stays for a week. Sex therapist Mandy works as sex stimulator and educator. Miraculously he is cured and is a changed man now. But Ananda gets a sex partner in Mandy. Ananda's attachment with Mandy may be seen in the following words:

“For the four days that Nina was going to be away he would spend every night with her. He would show his apartment. He would take her out for dinner. Now he had to go. (253).

Nina and Ananda carried on with their extra marital affairs relationships with Anton and Mandy respectively because such relationship was not relationship but purely meeting of bodies. A healthy give and take. Both betray each other. But in the climax of the novel, Nina faces double dilemma firstly though as Indian wife she committed adultery which is thought as evil and deceives Ananda and secondly by accepting the foreign cultural trend of having sexual relationship with Anton just to quench the body thirst.

But her visit to India for the cremation of her mother and conversation followed by Nina's college staff friend Zenobia's indictment that Nina was made to see the reality, she either has to leave Ananda or to confront Anton. Back from India, again Nina seems badly hurt when she returns to Canada after performing the last rites of her mother. She finds “a wavy blond hair next to her pillow” (327). Nina comes to know about Anton's lust for love who forcibly wants to have sex with her and also about the betrayal of Ananda. Nina decides to separate from both her husband and her

lover. She chooses her independent life and career. She was going to appear in an interview at the University of New Brunswick with a hope that she would get a job. The novel ends with the words, “She too was heading towards fresh territories, a different set of circumstances, a floating resident of the western world” (334). Nina stands for female liberty and she is not going to make any compromises for neither Ananda nor Anton. But as has been discussed earlier that Manju Kapur's heroines do not provide any model to other as their fight ends in dilemma.

Thus from the novel we come to know that education plays a vital role in one's quest for identity. Nina's education brings her financial independence which strengthens her to cross the threshold of her father's parental home after the death of her father as they were treated as a burden of unnecessary responsibility and subjugated object with no respect. Education helps Nina to establishes her identity not only in India but also on a foreign land and makes her economically self-independent and socially self-reliant. The novel gives an intuition about the psychological conflict and the alienation that creates certain amount of impact on personal identity especially in the case of the Indian immigrant women who faces doubled dilemma.

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## **Inter-community Marriages a Hindrance in Preserving the Ethnic Purity in Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat***

Vandana Bhagdikar

### **Abstract**

The quintessence of society is culture and it has swayed people in all the times and all places. History is evident that the culture has played a gigantic role in the growth and development of people, nations and society. The microscopic Zoroastrian community has been striving hard to preserve their ethnic purity but today one of the biggest challenge faced by them is in the form of mixed marriage. As per their culture Parsis are not permitted to marry outside their community because Zoroastrianism stresses the need for preserving the ethnic purity. The creative writers have well- documented the Parsi ethos and predicament. These Parsi writers have verbalized in their works their community's anxieties and aspirations, identity crisis, moments of agony and ecstasy, and its tussle for survival. The other disturbing cultural features like declining population, late marriages, low birth rate, high rate of divorce, attitudes to the girl child, inter-community marriages urbanization and alienation etc are also the main concerns of these writers. All these issues find appearance in the post- independence Parsi writing. Bapsi Sidhwa Parsi-Pakistani writer, has hinted at the problem of inter-community marriages in all her novels. This controversial issue of the exclusion of inter-community marriages among the Parsis is dealt in her novel *An American Brat*.

**Keywords:** Inter-community, Marriage, Parsis, Community, Zoroastrians

The creative writers have well- documented the Parsi ethos and predicament. In fact, the Parsi community has given birth to quite a few

artistic writers who have chronicled the Parsi destiny in diverse shades. These Parsi writers have verbalized in their works their community's anxieties and aspirations, identity crisis, moments of agony and ecstasy, and its tussle for survival. As A. K. Singh rightly points out: "There works exhibit consciousness of their community in such a way that the community emerges as a protagonist from their works though on the surface these works deal with their human protagonists" (Singh: 26). The other disturbing cultural features like declining population, late marriages, low birth rate, high rate of divorce, attitudes to the girl child, urbanization and alienation etc. are also the main concerns of these writers. All these issues find appearance in the post- independence Parsi writing. The literature produced by Parsi writers is related with their community. As V.L.V.N. Narendra Kumar suitably puts it:

Parsee novel in English, i.e. novel portraying parsee life, is a potent index of the Zoroastrian ethos. It voices the ambivalence, the nostalgia and the dilemma, of the endangered parsee community. In the parsee novel in English the 'operative sensibility' is Zoroastrian. The Parsee novelists have forged a dialect, which has a distinct ethnic character... Thus, parsee novel in English gives a peep into the turbulent parsee mind of today. (Kumar:35)

Pakistan born Bapsi Sidhwa who is a Parsee, is a writer of many acclaimed novels. According to Zoroastrianism, a true marriage is the sacred union of two souls, competing with each other in the ideal practice of self-abnegation. The marriage ritual is also symbolic; fire which is present at the agreement-stage, is taken as the witness to the union of two souls. The religious spirit of Parsism is against divorce. Although divorce is allowed among Zoroastrians, the priest stresses the permanency of the marriage tie. Monogamy is still a cherished ideal for the Parsi community. A mix of the Hindu and Muslim modes of marriage is observed in the Parsi marriage. This shows that the Parsis are cultural hybrids as they have embraced the customs of Hindus and Muslims both. But the actual ceremony of marriage is performed after sunset. The microscopic Zoroastrian community confronts today that one of the biggest challenge faced by them is in the form of mixed marriage. Sidhwa has hinted at the problem of inter-community marriages in all her novels. This controversial issue of the exclusion of inter-community marriages among the Parsis is dealt in *An American Brat*.

In the novel *Feroza*, the daughter of Zareen and Cyrus is sent to

America by her parents as they feared that as she will forget her Parsi culture as she was slowly adopting the ways of Muslim religion. The novel opens with Zareen's anxiety that her daughter Feroza is not behaving like a Parsi and she is influenced by the Islamic fundamentalist views, "She's becoming more and more backward everyday" (9). Zareen is worried. Brooding over her dark anxieties, she narrates the school-incident when she had gone to pick up Feroza:

In the car she said: 'Mummy, please don't come to school dressed like that.' She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude touted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: Look, we're Parsi, everybody knows we dress differently. (10)

Further Zareen asserts that she wore frocks when she was Feroza's age, but Feroza questions her dressing. Feroza must cover her legs, "Can she wear frocks? No. Women mustn't show their legs, women shouldn't dress like this, and women shouldn't act like that. Girls mustn't play hockey or sing or dance!" (AB:10).

Cyrus is concerned about his daughter as a Muslim boy visits Feroza, he fears that Feroza may marry a non-Parsi. The parents are also distressed that Feroza might succumb to the Islamic conservatism in one way or the other and forget her own Parsi tradition. Seeing Feroza's narrow-mindedness- that she believes special dress code for women, she does not consider men and women equals. Zareen and Cyrus find a way out of this by deciding to send her away to America for a holiday and expose her to a liberal westernised way of life which they think is very much like their own way of living. When Zareen's mother Khutlibai objects to their decision, Zareen defends herself by saying, "You've no idea how difficult Feroza's been of late. All this talk about Islam, and how women should dress, and how women should behave, is turning her quite strange. And you know how Bhutto's trails is getting to her" (30). This shows that the parents are worried that Feroza should adapt their life-style.

Once in America, Feroza decides to stay and study in America. She enrolls in a small strictly supervised college in Twin Falls, Idaho. She adopts the American ways of life with the help of her new roommate Jo. Jo first teaches her to speak English the way it is spoken in America. She improves Feroza's pronunciation. Feroza is now influenced with American culture makes her mind to marry David Press, an American Jew. To seek the approval from her parents she sends a letter along with his photograph to

her mother. The letter causes turmoil in the family. The family conference is summoned in Zareen's sitting-room, the elders and the youngsters get into discordant arguments over Feroza's proposal to marry a non-Parsi. The youngster requests them to change their narrow minds. They also suggest that the elders should do the community a favour by insisting the stuffy old trustees in the Zoroastrian *Anjuman* in Karachi and Bombay to allow mixed marriage as it has become unavoidable now. Jeroo and Behram's fifteen year old daughter, Bunny, says, "For God's sake! You're carrying on as if Feroza's dead! She's only getting married, for God's sake!" (268)

The elders are annoyed on listening to this comment. Jeroo screams at her daughter: "Don't you dare talk like that! One more peep out of you, and I'll slap your face!" (269). The elders calm down to deal with the problem created by Feroza. The ultimate solution is drawn that Zareen should go to the United States of America and forbid Feroza from marrying a Jew. They support her with instructions. They tell her, "If you can't knock him out with sugar, slug him with honey" (272). Cyrus gives her a bank draft for ten thousand dollars and tells her to offer it to David Press to part with their daughter and leave her alone.

Zareen is received by Feroza and David at the Denver airport. The next day Zareen introduces the subject of Feroza's marriage by questioning David's ancestry and his family connections. Feroza says, "If you go about talking of people's pedigrees, the Americans will laugh at you" (277). Zareen tries to open her eyes by informing her the dangers of marrying outside her faith. She would be exiled out of the community. She would not be permitted to enter the Parsi places of worship, or to appear in the funeral rites of her grandmother, or her parents. Feroza pleads her mother to look at things in the Americans way. Zareen cries, "And you'll have to look at it our way. It's not your culture! You can't just toss your heritage away like that. It's in your bones!" (279) When Feroza talks about love, Zareen says that love culminates only after being married to a right person. She repents her having sent Feroza to America, "I should have listened. I should never have let you go so far away. Look what it's done to you—you've become an American brat!" (279)

Zareen in the next two weeks enjoys her life eating out, shopping and visiting different places in Denver. She even starts liking David and forgets the purpose of her visit for the time being. She finds herself earnestly searching for the first time for an answer on the ban on interfaith marriage. She thinks about the discrimination and dual- standards that

while a Parsi man can marry a non-Parsi and still remain Parsi bringing up his children as Zoroastrians, why a Parsi woman cannot. She thinks, "How could a religion whose Prophet urged his followers to spread the Truth of his message in the holy *Gathas*—the songs of Zarathustra—prohibit conversion and throw her daughter out of the faith?" (287) Here she questions the cannons laid down by the religion and also the different treatment meted out to sons and daughters.

And then, in the third week of her visit, Zareen remembers the purpose of her visit when a spate of anxious letters from Pakistan arrives. Freny has enclosed 'WARNING' and 'NOTICE' copies of two pamphlets. One is from the AthornanMandal, the Parsi priests' association in Bombay, and the other is from the Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee. The message was typed in alarming capitals,

NOTICE : PLEASE NOTE THAT ACCORDING TO THE PARSEE, ZOROASTRIAN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, PERCEPTS, TENETS, DOCTRINES, HOLY SCRIPTURES, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS, ONCE A PARSEE-ZOROASTRIAN MARRIES A NON-ZOROASTRIAN, HE OR SHE IS DEEMED TO HAVE RENOUNCED THE FAITH AND CEASES TO BE A PARSEE-ZOROASTRIAN. THE LAWS OF PURITY OF THE ZOROASTRIAN FAITH FORBID INTERMARRIAGES, AS MIXING PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL GENES IS CONSIDERED A CARDINAL CRIME AGAINST NATURE. HENCE, HE OR SHE DOES NOT HAVE ANY COMMUNAL OR RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OR PRIVILEGES. (305)

Zareen reads them and a dreadfully fear for her daughter, clutches her heart, she becomes restless. She was not able to sleep. All of a sudden she gets up at three o' clock in the morning and finds to her disappointment that Feroza is not in her bed. Zareen feels assured that David, despite being admirable and appealing:

"Would deprive her daughter of her faith, her heritage, her family, and her community. She would be branded an adulteress and her children pronounced illegitimate. She would be accused of committing the most heinous sacrileges. Cut off from her culture and her surroundings like a fish in shallow waters, her child would eventually shrivel up." (289)

Her opinion of David has been alerted. She decides to protect her daughter from him by using the tactics of "If you can't knock him out with

sugar, slug him with honey" (302) to prevent the marriage. She playacts to agree to the marriage but asserts on the rituals and ceremonies which she knows will frighten David, a very private and reserved person. She succeeds in her plan as the relationship collapses and Zareen's ploy is partially accomplishes.

Although Zareen returns back to Lahore, she feels that the Zoroastrian rules are ridiculous and unjust to women. Zareen realizes that she and the educated custodians of the Zoroastrian doctrine "were no less rigid and ignorant than the *fundus* in Pakistan" (305) by denying her daughter freedom of choice in marriage. Though Feroza is heart-broken after David's departure, she does not compromise and remains firm in her resolution not to succumb to the dictates of Parsi laws against inter-community marriages. She articulates her opinions towards the end of the novel:

There would never be another David, but there would be other men, and who knew, perhaps someday she might like someone enough to marry him. It wouldn't matter if he was a Parsee or of another faith. She would be sure of herself, and she wouldn't let anyone interfere. . . . As for her religion, no one could take it away from her; she carried its fire in her heart. (317)

The Parsis might have acknowledged from the hegemonic community over a period of time so maybe they became flexible with regard to dress-code, language or food-habits and cuisine or various rites and rituals but there is no negotiation about mixing the genes and endangering the purity of their race. The older generation strives hard to make the younger generation stick to the tenets laid down by the religion. But the younger generations with the exposure to westernized ideas are reluctant to do so.

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## Poetry Section

### Of Curves and Lines

Supanth Bhattacharya

Mother, these days,  
Tries her best to be  
A perfect replica of a C,  
Seeking answers  
Within the earth  
To the many questions  
To which her grey present  
Has given birth.

At times, her accomplice bodyguards,  
With complete disregard  
For my  
Admonishing eye,  
Pull her up into an I.

That is how she stands,  
Milky eyes unfocussed,  
Toothless smile of pride and glee  
And none can misunderstand –  
This is exactly what she  
All her life had been,  
Every bit her own person,  
Every letter a queen.

(Epilogue)  
Finally,  
Death came by  
And straightened the painful C  
Into an easeful I.

### Catharsis, of Sorts

When Father died  
I toiled and tried  
Till I wrote my pain into art.

But when Mother went away  
This trick failed to play,  
Leaving just a hollow in my heart.

As days go by,  
What bothers  
Me is, why mothers  
Must be among others  
To die.

Dr. Supantha Bhattacharyya  
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## Blessed to be Human

**Manjushree Sardeshpande**

This mystical journey of life reveals divine intervention  
There is a chord, a soul, some bonding affection  
It communicates - missing a heartbeat, creating anxiety  
Sometimes fear, a desire to cry, or anticipate calamity

It's indeed a miracle, an experience spiritual  
True emotions reach us, a marvel actual  
Words, gestures, distance, place irrelevant  
Something awakens you to a feeling persistent

When it is joy, everything brightens up  
It's bliss, only bliss, everyone cheers up  
That ecstatic pleasure is soul's treasure  
Your happiness knows no bounds, no measure.

Some day I am sad, I want to cry, I know not why?  
I sympathise, I feel sorry, drained and dry  
Why is my son leaving? Why can't my daughter stay?  
I have to leave my dear ones? Why can't I stay?

When distress reaches its pinnacle, it does convey,  
Your heart sinks to desperation, depression and dismay  
Your loved one is in agony, anguish, or pain  
A sorrow strikes within, a premonition I disdain

I believe we are one, a part of the divine  
It resonates thus to reveal His design  
Love and attachment is a human soul's trait  
Blessed to be human, to experience you, mate

## A Saga of Intolerance

It's not my religion; it's not my nation,  
It's me who is intolerant.  
Greed and selfishness has made me intolerant.

Look at my parents, their adamancy apparent.  
Are these my siblings, are these my kids?  
My advice doesn't blink their lids.  
I'm fed up with my spouse, oh! Such a louse  
Who wants these relatives? Their bonding is so relative  
A friend is a friend, hah! Only to fulfill his needs  
Is this a boss, so infuriating?  
Why doesn't he find anything worth appreciating?  
Juniors' attitude oh! My, my; their duty is, just to sigh  
Offices, departments, leave you high and dry,  
to get things done I have to outwit or cry.  
Crimes and bribe are quite in vogue,  
No one knows who is a rogue.

Where is that love? Where is that pleasure?  
Where is that caring? Where is that sharing?  
Where's that patience? Where's the sacrifice?  
Who will teach compassion and to shun avarice?  
Where are the virtues - silence, suppress, and hold back?  
Nay, we bank on words, opportunities to attack.  
No one comprehends the language of eyes, the language of soul

Long long ago, once upon a time, all this was gold

Curb your desire, your willful pleasure  
Look inside you for that trove of treasure  
You are bestowed with, qualities infinite  
Why not choose those, which give peace and respite?  
Life is small, no place for, grievances at all.  
Learn to be happy, happy from inside.  
Meditation teaches you how to negotiate and over ride  
Accept, accommodate, love, everyone.  
Sadness, remorse and failure are then on the run  
You will feel light, armed and geared,  
to meet life and explore its gems so rare.  
With reason and insight to steer your way  
Live and let live is the mantra to be happy and gay.

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## Annandale --- A Memoir

Priti Singh

Nestled amidst majestic mountains lies a glade picturesque, an exquisite vale,  
Camouflaged by the verdant verdure of mighty deodars christened as “ANNANDALE”.  
Kissed by exuberant sunlight, enchanting and exhilarating greets you a bewitching sight,  
Nature with her bounty of fragrant flowers; on mankind her abundance showers,  
Sounds of silence intensify as a mountain brook flows gurgling by,  
Magical cool breeze eludes and enraptures, its quietitude enthrals;  
Nature’s pristine beauty enamours be it summer, spring frost or fall.  
Housed within its precincts is an Army Heritage Museum done with great care,  
Boastful of its achievements informative and inspiring for those who DARE,  
Hospitable, well – mannered is the staff, courteous to a fault,  
But alas! In this cosy cottage 'The Bunker' this was just a brief halt.  
This charming countryside woos each passer-by lures every visitor,  
Leave I, most unwillingly with a promise to visit again sooner or later.

(Written during a brief summer sojourn at Annandale , a picturesque valley in the beautiful hill station of Shimla, also known as the Queen of Hill Stations in India. Annandale Golf club is managed by ARTRAC (Army Training Command), and the passionate among them enjoy dribbling their balls here.)

## **The Real Heroes**

Attired in their customary Olive Green, the soldier dares, defies and withstands

Threatening attacks, random bullets, bombs, mines, even stones to protect his Motherland.

Daunting and dignified the soldier more than often is posted to regions and borders unknown;

Diligent, decisive, disciplined, duty bound is he risking his life bravely without a moan.

Enduring the harshest of the climates maintaining a stoic calm, soldiers remain unified,

Untouched by colours of caste and creed that seem so miniscule and mollified.

Revelling in a spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood, gushing with loyalty and devotion

The soldier never blinks an eye, ever active is he in command of the line of action.

The country owes a debt to all who serve for some arrive home draped in the flag silent and still;

Leaving behind a legacy of sacrifice for perhaps a child unborn, or a bride who never can his absence fill.

Optimistic, outstanding, organized, men of integrity, men of character, men of virtue;

The real heroes of the nation ever thankful and grateful to them we ought to be.

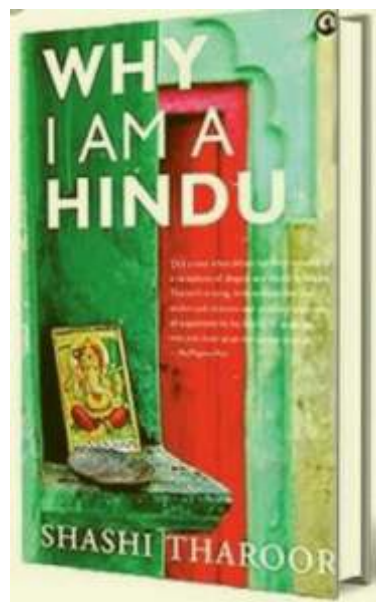
Salutations to these heroes, symbols of solidarity, missionaries of hope joy and peace,

Your presence at the borders make our life safe, comfortable and at ease.

Priti Singh  
Assistant Professor, Dept. of English  
Dr. Ambedkar College, Nagpur, Maharashtra

## Book Reviews

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### **Why I am a Hindu – Tharoor Affirms and Reclaims His Faith**

Shashi Tharoor, Aleph Book Company, 320 pages.

Book Review by Dr. Supantha Bhattacharyya, Associate Professor, Hislop College, Nagpur.

He is rarely out of the limelight. Whether it is his relentless assault on his right-wing political opponents, his unfortunate but sensational private life, the tharoorisms on social media which are almost as popular as Rajnikant jokes, or the well-researched and argued books on history and culture (he has, sadly, abandoned his great Indian novelist avatar decades ago), Dr. Shashi Tharoor has always been the cynosure of the public eye and media scrutiny. His last book, *An Era of Darkness*, revisited India's colonial past and his

meticulous exposure of British avarice and brutality made both sahibs and saffronationalists squirm. *Why I am a Hindu* could be read as a late rebuttal to Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd (who was quick to denounce the book)'s dalit critique of Hindu religion, philosophy and political economy *Why I am Not a Hindu* (1996). Although, Tharoor claims that he wrote this book for two primary reasons: a) to try and understand the "extraordinary wisdom and virtues of the faith" he had lived all his life; and b) to demonstrate that the intolerant and often violent forms of Hindutva which imposed themselves in the public space of India in the 1980s goes against the very spirit of Hinduism, "that most plural, inclusive, eclectic and expansive of faiths."

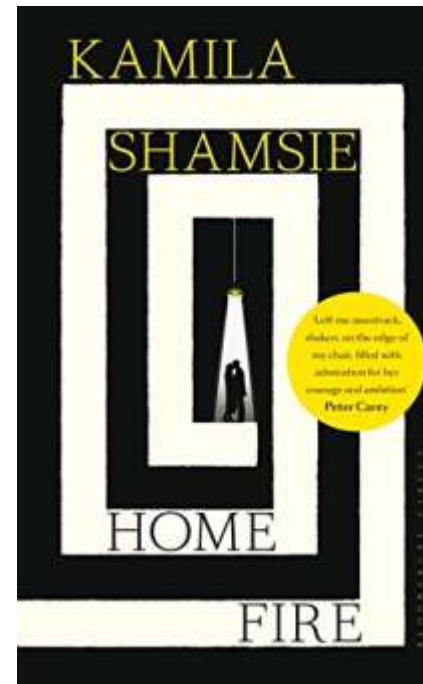
The book has three well-defined sections – I) My Hinduism, II) Political Hinduism, and III) Taking Back Hinduism. In the first section, Tharoor attempts to simultaneously circumscribe and expand the concept of Hinduism. He emphasises that Hinduism has never had any doctrinal despotism (both *astika* and *nastika* believers find place within its fold) which is the cornerstone of it being an all-embracing, democratic faith. Hinduism, according to him, may only be experienced and interpreted subjectively, "Hindu thought is like a vast library in which no book ever goes out of print; even if the religious ideas a specific volume contains have not been read, enunciated or followed in centuries, the book remains available to be dipped into, to be revised and reprinted with new annotations or a new commentary whenever a reader feels the need for it. In many cases the thoughts it contains may have been modified by or adapted to other ideas that may have arisen in response; it's simply there, to be referred to, used or ignored as Hindus see fit." In the second chapter of this section, "The Hindu Way", Tharoor explains some basic concepts and textual traditions of the Hindu philosophy. He also provides lucid explanations of various rituals, cultural practices, and customs which may prove unfamiliar and exotic to outsiders. The third chapter, 'Questioning

Hindu Customs' sees the writer unstinting in his condemnation of caste, superstition and uncritical devotion to conmen disguised as spiritual gurus. In his opinion, poverty and illiteracy are the root causes behind this unholy trinity. In the final chapter, 'Great Souls of Hinduism', Tharoor describes a host of spiritual personalities who had impacted Hinduism in significant ways: Vyasa, Yagnavalkya, Patanjali, Buddha, Mahavir, Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, the Bhakti saints, Kabir, Nanak, Mirabai, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, even Osho Rajneesh. Swami Vivekananda synthesises most of the religion's intrinsic values and Tharoor pays him glowing tributes as a visionary thinker.

In the second section, 'Political Hinduism', Tharoor strongly opposes the divisive and prejudiced notion of 'Hindutva' as promulgated by V.D. Savarkar and others which is very different from the pluralism and inclusiveness where *dharma* is not merely a religion but a comprehensive way of life. He is also critical of the contemporary efforts at glorifying India's past and pleads for a rational, scientific temper. Acceptance of diversity and celebrating difference is the central tenet of Hinduism which is something Indians must remember for ever.

In the third and final section, 'Taking Back Hinduism', Tharoor investigates how Indians could liberate Hinduism from its internal excesses and external exploitation. This could only be made possible by re-establishing the multivalence of religious identities in everyday life and rejecting any superiority theory of faiths.

Tharoor never allows his immense scholarship to weigh down on the readability quotient of his narrative. Even his disapproval of his rival ideologues and politicians is offset by an instinctive sense of civility and fairplay which are fast becoming traits on the brink of extinction. Whether one is a Hindu or an Ahindu, a believer or an agnostic, Tharoor lover or baiter, this book must feature in everyone's wishlist for the sheer brilliance of the writer's language and the tempered passion with which he argues his case.



### Love and Jihad in *Home Fire*

*Home Fire*, Kamila Shamsie, Bloomsbury India (2017) 272 pgs.

Book Review by Ms. Pooja Swamy, Assistant Professor Department of English, Hislop College, Nagpur.

Kamila Shamsie's epigram, 'The ones we love...are enemies of the state', sets the tone of her new novel, *Home Fire*. *Home Fire*, Shamsie's seventh novel, was longlisted for the Booker. The novel is a brilliant retelling of Sophocles's *Antigone*. Shamsie unabashedly makes a statement about the personal being the political and the political, personal. All her previous novels were mostly set in and



around Karachi but Shamsie's *Home Fire*, is truly global in outreach covering London, Amherst, Istanbul, Raqqa and Karachi in its wake.

*Home Fire* is divided into five sections similar to a five acts Greek Tragedy. Each section is narrated through the point of view of its five central characters- Isma, Eamonn, Parvaiz, Aneeka and Karamat. Isma is a substitute for Ismene, Eamonn for Haemon, Aneeka for Antigone — all figures from the Greek tragedy, Sophocles' *Antigone*.

The novel opens with Isma Pasha, a Muslim Londoner of Pakistani descent, held captive for airport interrogation on her way to America. Shamsie gives a nuanced picture of the grueling hours long interrogation. Isma stumbles in spite of her prepping up for the same with her soon to be lawyer sister, Aneeka. An officer wants to “know her thoughts on Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, ‘The Great British Bake Off,’ the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, dating websites.” *Home Fire* picks up from that point.

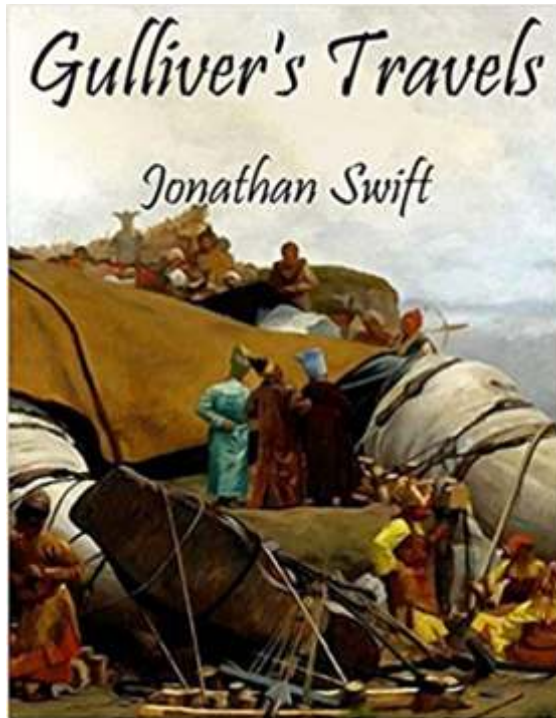
Isma has raised her siblings, twins Aneeka and Parvaiz, since their mother and grandmother died and is heading off to Amherst for writing a doctoral thesis in sociology trying to gain a perspective of her own life, enjoying her freedom now that the twins have become adults. The Pashas are guarded Muslims — trying to survive in a post 7/7 world of distress and mistrust, belonging to the marginalized immigrant community. Their particular tainted family history keeps them hovering suspiciously in the eyes of the system-their father being a jihadist. Parvaiz, is radicalized to follow in the legacy of his father and joins ISIS and leaves for Syria, soon to realize his mistake and willing to come back *home*.

From this point the narrative follows the struggles of Aneeka, the beautiful but impulsive sister, and Parvaiz's twin, to bring him back. She is willing to go to any lengths to bring her brother back and, to achieve her aim, befriends Eamonn, the son of

the Home Secretary, Karamat Lone. The Home Secretary is the epitome of Britain's integrationist policies. Lone Wolf as he is known as in the political circles tries to prevent Aneeka in her maneuvers. Eamonn oblivious to the realities around him lives a luxurious life, supported by his influential father. He falls in love with Aneeka, and is the sole entity who wants to help her in bringing back her brother. Eamonn follows her to Karachi leading to the resonant climax of the novel. The poignant end in the novel is thought provoking but feels a little melodramatic. Also characters like Isma or Karamat has not been given due justice. The reader is left wanting for more.

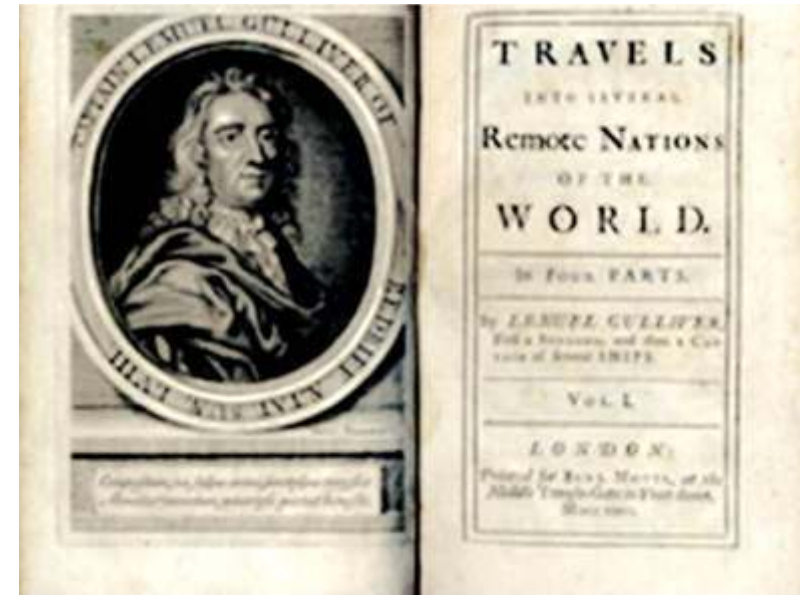
Home is the central idea in the novel in which Shamsie questions, ‘Do you consider yourself British?’ A recurrent theme in most immigrant narratives home, belonging and identity are the parallels which are drawn in the novel with the trope of youthful radicalization of British Muslims. The religious fundamentalism is an obsession which turns sour when faced with the brutal reality as is the case with Parvaiz. The dilemma faced by Shamsie's characters is the ones which the British Muslims are traversing, with the multiple identities, forging new ties. The geopolitics Shamsie touches in the narrative is the reality the South Asian nations particularly Pakistan faces. On the whole, *Home Fire* is a narrative that dazzles with its nuanced and humane portrayal of varied characters.

## Time Travel - Lord of the Files



The year 2017 marked the 350<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Jonathan Swift, widely recognised as the leading satirist in English. While he wrote in many forms — from poetry to pamphlets and from novels to sermons — it is for his mastery of satire that he is most celebrated.

Born on November 30, 1667, Swift has been described as 'the greatest writer of English prose, and the greatest man who has ever written great English prose' by T.S. Eliot. His work 'Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships' (1726) is placed third on the Guardian's top ten novels of all time.



Originally published anonymously, Jonathan Swift sent the manuscript for the satirical masterpiece *Gulliver's Travels*, which probably took at least five years to write, to his publisher under a pseudonym and handled any correspondence and corrections through friends. As such, even though close friends such as Alexander Pope knew about the publication, Swift still kept up the ruse of feigning ignorance about the book in his correspondence with them. The first edition of *Gulliver's Travels* appeared on 28 October, 1726, and from that time onwards it has never been out of print.

Right from the day of publication it was popular with both adults and children. Swift's friend, John Gay, remarked in correspondence between the two that it was, 'universally read, from the cabinet council to the nursery'.

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