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Courtallam- 627802, Tamil Nadu, India



Thiru.A.T. Paranjothi

Secretary

I am immensely happy that the Department of English and Research Centre is organizing an International Conference on “English Literature- A Tool for Social Upliftment” in collaboration with L Ordine Nuovo Publication on 7th March 2018.

Literature and Language are the two imperative requirements for human upliftment. As there is an ever increasing demand for literature teaching, innovative techniques and approaches for language, it would be a fitting gesture to organize such a Conference as this international level paves way for pooling national and international resources with the academic exchange of expertise from eminent language experts and researchers worldwide. The strategies employed in teaching one language and literature will definitely contribute that of other language literatures. Hence it would be a feast to the minds of budding scholars and teachers to be aware of various literatures, also the innovative teaching methods of language and literature.

I am sure that the Conference will provide a fruitful interaction among teachers, scholars and students of various languages from several corners of the globe.

I wish the Conference organized by the Department of English and Research Centre a grand success.



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Dr. (Tmt) K. Thiripurasundari

Principal

I am happy to note that the Department of English, Sri Parasakthi is organizing an International Conference on “English Literature- A Tool for Social Upliftment” in collaboration with L Ordine Nuovo Publication on 7th March 2018.

I am sure it will enlighten the importance of Teaching language and literature. There is an intimate connection between literature and life. It is, in fact life which is the subject matter of literature, and by teaching any language & its literature, it improves the vocabulary, exposes imagination and learning of general human interests. It also develops the creative thinking, which enhances the depth in knowledge and feels pleasure in actual application. By organizing this type of conferences the students will be more benefitted and the reflection will be on the society. This is exactly what we have to do in the present day context.

The Department has been quite active in organizing such programmes in order to provide opportunities for teachers and scholars of this area to discuss academic problems so as to enhance their professional competence and research capability.

I appreciate and congratulate the Head of the Department of the English and Research Centre Mrs. A.S. Radha & Dr. (Mrs.) S. Karthika and all the staff members of the Department of English and student volunteers who are actively involved in organizing this Conference. I wish the Conference all success. And I wish the department to bring immense laurels to Our College.

From Editors' Desk

Lexically 'Conference' means a formal meeting for discussion or debate, even an event for exchange of information and views. It has many avenues, one among is the International level which came practically result-oriented event at Parasakthi College, Courtallam on 7th March 2018 , jointly organized with L Ordine Nuovo Publication, Tamil Nadu., under the style and title on 'English Literature: A Tool for Social Upliftment' studded with many sub-themes to ease the participants to involve and commit fully in the event with their views and write-ups before the dignified audience to assess its truth and value, besides need and importance on personal discussion before it go for a printed form.

This special issue comes in multiple volumes on English literature. The first volume consists of 25 articles in English literature. The articles touch an area of the researchers' interest in literature. They also explore the new avenues where people find something could be filled in with. The published articles in this volume bridge the gap in the field of English literature. The articles are highly informative with exhaustive research and outcomes are quite innovative and enlightening. The readers of these articles will have something to store for their life.

The editorial team appreciates all the contributors for their research novelty and innovative outcomes. We also appreciate all the readers who invest their time to cherish these ideas into practical steps. Language is to express and literature is to follow and live. We sincerely thank the publishers and the team who put their effort to bring out this special issue.

At this Moment we make our Sincere thanks to Management and all faculty fraternity of English Department for this Successful Academic event backed by their wholehearted contributions and supports, which exhorted us at large that are really appreciably commendable.

Special Issue Editors

Mrs. A. S. Radha

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About the Editors



Mrs. A.S. Radha, M.A., M.Phil., has been working in the Department of English, Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam since 2006. At present, she holds the post of Head and Assistant Professor of Department of English. She did her undergraduate and postgraduate in Holy Cross College, Nagercoil. She did her M.Phil Dissertation in American Literature. Her Area of Specialization is Indian Writing in English. She has participated in various National and International Seminars and conferences. She has been the resource person to various institutions. With great

enthusiasm and cooperation from the department members, she successfully carries the department activities.



Dr. S. Karthika, awarded her Ph.D degree in 2013 in British Literature from Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamilnadu, India. She did her M.A & M.Phil in English from the same University Securing University First and Fifth rank respectively. She has been working as Assistant Professor in English in the Department of English, Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam, Tamilnadu since 2009. At present, she holds the post of Head of the Research Centre in English. Her area of specialization is British literature and Commonwealth literature. Her area of Interest in research is ethnic studies, gender studies, diasporic literature,

fourth world literature and all the postcolonial studies. Apart from literature she is also interested in teaching language studies like linguistics, phonetics, communication skills and soft skills. She has updated her qualification with, M.B.A in Human Resource Management, B.Ed & M.A in Hindi, M.A in Mass Communication & Journalism, M.A. in Linguistics and currently doing M.A in Translation studies and Psychology. She has published more than 36 research articles in various reputed journals and books with ISBN. She has received silver medal titled as the Young Researcher Award for the best paper presentation in the International Conference on Classical Literature: East and West organized by Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University and Centre for Excellence for Classical Tamil on March 2008. She has also participated and presented more than 35 research papers in various National and International Seminars/Conferences.



Mr. B.P. Pereira, Founder Director of SPEECH POINT is a Soft skills / HR / English trainer after his M.A.(Eng), M.A.(Psy), M.A.(Edn) besides holding M.B.A., B.G.L, PGD-JMC and other few PG Diplomas in multi disciplinary academic status. He has authored three books, edited 14 books, published 23 papers, presented 40 papers and carried out nine major event managements. He is one of the Associate Editors of Roots & Bodhi International Journals. He is associated with three NGOs for their project guidance and executions and also Psychological Counselor for few homes for

the aged, deserted children and Geriatrics Centres. He is a coordinating member of Placement Officers' Cell India Chapter.



Dr. S. Balakrishnan has been awarded Doctorate in the field of Philosophy entitled "Antonio Gramsci on State and Culture: A Study @ The Madura College, Madurai. He is working as an Editor-in-Chief @ Roots & Bodhi International Journals. He served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, The Madura College, Madurai (2011-2014). Served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Arul Anandar College, Karumathur in F.I.P. Vacancy (2010-2011). He has published 20 Books with ISBN, Presented & Published 70 Research Papers in Journals and Books with ISSN & ISBN.

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Academic Excellence in research is continued promoting in research support for young Scholars. Multidisciplinary of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in an multidisciplinary views, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of Books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

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QUEST FOR THE SELF IDENTITY IN VISHWAPRIYA L. IYENGAR'S GOWRIBIDHANOOR

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Abstract

This paper examines the story of independent, high-stung, craving girl, Gowri, the protagonist, has lots of aesthetic sense and yearns to be in solitude. She is a pet to her father. She leads a life of boyishness. It creates an aesthetic temperament in her mind. Her conflict and her sensibility are explored here clearly. Gowri is very much absorbed in her perception and dreams from the past. Gowri's unhappiness is not related to the reality of her circumstances; it is a product of her own consciousness and speculation. She regards herself as independent. And it is strong that she would be a menace to her own natural and conjugal identity. She boldly flouts the dehumanizing and disestablishing norms and values of society whose strange hold it is difficult to escape. Gowri's happiness is in part related to the process of her growing up; she has led a protected life and has been brought up on fantasies when she is confronted with reality of life, she is unable to face the disappointment.

Keyword: *Self Quest, Identity, Emancipation, Independent, society.*

Introduction

Gowribidhanoor, by Vishwapriya L. Iyengar intends to show an individual's liberation from the shackles and restraints of society. Its effect is to show woman's emancipation from the proprietary rights, Gowri the timid girl of this story, concerns herself to see if a Jasmine bud had burst through the dead green stem of the stubborn bush. For in the village, *Gowribidhanoor*, women wore no flowers in the hair. The trader women only wore flowers. Flowers were like favors from other worlds. The tribal's at the edge of the forest would be seen with blossoms that god had created for the insects. Hence to Gowri flowers were a great fantasy. Other thing that she fantasized was cinema. Cinema Talkies had come in the nearest town. She was very fascinated to see the horse-cart with posters of sensuous women with sea-like tresses blasted songs of love on megaphones. The other fantasies of Gowri were that:

These were the new kings from the celluloid empires in Bombay... announcing their wares like decreases from a royal court. These new goddess heralded the reign of dreams; of fulfillment on earth...without the resonant timbre of hymns they brought the whole world into an orbit of vision. Time and connection

with aeons of creation had been the text of hymns... the talkies spoke of now. The dazzling splendor of foreign lands. (135)

Gowri's life in the village was exclusively different, she would walk with her rock-muscle unfurled in her limbs and she tortured her body in exquisite perfection. Her legs like a Dhanush, she aimed her arrow of passion at the god of thunder. She danced everyday in the monsoons. She learnt the tandava, in the footprints of lizards and to the beat of bats'. In the stench of ancient, animal sacrifices.

She would run like a truant boy in and out of the forest. She would run towards the bright pink canopy where the puppet show was performing with masks of elephants and tigers with children were enacting the drama. The old woman would always curse her and told Gowri that she had fallen from grace of the gods but Gowri never bothered about her, she would run further "...the old woman followed her with a rasping cough torn out of her lungs...she is the eternal exile of youth... she too has been seduced by Siva... she is a mad whore" (136).

In the marathon of youth, the old woman died. But Gowri continued to run towards the opulence of the hills where dams divided rivers, to the bushes of crimson hibiscus, and buffalos like horse on the Indus valley seals, to the rain-

drenched sweetness of Jasmine, towards the chaos of eternal creation. In madness or vigilance, to claim for herself the truth of the new things, Airplanes seared the skies; all these aesthetic temperament was so strong in her mind and soul. Gowri's potential could understand the voice of nature and how it caressed her. Gowri knew that beyond those skies laid the peace that she carving for. Jardine says "I must claim the honor of having consciously worked for the emancipation of women. I am not, in fact, entirely sure what women's emancipation really is; my concern has been with the emancipation of people" (34).

The story of Gowri differs from the rest of the story in two prime ways, the first being the independence with which the protagonists roams around her village quenching her aesthetic taste. This is due to the fact that she is pet her father and brother. The question of how her life would be marriage is worth debatable. Here it is worthy to quote Sochen on Miss. Rodman's

...the attempt of women to grow up. To accept responsibilities of like to out-grow these characteristics of childhood selfishness and cowardliness that we require our boys to outgrow, but that we permit and by our social system encourage our girl to retain. (38)

The basic argument is that social, legal and economic structure is a hindrance for the upliftment of women. The indigenous contribution factors have been the legacy of equality of sexes inherited from the freedom struggle constitutional right of women, spread of education and the consequent new awareness among women. The Indian woman caught in the flux of tradition and modernity saddled with the burden of the past but both to cast off her aspirations constitutes the crux of aspirations constitutes the crux of women in India. In literary terms it precipitates in search for identity and quest for the detention of self.

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PORTRAYAL OF DESDEMONA'S LOYALTY AND DEVOTION IN SHAKESPEARE'S *OTHELLO*

Dr.S.Valliammai

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Shakespeare is one of the greatest dramatists of the world, and none equals him in the universality of his appeal. Not only did the audiences of his own age throng to see the performances of his plays, he has been loved and enjoyed during the last nearly four hundred years in all ages and countries. Shakespeare's concept of tragedy is largely Aristotelian. But he differs from the Greek master in one important respect-the mingling of the tragic and the comic. Tears and smiles mingle in life and so they do in the tragedies of our dramatist. But this induction of the comic does not weaken the tragic effect. Tragic and serious scenes of great intensity are followed by scenes in a lighter vein, and by contrast increase the seriousness of the tragic. In other words, Shakespeare provides dramatic relief in the form of light comedy which heightens the tragic effect of the preceding scenes.

Desdemona is the daughter of Brabantio, a rich and influential senator of Venice. She is a lady of exceptional physical beauty. Many "curled gallants of Venice love her and court her. Roderigo also loves her and persists in her love despite the repeated refusal of her father. Othello also loves her and he sacrifices his "unhoused free condition," out of his love for her. Even after his mind has been poisoned against her by Iago, his thoughts returns again and again to the beauty of her person. Cassio describe her in the most glowing words:

"He hath achieved a maid

That paragons description and wild fame,

One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens.

She is so beautiful that even rocks and sands,

As having a sense of beauty, do omit

Their mortal natures, letting go safely by

The divine Desdemona.

Brabantio has great faith in his daughter. He believes that she can do no wrong.

He describes her as,

A maiden never bold

Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion

Blushed at itself.

Was Brabantio wrong and did not understand the true nature of his daughter? For, she has boldness enough to elope with a Moor, and in the Duke's council also her behaviour does not show any timidity or lack of self - confidence .She boldly faces the full council, all the senators being strangers to her. She is not shy and her defence of her action in marrying the Moor is credible. Was she then really so bold and forward? No, Brabantio was right in the estimate of his daughter's nature. The boldness which she displays at this moment is only a temporary phase. It is the boldness born of love: it deserts her soon after, and in the rest of the play we find that she is really, "The maiden never bold" of Brabantio's description.

Desdemona in reality is gentle and passive. She is the very embodiment of gentleness. Her gentleness verges on passivity. When wrongs are done to her, she cannot resist or oppose. She can only suffer and terribly. That is why she has been called "a pathetic figure rather than the heroine of a tragedy" She cannot defend herself. She suffers patiently and all the insults and brutalities that are done to her by her brutal and beastly husband. He strikes her in the very face of the messengers from Venice, but she merely weeps and suffers without saying or doing anything in her defence. When he orders her to go away she goes out weeping and when he orders her to return she returns obediently. She thus comes very close to the ideal of a *Pativarta*

wife. He accuses her of treachery and faithlessness and she returns this evil with good. As she lives on her death bed, she says that she has killed herself and nobody else. In this way even at the last moment she strides to absolve her husband of the charge of murder. She is too helpless and passive, entirely unfit to be the heroine of the tragedy.

Her innocence and her tactlessness are childlike. She herself admits that she is a "child to chidding", and can easily be corrected. She is not only ignorant of the wickedness of the world, but also does not believe that any wickedness exists in the world. Owing to her child-like simplicity, she fails to understand the true nature of Iago or the web of villainy that he weaves around her. She does not even imagine that her husband suspects her. She does not think that there are any women in the world who are false to the husbands:

Desdemona: Tell me, Emilia

That there be women do abuse their husbands?

Emilia: There be some such, no question.

The remark is an index to her child-like purity and innocence. She is so pure and innocent that she cannot even mention the word whore. She asks pathetically:

Am I that name, Iago

To act as one (whore) is impossible for her. She would not do the deed for all the world, and she does not think that Emilia, too, would do it inspired by all her coarse talks. She is tactless like a child. Her innocence makes her tactless.

The word "Desdemona" literally means unfortunate and Desdemona is really unfortunate. Her marriage with Othello takes place in dubious circumstances. They could not live together long enough to understand each other. It is possible if she had remained in Venice where protection from her relatives and friends was possible, she would not have met such a sorry end. As it is, she is uprooted from her homeland, taken to Cyprus where she is entirely at the mercy of her rash and credulous husband. She suffers and suffers intensely without any fault of hers. She evokes our pity

and sympathy as no other heroine of Shakespeare does.

Desdemona is altogether more simply drawn. She does embody the principle of 'good' in the play, but Shakespeare takes care to provide her with certain human touches which fill out her character. She is probably younger than Othello, although Brabantio's early reference to her as 'O unhappy girl' and 'a maid, so tender, fair, unhappy' do not indicate that she is less than adult.

Despite Iago's insinuations, and Othello's later attacks upon her, she remains the most consistent character in the play, although the ambiguous circumstances of her marriage do open her actions to the possibility of misinterpretations. Brabantio initially thinks of her as a victim of *Othello's* magic charms, and, of course, Iago sees her simply as a passive animal, dominated by a more forceful one: 'An old black ram/Is tugging your white ewe'. She outlines her 'duty' both to her father and to her husband and she is clear and positive about her reasons for having decided to marry Othello. As with *Othello*, there are two viewpoints to consider. The public demonstration of Desdemona's virtues is balanced by a more covert undermining of them as Iago undertakes to instruct Roderigo in what he claims are the habits of Venetian women. Desdemona's love is reduced to 'merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will' and therefore cannot last: 'When she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice'. Throughout and particularly in Acts III and IV, Iago emphasises the discrepancy between Desdemona's physical beauty, and the corruptness of her soul, and he seeks to persuade Othello that the deceit she practises is somehow typical.

When Iago advances this kind of argument to Desdemona herself, she rejects it as a collection of 'old paradoxes, to make fools laugh in the alehouse, just as she responds later to Emilia's awareness of the sordid ways of the world. 'Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong. For the whole world.' It could be argued

that which had no place in either Cyprus or Venice. But we must remember that more than any other character in the play, she has a thorough knowledge of 'goodness', although Shakespeare takes pains to make it plausibly human in its appearance. For example, her elopement we have already mentioned, but notice her concern as she waits for Othello's arrival in Cyprus, particularly when she tries to disguise her own anxiety:

I am not marry, but I do beguile

The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.

Of course, like her elopement, this comment has a sinister ring to it, and helps to make Othello's own fall more plausible, but at this point it enables us to engage with the thoughts and feelings of Desdemona as a caring human being, as well as savour the irony of her position. Similarly, later in a scene of considerable tension and foreboding, we become aware, through her singing of the 'willow' song, of the intensity of her feelings. Here, if anywhere, Desdemona's view of the world could change, since her confidence in human relationships had been shattered, but even after the discussion with Emilia, and her questions about human behaviour, her prayers are finally directed towards eliminating evil, rather than participating in it:

*Good night, good night: God me such usage send
Not to pick bad from bad, but by badamend!*

There is a sense in which Desdemona is intrinsically incorruptible, although her doubts go some way towards humanising her character. Also, her actions are shown to be extremely vulnerable. Iago illustrates this in his conversation with Cassio just before the lieutenant falls from favour, but the latter continues to assert Desdemona's qualities in the face of a cynical attempt to undermine them. For Cassio she remains "a most exquisite lady", "a most fresh and delicate creature" whose speech is the model of 'perfection'. But to one already corrupted, these claims have no force, and hence she is made to seem naive in her subsequent pleading for Cassio.

There is, of course, a sense in which all 'good' in the play seems naive in the face of Iago's cynical and reductive outlook. The point is that Desdemona's openness is made to seem tactless, and in a curious way childish, in a situation in which it is a quality no longer to be valued. She preserves her integrity for us with her request to Cassio to 'Stay and hear me speak', and even her excuse for not being able to produce her handkerchief cannot, except in a reduced context, be considered as a deceit. These are all examples of Shakespeare's ability to individualise her character, while at the same time not losing sight of the values she represents within the wider framework of the play. In a number of ways Desdemona is a yardstick by which we can measure the extent of Othello's transformation. From a language they both share in the early part of the play (Iago says privately: 'O, you are well tun'd now'). Othello sinks to a position where Desdemona can no longer understand him: "I understand a fury in your words. But not the words." Perhaps the final evidence for her consistent devotion comes when at the point of death, she takes full blame for Othello's action: "Nobody, I myself, farewell."

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BREAKING THE SILENCE TO ACCENTUATE DALIT VISION – AN INSIGHT OF WOMEN AUTO BIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCES

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Abstract

*Dalit literature is neither a perfect demonstration of life nor an individual commitment, but a social commitment. The main intention of Dalit literature is the protest and liberation of Dalits. Shame, anger, sorrow and indomitable hope are the belongings of Dalit literature. The Dalit writers write what they see, feel and think in the social environment and it is an experience based literature. The Dalit people have started examining the problem of caste distinction, in order to strive for fundamental empowerment in the society. Dalit personal narrative as a genre is relatively new and completely different from the other autobiographical traditions. This paper focuses on the atrocities endured by Dalit community in Tamilnadu and Maharashtra by analyzing the autobiographical narratives of Dalit women writers namely: Bama's *Karrukku* and Baby Kamble's *The Prison We Broke*.*

Keywords: Atrocities, personal narrative, liberation, testimony.

Introduction

It is not a pain of any one person . . . anguish of many thousands of people, experienced over thousands of years. Therefore, it is expressed collectively. The anguish of Dalit literature is not that of an individual but of the entire outcast society.

(Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature, 31.)

Dalit autobiography sprang as a novel medium after 1947 in India as a most considerable means for Dalit people to express their trauma. Dalit autobiography is a noticeable genre of literature. Dalit writers have been using writing as a tool for their social affirmation. These writers use narration as a medium for achieving the identity of their own against the different forms of oppression. Dalit autobiography is primarily the expression of the truth about Dalit life and their community. These great writers excluded all role models, old literature, eastern and western critical theories and they were absolute to create a literature of their own.

Limbale in his book *Towards an aesthetic of Dalit Literature* openly stated that, "Dalit writers believe that Dalit literature is a movement. They see their literature as a vehicle for their pain,

sorrow, questions and problems" (2004, 105). Dalits started voicing and publishing their torments, sufferings and inhuman treatment given to them. Dalit autobiography transmutes experience of pain into a story of endurance. By writing about their own experience as a Dalit, they try to expose the reality behind their caste in a more realistic way.

Bama, one of the first Dalit women writers to be widely recognized was born in Puthupatti, Tamil Nadu. She imparts values of self-respect and social consciousness among her community. She has tried to articulate the aspirations and the anxieties, the fears and the hopes, the past and the present condition of her community as a whole. Her works include her autobiography *Karukku* and other two novels *Sangati* and *Vanmam* and a collection of short stories "Kisumbukkaram".

Bama through her writing aspires to influence Dalit women readers to shape their lives positively. *Karukku*, the first significant Tamil Dalit text deals with the incident of a Dalit woman. The stories of individuals act as voices of the entire community of people who have endured similar experiences of discrimination. Prema Nandakumar in her

article "Function as God's Word" says that, "one may change one's class, religion, even gender. But one cannot change one's caste!" (35). The novel *Karukkuis* entangled with the issue of caste domination and social discrimination within the Catholic Church. It presents Bama's life as a journey towards self-discovery and spiritual self. It is her deriving search for integrity as a Dalit.

Bama has used narrative as a means to voice the hardship, mistreatment, oppression of Dalit women in general and Paraiya Dalit women in particular. She describes the heartbreaking condition of women and their ill treatment as the human species. Bama's autobiography is thus reflection of both the personal autobiography and an account of the whole community who struggles hard for their basic survival.

As a testimony her narration moves from individual to community by sharing her tale of atrocity. Bama stands for her entire community. In an interview entitled "I am a Paraya from the Cheri Street: An Interview with Bama", Bama says, "It is true that *Karukkuis* my autobiography. But my story is linked with life of my community" (111). Dalit writers try to capture the supremacy of their community's suffering. Bama also experienced caste discrimination in her childhood days, during the holidays when she went home, if there was a Naicker women sitting next to her in the bus would say:

She'd immediately ask me which place I was going to, what street. As soon as I said, the Cheri, she'd get up and move off to another seat. Or she'd tell me to move elsewhere. . . . They'd prefer then to get up and stand all the ways rather than sit next to me or to any other women from the Cheri. They'd be polluted, apparently. (18)

In the case of drinking water it was really distressing to look at. "The Naicker women would pour out the water from a height of four feet, while paatti and the others received and

drank it with cupped hands held to their mouths" (14).

She felt outrageous when she watched all this discrimination based on caste. Bama mourned deeply that there was no place that was free of caste. "People of my community were looking after all the jobs like sweeping the premises, swabbing and washing the classrooms, and cleaning out the lavatories. And in the convent, as well, they spoke very insultingly about low-caste people. They spoke as if they didn't even consider low-caste people as human beings" (22).

Bama portrays how Dalits become the objects of mockery in their own place. "These days these people go about reasonably dressed. So you can't even make out who they are, sometimes" (99-100). Bama also witnesses her grandmother being insulted and abused for being a Dalit. One day Bama accompanied Paatti to the Naicker house, where she found, "The Naicker lady came out with her leftovers, leaned out from some distance and tipped them into Paatti's vessel, and went away. Her vessel, it seemed, must not touch Paatti's; it would be polluted" (14). This is not only the situation of her family but the entire communities suffering.

Bama writes in *Karukku* as:

In this society, if you are born into a low caste, you are forced to live a life of humiliation and degradation until your death. Even after death, caste-difference does not disappear. . . .

If you are born into a low caste, every moment of your life is a moments of struggle. People screw up their faces and look at us with disgust the moment they know our caste. (23-24)

Bama writes about their suffering in *Karukku* as, "This is a community that was born to work. And however hard they toil, it is the same kuuzh everyday" (47). It is the struggle of her entire community for their livelihood. In order to bring an end to caste oppression, she calls upon all Dalits to wake up, unite and fight against caste. Her dream is to possess a humane

society where she believes, everyone will be equal. Bama imparts her people by saying that, "we must crush all these institutions that use caste to bully us into submission, and demonstrate . . . it is we who have to place them where they belong and bring about a changed and just society where all are equal" (25).

Similar atrocities were endured by Dalit community in Maharashtra. Baby Kamble is one such dalit voice from Maharashtra who also struggles hard for the betterment of her own community similar to Bama. Her autobiography "*The Prisons We Broke*" focuses on the inhuman conduct of the Dalit community. She discloses the difficulty of the Mahar women through her autobiographical narration by bringing light into all sorts of atrocities of the whole Dalit community. *The Prisons We Broke* is the artistic portrayal of incidents and events in the life of Kamble. She agonized more at the hands of the caste Hindus and her husband because the Dalit women were considered far more inferior human beings. The Dalits in Maharastra had to do only menial works for their survival. They had to work from morning till nights and in return they were filled with stale food. "People somehow managed to survive on that meager amount so long as there was work. But the work on the canal got over; they had to face tough times" (2008, 3).

There would be no food in the house to quench the fire of hunger which is furious, not even the left overs. They worked very hard for their survival because of poverty. Kamble opines their poverty as "Well either have to remain hungry or eat rotten food" (2008, 39). All the dirty and arduous jobs were the only source of pride of the Mahar community. During the misfortunes the upper caste would ask the Mahars to carry the corpses away. Their delight has no bounds "everyone would rush to the place, as did the vultures, kites and dogs that compete with the Mahars!" (85-86). The infected corpses would feed the entire community and quench their raging hunger. They make a great

effort for their basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter "they would return in the afternoon with a couple of baskets full of leftover food. These leftovers saw their family through till the next morning, for that's what they ate for breakfast, lunch and dinner (46)".

From the treatment imposed on them it was clear that, they were not considered even equal to animals. If anybody was born into a Mahar family, they are forced to be lifelong slaves to the caste Hindus. They were made bonded workers. To quote Kamble: "The labor of the entire family was paid for in the form of bhabris, which the yeskar had to go and collect from house to house every evening" (74-75). They were unprotected to the plight of poverty in the huge scale. "We were reduced to a condition far worse than that of the bullocks kept in the courtyards of the high castes... but we were merely given leftovers" (49). Without any grudge, they ate the leftovers and labored for others.

The Mahars were leading their lives in illiteracy and poverty. Out of poverty they worked very hard in the field for their fundamental needs. "When the Mahar women labor in the fields, the corn gets wet with their sweat" (56). The men would not treat the women folks properly. Women were considered to be the lowest beings in their community. Among the Mahar women, the daughters - in - law were the poorest victims. They had to suffer at almost everybody's hands. Young girls, hardly eight or nine or ten years old, were brought home as daughters - in - law. "Girls, even younger, were married off; they were children who could not even remember their marriages" (87). However, for these girls, marriage meant nothing but disaster. The poor girl had to endure the abuses of everybody in the household,

The suffering of the woman would be beyond endurance. Even the spectators found it difficult to watch her plight. The daughter - in - law of that house was kept busy all twenty -

four hours of the day. Anybody could torture her as they wanted. There was nobody to care for them. They had no food to eat, no proper clothing to cover their bodies; their hair would remain uncombed and messy, dry from lack of oil. Women led the unhappy existence. "The entire day, the poor daughter - in - law would serve the entire household like a slave" (98). The life of the women in the lower castes was thus molded by the fire of catastrophes. This made them physically strong, but their minds cried out against this subjugation.

Bama and Kamble being Dalit women had undergone huge turmoil in their life span. It is evident from their autobiography that Dalits from Tamilnadu as well as from Maharashtra are undergoing similar hardships and adversities irrespective of their place of birth. Both the women writers aim for the same single motto - 'the upliftment of their entire community on the whole'. Dalit unity is indispensable in order to redeem them from the grabs of caste discrimination. Prasad has stated in *Dalit Literature: A Critical Exploration* that, "If you really want to live, you must live courageously. . . . You will have to stand up to acquire your human rights. You will have to resolve, unite and fight for your rights" (2007, 191). The writing of autobiography was used by oppressed group as a medium to achieve a sense of identity. Thus Dalit personal narration as a genre is relatively new and absolutely different from the autobiographical traditions that already exist.

The emergence of Dalit personal narratives is a historic revolution because Dalits in India, were voiceless. Education was scarcely available to them until independence and therefore they were absolutely silent all through these years. It was only after independence, a few among them who had education started articulating their hardships. Thus, the exact beginning of Dalit autobiography is an act of resistance. Dalits are trying to come out of their hurdle through their writing. Dalit women never show reluctance to

write about the nature of abuse they generally face both within their own communities as well as outside their communities.

Abedi expresses his view on women's testimonies very daringly in *Contemporary Dalit Literature*, "Women's testimonies make us discover a female world of hidden feelings . . . Specific ways and motives of a shared feminine sensitivity and cultural creativity are highlighted, as nowhere else" (2010, 249). Dalit writers regard human beings as an absolute power for their redemption, and lead them towards total rebellion. Dalit women writers by depicting their turmoil in their own direct language, they give much priority to problem of the entire community.

In order to come out of the cocoon, they should gain education and more over they should remain focused in their goals to achieve greater heights with determination, tolerance and hope in their own way. With the help of education they should stand united in bringing their reformation in the form of more writings because literature acts as a movement for entire Dalit liberation.

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REFLECTION OF CRUSHED SORROW, UNSCRIPTED PAINS AND RE-ROOT OF HISTORY BY A VICTIM DIASPORA, ANNA FRANK

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Abstract

Anna Frank is a German born Jewish writer who lived during World War II. Having got dispersed from the original land she becomes a diasporic writer where she survives among the thorns of life. Her writings reflect the torments underwent by the Jews. The displacement and helplessness in response to the cruelty that she has faced in her native are reflected so uniquely in her diary. Her writings are filled with facts of her native land. Inadequacy of proper necessities that prevails by the time of war is delineated so well in her writings. Specifically, the diasporic writers write about their native place with happiness and their experience on another country with much despair. They are the seat of optimism. There will be a confusion that exists in the mind of the diasporic writers in accepting the new environment. They may choose to move to other nation due to various reasons beyond imagination. If it is out of compulsion it would hurt them as well out of lesser inclination towards the new place they try to modulate themselves and even priorities for their emotions are lesser which gets converted into writings. In this paper a discussion on Anna Frank as a diasporic writer and the scattering of seeds in a positive way is focussed upon.

Introduction

“Historically, Jews were dispersed to such an extent that their diaspora population massively outnumbered the original homeland population.” (qtd Cohen 162)

Anna Frank is a German Jew survived during world war second. She is a teenager then. Her family is a blessing on earth with her father, Otto Frank, mother Edith, her sister Margot. Their happy family life comes to an end when Hitler rises to power. She is maintaining a diary which she receives as a gift on her birthday

“I’ll begin from the moment I got you, the moment I saw you lying on the table among my other birthday presents. (I went along when you were bought, but that doesn’t count.)” (5)

This diary is known to the world after the Second World War is over. Anna Frank registers the events in her diary that happened at the time of her stay in the hiding place. During war in order to escape from Nazis Anna Frank’s family were compelled to hide in the secret annex in Amsterdam.

“Anne Frank and her family, fleeing the horrors of Nazi occupation, hid in the back of an Amsterdam warehouse for two years. She was thirteen when the family went into the Secret Annex, and in these pages she grows to be a

young woman and a wise observer of human nature as well.”(1)

After two years being spent in the secret annex the family is shifted to concentration camp as their hiding place is informed to the people who were searching for the Jewish people. She died at the age of 15. She withstands unspeakable cruel situations during her life inside the camp. Her father, Otto Frank is the only one survivor after the Second World War. He comes to know that both of his daughters are no more due to diseases. Anna Frank’s father meets a different daughter when he reads the diary handed over to him by Meip Gies. Anna Frank died in the Bergen-Belson Concentration camp.

During war time they are scattered and settle down far off from their native hometown. This kind of pain is endless as they face many problems in all aspects. When they are made to make their way into other region it is inevitable they have to face many issues. The victim is always the one who finds opportunities to burst out off the subjugated condition. Anna Frank comes to know that the incidents, events, facts and happenings are going to be collected after the war and get published in the form of a book especially diaries and letters.

Anna Frank possesses more positive diasporic attitudes as she finds herself very much intimate with her writing especially on her diary which served as a therapeutic purpose. She declares:

"Paper has more patience than people. I thought of this saying on one of those days

when I was feeling a little depressed and was sitting at home with my chin in my hands, bored and listless, wondering whether to stay in or go out. I finally stayed where I was, brooding. Yes, paper does have more patience, and since I'm not planning to let anyone else read this stiff-backed notebook grandly referred to as a "diary" unless I should ever find a real friend, it probably won't make a bit of difference." (8)

Being a very small girl of thirteen years old she misses her friend as she and her family is dislocated due to political crisis. Right from the childhood or from the very early stage of life every one of us will be too attached to the people around ourselves and with the people whom we are in touch with each other in every walk of our life. So displacement causes a very big issue psychologically in the mind of the children. Anna Frank too has come across this agonizing circumstances and she takes up the way to get relief is writing diary. She considers it as her friend and named it as Kitty. "I want the diary to be my friend, and I'm going to call this friend Kitty." (9) As there prevailed an insufficient attitude too towards one another inside the place of secret annexe.

Auto biobiographical elements find its way in diasporic writings. Anna frank in her diary writing gives profound information regarding her personal updates.

"I started right away at the Montessori nursery school. I stayed there until I was six, at which time I started first grade. In sixth grade my teacher was Mrs. Kuperus, the principal. At the end of the year we were both in tears as we said a heartbreaking farewell, because I'd been

accepted at the Jewish Lyceum, where Margot also went to school." (9)

As she is a victim of the world war her diary seems a pile up of information related to historical details. The restrictions for the Jews are delineated so well in her writings. The air of freedom which she breaths in her place without any obstacle is no more. They cannot cope up with this life style. Their mind is filled with excruciating images which haunts them not to do with any kind of activities freely. There is no guarantee for anything that moved round. This tortured situation that prevails made them suffocate and ache for freedom. They all live with the disheartened soul and thoughtless mind.

"Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use street-cars; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3 and 5 P.M.; Jews were required to frequent only Jewish-owned barbershops and beauty parlors; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M.; Jews were forbidden to attend theaters, movies or any other forms of entertainment; Jews were forbidden to use swimming pools, tennis courts, hockey fields or any other athletic fields; Jews were forbidden to go rowing; Jews were forbidden to take part in any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8 P.M.; Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools, etc. You couldn't do this and you couldn't do that, but life went on. Jacques always said to me, "I don't dare do anything anymore, 'cause I'm afraid it's not allowed." (9-10)

External display of cultural variations too plays a vital role in diasporic writings. The behaviour, clothing, lifestyle some practices including usage of materials were determined by the host country. As Van Hear puts it, "diaspora can be made and unmade". (qtd

Cohen 141). Anna Frank represents the feelings of the Jewish people who are also human being with the same skin. Her sense of justice towards the victims is penned with great courage. The life is unpredictable as well. No coherence can be found in their writing. Inner struggle exists in the deep core of their heart. There may be many objections to do the daily activities.

"It's sweltering. Everyone is huffing and puffing, and in this heat I have to walk everywhere. Only now do I realize how pleasant a streetcar is, but we Jews are no longer allowed to make use of this luxury; our own two feet are good enough for us."(12)

"I know that I'm a woman, a woman with inward strength and plenty of courage" says Anna Frank in her "The Diary Of a Young Girl" on 11 April 1944. Her family enters Netherlands in order to live a happy and peaceful life and with the belief that the Holland government will be neutral. They live with the hope that their life will become enriched with all prosperity. Anna Frank with simplest of thoughts and without any dilemmas try to displace her mind too for this new environment. It is a strange experience to them. They find it difficult to abandon a place all on a sudden. The miseries that follows on moving to another place cannot be explained.

"Margot and I started packing our most important belongings into a schoolbag. The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb and some old letters. Preoccupied by the thought of going into hiding, I stuck the craziest things in the bag, but I'm not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses." (18) Enslavement. a feel sense by the people one who moves from their native land. Anna Frank and her sister are experiencing many new unjustifiable, regretful, forced situations.

"The stripped beds, the breakfast things on the table, the pound of meat for the cat in the kitchen -- all of these created the impression that we'd left in a hurry. But we weren't interested in

impressions. We just wanted to get out of there, to get away and reach our destination in safety. Nothing else mattered." (19)

It is too difficult for Anna and family to live there without knowing the occurrences of the near future. They are completely perplexed by the unexpected situation. The victimised situation disturbs the mind of the children, Anna and Margot. An undesired situation predominates that it stole their happiness and ordains with tension.

"It's difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart." says Anna Frank.

An alienated feel occupies the mind of Anna Frank when they enter into the secret annexe. It is a known fact that the selfhood has been systematically repressed and eroded completely off from the people who will be in another place far away from their hometown. They live with the struggle to reshape their identity. Nostalgia for lost origins can be seen.

"Don't think I'll ever feel at home in this house, but that doesn't mean I hate it. It's more like being on vacation in some strange pension. Kind of an odd way to look at life in hiding, but that's how things are." (22)

Seven members are hiding in a secret place covered with the book shelf. The reality is deeply felt in the lines of Anna Frank. Regularly she marks in her diary everything that happens around.

"When I think back to my life in 1942, it all seems so unreal. The Anne Frank who enjoyed that heavenly existence was completely different from the one who has grown wise within these walls."(155)

Anna Frank's writings are very substantial, weighty and valuable. It carries so many historical information too. On August 4th 1944,

somebody informs the police and their hiding place is under raid. They separate men and women and they were arrested in the Concentration Camp. Anna Frank diary ends up before two days of the raid.

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WAITING FOR GODOT - A GOOD ANECDOTE FOR THE MODERN PREDICAMENT

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Abstract

Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot is the best exponent of the existentialist philosophy prevalent in the current atmosphere. People in an existentialist society live and lead their life without attributing due significance to their living. Their living on earth is made null and void and also nullified due to their pessimistic approach. They are not active participants of the world. This study is a sincere attempt to show how the play could be considered a better anecdote for the current predicament of man on earth. Men with all their inabilities and inertia and despair get exposed through the characters of the play thereby reflecting their conditions as they are in their real life.

Keywords: Existentialism, Nihilism, Pessimism, All the world a stage in which each and every one has a role to play. (2.7)

Shakespeare

True to this Shakespearean saying, life on earth is very complicated posing a challenge to men in surmounting the difficulties thereon. He has to cross all the stages subjected to his life in encountering the problems. The whole world thus has become a battlefield that though he is determined to fight to the lost in circumventing it, he is still at his wits end owing to the difficulties attached to it. He is even perplexed and is obsessed with the sole idea of coming out successfully well that in such an attempt often he gets deviated and diverted from his goal. He is at the loss of his own identity and being able to decide his future course of action. The modern man thus has become a symbol of inertia eventually his condition has been hapless and hopelessness has become identical with the trend of the day. That is what does count the characteristic feature of existentialism.

Existentialism is a revolt against traditions and conventions against all that hampers human liberty. It is a revival of essential melancholia, a creed that believes in the essential and inevitable existence of suffering and misery. It is a rebellion against traditions and conventions – religious, moral, political, legal ethical and economic. It is an attempt towards man's true freedom. It puts to beat the traditional and logical beliefs because they ignore human existence. The existentialists

regard human life as absurd. They believe that the individual is the product of the choices he makes in literature. They highlighted man's alienation, loneliness, suffering, helplessness, freedom, absurdity of human existence and so on. To them, man is an isolated being who is cast ignominiously into an alienated universe moving from nothingness to nothingness in a world that is waste, anguished and absurd.

Waiting for Godot is a play of existentialism. The play deals with clock time as well as subjective time. The protagonists are placed in a very unhappy predicament; they have to live like serfs; they are not happy. The world is full of boredom and unhappiness and life is run in a void without any purpose. Man just waits hopelessly to end misery and suffering. The protagonists of the play are highly identical with the modern men with all oddities. They stand a better correlative to their contemporary counterparts and is universal as well. The play depicts the exact condition of modern men highlighting his impotence, ignorance and frustrations. It is a play that depicts the fact that suffering is the inseparable part of human life. Valdimir and Estragon suffer incapable of finding a solution to their problems. They are at a loss of their peace and being in mental agony they suffer also from starvation. Neither they have anything to eat other than carrot, turnips and radishes nor they have anywhere to recline

themselves on. They simply deplore and blabber repeatedly talking sheer nonsense. In utter desperation they feel that they can go up to Eiffel Tower and jump to their death from there. The backdrop also stands in good rhythm to the mood having only one tree in the surrounding. Estragon pulls off his boot and Vladimir takes off his hat to see if there is anything inside. They talk about Jesus Christ and the Gospels to while away time. Somehow or other they are imposed to be there waiting meaninglessly though at times they keep on reiterating the fact that they could go away from there. Still they hope that Godot will come. Neither they are certain of Godot's coming nor are they certain of the place of their waiting for Godot. The characters abruptly shift their emotions and forget about themselves and around. Waiting is the central act of the play and nothing active is to happen. They simply wait for Godot who never comes. Just like how in real day- today life in the mundane world man hopes against hope the duo intermittently take their turns in picking up the absent zeal in them. Estragon repeatedly wants to leave but Vladimir insists that they stay in case Godot actually shows up. They are bored to death suffering from all angles- physically, mentally and emotionally. They are inert being unable to move all on their own volition and fear an anonymous "they" who threaten to beat them. Such types of feelings are highly typical of the current temperament of the modern men. Having lost his identity the modern man makes a desperate search for his lost identity. He unnecessarily assumes and imagines and even invites pains, pangs and troubles to his own self.

"Nothing to be done" is the key note of the play featuring as the topic sentence at the outset. Beckett in his presentation thus has depicted man's meaningless existence on earth – loitering and dangling in the void. He feels that man is like a rudderless vessel roaming all on its own to be at the mercy of nature which is well

inferred from his aimlessness, having no objectives from behind his life and activities. The duo takes things for granted simply without any individuality of their own. He just apes and imitates others which is well seen from

Say I am happy

I am happy

So am I

So am I.(2.42)

Estragon and Vladimir just prattle whatsoever without any rhyme or reason

They say,

We are happy

We are happy (Silence) what do we do now,

Now that we are happy? Waiting for Godot.
(1.855-6)

They feel contended foolishly about their waiting without even bothering whether it is meaningful or not.

The way in which the duo converse with each other runs parallel and similar to the cackling, babbling and prattling of the contemporary men hoping aimlessly and moving shots in the dark. They say

We came too soon

It's always at nightfall

But night does not fall

It'll fall, all of a sudden, like yesterday

Then it 'll be night.

And we can go

Then it 'll be day again.(2.334-40)

Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it is awful. They say they want to go, yet they don't move. They talk about killing themselves which echoes nothing but the good-for – nothing attitude of the younger generation of this era. Their mood of despair and frustration find resounding tones when they say

The best thing would be to kill me, like the other

What other? What other?

Like billions of other.(2.85-90)

The way the two tramps pass time is indicative of the boredom and triviality of human activities, the lack of significance in life

and constant suffering it has in it .It also brings out hollowness and insincerity of most social interaction . Estragon and Vladimir question each other, contradict each other, abuse each other , become reconciled to each other without any serious intention or deliberation. Human existence in this corporal world itself is dull, boring and monotonous. The very essence of boredom and triviality is brought out in the scene in which Estragon and Vladimir repeatedly put on and take off their hats. They are even fed up with their meaninglessness which led them to decide on suicide. But the play is one which is about absurd theatre that suicide is said to be out of their reach. If they are depicted to have committed suicide their existence would be considered to be worthwhile and their attempt on suicide would be counted to be one done as a result of frustration and despair.

Next dealing with the theme of exploitation which has taken rampant strides on this inhuman world the episode of Pozzo and Lucky could be cited. Pozzo treats Lucky worse than an animal. Lucky has been so debased by the cruel treatment that he gives a vicious kick to Estragon whose only fault is that he sympathises with him and tries to wipe away his tears. The exploitation of the weaker section has taken a very stringent note that the exploited become so demoralised that they are

unable to offer any resistance to the exploiters. The theme of Exploitation like capitalisation thus has taken overpowering hold over the exploited that the exploited doesn't even bother about resistance even. At times, Pozzo feels that Lucky fails to obey his command. Even when Pozzo has become blinded, Lucky does not have the guts to free himself from his enslavement.

Waiting for Godot is a many- faceted drama. Its interpretations and implications are complex It may be looked at as a clever farce or a tragic exposition of the human situation .It's themes have universality and timelessness. .It is an existentialist play, but at the same time it mocks at Existentialism. It is a religious allegory and nihilistic also. The themes of the play have an inexhaustible richness implication. The play ends on a strange note of hope that the tramps would be able to come by a piece of rope with which to hang themselves the next day. Thus as an absurd play exposing the qualities of the absurd theatre, the play exposes the absurdity of life as well in so far as it ends up with note of suicide to be taken with the positive approach .

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NEXUS OF HISTORY AND AUTHORITY IN ISHMAEL REED'S *MUMBO JUMBO*

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One of the leading satirists in contemporary black literature, Reed is best known for those novels in which he examines politics, religion and technology as repressive forces. Although the central target of his work is Western civilization, Reed's primary concern in his writings is the establishment of an alternative black aesthetic.

Mumbo Jumbo records the conflict between authority figures who regard survival as the preservation of Western civilization and the defenders of Jes Grew, the ancient mysteries that have gone underground. The novel is a mystery, a detective story, with PaPa LaBas as the private investigator. The object of his search is the Text, the original work that records the Jes Grew, or Hoo Doo mysteries. Jes Grew's antagonists work to ensure that the Text does not surface. Reed contends that this recurrent struggle resides not in those who are publicly visible (the president, politicians, industrialists, religious leaders) but within secret societies. The name of the society opposed to Jes Grew is the Wallflower Order, along with its disgraced military arm, the Knights Templar.

The Text had once been in the possession of the Templars. One of them, Hinckle Von Vampton, takes it upon himself-without the endorsement of the Wallflower Order-to locate and repossess the Text in order to keep it out of the hands of Jes Grew. Hinckle becomes PaPa LaBas' primary antagonist. The novel is fleshed out with subplots and fanciful historical reporting-for example, Hinckle's plan to draw attention away from true black art by creating a conventional black android poet; the clandestine activities of the Mutafikah, who steal art objects from museums (centers of art detention) in order to return them to the

cultures that produced them; Earline's possession by a loa who uses her body to seduce a trolley-car driver; interpretations of Warren Harding's presidency and the real story behind his death by assassination. The central line of the plot, however, is LaBas' search for the ancient HooDoo Text. All signs point to its being in New York City. The Jes Grew epidemic has spread from New Orleans to Chicago and is now only a few miles from New York. In order for it to catch on and become a permanent part of the black community, PaPa LaBas must find the Text and reveal it to the public at large. He follows up various clues and finally discovers the box containing it at a nightclub in the city. In a public ceremony designed to expose Hinckle and his associates as villains, LaBas opens up the box, only to find the Text missing. (Hinckle, nevertheless, does not escape punishment. LaBas has him shipped off to Haiti to be judged.) He later discovers that the man who had the Text in his possession-Abdul Hamid, a Black Muslim magazine editor-had assumed the role of censor and burned not only his translation of it but also the original on the ground that it was obscene. The Text, which was to establish Jes Grew as the dominant spiritual force in American culture, is gone forever. LaBas is not discouraged, however;-he comforts his secretary Earline with the belief that there are two forces in the world, life and death, and that Jes Grew is life. America will create its own text. The Harlem Renaissance is evidently only one of the many manifestations of it. The novel ends with an epilogue: LaBas as an old man in the 1970's delivering to a college audience his once-a-year lecture about the Jes Grew phenomenon. After fifty years of

dormancy, the epidemic once again shows signs of revival.

LaBas' quest for the Text is also a quest for himself. At the beginning of the novel, he is the founder and head of the *Mumbo Jumbo* Cathedral. Though he does not realize it, he is trying to institutionalize the HooDoo spirit. The effects of this rigid and limited view of the human spirit are already evident. His assistant, Berbelang, has left the Cathedral and is engaged in illegal activities—the restoring of art objects to the countries from which they were stolen. LaBas shows tolerance of Berbelang's activities but only gradually comes to accept the variety of manifestations of the Jes Grew spirit. What he must understand is that the popular art of black culture, especially as manifested during the 1920's (the Harlem Renaissance), is the essence of HooDoo in America. That he is still only a novice in the mysteries is evident when a loa possesses his secretary Earline; he must yield to his compatriot Black Herman, who knows the art well and can apply the right formulas and exorcise the daimon. It is only after his experience in search of the Text that LaBas comes to realize the truth about Jes Grew. Berbelang is betrayed and murdered while retrieving art treasures from the New York Center of Art Detention; Charlotte, LaBas' trainee in the Cathedral, is likewise deceived and murdered by the same villain (her lover), and finally LaBas discovers that there is no Text. Institutionalization and codification stifle rather than revive Jes Grew. The Text must be continually recreated. Through much of the novel, then, LaBas is a well-meaning HooDoo priest, a novice in the ancient mysteries. The novel records his education. It ends with LaBas as an old man, in appearance a silly old man but faithful to his calling, and wiser. LaBas may be an amusing portrait of the author, his own groping attempts to defend the forces of life in American society. He calls himself "a jacklegged detective of the metaphysical," "a private eye practicing in my Neo-HooDoo therapy center."

The narrator calls him a "noonday HooDoo, fugitive-hermit, obeah-man, botanist, animal impersonator, 2-headed man" who "eats heartily and doesn't believe in the emaciated famished Christ-like exhibit of self-denial and flagellation." His ancestors include the Nigerian oracle, Ju Ju of Arno, a black Gypsy, the Moor of Summerland, who initiated witchcraft in Europe, and a grandfather whose HooDoo powers spelled the doom of his various slave masters. Thus, while PaPa LaB as is the most individualized character in *Mumbo Jumbo*, his representative role as novitiate HooDoo priest (at fifty years of age) takes precedence. His purpose is to show that America is only now beginning to take its place within the true history of the human spirit.

Mumbo Jumbo is a reinterpretation of history, art, and religion. The core of the plot is the Text of the Jes Grew movement. The Text is Reed's alternative to the Christian Bible. Toward the end of the story proper, PaPa LaBas delivers a long historical discourse that traces the history of religion from the black point of view. The story of religion begins in Egypt with the young Prince Osiris, a black African. His religious activity was the dance. The book that celebrates him is a choreography of his dance movements, set down by Thoth, a written record of the ancient mysteries of nature. Osiris was the original natural man. His primary antagonist—the real devil—was Set, his brother, the primal form of artificiality, censorship, rules, and conformity. Reed calls such enemies of the human spirit "atonists." Moses, in a direct line from Set, deceitfully works his way into the secret room of Isis, who after Osiris' mutilation and supposed death (he like Christ does not die but is continually rejuvenated) guards the Book of Thoth. Their sexual union draws from her all the Osirian mysteries. Having gained the secrets, however, during the wrong phase of the moon (that is, with wrong motives) he knows only its obverse side. The teachings of Moses, then, are distortions of the Text. Reed has LaBas

say the same thing of Christ (whom he elsewhere in the novel calls an "impostor," a "burdensome archetype"). The line of descent extends from Set to Moses to Christ to the Apostles to the Knights Templar, and hence to Hinckle. Along the way, the original Text was lost. Only its Left Hand version, the Bible, survived. According to tradition, Moses hid the original in a tabernacle when he caught his people observing its heathenish rites. Solomon's Temple and then the Templars' headquarters were built on the same site as the tabernacle, and thus the Text came into the hands of Hinckle, the Templar librarian. When Hinckle tried to translate it, however, the book resisted. It would not allow Hinckle to do to it what Moses had done. Hinckle kept the book with him from the twelfth century to the twentieth. Wherever he went, however, Jes Grew appeared, the true spirit of the work. Finally, in the 1920's Hinckle uses it as a bargaining chip to become the acknowledged leader of the anti-Jes Grew movement. As one of Hinckle's cohorts, Abdul got hold of the book and destroyed it. He thus achieved what the atonists wanted all along; they believed that the destruction of the Text would be a destruction of the movement. LaBas assures readers that the contrary is true. Natural instincts will continually find their expression in new texts. This history of the world according to Hoodoo is the central thesis of the novel. The inevitable reappearance of Jes Grew is a ritual repetition of Osiris' death, dismemberment, and germination. Apparently, it is as real to Reed as the Passion has been for Christians.

This true history of the world becomes, as it were, the sanction for Reed's revolutionary (upstart, nihilistic, populist, ritualistic) definitions of religion and art. Reed consistently stands on the side of Sodom and Gomorrah, the worship

of Baal, the Greek mysteries, the Dionysian orgy, Judas, Julian the Apostate (a defender of the Greek mysteries), the Bohemians of the 1920's, and the black spirit of the 1970's. These are not, as the Christian tradition has painted them, aberrations from the divine nature, blasphemies against the true God; they are instead the true instinctive worship of the gods, recognitions of animistic realities. Christianity has been an inhibitive religion, a religion of self-denial and "flagellation." Even slavery itself is a consequence of it. Reed believes that Christianity has denied the blacks their true heritage, calling the animism that characterized their indigenous religion an evil and teaching them to deny the joys of this world. Even black writers have succumbed to this dark, pessimistic view of life. Reed names Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison as examples. Rather than express the joy of life, they react with anger, self-pity, and bitterness against the white, atonist system. Reed proposes a new aesthetic, one based on the spirit of the 1920's, the spirit of blues and jazz, art that uplifts the spirit, that deals positively with the ancient mysteries. His purpose is to write a novel that asserts pride in the black race because it, in fact, introduced into America the Osirian mysteries. Christianity calls Africa the dark continent; in Reed's interpretation of history, Africa carries the true line of man's descent in religion and art. It will be the salvation of the West.

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THE VIEWS OF MAHATMA GANDHIJI AND CHITHRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI ON WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhiji, ruthlessly fought for the rights of women in his later years. His attitude towards women was different in his younger days. The male chauvinistic society had influenced his opinion about women. But his Child- wife aged 13, made him understand that women to had intelligence, self- respect and dignity as men. He attributes his shift- in faith towards women's rights and capacity to his wife's influence in his autobiography.

My Experiments with Truth

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning poet, shortly story writer and novelist who has created to the literary tastes of people belonging to all age groups, from children to adults. Her novels portray powerful and highly individualistic women characters who voice their concerns against a variety of issues concerning women. This paper analyses how Gandhi and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni advocate women's right and equality.

Mahatma Gandhiji, had ruthlessly fought for the rights of women in his life. He was a ceaseless crusader of women's equality. He brought the women out of their homes and made them equal participants in all works of life - social as well as political. Under Gandhi's leadership thousands of women took leading roles in freedom struggle. Because of Gandhiji's initiative, the first cabinet of Independent India consisted of two women ministers. According to Gandhi woman was neither Man's plaything, nor his competitor, struggling to be like him. What she needed most was education, the recognition of her birthright to be free and equal, to steer he own destiny side by side with man. Gandhiji Strongly spoke against Child-marriages, the isolation and Subjugation of widow, the cruel domination of men over women, and women's own subservient mentality. In his *Autobiography, My Experiments with Truth* he made various

youthful experiments with truth. Gandhi, from his childhood days was an extraordinary lover of truth. He tried to understand and verify the truth of any new thought and every personal experience he came across. He had read that a wife must always be subjected to her husband's will. Hence he took on the role of an authoritative body husband. Little was he prepared to face the challenge posed by his strong and spirited wife, who stood up to him for her rights with dignity and self- possession, which, in the early years he construed as stubbornness, and later extolled as moral courage. He evolved his ideas on women, and the relationship between men and women, thanks to a series of experiences with his during his formative years. His own pain and regret are evident in his words:

"Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity- to me, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge".

Gandhiji held ancient models of womanhood - Sita, Savitri, Damayanthi and Draupati- in high reverence venerated them for their moral strength; they were not passive, weak women. In his considered opinion: *"To call woman the weaker sex in a libel: it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed is woman less brute than man. If by*

strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?".

Gandhiji visualized great roles for Indian women. He wanted them to be leading soldiers of non-violence. He expected women to transfer their love for their off springs to the whole of humanity. Women could occupy the proud position of mother, maker and a silent leader. She alone can teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for the nectar. Women are a personification of the power of self - suffering. He suggested:

"If only the women of the world would come together they could display such heroic non-violence as to kick away the atom bomb like a mere ball. Women have been so gifted by God. If an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered, what a celebration it would occasion. Similarly, women's marvelous power is lying dormant. If the women of Asia wake up, they will dazzle the world. My experiment in non-violence would be successful if I could secure women's help".

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, the modern epitome of Indian writing in English deserves a place among the literary giants. In her works she largely discusses about the cultural divisions and plight of Indian women and diasporic women in her works. Divakaruni has dealt elaborately on how women are being handled by men.

In the Story "The Disappearance" appearing in her book "Arranged Marriage" the author has constructed and exhibited her message, on oppression. The Protagonist of the story is married and settled in U.S She had left her family but not for the reason what people believed it to be. Her disappearance has a lot more to say. Divakaruni wrote a simple and striking sentence regarding the unseen

Protagonist she wrote, " *She never did wear American Clothes*". This line is a sign from which the readers understand how her husband treated her. She was not allowed to wear dresses of American style though she had an intense desire for it. More over, we can understand from the following lines the strong message that the author wants to convey: " *She'd been out for her evening walk, she took one every day after he got back from the office. Yes, Yes, always alone, she said that was her time for herself*".

Divakaruni explained how much women are caught and made use of in the world of men. They are not allowed to do what they wanted to. Women are continuously struggling and searching for a couple of minutes to be released from the cuffs of men. The protagonist in the story found a way of escape through her evening walk. She finds this particular exercise as a momentary solace to forget her burden. " *He didn't quite understand that*" this was how the author categorized men. The women preferred to go for a walk alone. As a husband, he had failed to understand why his wife wanted to be left alone. There was no quarrel between them, they loved each other, everything was normal, yet she was not happy, In this story oppression seemed to occur smoothly.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni says that men always try to involve in women's matter. They are eager to know each and every inch of their move. Hardly have they left any space for them to act independently. In the name of love, in the name of power, in the name of family head, in every possible way men are governing women. Women appear to be liberated in the society, but every house hold has a tale of domination. Divakaruni brings to light the type of oppression that most women face in the contemporary society.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni questioned the basic men-women relationship in Indian Society, which is essentially a patriarchal Society. In the Short story "Clothes" Sumita's marriage is fixed with Somesh. Sumita

surrendered to Somesh because she felt that it was her wifely duty. Somesh went back to America, Sumita felt that she was unable to recall Somesh's face. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni had shown that readers the paradox of an arranged marriage. Again Sumita who had been fed on traditional ideals felt that it was her moral duty to act like a good Indian wife.

The story reached its climax when Somesh was murdered by some unknown persons. This was an enormous shock to Sumita as she realized that her life had also ended with Somesh's death she further realized that her life, her happiness, her sorrows, her clothes, her habits etc had never been her own but always had been for her husband and his family. At the end of the story, we see Sumita Standing in her bedroom and seeing her image in the mirror. Tradition asked her to wear white, but the mirror, as personified by the heart, showed a different image. Sumita felt that America was calling her. America stood for liberty, gratification and existence. She rejected what fate had given her and decided that she did not want to become a Dove with cutoff wings. She visualized a new independent woman in the mirror. Thus in this story she was able to reject the widow's clothes and position that the Indian

society and the family customarily imposes on women.

It is Divakaruni's professed manifesto to celebrate the courage and humanity of suffering women who have rebelled against oppressive patriarchy and have joined a universal sisterhood. The quest for happiness and harmony is what the character in the collection of short stories "*Arranged Marriage*" are trying to achieve. They are also questioning the values of old traditions and seeking to accomplish something innovative and different. It is time to alter and the priorities of human being are changing. In this changing Scenario, writers like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are rewriting the history of their characters.

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DIALECTIC OF SUBALTERN CONSCIOUSNESS IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S THE EDIBLE WOMAN

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The postcolonial discourse of 1990's reinvented the notions and perceptions in social, cultural and political aspects. The umbrella term 'postcolonialism' is championed by critics like Edward Said, Franz Fanon, Homi K Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak etc. The postcolonial writings bring changes in theoretical perception in literature, history and culture. It is concerned about the loss of identity and insignificance. The colonizers regime of European countries has set aside the native culture for centuries. The awakening of marginalized sectors against the hegemony of colonizers gave rise to postcolonial approaches. The colonizers were the dominant force of center. The colonized are 'the margins', 'the other'. Postcolonial consciousness unravels the hidden policies and politics behind all sorts of dominance. This long held notion of suppression and suspension of reality have muted the indigenous voices. Postcolonial perspective deciphers the voices of subaltern societies. The subaltern study becomes an important issue in the post colonial theory. Subaltern is the catch-all term for all groups who are below or 'inferior rank'. It came into existence out of the writings of Antonio Gramsci. Subaltern study posits the subordination in class, language, race, gender, culture, space, etc. Gayatri Spivak in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" wrote "the subaltern cannot speak".

The subalterns are voiceless. They are subdued by the assimilation and colonialism. The subaltern study is extended to the discipline of history, anthropology, political science, sociology, geography and literature. It exposes the expulsion enforced on minority society. The subaltern is synonymous with insignificance,

powerlessness, enslavement, hegemonic tension. The discursive attribute of subalternity articulates the tension of naïve communion, exploitation of gender, power politics of colonisers, established canon of tradition, prejudiced literary representations etc.

The subaltern study deals with the history of losers, who have been either subdued or evaded. The subaltern groups are always the victims of hegemonic hierarchy. Women, tribes, indigenous people, poor, minority groups, discriminated groups etc are targets of subalternity. Gayatri Spivak writes:

The Subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must now disown with a flourish (308)

Women are the subalterns because they are the victims of subordination and the result is explosion of waves of feminism. The feminist study exploded out of rebellious outlook of women, who are always 'the other' and 'the weaker sex' in the society. She is the subject of male authoritarianism, deprivation of psychological and physical needs, pruned to economic dependence, and subjugated on societal plane, deceived by perverted logic, chained by canonized ancient scriptures, engulfed by unjust established traditions, misleading historical imprints, and patriarchal political policies etc., lead women always to the negative end. The exclusion of women is less bothered and they are over shadowed by men. The viewpoint of Simon de Beauvoir explicitly reveals the subaltern plight of women:

The strong environmental forces of educational and social tradition under the

control of men has resulted in the general failure of women to take a place of human dignity as free and independent existents, associated with men on a plane on intellectual and professional equality, a condition that not only has limited their achievements in many fields but also has given rise to pervasive social evils and has a particularly vitiating effect on the sexual relations between men and women.

- Simon De Beauvoir

Feminist writers over the world have sensed that it is necessary to ventilate their untold miseries. The writers subvert the history of dominant male literary canon. They interrogated the authoritative cultural ethos of men and ventured to articulate the new identity for a new generation women. The notable feminist critics are: Simon De Beauvoir, Millet, Elaine Showalter, Susan Gubar, Sandra Gilbert, Lisa Trurtle, Julia Kristeva etc. Hence in the postcolonial era feminist study rose to prominence. Prasanna Sree in *Psycho Dynamics of Women in the Post Modern Literature* writes:

In many different societies women like colonized subjects have been neglected to the position of 'the other' and colonized by various forms of patriarchal domination. They thus share with colonized races and culture an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression. It is not surprising, therefore that the history and concerns of feminist theory have paralleled developments in post colonial theory (18)

The present paper explores Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* to enumerate the subaltern status of women. Atwood is the Canadian writer. Her works projects how women are caught as "gendered subalterns". The novel *The Edible Woman* brings to light the postcolonial dilemma of a woman who strongly feels for identity and individuality.

The prominent Canadian writer Margaret Atwood has won many awards and honours. Her first novel is *The Edible Woman* (1969). Her stories deal with women's encounter with the

society. Her characters overcome alienation and aim for personal identity. Atwood discards the languages that perpetuate male superiority that represent and transpose a pre-existing reality. Victimization and survival are the twin themes in Atwood's novels. Her novels explore the themes of gender.

The Edible Woman is about the economically independent woman's realization of her marginalized subaltern status as "second sex". It is about a young woman's fight against society, fiancé and food. The novel is considered as an early work of feminism. It is an indictment of "male consumption" of women by patriarchal male consumer. The title of the novel is suggestive by the food imagery which aptly articulates the atrocities of hegemonic attitude of men. The story is about Marian, who is a young graduate working for Market Research Company. She is being occupied by Peter Wollander, a lawyer. Their relation in the beginning worked well. Their initial relationship is non- expectant. Peter proposes and she accepts it. At the beginning she accepts the victim role, but soon realizes that she is trapped. Peter prefers Marian because she is type of woman who would not try to take control of his life. With a job, apartment and a lover she feels her life is complete. As an independent and emancipated woman, she raises a question to herself relating to her identity. She gauges the character of Peter when he is engaged in a conversation. At that time he releases a rabbit which represents the hunter's target. Marian associates this incident with her life and imagines herself as a prey like the rabbit. She thinks of Peter as a hunter armed with his camera, the gun, a substitute, with which he ever fixes her in an image of what she should be. His hobbies of hunting and photography unnerve her. She imagines herself as prey in the hands of Peter. Having selected her with care he displays her with pride to his successful friends in the cocktail party. The intentions of Peter are the replica of hegemonic

reign of men who manipulate the suppressed lots according to their wish. Marian's status is also subaltern, who is seen as a commodity to be valued by the society.

The prospect of marriage makes her an object and she realizes that she is subordinated. She now realizes that her engagement with Peter becomes more serious than she thought to be. It makes her think that her marriage to Peter does not mean mere comfort and protection but beyond that it means death- a form of socially accepted suicide. This rebellious mental agony is represented through the food imagery. The first symptom of anorexia (loss of appetite) is seen in Marian soon after the marriage proposal. She develops an aversion for food this starts with the streak then with egg, rice, pudding and vegetable. Her refusal to eat shows her disapproval against all that Peter represents. The cocktail party arranged by Peter served as an eye opener to her to realize that a woman's primary market value in the marriage market relies on fascinating image. She is simply the commodity not a human being. She says to Peter "you've been trying to assimilate me. But I've made you a substitute, something you'll like much better. That's what you really wanted all along isn't it?" (301). She perceives Peter as a victimizer who carries on technical assault on women by means of his camera. Peter begins to treat Marian more like his wife and not as a better half of his life. Marian becomes overwhelmed by playing wife role and agrees to Duncan's (graduate student of English) proposition.

Despite their engagement, Marian continues to see Duncan secretly, the aimless graduate student of English. Despite the fact that she is engaged to Peter she spends the night with Duncan. Then she went to grocery shop and bought the ingredients needed to prepare cake. She prepares the cake resembling herself, When Peter arrives she accuses him for trying to

destroy her. She insists to devour the cake and puts an end to the engagement. She is more comfortable being a slutty free agent than a bride. After Peter left the place she revives back her instinct to eat the cake. She eats the cake and feels relieved. When Duncan arrives he gives him the rest of the cake.

Marian's quest of 'becoming' describes Atwood's feminist polemics against the restrictive gender role enforced upon a woman in a paternalistic society. The dilemma of Marian delineated by Atwood describes how women are inferior. The psychological dimension of the novel is revealed through claustrophobic atmosphere and food imagery. The imagery elucidates the tension inherent in woman who longs for individual identity. Women's individuality is being eaten up by men who are hungry monger on women's self. The woman in the novel as the edible image explicitly elucidates the subaltern position. She is viewed either as edible object or edible maker in the society. The pressure Marian undergoes projects woman as inferior. The heroine strives to rise from subalternity to sublimity. The dilemma in which she has been caught as to be the victim of the society or the victor of self provides possible plane for Marian to restore her from subalternity to esteem and superiority.

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FRACTURING IDENTITIES IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S THE MISTRESS OF SPICES

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Abstract

Representation of fractured identity issues is a thematic element powerfully present in the work of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Although identity is a commonly explored theme in general, it is through fragmentation in her novels that struggles are often identified and trauma is illustrated. Complex, fragmenting experiences of persons living in the Indian diaspora are frequently present in novels by Divakaruni along with continual employment of fracturing in terms of structure, imagery, plot, language, and character. It unfurls the through its protagonist Tilo, an Indian immigrant in America, who is endowed with magical abilities to conjure the power of spices which she uses for healing people at her store in Oakland. The present paper explores the jagged paths that the characters had to encounter and studying fractured identity as a result of diaspora, I assert that by successfully processing fractured identity issues, the women in the story are ultimately empowered.

Keywords: Fracturisation, In-betweenness, Diaspora, Tilo, Identity.

Introduction

"The art of dissolving boundaries is what living is all about" - Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a post colonialist giant of Indian literature is involved in what it means to leave girlhood and enter womanhood. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni had born Chitralakha Banerjee. She was born in 1957 in Calcutta, India. One of her first memories is that of her grandfather telling her the stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata, ancient Indian epics. She made the observation that unlike the male heroes the main relationships that woman had were with the opposite sex-husbands, sons, lovers or opponents. They never had any important women friends. This topic would eventually become important to Divakaruni's writing. Divakaruni was raised as, and still is a devout Hindu. She attended a convent school in India run by Irish nuns during her childhood. She went on to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Calcutta in 1976. That same year she went to the United States to attend Wright State University where she received a Master's Degree. She received a PhD in English from the University of California, Berkeley in 1985. Divakaruni's short story collections *Arranged Marriage* won

American Book Award in (1995). Her major novels include *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *Queen of Dreams*, *One Amazing Thing*, *Palace of Illusions* and *Oleander Girl*. Although the greater part of her novels is written for adults, and focus on the experiences of South Asian Immigrants, she writes for children as well as adults. She has also written a young adult series called *The Brotherhood of the Conch* which unlike many of her adult novels takes place wholly in India and draws on the culture and folklore region.

Her themes include the Indian experiences, contemporary America, women and the joys and challenges of living in a multicultural world and she has published novels in multiple genres, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, and fantasy.

The term 'Diaspora' was initially used for scattering and exile of Jews from their homeland. In other words a space changed with the possibilities of multiple challenges. According to Robert Cohen; From 1960s and 1970s the classical meaning of diaspora was description of dispersion of Africans, Armenians and Irish. 1980s onwards the term diaspora was deployed as expatriates, expels, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants

and racial minorities. From mid 1990s diaspora stands for the people who live outside their national territories. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their book *Key concepts in Postcolonial Studies* define 'diaspora' as "The voluntary or forcible movement of people from their homelands into new regions" (68). The exile or displacement is mainly based on three types of phenomena, namely forced, half forced or half willed and willed consequences. The Jewish community was forced to exile, whereas during the colonial period people were uprooted to serve the British Empire in different parts of the world and their settlement in alien country was half forced. The third dimension of expatriation is the willed choice of migrants from the third world countries for greener pastures in the developed countries.

Because of the profoundly deep impact of immigration, individuals experience a wide range of difficulties in relocation. Ideas about homeland, nationality, role, responsibility, desire, obligation, expectation, and perception are challenged when a person goes through the experience of moving from one country to another. Ranajit Guha asserts that "to be in a diaspora is already to be branded by the mark of distance" and as a result the immigrant becomes an outsider to his/her home country and also in his/her host country" (155). Lack of cohesion in the lives of immigrants creates a place where an immigrant can no longer feel at home anywhere, and subsequently loses his/her sense of past, present, and future simultaneously. The immigrant who has left a home country has essentially 'disowned' his/her history and the subsequent lack of a space in which to belong equates to "a loss of the world in which the migrant has had his own identity forged" (156). To compound that, often "[the migrant] has nothing to show... except that moment of absolute discontinuity" (157). So, in this complete state of loss and lack of belonging, the diaspora is a painful place to be.

The *Mistress of Spices* is full of people negotiating the immigrant experience and Divakaruni skillfully builds an enchanted story upon identity crisis. The protagonist, Tilottamma or Tilo is originally from India, then trained to be a mistress of spices by a mystical teacher, The Old One in a god forbidden island. She is mistress of sesame seeds, and like all others must follow the three dictums to wit, look after desires of others, never leave the spices store, and never touch anyone else's skin. Tilo is trained to walk over fire, and control her senses. After the completion of the training each of the mistress has to go through the Sampath fire and choose the country they want to go. And thus she is placed in charge of a store 'Spices Bazaar' in San Francisco, where she caters to an older Indian man called Dadaji, a male named Kwesi, a women named Myisha, a taxi driver named Haroun Rehman, Jagit and his mother, as well as a man named Raven. She prepares special spices and mixes them to improve their lives.

The *Mistress of Spices* solidly fits within the 'worlding' to which Bhaba refers, while simultaneously assuming the unique perspective that Lisa Lau refers to: "The positionality of diasporic South Asian women writers can be understood to be a somewhat uneasy one as they simultaneously struggle to negotiate their identities and yet find themselves occupying a vantage point relative to those writing from within South Asia" (243). The perspective is unique and provides for an interesting position in which to observe and describe the challenges of immigrant life in America. Furthermore, because the negotiation of identity becomes a repeated element of literature written by women of diaspora, it becomes noteworthy to examine how and where it is exhibited in the stories.

The major diasporic element in the novel is multiple identities and resultant identity crisis and cracked images. Many characters in the novel have multiple names which exemplifies

multiple identities. For instance, the protagonist has five names. When she was talking to Raven she said, "I too have had more than one. But only one of them is my true name" (152). She was named as Nayan Tara by her parents, Bhagyavati by the pirates group which kidnapped her, Tilo or Tilottama by the First Mother who had trained her in mastering the power of spices, Maya by Raven, an American, who loved her and the Mistress of Spices by the general public. Raven too has many names it seems. When he met Tilo at the Spices Store she asked him his name. He replies, "What name shall I tell you? I have had so many" (152). Raven's mother too has two names. Her first name was Evvie but her later name was Celestina. It seems that Raven too had multiple names and this fact angers him. When Tilo asked him his name he replied, "What name shall I tell you? I have had so many" (152). Regarding his true name he said "I'm not sure I can tell which one it is" (153). This signifies that diasporas acquire multiple identities for various reasons. Consequently, they experience identity crisis and their image is cracked or fractured one.

Some of the most powerful examples of fracturization for characters occur in physical trauma experienced. Haroun, for example, is a character that is introduced early in the novel and the many elements of his fragmented character become a repeated focus. Tilo feels protective and worried about Haroun in a way she cannot quite define, but from very early on she senses his good nature may be short lived: "O Haroun, I sent up a plea for you into the crackling air you left behind.... But there was a sudden explosion outside... It drowned out my prayer" (29). Later when Tilo puts a hand on Haroun's new taxicab, she is overwhelmed with a vision of disturbing physical damage to Haroun, in which she sees someone slumped against a steering wheel; in reflection, she asks herself "the skin is it broken-bruised, or only a shadow falling?" As Haroun leaves, Tilo

observes him as "silhouetted against a night which opens around him like jaws" (117). His body appears to her in this way almost as though she can sense an immediate danger of physical damage. The many uses of fragmented imagery in this scene illustrate the continuing fracturization that Haroun experiences and set the stage for future fracture. Further development of the fragmentation of Haroun involves him actually being physically assaulted and robbed. As Tilo waits for him outside of his home, she is anxious; the description is again full of fracturization, referring to footsteps "splintering pavement" and sirens "drilling through the bones of [Tilo's] skull in corkscrew motion" followed by images of the "shatter of brown glass" (242). When Haroun finally stumbles up to his apartment, his body is crumpled and bloody as a result of the attack. The doctor who attends to him says it "looks like they used an iron rod. Skull could have cracked like snail shells" (244). Haroun's experiences offer multiple illustrations of fragmentation; it is undeniable that one of the most powerful moments of fracture is the physical violence to his body. It is also remarkable that Haroun is experiencing such fracturization because of his status as a character who is a rather new immigrant to the United States. The presentation of fracturization in the descriptions and experiences of Haroun are a powerful illustration of the way in which Indian-Americans often experience a shattering of their former selves. One of the most disturbing and painful scenes in the novel is likewise fraught with the physical fracturing of another Indian-American person. The words used to describe the attack on Mohan are heavy with references to things being broken, fractured, splintered, and fragmented. As his attackers approach, Mohan "hears the steps, fall leaves breaking under boots, a sound like crushed glass" (179). The two men who attack him are skinheads, and the attack is definitely racially motivated as they slur out "Sonofabitch

Indian, shoulda stayed in your own goddamn country" (180). As he is being beaten, Mohan experiences such excruciating pain that Divakaruni describes it "like hammers breaking" (181). He cannot even wrap his mind around the horrific way he is breaking apart; he tries to defend himself "even though it hurts to breathe and a small jagged thought - ribs? - spins up for a moment into the lighted part of his mind" (180). At one point experiences "a blow to the head so hard that his thoughts splinter into yellow stars" (181). Disjointed reflections like this provide further illustration of fracturization of the text while also indicating just how deep the physical fracturing affects the individual character. Throughout the scene, Mohan's attack is described in simile, metaphor, and other figurative language that constantly evoke fracturing. Due to the profound level of trauma, Mohan's experience leaves him fractured in multiple ways even beyond the split he's already experiencing as an immigrant Indian-American. This fragmentation is significant as it illustrates the way in which his identity is becoming fractured as a result of the trauma he is experiencing in his immigrant life.

Mohan is not the only character that experiences shattering on a physical level. Although Lalita experiences sustained trauma over a period of time, she too is fractured physically. When she first comes into the store, Tilo feels from her a desire for life to be different but even more powerfully recognizes that Lalita is in physical pain from injury. The physical abuse that is inflicted on Lalita at the hands of her husband, Ahuja, is apparent immediately and the body continues to be a powerful example of the fracturing that Lalita experiences. Lalita's body is abused to the point of actual fracture: "He started shaking me so hard I could hear the bones in my neck make snapping sounds" (286). Many of the woman in the shelter Lalita is staying in experienced horrific abuse as well, and one she writes "had her skull fractured with a wrench" (288). The

body is a mode in which Divakaruni is able to powerfully illustrate the level of fracture that occurs with characters in the story.

The physical body is the primary assertion of identity, both in appearance and action. A person is usually judged first and foremost on what they look like - tall, short, thin, fat, light-skinned, dark-skinned. For immigrants, the experience of physical difference can be multiplied as they often have different ethnic features that many of their American counterparts. Furthermore, as evidenced repeatedly, aggression and prejudice is often acted out in acts of violence against the body. In each instance in *The Mistress of Spices* where the body is involved, Divakaruni skillfully employs fracturization as a way of emphasizing the potentially horrific effects of diaspora on the physical condition of the immigrant. Since she paints so many pictures of fractured bodies, and the body is 40 established as a powerfully significant element of identity, such representations carry great strength. When their bodies are fractured, characters in the novel try to express themselves in a variety of ways. As Divakaruni's immigrant characters struggle, they try to communicate experiences, feelings, concerns, needs, etc. In that process, language becomes yet another site for fracturization. Difficulties with language expression combined with a multitude of language barriers often create challenges, prevent effective articulation, and/or block healthy interpersonal interaction within the diasporic community.

Though emigrants experience the racial discrimination, homelessness, adjustment problem their migration has empowered and liberated many of them. For instance, Hameeda was divorced by her husband as she could not give birth to male child. Her brother brought her to the USA and helped her to learn English and computer. Thereby she has acquired the ability to earn and to be independent. Her brother Shamsur came in search of a job started working as a chef in a small inn first, then in a

big inn and shortly he will become a manager in a famous restaurant. Lalita, reluctantly came with her husband due to force by parents, thought of family reputation and her sisters' future. She experienced a lot of torture by her husband. In a letter to Tilo, she writes: "I cannot write what else he did to me. It is too shameful" (270). In order to get rid of it she contacted people who come to the help of such people and got rid of him. They are ready to help her to set up a small tailoring business. Geeta had got very good education and consequently got a good job in a company. Thus several characters have got liberating experience. Another important feature of diasporic literature is to reclaim native culture and rewriting it. It seems the main objective of the novel is to do so. The title of the novel itself underscores it. History is the witness that India has been known for its spices. The *Mistress of Spices* diagnoses problems of emigrants and offers suitable spices to end their problems as physicians diagnose and prescribe medicine. Almost all who called on her got rid of their problems with the magical working of spices. Out of fifteen chapters, thirteen chapters are titled after Indian Spices. Through this, Divakaruni wishes to decentre the centre by providing central space to the marginalized knowledge system. It is like elevating the local to the global level and offering local solution to global problems. It also involves deconstruction and rejection of western cannons. By underlining and bringing to light the native natural solutions to emigrants' problems, the author wishes to decolonize the minds of the colonized.

Another feature of diasporic writing is conflict or in-betweenness. Most of the characters are caught between two ways of thinking; western and eastern. Emigrant parents strongly desire to give their children modern English education based on western model but expect them to follow Indian traditions. Consequently such children face the problem of in-betweenness. Since they are born and

brought up in host country for them that is the home. But their parents insist that their homeland is India. Willingly or unwillingly they accept it. Thus they do not have single home but multiple homes. For instance, Geeta's parents bring her up in Oakland, offer her good education, she has got A grades at all levels, till the completion of education she followed her parents' advice. But after getting a job in a company her attitude has changed. Her grandfather does not like her coming home late. He remarks, "If a young girl should work late-late in the office with other men and come home only after dark and sometimes in their car too? Back at Jamshedpur they would have smeared dung on our faces for that" (85). Geeta loves Juan and wishes to marry him. When her parents oppose it she leaves home. As everyone expects she does not go and live with Juan but stays with her friend hoping to convince and get the consent of her parents. Lalita faces the conflict if she should continue to tolerate the torture given by her husband or she should resist and give up her husband. Tilo also experiences conflict at various contexts. As the *Mistress of Spices*, she is not supposed to touch the hands of any customer. But when Haroun comes and pleads to read his palm she faces conflict and finally takes his palm into her hands. She is not likely to go out of the spices store but when Geeta's grand-father requests her to go to Geeta's office to convince her. She is caught in conflict, in spite of warning by spices; she takes the risk and goes Geeta's office. So also she goes to the place where Haroun lives and offers him spices. She is not supposed to love anybody but she is drawn to Raven as equally as to spices. She is not likely to use spices for her own sake but in order to acquire attractive look she takes-in Makardwaj, the king of spices, acquires the desired look, goes out with Raven to his palace and spends a night with him. The novel has, besides the above explored diasporic elements, many more diasporic elements. The novel throws light on

several feminist issues also. It is known for its employment of narrative devices like the first person narration, non-linear plot, shift in time and place, flash back, magic realism, story within story, epistolary method, hybridity of language, inter textuality etc.

Banerjee's writing affirms that diaspora is not merely a scattering or dispersion but an experience made up of collectivities and multiple journeys. It's an experience that is determined by who travels, where, how and under what circumstances. Almost all the expatriates who emigrated from India to America face the clash of opposing cultures, a feeling of alienation which is followed by the attempts to adjust, to adopt and to accept. Only the degree of this adaptation differs according to the generations. Banerjee had moved away from her location, through this work she

recollects her homeland, and as an outsider observes details with objectivity. It reflects as a reminder of her identity. Chitra Banerjee thus analyses the relationship of women with universal problems of discrimination, displacement, disturbance and disorder thus articulating the diasporic consciousness in this work.

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DIASPORIC CRISIS: IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPE IN UMA PARAMESWARAN'S MANGOES ON MAPLE TREE

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Abstract

*Uma Parameswaran, one of the major Indo-Canadian writers portrays the multi-dimensional facets of cultural pluralism in Canada which is undergoing its third phase of expatriation. Her living in Manitoba helps her in the observation of Canadian government's bilingual policy. As an ethnic minority writer she herself experiences the 'third space' which is further reflected through her works. Her first novel *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* (2002) portrays the lives of two families Bhaves and Moghes settled in Canada leaving their home land India. The Diasporic crisis they face in a foreign country and the ethnic problems they encounter become the core part of the novel. The prevailing tension within the family and in addition the tension that arise from the greater society in which they play minority comprehends the real chaotic living of the immigrant people. In spite of the geographical Canadian landscape that affects human living, the societal constructed landscape like individual property, house, land, also affects the human living there. This article focuses to bring the feelings of rootlessness, uprooted identity and thereby revoke the group consciousness among the oppressed minorities.*

Keywords: *Ethnic Minority, Group consciousness, Uprooted Identity.*

Jean Paul Sartre the well-known French philosopher uses a term 'engagement' in referring to the process of acceptability among individual for his actions signifying a political consequence. The same concept of 'engagement' can be applied in Uma Parameswaran's novel *Mangoes on the maple tree* where the main character Sharad Bhava decides to leave his home land to settle in a foreign place. As a result, the family experienced the sense of loneliness which made Sharad to realize of his wrong decision and finally to establish a 'collective solidarity' within themselves through mutual support. The feeling of uprooted identity, rootlessness is one of the major issues concerned in the life of diasporans which Parameswaran also rationally records.

The isolation and interdependence the immigrant family faces there and the steps they take to resolve the existential problem by positively or consciously engaging in willed action is much reflected this novel. The place of living ie: the landscape of existence also plays a vital role in the life of people making them aware of the responsibility and need for survival. Thus 'Existential Engagement' is a term which insists on the issues related to

political awareness and bad faith in the minds of people. Parameswaran also focuses on the impact of the vast and harsh landscape which problematize people or in some extent makes the people accustomed to it.

She herself writes in her essay:

Though the landscape around me has been cedar and spruce for the last twenty five years, the landscape I am most familiar with is treed with mango and jasmine. I can describe without effort the tender yellow blossoms and the hailstone showers that brought green mangoes to the ground but I cannot be as effortless when it comes to the pine cones I have been ranking off my yard for the last so many years. (104- 05)

Parameswaran compares the Assinboine of Canada to the Ganges of India and tries to break the cultural barriers of the both land. But the New-Canadians experiencing racial discrimination, disempowerment, and uprooted identity is also much reflected in her work. Kearns one of her colleagues observes in Parameswaran's works: A sense of community has steadily enriched her work, which deals with the intersection of different cultures and the adaptation of ancient traditions to life in new and unfamiliar circumstances. (2007, 7-8).

Parameswaran traces the four phases of immigrant settlement in which the younger settlement are forcefully bound to experience disparate cultures.

Among the seniors there are of two types namely –those over middle age...those who have spent their working life in Canada, and those who come to Canada after retiring from India, to join their adult children (2007, 213). The first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is so busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is when immigrants start taking part in the shaping of Diaspora existence by involving themselves in ethnocultural issues. The fourth is when they have –arrived and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues. (2007, 305)

Mangoes on the Maple Tree also deals with all the four phases of Immigrants exclusively their problems overlapping together. The Bhav family which migrates from Pune to Manitoba is a New Canadian family settles aiming to improve their middle class status through financial position. Sharad and Savitri with their children Jyoti and Jayant occupy a third space in the land leaving their sparse comforts in their ancestral home. Sharad's real-estate business is an ironical hint on the man helping other man to occupy foreign land in the name of business. Sharad's reputation in the family also gets lowered because of his job. Jayant shows his unhappiness towards his father for leaving his engineering job in India which might have elevated his position higher. The writer herself introduce Sharad's character being adopted to the new culture as:

Forms, legal advice bribes just to get people to do their job. In order to expedite the paperwork, his father had legally renounced all claims to ancestral and paternal property. And now he was a real estate broker. Betrayal, his lifelong companion. (109)

The cultural impact on male and female children in Canada is different which can be noted in this novel. Savitri toils hard as a schoolteacher worrying about Jyoti's adolescent behaviour. The royal treatment at their grandparent's house being replaced by harsh racial discrimination in Canada makes Jayant decide to leave home in 1976 Pontiac car to California for a year. Jyoti's love with Pierre a White Canadian and her thoughts on expecting her parents to accept her marriage with "...not someone of _our own kind" (9) clearly emphasis the cultural calamity. Sharad's sister Veejala a scientist also settles in Canada along with her family following her brother. Her son Vithal reveals the prejudice towards the Canadians same way as Jayant: "They-white Canadians-don't want us to assimilate. They want us out. We'll be squashed like bugs soon" (81). However his love for the white girl Donna who according to him "...is like us, very Hindu in her values more so than many of us" (92) show his mentality to accept the new situation. Vithal also supports Jyoti's love for Pierre while her brother Jayant resist because of his immersed greatness for his ancestry. He remembrance then and there about their families proud history which had passed on him through bedtime stories make a strong feeling of dislike towards his father.

Uma Parameswaran herself adopts the technique of using Hindi and Marathi words without glossary or textual explanation to identify India in Canada. This kind of multiculturalism makes the novel an engaged literature. The author's preoccupation with Indian landscape and culture and her inability to drive away her mental mapping of the Indian soil can be very well observed. Veejala resigning her job, her decision to return to India where her freedom and liberty can be exercised shows the repatriate nature of immigrant settlers in common. Savitri who first wonders at her sister-in-law's decision to return back later accepts

telling "But why not? India had moved on, would move on" (140-1).

The complicated part played by these immigrants is through getting accustomed to the newer way of living in their migrated land. The two women characters Savitri and Veejala show a complete contrast in their belief and way of living. Savitri finds Winnipeg to be "...a friendly place of warm, hardworking people and large, closely-knit families"(22). But Veejala on the other hand shows dilemma in her decision towards living in a migrated land. Her dislikes towards Canada and yet not wanting her children to be reminded of their past life at Pune "...you have only bad memories of Pune...Besides, this is home to you, and one can have only one home at any given time" (47) show the writer's confused state in presenting the character of Veejala. Anant accepting Veejala's decision of leaving for India and happily dropping her at the airport further validates how Parameswaran gives a male voice to hold her women characters position.

You shouldn't worry about the house,|| he said, smoothly deflecting it from himself. ...You should go ahead with your plans, get away from housework and, for heaven's sake, away from guilt feelings. (212).

Anant, having realized the pressure exerted by social norms for a wife leaving the family, consoles Veejala for her guilt conscience and explains "I decided to stay because you decided to go away" (214). Such an understanding between a husband and wife shows the societal cruelty in an alien country. Jyoti's attraction towards two men namely Pierre and Sridhar and her justification to Donna "...if she, Jyoti, wanted to play around with two men and not let go of either, why shouldn't Donna" (208) shows Jyoti's complete surrender to premarital sex with Pierre. Uma Parameswaran as a transplanted writer present the first generation settlers being nostalgic of India and the second generation settlers being initially analytic and critical of their position and finally accepting

and acknowledging the new land as a source of their survival. The allusion to Indian tree and the uselessness of evergreen trees are metaphoric and philosophical in Indian terms.

Jayant thinking about his mother land yet his opinion to help the country during flood purely shows his readiness to accept the land where he lives , "Our people, our old country...Dad there's no our people, no old country for anyone in the world anymore, least of all for us. This is one land and here we shall stay" (30-1). Jyoti confirming the mixture of two cultures pangs the solution for immigrant life:

We will plant evergreens and oaks with roots...And grow mangoes on maples, and jamuns on birches, and bilvas on spruces. God willing, we shall...Krish and one of those little Indian girls born here, Romona's sister may be, Vithal and Donna, she and Pierre or...whoever it was to be|| (221).

Uma Parameswaran mixes up both Indian and Canadian landscapes while using analogy and metaphor in describing the life of her narrative. From Vithal's observation "...Mangoes and maples don't mix. And whisk" (74) and Jayant's observation, "you should make every effort to merge, since you are here to stay...this is your country. You have to try to assimilate ...The Canadians would appreciate that" (81), Parameswaran's confused transcendent nature in presenting the diasporic problem is revealed

When the news of flood arrives everyone thinks in terms of their possible means to help for a common cause. Savitri's words proves the helpless condition of the settlers in an immigrant land but even then a single unified identity as Canadians to extend their hand while crises is revealed: "Sad isn't it that there has to be such a disaster before people will come together...on the other hand, it is comforting to know that people do help out at such times. Just think how terrible it would be if we got so hardened that even disasters didn't make us human again"(176). Thus landscape

and place of living determines the final condition of the immigrant people making them adopt accordingly. Uma Parameswaran's novel also stresses on the importance of landscape which had made the people of various identity to get united as one without minding their past identity.

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RACIAL DISTRESS OF THE NATIVE SELF IN ADICHIE'S AMERICANAH

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Abstract

The present paper "Racial distress of the native self in Adichie's *Americanah*" explores the modern attitudes to Race and Racism. This paper is a critique of critique of race and racism across three continents like America, England and Nigeria and also the biting observations on the subject of racism in the view of Adichie. It also highlights Adichie's instances of people overcoming racism through close friendship and romantic love. *Americanah* wrangles with perceptions of race in America. It is because Ifemelu, the protagonist of the novel is unused to the concept, which is a very smart commentary on the hegemonic functions of American thought. This paper gives a clear thought by which racism could be defeated through giving a detailed account of the various incidents that occurs due to the racial distress.

Keywords: Racism, Discrimination, Hegemony, Racial relations.

Introduction

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to human heart than its opposite." -Nelson Mandela

Racism is the discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity. Today, the use of the term 'racism' does not fall under a single definition. The ideology underlying racist practices often includes the idea that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior. The Holocaust is the classic example of institutionalized racism which leads to the death of millions of people based on their race.

Racist ideology can be manifested in many aspects of social life. Racism can be presented in social actions, practices or political systems that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices. Within the black community, the roles of the oppressor and oppressed are re-enacted between men and women, so that women must go through the same encoding and sublimation to cope up with

male oppression that blacks go through, to cope up with racial oppression.

Black history in America forms a repressed, encoded and ruptured alternative to the American history, a chain between the generations bound by sympathetic subjugation. The misunderstanding between blacks and whites occurs because of an inherent prejudice that they are superior to blacks because they are whites. This feeling of white American is always being right, since black is certainly detained to be wrong, is used by them as a whipping lash for blacks. But it cannot be denied that the black themselves are touched by evils of various kinds such as violence, incest, a sense of defeatism and a collaborative attitude towards their oppressors. The blacks in white dominated America are treated as slaves or animals.

Though *Americanah* is a story of individual characters, it is also an analysis of race and racism in the three continents namely America, England and Nigeria. Adichie's *Americanah* is peppered with her observations on the core issue of 'racism'.

The novel begins with a central character Ifemelu, a Nigerian woman living in Princeton. Adichie introduces Ifemelu at a time when she has created a successful identity for herself as an American citizen. She has a fellowship at

Princeton, a successful blog called 'Raceteenth or Various Observations about American Blacks by a Non-American Black'. In Ifemelu's blog posts Adichie is more direct in her criticism about race, identity and American culture. Ifemelu in her blog shows how race and class often overlap in America. She uses to interview random people that she finds herself on public transportation about racial issues and their opinions.

As the novel begins she is preparing herself ready to go back to Nigeria after fifteen years. Ifemelu getting her hair braided acts as a frame story for the first part of the novel. Posts from the blogs of Ifemelu will be scattered throughout the narrative, and through them Adichie is able to give more racial commentary. It is shown that Ifemelu's gaze is similar to Adichie's own, always noticing the small things that make up the pictures of culture, race or identity.

In *Americanah*, Race is given much importance. Equally important is her Aunt Uju, with whom she lives when she first arrives in America, and who settles permanently in U.S. Aunt Uju, has a major role in moulding Ifemelu. Ifemelu witnesses the growth of Dike, her aunt's son. His troubled development hints at the terrible difficulty of raising a young black man territory in America. Dike grows up in America yet experiences racism through microaggressions. A camp counselor tells him that he does not need sunscreen and his classmates teasingly asks him for weed that contribute to a confusion and alienation that ultimately causes him to attempt suicide. Coming into a country where the majority of the race tells them their race is inferior. Ifemelu, Aunt Uju and Dike along with other African immigrants, actually begin to think that they are worthless.

Ifemelu's story begins with a description of the pleasures of Princeton where she lives in the beginning of the novel. She launches a list of all that she finds unpleasant, the things or feels that

are denied to anyone due to colour. Once a white man, who sat next to her in the train commented, "Race is totally overhyped these days, black people need to get over themselves, it is all about class now, the haves and the have-nots" (4). And she uses it as the opening sentence of a post titled "Not All Dread Locked White American Guys Are Down" (4).

Another man from Ohio, who is seated next to her in a flight wanted to know what she means by 'Lifestyle Blog' and she tells him, expecting him to become reserved, "The only race that matters is the human race" (4). But he says, "Ever write about adoption? Nobody wants black babies in this country, and I don't mean biracial.. I mean black. Even the black families don't want them" (4). He also tells her that he and his wife had adopted a black child and their neighbours look at them as if they have chosen to become martyrs for a dubious cause. By this conversation with the man from Ohio, Ifemelu in her blog posts about him as a "Badly Dressed White Middle Managers from Ohio Are Not Always What You Think" (5). And this blog has received the greatest comments. Likewise her blog carries the post related to race and racism for which she has attained a great honour. Her conversation with the man from Ohio affects her deeply. America does not want black babies and Black babies growing up in America is aware of the existing discrimination based on color towards them.

Ifemelu says that she has come from a country where race is not an issue, and she becomes aware of the racial issues, upon her arrival to America. Adiche brings to limelight the hardships African immigrants have to undergo in adaptation and acculturation processes in the host land. In the novel, Ifemelu at one instance says that, many people do not perceive themselves as blacks until they move into a cultural environment in which their 'race' conditions their lives and makes them to become someone different in the eyes of others. Ifemelu does not really think of herself as black.

There is a racial hierarchy in Nigerian culture, as light skinned or mixed race people are considered more attractive, and people use products to make their skin lighter, but when Ifemelu and Obinze goes to America and England respectively, they find that racism is a much more pervasive part of life. Ifemelu discovers race and starts to consider herself as black, only when she is forced to adapt to America's complex racial politics.

Ifemelu's blackening ensues as the result of the covert and overt racism, she witnesses and experiences. Her blog is fully about her daily encounter with racial differences. When Ifemelu wanted to get her eyebrows waxed, she was informed that they do not work upon curly hair. Ifemelu wanted to disclose the racial tension, but she finds herself unable to talk about. She understands the passive nature of Blacks due to respectability politics which ensures that racism is an extinct phenomenon. Her experience is made not only against her sense of self but against her sense of community. Through the exploration of 'race' relations in America, Adichie exposes the many factors that determine people's lives through their skin colour or their birth origin.

The beginning of the novel shows Ifemelu as let down and uneasy, muted by the world she inhabits. She becomes nameless, only a colour, a generic type. She irritatingly says that she has come from a country where race is not an issue, and she does not think herself as black and she only becomes black when she comes to America. She totally experiences a worrying discontinuity. She was 'Myself' then, suddenly, she was black. In becoming black, the self is subsumed in 'blackness'. She falls as a victim to American racism when her black American boyfriend, Blaine, organizes a protest against racism in front of a library at Yale, she instead attends a party, already executing her escape from a racial struggle of which she realizes she wants no part.

Ifemelu is a peculiar character and a rare individual, who does not hide that she is quite secure in her own sense of attractiveness and worth. She knows that she is adorable, but Adichie neatly shows that racism even weakens the aggressive and bold character Ifemelu with everyday comments and stares about her hair and people around her assume her to be the projection of Africanness. Ifemelu herself gives the solution to overcome race in her blog and at the dinner party, where she says that the simplest solution to overcome the racial issues in America is romantic love. She mean the love which is not the kind of safe shallow love where the purpose is that both people remain comfortable, but the real deep romantic love, which is the kind of love that twists, wrings out and makes one to breathe through the nostrils of the beloved.

The element of racism is seen when the patients refuses to have Auntie Uju as their doctor just because she is black and people assuming the white Curt could not be dating black Ifemelu. It is at this juncture, Ifemelu starts a blog about race and Adichie scatters blog posts throughout the novel. Through these posts Adichie is able to be outwardly critical of racism in America. There is a ladder of racial hierarchy in America. White is always on the top, specifically white Anglo-saxon protestant and American black is always on the bottom, and what is in the middle depends on time and place.

Adichie makes multiple important points like the idea of 'becoming' black. It affirms the fact that 'blackness' is not present in Africa because the racial baggage of America does not exist. Then she points to the combining of African cultures into one in America, both by whites who do not care to understand and by Africans who often feel the need to band together. Adichie holds nothing back in her cultural criticism. The Nigerians get just as much as satire as Americans.

She effectively portrays the many struggles of immigrants in America who are the poor victims of race. In the case of the African-American Taxi drivers, whom Ifemelu meets in America are a crisis of racial difference by which they are ranked lower in the society. Ifemelu makes the kinds of small cultural observations that make up much of the novel, like nothing that Mariama is lying about the air conditioner, but in a way it preserves a kind of shared fantasy about their status in America.

Hair becomes more of a symbol as Ifemelu chooses natural over artificial. Black women are expected to relax their hair or somehow make it more like white women's hair according to the standards of beauty and professionalism. Ifemelu, decides to embrace her natural hair and not subject it to chemicals. Thus the hair represents how American society makes no place for black independence or beauty. Adichie explains the meaning of her symbol of black women's hair that it is not just a literary symbol in the novel, but also an encapsulation of American racism in real life. Barack Obama emerges as an important figure for Ifemelu. Ifemelu's blog is not only about cultural criticism and humor, but also another inclusive community for black women choosing their natural hair.

Race is not really an issue in Nigeria, except for the aesthetic idea that lighter skin is more beautiful than darker skin. Once Obinze enters the inner circle, the system is all set up to work for him. More hints of racial issues are witnessed in Nigeria as people gets more respect if they have a white 'General Manager' even if it is a fraud action. Part of the worldwide of the rich is elevating Western culture over the Nigerian culture. Like many of the Nigerians Adichie portrays, Ifemelu's mother trying to appear more beautiful or formal in dressing up for church.

Obinze's life-long fascination for America leads to a cruel irony when he denies an American visa and Ifemelu ends up becoming

an American citizen. Obinze's compliment elevates the lighter skin over the darker skin, but it still elevates the American culture over the Nigerian culture.

On her first night in America Ifemelu is instantaneously introduced to the country's intricate racial politics and hierarchies. As soon as Ifemelu moves to America, Adichie sprinkles the story line with posts from Ifemelu's later blog about race, showing just how all-encompassing an issue it is. When Ifemelu reads the articles on a website called Nigerian Village she sees another facet of immigrant unhappiness, which lashes out at other immigrants and desperately trying to keep up a facade of success and happiness. The arguments on the website prefigure the comments on Ifemelu's own blog.

Another issue Adichie brings up about American society is the prevalence of mental disorders like depression, anxiety and alienation. A new immigrant like Ifemelu does not understand all the things that would be offensive to an African-American, as she does not think of herself as the same race as an African-American. But she is white, because of her skin colour.

Ifemelu's initial adjustments in America allow Adichie to make all kinds of observations about American culture and ways in which it is different from the rest of the world. Initially the cultural and racial disparities are innocent and humorous but later they become more serious. Ginika echoes Auntie Uju's comments that Americans will believe anything about Africans and think they all look the same. This is humorous but it is a side effect of deeply ingrained racism in American society. James Baldwin is a famous African-American writer who writes boldly about racism, and it is through his experiences Ifemelu identifies the matter of race. Ifemelu would come to realize later that Kimberly used "beautiful" in a peculiar way. "I'm meeting my beautiful friend from graduate school," Kimberly would say, or

"We're working with this beautiful woman on the inner-city project," and always, the woman she referred to would turn out to be quite ordinary-looking, but always black (146). With Kimberly, Adichie introduces a character that allows her to observe and criticize wealthy, liberal white Americans. Racism in America is not always obvious or intentional. It is presented even in the way Kimberly calls every black person 'beautiful' seeing them as 'other' and so being accidentally superior. This moment is a rare example of real connection across race and nationalities. Kimberly accepts Ifemelu's critique and the two develop a real friendship and their relationship helps each other to overcome race.

A carpet cleaner who arrives at Kimberly's house is shocked when Ifemelu answers the door. He looks hostile until she reveals that she is the 'help' and then he relaxes and acts friendly. This attitude of him is a good example

of a small incident that has a large and complex issue behind it racial hierarchy. Ifemelu might be rich enough to own such a house, but the fact that she is 'black' which matters. Thus in this paper race and racism are dealt as a big and complicated issues on their own, and the ways by which racism can be defeated is also poignantly discussed.

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IDENTITY CRISIS IN ANITA NAIR'S *THE BETTER MAN*

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Abstract

Anita Nair, like many other writers of novels of mainstream literature, has chosen self-discovery as the central theme of her novels *The Better Man*. The theme of search for self has been explored by Anita Nair through the protagonist Mukundan. Anita Nair's first novel, *The Better Man* is a welcome change from the hackneyed East-west encounter theme. It is perhaps the only novel written by a woman, which is not about an Indian woman; nor is it freely peppered with incest and/or same sex relationships. The essence of the novel, *The Better man* is: change is always possible; hope never dies; and happiness can be found. One just has to look for it and when he finds it, he should take chances even if by doing so the rest of the world might turn against him. Mukundan in *The Better Man* emerging from the shadow of his father's personality to become a better man, discovers the varied vibrant hues of life.

Keywords: Self-identity, emergence, conflict, redemption.

Introduction

Anita Nair, a living post modern Indian women writer in English, is one of India's remarkable female writers. She exposes the conditions of women with wit and humour. Anita Nair's first novel, *The Better Man* is a welcome change from the hackneyed East-west encounter theme. It is perhaps the only novel written by a woman, which is not about an Indian woman; nor is it freely peppered with incest and/or same sex relationships. It is a straightforward tale set in a village in Kerala. Nair's Kaikurussi is very different from Arundhati Roy's Ayemenem; it is a realistic description of the violence and conflict lying underneath the deceptively calm surface of village life. Mukundan Nair, the protagonist has been traumatized by the tyranny of his brutal father, Achuthan Nair, who has done everything to destroy his son's self-esteem. After retirement, at the age of fifty-eight, he comes back to the small village, but his ancestral home is haunted by the spirit of his unhappy mother.

Identity crisis or search for self is basic to the human world. It is innate in everyman. So, search for self is an archetypal and universal motif in Literature of all ages. This quest forms the theme of Anita Nair's *The Better Man*. This chapter discusses how subtly the theme of search for self has been explored by Anita Nair through the protagonist Mukundan.

Anita Nair's first book, *The Better Man*, is a finely structured novel set in a small Kerala village. Mukundan, her hero, returns to the village, hoping to exorcise bitter memories. Anita Nair not only has a wonderful knowledge of life in the village, but shows a deep feeling for the undercurrents of consciousness, as Mukundan seeks and finds redemption. It is the place to which Mukundan Nair, the native alien, returns after he retires from a government job. He is back not out of love for the place of his birth but out of sheer compulsions. The novel is an account of a man's growth-how he develops from being a man with selfish concerns into a man with a wider concern which extends beyond himself. It is the journey of a soul, the story of a retired government officer-Mukundan Nair, who beset by bitterness and self doubt returns-reluctantly-to his tyrannical father and his ancestral place in the village of Kaikurussi.

Kaikurussi is, like all fictional villages, a self contained and complete universe. It has the full gamut of human virtue and vice. There is Power House Ramakrishnan, representing the thrusting, arriviste new order, Che Kutty, the Marxist owner of the toddy shop, Krishnan Nair, the faithful retainer and Philipose, the aggressive postmaster. Valsala, the lonely wife of the ageing schoolmaster Prabhakaran, falls in love with her neighbour Sridharan, and together they kill and dismember her husband in order

to claim his insurance policy. But the police discover the plot and Valsala is led away in handcuffs in front of the entire village. These random vignettes form the backdrop against which the story of Mukundan's journey of self-discovery takes place.

Before finding out Valsala as the murderer, it was Mukundan who wrote the letter about Prabhakaran Master's sudden disappearance in the village and sent it to the police station. At first Mukundan wrote the letter, so that Prabhakaran master could be traced. But later when the police discover Valsala as the murderer of her husband and take her into custody, Mukundan feels sorry for her and remains in deep depression. He rambles to Bhasi that he just wanted to help her and he didn't think any of this would happen when he wrote a letter. Bhasi moved by Mukundan's depression, makes him realize his courageous task and proudness of bringing a criminal to dock. Bhasi's words throughout the novel, proves to be an anchor supporting Mukundan and leading him to the right path.

Mukundan is tortured by hatred of his father, Achuthan Nair, who bullied him and intimidated him since his childhood. When Mukundan was a child, he loved to read books. To Mukundan the library was the place of a family and allowed him to don the role of head of a household. He wished to become a writer. He tried rewriting the Bronte and Dickens, Goldsmith and Chesterton, in his own words. But Achuthan Nair turned to be an obstacle towards Mukundan's desire to become a writer. He was never satisfied with anything he does. Achuthan Nair never wanted his son to become a writer, for he considered it as useless. Instead every evening Achuthan Nair dictated official letter for Mukundan to write.

Mukundan's mother Paru Kutty was as intimidated by his father and as much a butt of his ire as he was. Whenever Mukundan's mother tried to console him, he asked her in a troubled voice, "Why is he never satisfied with anything I do? Why is he so angry with me all

the time?" (*BM 17*). His mother in turn consoled him by saying that his father just wanted him to grow up to be like him—strong and capable. But Mukundan knew that his mother was just mouthing all those words to make him feel better.

By the time Mukundan was seventeen, he learnt to write a perfect letter when asking for leave, to beg for a sanction and he knew what phrases to use when seeking a favour. And so his emotions found expressions in the letters he wrote. Later when Mukundan heard of an opening for a clerical post in an explosive factory in Trichy, he penned the best letter he would ever write. For it helped him escape the father and life he hated with a single-minded passion. Since then he never read a novel nor again wrote anything but letters and official letters.

Achuthan Nair abandons Mukundan's mother for another woman and when Mukundan returns to the village, is living with the children of his second union. Mukundan's mother died in a mysterious circumstances, falling down the steep stairs of the ancestral home. Mukundan suspects his father's hand in her death and feels terrible guilt about his mother, especially as she had begged him to take her away just weeks before she died. The evening before Mukundan boarded the train to Trichy, his mother pleaded him, "take me with you, son. I am so unhappy here" (*BM 31*).

When Mukundan was a boy, she tried to shield him from Achuthan Nair's cruelty. But now she no longer tried to hide how terrified she was of his father. On seeing his mother plead, Mukundan hesitated before he replied. He gently loosened her fingers from his arm and said,

How can I, Amma? I share a room with another bachelor. I can't just take you there and expect him to move out. Give me a little time, and I'll find us a house we can live in. (*BM 31*)

Later on his return to Kaikurussi, his ancestral home, he is haunted by his mother's ghost which he believes wants to kill him for

not taking her along. He is forced to relive the memories of his childhood days which were punctuated by terrifying moments. Mukundan realized as if he could hear his mother's voice ringing through the room. He is haunted by a sense of failure for having abandoned his mother. Mukundan has to confront a lifetime feelings of inadequacy. His need for his father's approval, which was never given, prevented him from marrying; instead he sought refuge in intermittent, transient relationships.

In the village, Bhasi and Power House Ramakrishnan representing good and evil respectively befriend Mukundan. Bhasi brings out a positive transformation in Mukundan. However Mukundan also gets influenced by Ramakrishnan and unknowingly betrays Bhasi for the former's sake. Bhasi tells part of the tale in the novel *The Better Man*. Bhasi was once a college lecturer and he came to Kaikurussi after a failed love affair. And spared from dying in a train wreck, Bhasi has taken his narrow escape as a sign. These two incidents, described briefly, make him turn his back on his middle class existence and totally reinvent himself. He realizes that it is time to change his life. Driven out of his teacher's position in another village a decade earlier when he got himself mixed up in a disastrously miscalculated romantic entanglement, Bhasi hopped on a random bus and ended up in Kaikurussi.

In Kaikurussi he became a house painter and married a beautiful local widow and had a son by her. And also he developed his healing prowess, first, by cultivating medicinal herbs and, then, by addressing the distress of others. He is a healer now, he declares in an opening monologue. An educated house painter, Bhasi is more interested in repairing souls than decorating houses. "Damaged lives", he explains, "fill my world as much as flaking paint does" (BM 11). Also known to the villagers as One-Screw-Loose-Bhasi, the painter is on a mission to fix them as well. He explains, "I do not capsule healing with compounds and equations packed into little pink and blue

gelatin caps" (BM 8). Instead he hears people's complaints and using the right combination of herbs and subtle suggestions, helps them recover. Entrusted with the job to paint Mukundan's house, he senses Mukundan's vacuity and takes upon himself to "peel the scrabs of his festing soul" and let the fear seep out. Bhasi recognizes Mukundan's despair and immediately starts to help Mukundan lay his demons rest.

The chapter, 'Forest of Umbrellas and the Womb Jar' deals with Mukundan's redemption and Bhasi's care and concern to heal Mukundan's wounded mind and his effort to shape Mukundan's life. Bhasi firmly believes that in Mukundan there is a being waiting to be born and only he could help it emerge. Bhasi as a friend cares for Mukundan so much that he always keeps in his mind the pain and the hurt that Mukundan had carried in himself like a secret malignant tumor gnawing at his insides all these years.

As an initial step to heal Mukundan, Bhasi wants him to make a journey in the forest of Umbrella-Kodakkad. The cure entails taking him to a local meadow early every morning. And there in the meadow lays the mandukaparni thrives-the celestial herb by which Bhasi finds his place in Mukundan's thought stream and in his life. He protects Mukundan from further hurt and further pain. Bhasi exposes Mukundan's importance in his life by promising him to make a man he meant to be and a man capable of love and happiness unlike his father.

Bhasi and Mukundan together walk in silence in the midst of the forest and then abruptly the forest opens out into a small clearing. Mukundan stands there at the edge of the clearing, too astonishing to speak. Mukundan did as Bhasi asked him to. And Mukundan felt a great peace filling him.

As another form of meditation, Bhasi persuades Mukundan to climb into a huge clay jar in the attic of his ancestral home. At first Mukundan finds it as preposterous and shouts

in shock at Bhasi. But Bhasi asks him to take it as an exercise to strengthen his mind and exorcise his past. Bhasi says,

Look at the shape of this jar. It could be a woman's womb; your mother's womb. To rewrite your destiny, we have to start with the beginning of your existence. *(BM 197-198)*

Mukundan steps into the jar. In this receptacle, he assumes a foetal position, and when he emerges, has a sense of rebirth. Thus with the help of Bhasi, Mukundan finds redemption. Mukundan's recovery is aided by his relationship with Anjana, a thirty seven years-old school teacher, married to a man who rarely visits her and treats her brutally, when he does.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all these personal journeys, Kaikurussi village politics heats up. Power House Ramakrishnan, the local biggie, decides to grab Bhasi's small landholding to build a village community hall, which will both enhance his (Power House's) local standing and bring in substantial dividends from being hired out as a wedding venue. When Bhasi refuses to sell his land, Power House Ramakrishnan threatens to break his business and run him out of the village.

As the richest and most powerful man of the village, Power House Ramakrishnan was capable of doing just that and Bhasi knows this as well. So Bhasi returns to Mukundan to intervene on his behalf. Mukundan sets out to save Bhasi's home but is completely swayed by Power House Ramakrishnan. The latter knowing how recognition-hungry Mukundan is and how easily he would succumb to flattery, uses that as his weapon to sweep over Mukundan's objections and has him actually agreeing to become a part of the community hall committee.

Mukundan filled with dazzling visions of outgoing his father's position in the village, not only goes along with Power House's machinations, but also decides to dump Anjana fearing the liason could erode his new found respectability. On the other hand, Bhasi with a

broken heart leaves the village. Until that moment Bhasi thought that his friendship with Mukundan would prevail and Mukundan realizing his mistake would do something to prevent him from leaving the village and would find a way for him to stay on. Mukundan thus betrays Bhasi, his intimate friend and alienates Anjana, the woman he is in love with. Mukundan does not perceive it as betrayal and stubbornly clings to the belief that what he has done is right. It takes his father's death and a lecture from Krishnan Nair (his father's near-feudal retainer).

He also makes Mukundan realize his mistake and he says, "What is the point in surviving if you have no one to share your happiness or grief with? Don't make the mistake I did. Don't throw away your life" *(BM 347-348)*.

Mukundan gradually realizes the truth that how insignificant man he is. He is no more one's friend and no one's beloved. Mukundan deeply moved by the words of Krishnan Nair gets into the earthen jar once again to bring him back to a sense of his self and his wish to take control of his life. So there is a happy ending: he is reconciled with Bhasi, to whom he gifts a piece of land, and Anjana comes to live with him. Most astonishingly, he decides to blow up the community hall. The tale concludes with Mukundan crouched in the shadow of the hall, preparing to light a fuse. Anita Nair ends with this sentence: "Mukundan felt his destiny flicker, leap, and change its course" *(BM 361)*.

Thus Anita Nair probes deep into the much battered psyche of Mukundan and makes him realize his self. The protagonist Mukundan goes on a search for his self and at the end of his journey he learns to live free from fear of rebuke from society, to believe in his dreams and to strive to achieve them. He becomes a better man. He learns the lessons of life and realizes that change is always possible; hope never dies; and happiness can be found.

WOMEN AND NATURE, INTERTWINED VICTIMS OF PATRIARCHY: - A STUDY OF MAHASWETA DEVI'S WRITINGS

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Abstract

Literature represents life and life is a social reality. In every society there are some sections of people dispossessed of socio economic prospects for their sustenance and they are victims of social, cultural, and political marginalization. They are the marginalized groups consisting of the rural poor, the subjugated, and those who belong to the indigenous group. Mahasweta Devi, the renowned writer-activist from Bengal, uses her pen to raise consciousness against social disparity, discrimination, and poverty, especially against tribal and indigenous people in India. The paper attempts to throw light on the violation of tribal women and the encroachments on the environmental rights of the indigenous communities as an interwoven theme in Mahasweta Devi's short stories, "The Hunt", "Douloti the Bountiful", and "Draupadi". The paper attempts to trace the juxtaposition of the problems related to the subjugation of indigenous women and exploitation of nature, in the works taken up for the study. The livelihood of indigenous people depends upon forest and natural resources, thus the land grabbing by various agencies in the society affects the survival of the group. The women from indigenous groups become double oppressed when they become victims of sexual violence perpetrated by upper caste men. Women and land rights of the dispossessed tribes in India have environmental, social, cultural, and political implications.

Keywords: *Patriarchy, Nature, Women, Oppression, Exploitation, Victims*

Introduction

Mahasweta Devi's works depicts the exploitation of women and destruction of nature with equal zeal. The patriarchal commercial powers have snatched the indigenous way of life of the tribals and their forest resources. Her works reflect the appraisal of modern civilization, the clash of nature and culture and threat posed by forces of modernization. The legacy of conquest of nature and its resources is more obvious in the present day scenario of tendencies associated with rampant capitalism. This is applicable to the constant displacement and marginalization of the people associated with and sustained by nature. It is always those people existing on the fringe of the socio economic spheres who are affected as they become voiceless against the dominant power structures. Degradation of women and nature being the prevailing scenario they effectively marginalize the already marginalized. Mahasweta Devi has dedicated her fictional works and grass root activism to the cause of the welfare of the marginalized voiceless Adivasi's in India. "I think being conscious about history is a primary condition of being a

writer. As a writer I feel a commitment to my times, to mankind and to myself.....for the last fourteen years I have written almost exclusively about the bonded labourers and the tribals, and about repression and protest, about their heroic endeavor for survival and their rights." (Statement by Mahasweta Devi at the Frankfurt Book Fair, 1986, as part of the Indian Presentation.)

The short story, "The Hunt" is a touching tale of the twin exploitation of nature and the tribal women. Bhikni, a tribal woman impregnated by the Australian planter is later abandoned. She gave up Christianity to be employed by her next master Prasadji. Her life thus moves on from a voiceless slave under a Colonial master to a Post-Colonial one. Her daughter Mary Oroanis troubled by her origin as her Australian father has cheated her mother. She yearns to be completely associated with her tribe who has reservations in accepting her because of her mixed origin. She is pursued vehemently by Tehsildar Singh, the greedy mainstream contractor, who lands in the quiet village of Kuruda with intentions of felling and carrying away the giant Sal trees. He represents

the mainstream power that exploits nature, poor workers, and women. In spite of being married and having children, Tehsildar Singh lusts after Mary Oraon. A bold Mary spurns his physical advances but that does not deter him in his pursuit.

The second short story "Draupadi" is set in the villages and forests of West Bengal and follows the life of a group of rebels, poor landless labourers and exploited workers who are being pursued by the police and Special Forces. The story is set against the backdrop of the Naxalbari movement among the tribals of the northern part of West Bengal. An alliance of peasant and intellectual sparked off a number of Naxalbari movements all over India. The mutineer, Dopdi is hunted down by the government in the attempt to subjugate the tribal groups. The government exercises tyranny at its best in the form of Kidnapping, murder and rape, and any tribal death in custody is inevitably made to appear as an accident. But Dopdi who is raped and abused and deprived of food and water, does not capitulate. Rape is unanimously viewed by society as a sign of female mortification, female submission, and the stripping of honour and humanity. Devi's Draupadi, a tribal rebel, is raped by the representatives of patriarchal authorities of the state although here the unveiling of the female garments reveal immense female power. "In the muddy moonlight she lowers her lightless eye, sees her breasts, and understands that, indeed she'd made up right. Her breasts are bitten raw, the nipples torn." (Devi 171)

The third short story, "Douloti the Bountiful" deals with the problems of selling of women in a predatory patriarchal capitalist system. The story is set in the village of Seora in Bihar in post-independent India. It focusses on the plight of GanoriNagesia a bonded labourer and his daughter Douloti. When GanoriNagesia is unable to pay off the debts, he sells off his daughter as a bonded labourer at the age of thirteen to Paramanda, the priest. She was in

turn thrown as a piece of meat in the flesh market of Madhpur. The Godmen like Paramandatake advantage of the age-old system of bonded labourer, which keeps most of the landless labourers from the Adivasi families under the control of the landed gentry. He forces many women like Douloti who are forced to become prostitutes to repay the debt of their families. The woman's body here is juxtaposed with that of the land, which they do not possess. "The boss has made them land, he ploughs and ploughs their bodie's land and raises a crop, they are all some people's meat." (Devi 60)

The treatment meted out to the tribal women is the result of the encroachments on the forests and natural habitat of the tribals. Greedy government officials turn a blind eye to the large scale felling of trees. The government comes out with development plans without considering the livelihood of the native tribals. The enforced displacement by the government in the name of development hurts the indigenous population badly. Forcefully driven out of their homes in the forests, they are forced to look out for means of survival in hitherto unknown mainstream way of life. Their lack of education makes them easy victims of cunning commercial predators. The women are worse affected because of their sexuality. They become unrepresented victims under the patriarchal society. Ecofeminist Vandana Shiva, believes that the issues related to exploitation of nature and women are interconnected.

With the destruction of forests, water and land, we are losing our life-support systems.

This destruction is taking place in the name of 'development' and progress, but there must be something seriously wrong with a concept of progress that threatens survival itself. The violence of nature, which seems intrinsic to the dominant development model, is also associated violence to women who depend on nature for drawing sustenance for themselves, their families, their societies" (Shiva xvi)

The female protagonists in the short stories are not treated as the traditional archetypes of Goddess or Mother by the society. They have become objects, as they are the marginalized indigenous population who are exploited in the name of development. Mary Oraon's attacker comes in the form of an outsider Tehsildar Singh who represents the mechanized exploitation and alienation of the tribes in the village. Mary Oraon plays the role of a protector for the villagers and informs them about terrific profit being appropriated by the forest guard, Tehsildar Singh, at the cost of their trees. She informs Prasadji about the misappropriation by Tehsildar Singh and says firmly, "The bastard tricked you. He took all the profit" (Devi9) and advises him to refuse the cheap prices being offered for the trees. She motivates fellow tribals to be active in bargaining for the rightful price for their trees. Thus, she becomes the protector reversing the traditional role assigned to women in patriarchal society

The two women, Duoloti and Dopdi are representatives of the cultural diversity that the tribals stand for in India. The callous effort to subdue and control them by the upper caste/class shows the normalized assault that defiles this diversity, both in terms of gender and caste/class. The short stories, "Draupadi" and "Duoloti, the Bountiful", represent the stage of struggle where there are only depleted forests for the tribals to settle in. In "Draupadi" the trouble starts when the tribals kill SurjaSahu and his son because of his inhuman refusal to allow them access to water during the drought. The government instead of looking into the problems of the tribals, which forced them to take up violence, unleashes the full state machinery on them in the form of encounters, enforced disappearance, and raping of women. The progress in this village is limited to the upper class whereas the tribals are cut off from necessity like water. Removed from their natural environment the tribals find it difficult to settle in to the mainstream life because of lack

of tribal friendly proposals of the Government. Forest in this story is represented as a labyrinth of fortification from the patriarchal state machinery

In "Duoloti the Bountiful", the bonded labour system, which was banned in India in the year 1976 brings the downfall of the protagonist. Tribal women like her are removed from their natural habitat and forced to become bonded labourers or prostitutes by the patriarchal society. With no means of sustaining themselves in the villages, they are forced to sell of their bodies. Mahasweta Devi portrays the land and women as disadvantaged victims under the cruel upper caste men. The indigenous population is lured out of the forests with promise of better life but the colonial and post-colonial masters have ensured that their transition into mainstream never takes place. They remain marginalized forever-running parallel with the mainstream but never actually meeting. In the 'conversation with the author' session in *Imaginary Maps*, Mahasweta Devi makes the following observation, "They have apparently abolished the bonded labour system but bonded labour system is no longer confined to the agricultural sector....women after or before marriage are taken away when husband or father has borrowed money from the money lending upper caste. They are taken straight to brothels in the big cities to work out the some" (Devixix)

Mahasweta Devi hints of resistance in two of the stories where the victims fight back with physical force. In "The Hunt" Mary Oraon uses the traditional tribal myth of Janiparab as a symbol of resistance to hunt and kill the biggest beast (Tehsildar Singh) known to her. Traditionally, hunting has been an activity performed by men. Once in twelve years the role is reversed and women get the chance to hunt and men participate as passive spectators. In the story Mary, is forced to resort to violence to kill Tehsildar when she is unable to ward off his sexual advances and feels threatened by

him. In "Draupadi", the raped victim fights back with her naked body as a powerful weapon and asks Senanayak, who gave the orders for raping her, "You asked them to make me up, don't you want to see how they made me up?" (173) Dopdi uses her female nakedness as a weapon against her enemy. She unveils herself to turn the violence she endured, upon the man responsible for the violence against her. Instead of letting this repugnant act deprive her of her humanity and honour, she is empowered by the rape.

Mahasweta Devi being the champion of the downtrodden masses and voiceless nature draws our attention to the fact that though the government has passed laws declaring illegal the felling of trees in forest regions. The government machinery is so corrupt that illegal actions are never caught. The story promotes awareness among the powers that because of the negligence deforestation goes on undeterred. She questions the disruption and destruction of nature and its resources by patriarchal capitalist agents. She talks about effect of this on the women who are the voiceless helpless victims of this domination. Thus, her works are ecofeminist in presentation.

Mother Earth herself, though tired,
lies open to the skies;
there's still flesh on her bone,
marrow for your hunger.
Come, come brother,
Never forget that you're a man! (35)

The above-mentioned lines from the translated poem *Do Something Brother* by Gopalakrishna Adiga mocks the self-centeredness of man and the belief that everything is created with the purpose of

ultimately proving useful to man. This viewpoint, which is sanctioned by the social and patriarchal society best, captures the essence of Mahasweta Devi's short stories taken up for the study. The woman is doubly marginalized as she is subjected to prevalent patriarchal norms cutting across socio economic classes as well as the state machinery. Thus her voice is muted by the power structures of her class as well as of the state. Both nature and woman are thus reduced to the condition of being manoeuvred by the socio economic constraints of the influential classes. Her writings illustrate how the environment as well as the women constitutes the subaltern in the modern paradigms of development.

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POST-COLONIAL IDENTITY CRISIS OF NIGERIA IN PURPLE HIBISCUS

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Abstract

Nigerian literature is literary work that articulates the social- cultural and historical imperatives of the African people. Adichie exhibits her artistic liberation splendidly in her Purple Hibiscus with a rich parade of local and religious expressions in the novel. The nature of colonial identity is not monolithic, but ambiguous or hybrid and act as a bridge between the culture of the colonizer and colonized. Colonial domination has unintended effects because the dominated groups appropriated colonial ideas and concepts and transformed the concept according to the culture. The characters in Purple Hibiscus are so contaminated that they do not speak only languages of other but imitate the accent and lifestyle as well. They are neither completely Nigerian nor are they fully English. Consequently they are in dilemma and thus suffer in-betweenness. Their ambivalence pushes them to suffer crisis of integrated selfhood or identity. It does not seem to interrogate the western hegemony, cultural arrogance and class supremacy implicitly imposed through the globalizing agents which are indeed working to retain imperialism in the colonized nations even in the postcolonial situation.

Keywords: *Post-Colonialism in Nigeria, Hybridity, Tradition Vs Modernity.*

Post colonialism and Nigeria

Post Colonialism in literature includes the study of theory and literature as it relates to the colonizer colonized experience. Edward Said is the famous theorist in post colonialism with Chinua Achebe being the leading author of post colonialism. In literature, specifically coming out of Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent and the characters are struggling with the identities in the wake of colonization or the establishment of colonies in another nation.

Chimamanda Adichie is a young woman can be considered a post-colonial writer. 'Post-colonial' means post or after colonial period. Indicating something happened after the end of formal colonization in the context. And most South Africans now days think of the achievement of multiracial, democratic elections in 1994 as the turning point at which the colonial structures of the past. It is pursue the relevance and applicability of post-colonial world. It gives a clear set of theoretical approaches the focus directly on the effect and aftermath of colonialism. It alters our understanding of history, political economy, cultural studies and literary evaluation in the country. Memory acts as a bridge between colonialism and the establishment of cultural identity but they are in total chaos to understand their own self which is because of

an impact of post colonized imprints in their mind. Nigeria is a populous country in Africa, colonized by the British. The natives were exposed to a completely new outlook from their culture and tradition.

The western religion severed the natives from performing their ancestral practices which was the pulse of African people. Literature produced during their colonized period reflects the sufferings of African people. During colonization Nigeria was exposed to the English language and started to produce many literary works. A myth in any genre is accepted to the narrative. It can even be argued that myth are scared narrative in which Gods and supernatural elements hold the centre stage and is often addresses to human beings. Literature of postcolonial period concentrates on the culture and family set up in Africa, which was torn between nativity and western culture. Adichie in her novel focused on the scramble of families in the postcolonial set up. She has thrown the limelight upon the lack of heritage and self-identity in the people of commonwealth countries. She has made novel is a tool to voice out the African's suffering and their traumatic experiences.

Adichie creates miniature version of her country by presenting the picture of two families. It shows how military regime has

impacted the lives of common and rich alike. It suppresses the truth and exploits the common the military regime does not hesitate to kill the people and spread terrorism among the common people keeps her finger on the contrasts in two families affected by this military regime. Crises are considered as a part and parcel of life. Crisis means an unstable condition, as in political social or economic affairs, involving an impending abrupt or decisive change. These crises could be social, political or psychological literature is a weapon that could be used for the resistance, it could be observed that the true literature flourishes during the times of crises Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie one of the young Nigerian writers, is considered as a fresh voice in African literature.

She belongs to third generation African writers who have badly suffered from the despotism of more than two decades during writers who have badly suffered from the despotism of more than two decades during their childhood. The novel explores the domestic life of two families during military coup in Nigeria. It suppresses the truth and exploits the commons Papa-Nnukwu and Auntie Ifeoma and her children Amaka, Obiora and Chima Later they spend vacations in Nsukka Auntie Ifeoma s where they learn certain things and observe certain differences .Achike family is seen to be destroyed Kambili's father does not understand that the childhood of Kambili and Jaja is like a butterfly that crushes and dies if being held tight. Second family survives the crises by leaving the country. Adichie, like in her other stories, implies that American is the place of the solace and peace for the people of Nigeria in the post colonial setup. "Papa had driven us past the crowds at EziIcheke once some years ago, and muttered about ignorant people participating in the ritual of pagan masquerades" (PH-85).

The novel *Purple Hibiscus* follows post colonial identity crises by the paths of a pair of Nigerian siblings of an aristocratic family. They

survive and severely abused by Papa under the colonial power of a strict father both physical and emotional. When they visit their Auntie Ifeoma town, who is a woman is the polar opposite of their authority figure at home. This is particularly difficult given that adolescence marked by internal struggles of identity. The characters are attempting to navigate through an abundance of history, ranging from the histories of individual tribes and religions to struggles suffered on a national level. Kambili and Jaja's family disintegrates, they must come into their own, a task metaphorically equal to the struggle of Nigeria and to form its own identity in its post-colonial society.

Kambili and Jaja are allegories for burgeoning post-colonial Nigeria, also face an identity separate from its colonial roots. The fact that both children are ethnically Igbo, a culture and ethnicity ripped apart by violence, indicates that the identity of Nigeria rests in how well its people can overcome the pain of their past. Kambili and Jaja are bombarded by opposing forces in a colonial setup indigenous and colonial, pagan and Christian, Nigerian and English, familial loyalty and individual identity. Any individual or nation in the novel are seems to attempting navigate a new identity with its past. Papa Nnukwu represents indigenous culture of Igbo land. He is the only one who practices Igbo cultural traditions. It is the culture combined with colonizing culture that has created the siblings futures of Nigeria that Eugene and Auntie Ifeoma, represent autocracy and democracy. Indigenous culture giving way in the face of a colonizer, Papa Nnukwu is a father he let his children become their own individuals. As the grandfather should hold the role of the ultimate patriarch he relegated to having no authority. He is metonymic for a pure cultural past. The past cannot remain pure when colonizing forces invade its sphere.

Cultural Hybridity

The Hybridity Culture according to Homi.K.Bhabha (1994) a key feature of

postcolonial identity. He argues that the nature of colonial identity is not monolithic, but ambiguous or hybrid and act as a bridge between the culture of the colonizer and colonized. Colonial domination has unintended effects because the dominated groups appropriated colonial ideas and concepts and transformed the concept according to the culture. Cultural double-ness on the other hand could imply the intrapersonal conflict that brought on by unresolved issues surrounding the individual in the society where human lives. This is one of the serious issues which discussed Westernization in relation to indigenous peoples especially those from post colonies, the phenomenon of cultural clash and cultural double-ness came after that. Homi Bhabha in this treatise on colonialism and cultural double-ness, developed the concept of 'hybridity'. It essentially explains the dual and complex nature of the postcolonial subject. Because the colonizers presented their culture and persons as superior and preferable to the colonized indigenous people, the desire to be like the colonizer built up in the indigenous people. After many years of colonialism and denigration of their culture by the colonizers, the colonized subjects adopted the culture of the colonizers. The indigenous people are not fully integrated into this new culture and are rather products of a fusion between indigenous cultures. It resulted in the state of 'in-betweenness' in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

Tradition Vs Modernity

'Adichie as a fresh new voice out of Africa'

-Christopher Hope (Daily Telegraph 7)

In the regard of the ethnicity, race or socioeconomic background of the author is the tug-of-war battle between modernity and tradition in Africa. The diversity in historical, geographical, linguistic and also in intellectual factors developed the post-colonial setup in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie novels. The location of the author, interprets the intension

for writing the novels. The vision of viewing the novel according to the author and reader's perspective depending on the factors like tradition, gender, class and cultural roots in a former or after colony in the novels.

Traditional referred to the society or elements of society derived from indigenous and often ancient cultural practices, following the foot prints of the ancestors. Modernism is referred to the practices that relate to the industrial mode of production or the development of large-scale of colonial societies. Industrialization and Globalization results the modernism by the people to adopt a new culture and practice. There is no completely a traditional or modern society at the present scenario. It is considers as two poles and two sides of coin, one related to other. Socialization that helps the infant gradually becomes self-aware knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of cultural and tradition they were born. This socialization processes effected in relationships in Adichie's novels *Purple Hibiscus*.

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EXPRESSION OF THE COMMUNITY IN A. REVATHI'S *THE TRUTH ABOUT ME: A HIJRA LIFE STORY*

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Abstract

The paper titled *Expression of the community in A. Revathi's The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*, aims to speculate on the smouldering issues of the transgender community in the heteronormative society. Gender determines particular status-quo in the society but it is problematic. It is something that is entirely different from biological sex. The attributions of the society to particular sex constitute the gender of an individual. The binary notion with respect to the gender and domination of patriarchal society are brought under study many decades ago. The emergence of the third gender dismantling the binarism of gender is at its heights today. The otherisation of the transgender people in the public sphere has to be rechecked for they too are deservable to live in this world.

Introduction

The term transgender community refers to a category of society that tends to get their gender transitioned either by cross dressing or make-up or through mannerisms or through gender reassignment surgery. The transgender people often experience a conflict between their gender identity and the assigned sex. The perplexity they feel within their body is intense. They are neither and both the females and males. The affirmation of their gender identity helps them to contemplate on their self image, self reflection and self-expression. It inspires them to identify their individuality.

Hijra, the ancient Indian transgender community is always otherised, colonized by the heteronormative society. Their ontological existence is often questioned. The rights and recognition of the hijras are mere epistemological. The existence of the community however dismantles the binary opposition of the gender system that prevails in the society. The community strives for their dignified social recognition as normal and respectable gender like the females and the males in the heteronormative society.

A.Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* defends against the conventional tortures and horrific violence inflicted upon the transgender community. It expresses the poignant life situations of a transgender life. It is

a text that disseminates the sexual oriented notions regarding the third gender or the transgender. It is the first autobiography to tackle up the subject of transgender subjectivity in the Indian society. It can be considered as a manifesto of transgender consciousness. The violence perpetrated by the heteronormative society against the gender nonconformity of the transgender community is intense. In the autobiography we have the glimpses of the hardships and sufferings of the liminal gender. It is the verbal expression of the annihilations, turmoil and exploitation of the transgender community. It takes us into the minutest realms of psychic dilemma of a transgender who might oscillate between the two genders. It tempts each of us to speculate on their crisis and oscillating identities of transgender community.

A.Revathi in her autobiography, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* describes the the rejection and derision faced by the Hijra community due to their gender fluidity. They are denied opportunities to enter into the forefront of the society due to the social stigmatization they suffer in terms of their gender nonconformity. With great agitation, A.Revathi points at the society's inhumanistic attitudes towards her community. They are denied to live freely like any other human being. It tempts each of us to speculate on their

crisis and oscillating identities of transgender community.

The paper titled Expression of the community in A. Revathi's *The Truth about Me: A Hijra Life Story*, aims to speculate on the smouldering issues of the transgender community in the heteronormative society. Gender determines particular status-quo in the society but it is problematic. It is something that is entirely different from biological sex. The attributions of the society to particular sex constitute the gender of an individual. The binary notion with respect to the gender and domination of patriarchal society are brought under study many decades ago. The emergence of the third gender dismantling the binarism of gender is at its heights today. The otherisation of the transgenders in the public sphere has to be rechecked for they too are deservable to live in this world.

The term transgender community refers to a category of society that tends to get their gender transitioned either by cross dressing or make-up or through mannerisms or through gender reassignment surgery. The transgender people often experience a conflict between their gender identity and the assigned sex. The perplexity they feel within their body is intense. They are neither and both the females and males. The affirmation of their gender identity helps them to contemplate on their self image, self reflection and self-expression. It inspires them to identify their individuality.

The social stigma attached to the transgender people has to be chocked out. They are considered as disgrace and shame to the family. Out of embarrassment and dejection; they are driven away from their homes. Ostracism to the hijra community is spread throughout the whole of India. The communities located in and around both villages and cities of India face negligence. They are stigmatized in terms of the social values and hierarchies. The lives of the transgender community are the manifestations of the social

oppression that they are subjected to in terms of their gender nonconformity. The heteronormative society often questions their existence. The slippery concept of gender evokes a lot of perplexions and speculations in the lives of the transgender people.

Hijra, the ancient Indian transgender community is always otherised, colonized by the heteronormative society. Their ontological existence is often questioned. The rights and recognition of the hijras are mere epistemological. The existence of the community however dismantles the binary opposition of the gender system that prevails in the society. The community strives for their dignified social recognition as normal and respectable gender like the females and the males in the heteronormative society.

A.Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* defends against the conventional tortures and horrific violence inflicted upon the transgender community. It expresses the poignant life situations of a transgender life. It is a text that disseminates the sexual oriented notions regarding the third gender or the transgender. It is the first autobiography to tackle up the subject of transgender subjectivity in the Indian society. It can be considered as a manifesto of transgender consciousness. The violence perpetrated by the heteronormative society against the gender nonconformity of the transgender community is intense. In the autobiography we have the glimpses of the hardships and sufferings of the liminal gender. It is the verbal expression of the annihilations, turmoil and exploitation of the transgender community. It takes us into the minutest realms of psychic dilemma of a transgender who might oscillate between the two genders. It tempts each of us to speculate on their crisis and oscillating identities of transgender community.

A.Revathi in her autobiography, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story* describes the rejection and derision faced by the Hijra community due to their gender fluidity. They

are denied opportunities to enter into the forefront of the society due to the social stigmatization they suffer in terms of their gender nonconformity. They are subjected to ceaseless mental and physical tortures. Her early childhood, the seclusion she suffered in her early youth, the harsh realities she overcame in her life are portrayed with fidelity in her autobiography. The transition of a perplexive life of Doraiswamy into a self-reflective independent individual is portrayed with fidelity in her selfwriting.

With great agitation, A.Revathi points at the society's inhumanistic attitudes towards her community. They are denied to live freely like any other human being. Emotionally she says,

"Men and women stared at us and laughed heckled us. I realized what a burden a hijra's daily life is. Do people harass those who are men and women when they go out with their families? Why, a crippled person, a blind person- even attract pity and people help them. If someone has experienced physical hurt, they are cared for both by the family and by outsiders who came to know of it. But we- we are not considered human." (83)

A.Revathi was born as the youngest boy named Doraiswamy in a small village in Tamil Nadu. In her early childhood itself she realized that she is different than the body she is born in; it's different than the sex she is assigned with. Her gender didn't add up with how she viewed herself. Randi Kaufman, a clinical psychologist who works at The Gender and Family Project at the Ackerman Institute for the Family in New York city is of the view that when a baby is born, someone looks at its external genitals and assigns something to it, but that might not be how the baby feels inside. Thereby someone who identifies as transgender may identify their gender differently than their assigned sex. Her childhood was of her attempts to negotiate her gender incongruity with the assigned sex. She always showed her inclination to wear women's clothings and make-up and for this she was

beaten up by her family. It is documented that her life as a hijra began when in her mid-teens she ran away from home to join the hijra community in Delhi. But it was not as easy to lead a life of hijra as she thought. It was a life of anguish and sufferings.

The perspectives of the society towards the hijra community is pathetic.

In her autobiography she expresses her embarrassments when people call them nine and devadasis. A large part of the book deals with her steps into sex work - it's hard to understand, to remember how limited her choices within the hijra houses were, but in essence, at the age of twenty Revathi decided to take up sex work in order to fulfill her sexual desires. This was the only way, at the time, that she could come close to sexual satisfaction. But being a sex worker, and a person from sexual minority always fetches the wrong kind of attention. Revathi mentions that she had moments of happiness in her life, but details in dry terms the brutal facts of life as a hijra - the dangers, the assaults, the rapes. She was treated more or less like an object. They were sexually abused. The rowdies, their clients and even policemen who arrested them for immoral traffic brutally raped them. They were compelled to have free sex with them. They were thrown into the life of indescency. She writes,

"People from all age groups came to me. No one actually cared, after all it was only for the sex. Some of them were violent. But once you're a prostitute, you learn never to complain; to hold the pain inside and go on as if you don't feel anything. Often, times were so bad that I had to resort to charging as low as Rs 20; sometimes I had to sleep on the roadside. And then there were the rowdies, who used to harass me to have free sex, and if I refused, they used to take out knives. Rape was commonplace." (68)

Her autobiography is an account of her fervent attempts to develop her own space and identity in the society. It narrates her paths of

self-actualisation by overcoming the impediments imposed upon their category in terms of their gender nonconformity. She thought that after sex reassignment surgery becoming a woman would soothe her life. She expected a comfortable existence. But in the journey of the declaration of her feminity, she faces immense sufferings and self-conflicts. The perspection of the society towards the hijra community is pathetic and it is projected in the autobiography.

As Revathi, she could dress, walk, talk as a woman. But she is, of course, a hijra, that liminal third-sex, and so she was constrained to live and earn in specific places, in specific manners. The story follows Revathi's life as she moved from city to city, from Hijra House to House. Revathi yearned to live freely, to love, to be a woman – for me it was a bit odd to place myself in the mindset of someone who defined womanhood in terms of the loving, dignified service which seems so oldfashioned, today, even oppressive if viewed as the only option. The hijra elders forbade her (and as far as I can make out, still forbid their younger, mentored daughters) from taking a husband, or a steady man. Proscribed from marriage, unable to work, unrecognised by the state bureaucracy, Revathi had only three

options to make money – she could beg, she could bless, or she could do sex work. Initially, she begged, in the flamboyant, utterly recognisable hijra style; but she felt restricted and constrained by the rules and demands of her hijra House, with her guru and her sisters. One of the underlying themes of Revathi's life is that for each step she took to attaining her desires – the *nirvaanam* or castration, the financial power, the recognition, support and intimacy of other hijras who knew what she was going through, and applauded her zeal and valued her as a person – she recognised new avenues of desire, of freedom, she now incoherently yearned for.

In her autobiography, the beleaguered self and body of Revathi is the central point throughout. Right from the beginning, her emotional and sexual conflict is pivotalised in her book. It is an effort of constructing a self literally. By portraying the queerness according to the heteronormative society she tries to expose the epiphanies and the variant aspects of transgender community which cannot be defined and treated as unheard.

SCRUTINIZING HOMELAND AS THE REAL HEALING OF THE BRUISED EXPATRIATES IN CARYL PHILLIPS' *THE FINAL PASSAGE*

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Abstract

West Indian People wanted to be freed from the chains of African heritage and legacy and had an ideological illusion of Britain as their motherland. They were ready to make a physical as well as psychological flight to England with a belief that the residence in new land would bestow upon them good future enriched with joy and bliss. Poor people were not aware that only their homeland was willing to embrace them when they suffered from discriminatory experience of Britain.

The Novel The Final Passage captures the personal problems and agonies of Leila and Michael, leaving of her mother and friends Millie and Bradeth in her island home and the discomfort that she faces in England. Her passage to England brings her face to face with the consequence of decisions she has made to determine her life on her own terms.

This paper focuses on the consequence that the immigrants face when they fail and forget remembering the greatness and heritage of their native land. Behind the understanding of the tradition, richness and legacy of their native soil is hidden the opportunity of every citizen of their country. It also makes us clear that only their homeland can be real curative for all the battered immigrants who struggle as an orphan in alien land.

Keywords: *Loneliness, Diaspora, Pangs of Estrangement, Alienation, Cultural shock, and a struggle for survival and existence.*

Introduction

Migration has become deeply embedded in the psyche of Caribbean peoples. Caribbean islands have become bizarre and strange to the Caribbean men and women as it was once an environment in which their ancestors were not free to move. Each one has their own fantasy and dreams towards moving into new land. Their purpose differs completely. West Indian People wanted to be freed from the chains of African heritage and legacy and had an ideological illusion of Britain as their motherland. They were ready to make a physical as well as psychological flight to England with a belief that the residence in new land would bestow upon them good future enriched with joy and bliss. Poor people were not aware that only their homeland was willing to embrace them when they suffered from discriminatory experience of Britain.

This paper focuses on the consequence that the immigrants face when they fail and forget to remember greatness and heritage of their native land. Behind the understanding of the tradition, richness and legacy of their native soil is hidden the opportunity of every citizen of their country. It also makes us clear that only their homeland

can be real curative for all the battered immigrants who struggle as an orphan in alien land.

Caryl Phillips happens to be an influential novelist who brings up human experiences in his works. Known for his penetrating studies of racism and cultural displacement, Phillips is one of Britain's most critically acclaimed authors. Noted for his writing skills in a variety of genres, Phillips has consistently explored themes of the identity, displacement, cultural heritage and persecution throughout his body of work. He embraces the common experiences and traits of the people individually and gives insight into the personalities and memories of people who were subjected to historical catastrophes.

The Final Passage focuses on the life of a young immigrant family's exodus to the mother country. Phillips portrays his characters who are in a quest to escape the miserable lives, they seem to be leading in the Caribbean land and to venture into a promising England to seek a better future. The novel is divided into five sections i.e. *The End, Home, England, The passage, winter. The Final Passage* has a disjointed structure. The five parts are not in a

chronological order and it mixes the past and the present. The time line keeps oscillating back and forth thus giving insight into the lives of each character and the reasons for their decisions

Final passage depicts themes of isolation, belonging, novelty, cultural difference and the issues and challenges around the whole idea of displacement. Displaced communities often suffer greatly from homesickness for their own land. Though they optimistically leave their homeland in search of a better life, sometimes they are made to regret that they have made a mistake. Leila's quest for love, a better life and happiness remain unfulfilled and unsatisfied. Her fear of others transcends her control. England where she has placed so much of her hopes no longer holds any attraction and use. She is grounded in situations which are surrounded by alienation, bullying, estrangement, and internal weakness.

The main concepts of Post-colonial literature evolve around Diaspora, the experience of discrimination, hybrid dilemma, notions of home and belonging and shift in identity. Diaspora often leads to the displacement of people and leads to the rise of another post-colonial aspect, dislocation. This concept is seen in Caryl Phillips's non fictional work *European Tribe* where a migrant tries to take root in foreign ground. Phillips has used a vegetation symbol, like that of a tree, trying to take root in a foreign soil in order to survive.

The novel's protagonist Leila, culturally enfranchised by mixed parentage, she imagines her parents other than they are in orders to find her own identity. Leila longs for her mother's love and closeness. Leila, the tragic mulatto figure, tries to mingle into her black roots and ultimately, exhausted by her struggle, chooses the easy route: a white man's life. Leila engaged in sexual relationship with Michael at wrong time, she was too young to take responsibility. She started to suffer from worthlessness and self hate. Her state of mind is further worsened by

betrayal of her love by Michael after they reach England. Her remembrance of culture, history and abundant endowment of home has been disconnected from her consciousness by her experience from the outside world. She is not able to escape from the entrapment of rejection of self.

Leila fails to appreciate her home by discovering its richness and magnificence with which she can become blissful and self confident. Her illusion and longing for new land made her to forget embracing the heritage and history of her homeland which would help re discovering her true self and become a better person with positive mindset. "The night before, Leila had decided that if England was going to be a new start after the pain of the last year, then she must take as little as possible with her to remind her of the island." (15)

Leila presumes England to be her dream paradise to start a new life. With endless hope and expectations, she packs to depart from St.kitts. As she packs, she talks to her best friend Millie. The couple is about to face daunting state of affairs ahead in England which they consider to be their dream paradise. She bids farewell to her island and heads into the great unknown. This journey is not an escape from their homeland but a flight towards enslavement.

She has planned to leave the country for livelihood forgetting the fact that she has to adjust with the place, people and period. She is embarking on the most painful yet important journey of her life – she is leaving home to build a better future for her family. A journey is one which makes a transformation in person's life in course of time. A journey can be a physical one or mental one. Many times it's the one which opens the mind of the protagonist that makes them know their own identity and the internal strength they fail to recognize.

She decides to move from place to place for betterment of life but the inner struggle remains the same. She is unable to balance these two worlds. She is in search of harmony in her life

by adopting forms and manners of another culture. But one cannot find solution to the problems of one's own culture in the other culture. To settle in a new land where culture, language, customs and climate are dissimilar to the homeland is very complicated. The change accompanying immigrant destabilizes one mentally and psychologically.

Leila looks at the English landscape;

Everything seems bleak,...overcast... there were no green mountains, there were no colourful dressed women with baskets on their heads selling peanuts or bananas or mangoes, there are no trees, no white houses on the hills, no wooden houses by the shoreline, and the sea was not blue and there was no beach, and there were no clouds, just one big cloud(142).

She does not feel at home as the shipwreck lies within. It is impossible to remain satisfied with outside world when the dilemma lies inside and so her mind suffers from helplessness and hopelessness. She has been forced to surrender her local culture and accept imperial discourse. The idea of belonging is very essential and everyone seems to necessitate that feeling of security, even if it is a case of embracing a new nation gratefully and declaring it to be one's new true home.

Michael was doubtful when he was packing for England, if this is the right idea for he says: "Leaving this place going make me feel old, you know, like leaving the safety of your family to go live with stranger." (11). On arrival in the new land, Michael seems to enjoy but the reality of their state strikes them bitterly. When they first start looking for a house they come across signs that say 'No coloureds, No vacancies, No children' (155). It showed how the British didn't really welcome their stay and was honest enough to say that they were unwanted.

Leila notices how the white people watched her and how the Black people living among them didn't have a content look or even a smile on their face. She noticed that coloured people did not own big cars or wear suits or carry

briefcases and seemed forlorn and cold. This is when she realizes how reality was a lot worst from her expectations. Blacks were discriminated and not treated rightly and that her own mother had not told her the whole picture in her letters and hidden the dark side about the new land. "The shock of what she had found made her wonder what else her mother had left unsaid." (151)

Leila stood at this junction and looked up at their home. Two of the upstairs window panes were broken in, and the door looked like it had been put together from the remains of a dozen forgotten doors. [...] The light switch did not work. The house was dark and smelled of neglect, and there were no curtains to open to let the light in, and there were no doors to prop open to let the air circulate. (161)

This doesn't just show the broken state of the house but also symbolizes the broken nature of their life. They are lost in the dark, and are in a state of utter confusion, as they see each of their expectation filled castles come crashing down on them. Leila considered England to be the Promised Land but it didn't make her feel at home, rather she felt lost and torn at the sight of the crude reality.

All her attempt to integrate and adjust with an uncooperative environment that is prejudiced and racial failed and started to torment her psychologically that ultimately led to mental trauma. This psychological dislocation can even cause madness. She is overwhelmed by the new landscape and shocked by the banners that read 'If You want a Nigger Neighbor vote Labour' (122). For Leila, the result is severe hostility and estrangement from her homeland. Michael and Leila are alienated from their marital love bond and domestic life due to the changes caused by adaptation and adjustment to new pattern of life. Rejection of home and infirmity are indications of being cut from ones home, culture and identity.

She lives in a perpetual state of anxiety. The aromas and sights that bombard him are

unfamiliar. Everything looks unusual for her. Experience and the hard life in alien countries that are full of prejudice can destroy one's self identity and individuality. Leila and Michael have become the victims of such experience. The only way to reclaim their pride and happiness is by recovering their pride in their homeland.

Her arrival proves her wrong. Her belief that Michael will transform after reaching England goes completely wrong. He abandons her. Leila's vision of England is shattered as her experience and undergoes ruin and decrepitude everywhere. All the hopes they had were betrayed by the reality of England which was purely inhospitable and discriminatory. The sense of Alienation and separation deepens between Leila and her ailing mother when she realizes the sudden reality of wantonness and poverty. An alienated individual is not in the control of her situation and the world. Her mother is distant and no emotional support for her. Now, her mother's words saying, London is not her home and she shouldn't forget that, always reminded her to stay away from England whenever trouble tormented her. Completely dislocated from their country, neighbors and relatives, they are unable to find a lifeline to their roots. "Unable to share her distress with anyone, she had therefore lived out this passage in more mental than physical discomfort, knowing the world she had left behind no longer held anything of interest for her save Millie and Bradeth".(137)

The oscillation of new life in England and her past life in her native make her living more confounded. Leila has become an example of those persons who leave their native land in search of better life in spite of their natural tendencies and capacities and ultimately invite more trouble than they have ever expected. Every now and then she struggles to preserve her own identity in the strange environment and tries to establish her selfhood. The life she leads over there has become a life full of obstacle and impediments which she has to

overcome all alone by herself. Now she is enforced to make a lot of compromises with the situations though she went to England willingly with all hope. Issues such as poverty and victimization or racism can be challenges too and the whole lot is very difficult for the new citizen to take on board.

Then Leila left England behind, not understanding this country in which a smile could mean six things at once, a nudge on a bus from a stranger either an accident or a prologue to a series of events that might actually lead to your destruction. In England people left bread on their doorsteps and dogs came and passed water on it, and in England it never rained good and hard.(198)

Only towards the end does she Leila realize what a terrible mistake she had made in entering a land that never was hers in the first place. She realizes Millie's opinion of home and decides to back to the place that was her real and only home. Millie says 'I love this island with every bone in my body. It's small and poor, and all the rest of the things that you and Michael probably think is wrong with it, but for all of that I still love it. It's my home and home is where you feel a welcome.' (115)

Leila realizes that the England project for better prospects was an entire failure. Not just the new land but also her own marriage was now on rocks. Her illusions are all shattered and she becomes so paranoid that she withdraws her

First Leila would take a boat and leave Michael in this country among the people who seemed to keep him warm in mind and body. England, in whom she had placed so much of her hope, no longer held for her the attraction of her mother and new challenges. At least the small island she had left behind had safety and two friends, and if the price to be paid for this was a stern predictability from one day to the next then she was ready to pay it. (203)

Leila, with very little education and in a new country with a cheating and unreliable

husband, finds herself feeling inadequate in general and threatened by English women and she starts to yearn for home. Leila feels that the Island back home offers much more of a security and a predictability of her daily life, as well as the warmth of her two friends Millie and Bradeth. The diasporic experience robbed her of her self-esteem and taught her that she didn't belong there and that she would never understand the white people. Re-discovery of Homeliness of home is the only healing of the bruised immigrants. While outside world is prejudiced and alienating, home is healing.

Robert frost in his poem *The Death of the Hired Man* says 'Home is the place where, when you have to go there,

They have to take you in.' (122-123)

Thus not every place one stays becomes a home, no matter how much one tries to make it

one. It's about how that place welcomes one as home, for heart is where the home is.

Phillips has beautifully interwoven, history and reality and brought out a picture of silenced people, voicing themselves and at the same time shifting the notions of identity and home in a period of fast changing social world. Thus, it has been rightly said by Chinua Achebe in his work *Home and Exile* has powerfully quoted that 'Until the lions produce their historians, the story of the hunt will glorify only the hunter. (73)

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POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

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Abstract

Literature is a set of written works. The word has originated from Latin 'literatura-litteratura'. It is derived from 'littera', which means letter or handwriting. The growth of literature and civilization follow each other closely. The English language developed 1400 years ago. English literature falls under: Old English Literature English, Middle English Literature, followed by English Renaissance, Elizabethan era etc. and finally the modern era. During modern and post modern era, many changes have taken place. It started in the early 20th century. Post colonialism is a period of time after colonialism. Its main feature was to oppose the colonial rule. Hence, some of the critics felt that any literature which opposed colonialism, though it was produced during colonial period, may be included in the post colonial literature. It is a discourse between colonizers and colonized. During the postcolonial period, the writers incorporated native words, phrases and expressions in their English works. Works of the post colonial literature mainly consisted of racism or a history of genocide, slavery, apartheid, suppression, migration, representation, resistance etc. Some women colonial writers stated the relationship between post colonialism and feminism. The main focus of the postcolonial writers was to enlighten the people and fight against decolonization and social evils prevailing at the time. According to Wisker, "Postcolonial writing is resistance writing." The noted postcolonial writers are Derek Walcott and Chinua Achebe etc, and the Indian postcolonial writers are Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Gayatri Chakravorty, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Leela Gandhi, Jhumpa Lahari etc. Irrespective of the country, every writer's theme was more or less on the same line, addressing local problems apart from decolonization.

Keywords: Literature, renaissance, colonization, untouchability, discrimination, apartheid, imperialism, acculturation, natives, exploitation, social milieu.

Introduction

Literature is a set of written works. The English language developed 1400 years ago. English literature is divided into different periods. Each period has its unique features. In the modern period, postcolonial literature plays vital role in social upliftment by enlightening people regarding decolonization and other social issues prevailing. In order to comprehend postcolonial literature and its effects on the people, it is necessary to know the meaning of 'literature' and the background of English literature.

What is Literature?

The word 'literature' has originated from Latin 'literatura-litteratura'. It is derived from 'littera', which means letter or handwriting. The growth of literature and civilization follow each other closely. Ancient Egyptian and the Sumerian literature are considered world's ancient literatures, with the basic genres such as hymns, tales and prayers which were in the form of verse. Literature records the

contemporary works of the society and they in turn remain in the history to guide the posterity in following the customs, traditions and myths. They may carry moral and spiritual messages. Finally, literature encompasses all the written works. According to Henry Van Dyke, "Literature consists of those writing which interpret the meaning of nature and life, in words of charm and power, touched with the personality of the author, in artistic form of permanent interest." Literature is also a tool to give entertainment, enlightenment etc. All the written works cannot be categorized as literature. For example, collecting data and recording it in a register does not come under literature. The written work which gives pleasure, knowledge, morals, preaching, canons or any other work which is worthy of handing over to the next generation is known as literature. It contains all the features mentioned above. Therefore, literature helps to uplift or enrich society. "Epic of Gilgamesh" in Sumerian (2000 B.C), "Egyptian Book of the Dead" (1250 B.C) are some of the examples of ancient

literature. Literature can also be oral. These are handed over by oral tradition many centuries ago before they were brought in written form. It is impossible to ascertain the period of such literatures. The core of Rig Veda is an example of such literature and it is estimated that it belongs to the mid 2nd millennium B.C. Thus, the languages of Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek, Latin, Prakrit, Sanskrit etc. have vast contribution in literature and in turn to the society. Later on, English and some other languages have also contributed to enrich literature. Though, English is not as ancient as Latin, it has many contributions and because of colonization, it has gained popularity throughout the world. Thus, English language and literature have impacted the world. It cherishes the principles of people such as love, faith, duty, friendship, and reverence and they are invaluable beyond time.

English Literature

The earliest form of English was brought by Anglo-Saxon settlers from Anglo-Frisian dialects to Great Britain in 5th century. The literature in English started with the stories, songs of Jutes, Angles and Saxons who conquered and laid the foundation of the English nation in Britain. These people were interested in writing about the sea and plunging boats, battles, adventures, the glory of warriors and the love of home. Strong religious feelings, reverence for womanhood etc. were some of the important themes of their writing. *Beowulf* is the earliest or first poetry. *Widsith* is another work of the late 10th century in which list of all the kings and their impact on history was mentioned. Most of the works during this period include genres such as epic poetry, hagiography, sermons, Bible translation etc. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle is the collection of annals in the old English. Oral tradition was also prominent during this period. Very few authors such as Bede, Alfred the Great etc were known to the world. The remaining authors were

anonymous. Thus, with the conquest of Norman of England in 1066, the Anglo-Saxon literature has vanished slowly. Middle English literature has emerged.

Middle English

The English that was used from 1100 to 1500 A.D is known as Middle English. Owing to the Norman conquest of England, the influence of French in English was predominant. During this period, the invaders integrated their language and literature with the natives. Religious literature was popular. Middle English Bible translations helped to establish English as a literary language. In 14th century, the major writers were William Langland, Geoffrey Chaucer etc. It corresponds to medieval period. Medieval works of English literature often revolve round the inevitability, sadness, change, loss and death and the vanity of human grandeur. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was considered the masterpiece. Initially, English was spoken only by common people, whereas, Latin was used in churches and schools and French in courts. Later, in late 1300s, English regained its importance. It replaced Latin and French in Parliament and court. William Caxton printed majority of his writings in English in late 15th century. This helped to standardize the English language and to enrich vocabulary. Many reforms took place in the English literature after the introduction of William Caxton's printing press. This can also be called English Renaissance. It was both cultural and artistic movement in England. This was more evident in Elizabethan era.

English Renaissance

Elizabethan era is the second half of the English Renaissance. During this period, dramas along with poetry were important literary forms. The dramas of this period became more popular than Middle English period. Edmund Spenser was the author of the epic poem, *The Faerie Queen*. William Shakespeare was also an important playwright

and poet. He wrote plays in different genres, which included histories, tragedies, comedies, romance.

William Shakespeare's dramas were very famous. Some of them are *Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest* etc.,. During the Jacobean period, which was after the Elizabethan period, along with Shakespeare's dramas and sonnets John Donne, George Chapman were some of the renowned poets of the time. Though *Canterbury Tales* of Middle English was in prose, most of the book is in the form of verse. Whereas in late renaissance, prose works have become predominant. King James Bible is one of the important prose works of the time. In the late renaissance, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* was also very important poetry. Similarly John Keats romantic poems were also popular. Later in Restoration Age, more prose works are observed.

The Modern Period

During modern and post modern era, many changes have taken place. It started in the early 20th century. During this period, the social and political conditions were totally different. Because of the colonial rule, the English language had spread almost all the parts of the world. Two world wars took place during the modern period. Many social issues in the colonies were addressed. The gap between the rich and the poor, the post-war economic dislocation, Karl Marx scientific socialism, Darwin's *Theory of Evolution* etc. were some of the major themes of this period. The tradition of novels as in Victorian period continued. H.G Wells, Arnold Bennette were some of the important novelists. As most of the colonies were in freedom struggle or decolonization strive, the novels, poems etc., were based on those themes only. In countries like India, many writers flourished. They wrote many poems, novels addressing the social issues such as untouchability, women education etc. Tagore's *Gitanjali* was awarded the Nobel Prize. Writers

from India and commonwealth countries depicted social issues and the subjugation of the foreign rule in their writings. This has paved the way to postcolonial literature.

Postcolonial Literature

Post colonialism is a period of time after colonialism. Its main feature was to oppose the colonial rule. Hence, some of the critics felt that any literature which opposed colonialism, though it was produced during colonial period, may be included in postcolonial literature. According to Simon During, "the need, in nations, or groups which have been victims of imperialism to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalists are Eurocentric concepts or images." Postcolonial literature mainly dealt with the problems of the people (nations) who suffered because of the colonial rule. In the mid of 20th century, most of the colonies gained independence. The writers had their major role in awakening the general public to fight for independence. The writer through his thought process makes use of his mind as battlefield. Similarly, the freedom fighters plunge into action in the physical battlefield. Postcolonial literature has arisen at the end of Second World War in the regions which were undergoing decolonization. The works of 20th and 21st centuries from the regions like India, Nigeria, South Africa, Caribbean islands are the examples of postcolonial literature.

Characteristics of Postcolonial Writing

During the postcolonial period, the writers incorporated native words, phrases and expressions in their English works. The idea of using native language in English was to challenge the colonial rulers. Most of the colonizers interpreted history in their perspective. According to them, the colonized people had no culture and were ignorant. Therefore, colonialism was the harbinger of change and they wanted to civilize the natives. Postcolonial writers did not like the above narration of history. Hence, they started writing

from their view point. They stated that colonization was all about economic exploitation. The postcolonial writers felt that because of colonialism, nature and culture was suppressed. Its effects were so deep that even after decolonization, it continued to influence in their social milieu. Along with culture, native language and religion were also put to lot suppression. Many conversions to Christianity by Missionaries took place. Most of the writings during the period were about nationhood, nationalism, social identity, patriotism etc. These writings criticized not only the colonies but also the corrupt practices of the natives. The intention was to remind the dreams of newly liberated nations. There were a number of freedom fighters who were also writers. They were interested not only to decolonize the political structure but also to change the way of thinking of the people towards the liberalization of culture and philosophy of colonialism. Postcolonial literature described interactions between European nations and the people they colonized.

Postcolonial literature pertains to the literature of the countries which were colonized, mainly by Europeans. Barring Antarctica, all the other continents experienced this. It is related to the problems and consequences of decolonization of a country, especially problems relating to political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated people, and themes such as racialism and colonization. Literary theory also evolved around these themes.

Postcolonial literary theory studies colonial literature, with particular reference to the social discourse, between the colonizer and the colonized, that forms the basis of literature of the period.

Themes of Postcolonial Literature

Works of the post colonial literature mainly consisted of racism or a history of genocide, slavery, apartheid etc. In order to bring social awareness among the people, post colonial

writers chose the above themes in their works. Post colonialism focused on many subjects. Different geographical, historical, social, religious, and economic affairs of the colonies (which were then decolonized). Wisker in her works stated that 'postcolonial writing is resistance writing.' The writers during the period wanted the rulers to give their due rights and at the same time wanted to protect their culture and traditions.

Some women colonial writers stated the relationship between post colonialism and feminism. Most of them who were part of staunch patriarchal cultures felt that English literature of the time did not take their woes into consideration and were ignored. However, during the postcolonial period, women were given freedom to express through their writings. According to Bill Ashcroft et al., "Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, and linguistics and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing, by which all these come into being. None of this is 'essentially' postcolonial, but together they form the complex fabric of the field." Thus, the term 'postcolonial literature' refers to a phase in the history of the country, and literature belonging to the phase. It is a term of collectivity for the literatures emanating from the third world countries, which share certain formal and discursive features of their own specific to the social, cultural and historical conditions.

Postcolonial Writers

Postcolonial writers through their works influenced the people and made them realize the need for independence. Some of the noted writers are as follows:

Derek Walcott: He belongs to Trinidadian. He was a poet, playwright and professor in English. He had a family history of colonialism.

His poems reflected the colonial history. He was influenced by poets like T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound. Methodism and spirituality have played key role in his writings. He published more than 20 plays in which he addressed luminal status of West Indies in postcolonial period. In his poems, he questioned the paradoxes and legacy of colonial rulers. In his essays he stated the problems of an artist regarding indigenous state. He says, "We are all strangers here...our bodies think in one language and move in another." Some of his poems were *Mid Summer*, *Mil tonic* etc. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* was one of his plays which was played in the theatres of Trinidad. He got Nobel Prize for his epic poem *Omeros*.

Chinua Achebe: A Nigerian novelist whose writings revolved round the intersection of African tradition and modernity, with the mixture of European colonialism. His writing also reflects the deprivation of the native culture and the conflict between African culture and Western influence. His novel *Things Fall Apart* is an example explaining the clash with tradition of *Igbo*. It was written during the cruel British colony rule. In this novel, the character Okonkwo, who was a *Igbo* warrior opposed the British colonizers. As a result, he faced several problems with the colonizers. Through this novel, the writer wanted to show the Europeans that Africans were not savages. His second novel *No Longer At Ease* was written at the time of their independence. It is about the moral destruction of colonialism which damaged their indigenous culture and society. His third novel *Arrow of the God* is about the conflict between indigenous religion and values and Christianity. It was written after their independence. These three novels are known as *trilogy* of Achebe.

Postcolonial Writings in India

Indian writing in English during postcolonial period was in full swing. Many writers with the new themes and techniques made their presence felt in the English speaking

world. It was divided into two parts: 1.Pre-Independence and 2.Post-Independence. During Pre-Independent era, writers from different parts of India addressed the problems of colonized India. Some of them highlighted the highly prevalent social evils like *sati*, casteism, marginalization, widowhood, rites and rituals, poverty, illiteracy etc. On the other hand, there were some novels which highlighted patriotism and nationalistic ideas of the great freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi among the few people. Some of the postcolonial writers are Mulk Raj Anand, Anita Desai, Gayatri Chakravorti, Amitav Ghosh, Kiran Desai, Leela Gandhi, Jhumpa Lahari etc.

Mulk Raj Anand: Mulk Raj Anand focused in his novels about sufferings, poverty, exploitation of downtrodden class of Indian society, religious hypocrisy, superstition, place of women in the society etc. In his first novel *Untouchable*, he described a single day in the life of the protagonist, Bakha, a scavenger boy. Through this character, Anand wanted to portray the poverty, inhuman exploitation of downtrodden people etc. and the gap between high castes and untouchables. His other novel *Coolie* dealt with the gap between haves and have-nots. His *Across the Black Waters* talks about the experiences of Lulu, a sepoy in the Indian army fighting for the British during the World War I. He is hardly aware what the war is about. According to Basavarj Naikar, "In Lulu's tragedy lied the tragedy of the Indian village and Anand dramatizes a poignant truth: to dispossess any one of land is to deny him an identity".

Raja Rao: Raja Rao's works are deeply rooted in metaphysics. He was active in Indian national movement as well. His first novel *Kanthapura* dealt with the story of a south Indian village called Kanthapura. It mainly focused on casteism and Gandhian philosophy. The main character Murthy was a young Brahmin, who leaves for city to pursue higher education and was fascinated by Gandhi's philosophy. After

his mother's demise, he stayed with an educated widow, Rangamma, who was active participant during freedom movement. Murthy and Rangamma faced many hurdles. Despite the hurdles, Rangamma tried to instill sense of patriotism among women by telling the stories of notable women in Indian history. Her contribution in bringing out reform among women through her story telling was worth mentioning. Murthy, on his part, tried to unite the people of town irrespective of caste to participate in the freedom struggle. Thus, *Kanthapura* brings unity among castes and patriotic fervor among the people.

Manju Kapur: Most of the women postcolonial writers mentioned about the problems faced by the women in India in the male dominated society and also problems encountered by women during the British rule. Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* is one in which she presented the suffering of the women. She also presented the problems due to the partition of the country. In her novels, she also emphasized the patriarchy, family bond, male-female bond, domestic violence etc., In her novel, *A Married woman*, through her woman protagonist Astha, she narrated the challenges of the middle class existence. Thus, Manju Kapur's novels extend moral support to the women readers.

Anita Desai: Anita Desai depicts the torture and oppression faced by women in her writings. Most of the women characters in Desai's novels

were rebel against the patriarchy and explore their own way to live. *Clear Light of the Day* and *Cry a Peacock* are some of her novels. Most of protagonists were single women. It didn't mean that she opposed marriage and supported alienation from society. In her novel *Clear Light of Day*, the protagonist, Tara had successful marital life. Thus, Anita Desai through her novels, tried to motivate and enlighten the women. Through the characters of her novels, she proved that women have potential to lead independent life.

Conclusion

Thus, the postcolonial literature is a mixture of the themes of patriotism, unity, anti-casteism, anti-racism, women education and empowerment etc., Irrespective of the country, every writer's theme was more or less on the same line, addressing local problems apart from decolonization.

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POST COLONIAL IMPACT IN ANITA DESAI'S IN CUSTODY

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Abstract

Post colonial literature is the literature of countries that were colonized, mainly by European countries. 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. Postcolonial literature emerged at the same time that many colonies were fighting their way to independence. It really began picking up as a coherent literary movement in the mid-twentieth century.

*Anita Desai is one of India's foremost writers. She uses ordinary everyday activities to portray something greater and universal. Anita Desai novels present social conditions. Anita Desai's novel, *In custody*, I explore the constitutive elements of the post-Independence sense of the nation. Anita Desai symbolically described how Urdu has been replaced after independence. The aim of the two characters is to save great Urdu language in the postcolonial era but both of them have experienced in negative way.*

*In *Custody* highlights the impoverishment of the cultural and linguistic forms of Muslim identity in post-1947 India. But in postcolonial and post-partition India, Urdu finds itself abandoned by its wealthy and regal patrons of the pre-partition era, who are reeling under the disorienting effects of geographical dislocation. Historically, the partition of 1947 did fragment the writing community by redistributing its members into two separate territorial nations. One of the significant consequences of partition was the migration of Urdu writers of Muslim origin to Pakistan. Nur's poetry and Urdu literature, as well as Muslim culture, are in danger of being incorporated and neutralized within a nationalist polity that annihilates the nuances woven by cultural and linguistic difference in post-Independence India.*

The paper presents an ineffective and fruitless but well-meaning young man whose problems are not just personal and private but public and social. The novel describes the issues of language and poetry.

Introduction

In *Custody* engages with the complex post-Independence life of diverse linguistic communities in modern India. The narrative concentrates on the loss of power of a community that had once ruled the land through the figure of the poet Nur whose dwindling literary talent is a metaphor for the gradual disappearance of the Urdu voice in modern India. Concerning the issue of language and the issue of post-colonialism we may have a double grievance within a nationalist reading of the novel. When the British rule came to an end in 1947, the subcontinent was partitioned along religious lines into two separate countries-India, with a majority of Hindus, and Pakistan, with a majority of Muslims. Hence, the reflection to a certain point in the novel of a post-colonial situation in relation to the Muslim/Urdu colonization and also to the English one, a double colonization and cultural alienation fought off by the Hindus in their attempt to gain independence in 1947.

The fable, the story of the novel, is based on a this yarn- the offer of an interview to a Hindi professor, the preparation, the holding of the interview, publication of an article and the consequences- all these incidents concern Nur and Deven. A temporary lecture in Hindi in a private college named Lala Ram Lal College in Mirapore, at Delhi. Deven is interested in Urdu literature.

The novelist linked in the middle class rural Hindi Lecturer and the famous Poet Nur in connection with the love of Urdu language. Deven is a Hindi lecturer in a college at Mirapore, a small town. He is the central character of the novel. He is from middle class family. His father was a school teacher and also lover of Urdu language. Due to the influence of his father, he learned Urdu language. He is very much interested in reading Urdu poems written by the famous Urdu poet Nur's and also fan of him. Deven's concerns are chiefly literary.

The adoration of poetry is at the center of the thematic, emotional and plot pattern in the

novel. Deven's higher artistic aspiration, its fulfillment, and consequence form the basis of the novel. Although in Custody entails the comic mutual dependence that develops between a provincial college teacher and a famous ageing poet, the historical relationship of language and culture to politics and society is an implied theme of the novel.

Deven considered Nur as a great hero and savior of Urdu language. He was very much impressed by Nur's verses. As a teacher, Deven is not a capable person in handling the classes. His marriage is matchless and as a husband, he does not fulfill the family desires. He is very much interested in establishing the endangered language Urdu instead of living present life with his wife and son Manu. His behavior towards his wife makes things unpleasant in all circumstances in his life. He suffers very much in fulfilling his duty of marriage as a shameful failure.

The novel begins with an unexpected meeting between two childhood friends Deven and Mural. Both of them have different personalities and different family backgrounds. Deven is requested by Murad to interview the famous Urdu poet Nur for a special issue of his journal *Awaaz*. Murad flatters and insists Deven to revive the glorious past of Urdu language and limelight the poet whom Deven loves very much by conducting the personal interview. Murad says keep alive the glorious tradition of Urdu literature.

In the interview that Deven hopes to have with Nur, he really aspires to experience the bright promises of poetry as against the grey shades of his own incomplete existence. But Nur, at the time of the meeting, is already old and has lost much of his creativity, although Deven, blinded by his own adulation of the poet and his need to experience greatness and fame through him, refuses to accept this fact. In this self-deception lies much of Deven's later misery and the seeds of Nur's decision to exploit him

for what Deven is going to get out of him- fame for the interview of the great poet.

When Deven comes to see Nur, the poet asks his purpose. Deven tells the Urdu poet about the intention of his visit that is to interview him for an Urdu magazine. At this Nur starts interrogating him, and criticizing him for teaching Hindi in college. The poet foolishly argues that Hindi is being given top priority only to uproot the Urdu language, and that Deven is a party to this. At this Deven tells him that the reality of life is quite different from the dream of it. Although he loves Urdu poetry, he cannot earn a living from teaching it. After listening to such arguments from Deven, Nur gets very angry. The language controversy and the conflict between Urdu and Hindi are major themes in the novel. Nur criticizes Deven's job as a Hindi lecturer. He mocked that the Hindi is given more important than Urdu in the postcolonial era.

In meeting with the great Urdu poet Nur and Deven Anita Desai beautifully portrayed how he reached Delhi to meet the great Urdu poet Deven. Deven has a great imagination about the poet's life style and he expected good reception from him. But in contrary to his expectations he was unwelcomed by the poet. Nur gets angry and says,

'Urdu poetry'? --- How can there be Urdu poetry where there is no Urdu language left? It is dead, finished. The defeat of the Moghuls by the British threw a noose over its head and the defeat of the British by the Hindi wallahs tightened it. So now you see its corpse lying here, waiting to be buried.'

Nur's world is of course more glamorous, because of his fame as a poet; otherwise, he is as much a victim of the decadent, restraining custom and convention as Deven is. Nur's two jealous and quarrelsome wives, his vulgar and opportunistic company of admirers and parasites make it impossible for Nur to continue the glorious, living tradition of Urdu poetry. His life style is archaic and his music is but a

cacophony as the recorded tape finally proves to be.

AS Nur's despairing statement indicates statements indicates, the decay of the Urdu language and its literature and culture in post-partition India is an effect of the imposition of the singular definition of nation against which ethnic and religious minorities continue to protest in present-day India. Nur's point that the world of cultural depletion, dislocation, and impoverishment cannot be separated from that of exalted end poetry, romance, and alluring myth seems to be endorsed by Desai, who invests the narrator with the authority to be the Custodian of Nur's oeuvre but acknowledges that the world of everyday reality cannot be ignored.

In this paper deals with the subject of Urdu language and culture in India, through the central character of an Urdu poet. Unfortunately, in the political conflicts between

India's Hindus and Muslims, Urdu is perceived as the language of Muslims, and by its association with religion, the language has become part of the political propaganda war. Urdu is not a religion; it is the language of a culture that was once shared by both Muslims and Hindus. Deven's has received

"the gift of Nur's poetry and that meant he was custodian of Nur's very soul and spirit. It was a great distinction. He could not deny or abandon that under any pressure".

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MAHASWETA DEVI'S "DAINI": SUBVERSION THROUGH WITCHCRAFT

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Abstract

Inequalities prevail widely endangering the social harmony and well-being. The privileged sections of the society keep the under privileged members under their control in order to exercise authority for their own selfish ends. Mahasweta Devi a social activist - writer documents the travails of the *adivasis* in her writings. "Daini" relates the story of Hanuman Misra, a Mahajan, who subverts the tribal people through their superstitious beliefs. The aim of the paper is to show the subversion of the Indian tribal people by the upper class using superstitious beliefs. "Daini" elaborates the superstitious beliefs as subverting agencies of the *adivasis*. The upper caste people spread superstitious beliefs to keep the *adivasis* in thrall and servitude. Superstitious beliefs keep the *adivasis* under subjugation of the upper class society. The *adivasis* avoid black cows and feed their children with holy milk that costs lives. They abandon houses on fire, reject medical service from lady doctors and avoid medicinal plants with curative powers. The chief priest and the Government officials are also in the grip of terror of the daini. The hunt explores the daini mystery and holds Misra as the guilty. Collective protest is suggested as remedy for the sufferings of the *adivasis*.

Keywords: travails, superstitious beliefs, subjugation, sufferings, collective protest

Mahasweta Devi's "Daini": Subversion through Witchcraft

Inequalities prevail widely endangering the social harmony and well-being. The privileged sections of the society keep the under privileged members under their control in order to exercise authority for their own selfish ends. Money, power, race and gender are some indicators showing social inequalities. The caste hierarchy in India pitches the *brahmins* as superior to the *adivasis* (people who dwell in the forest) and thereby causes social inequalities. Mahasweta Devi (1926-2016) a social activist - writer documents the travails of the *adivasis* in her writings. The *adivasis* are the socially oppressed and marginalised members in India and Devi gives a clarion call for their uplift. Through her writings, Devi voices for the voiceless and champions the cause of the downtrodden. Generally, Devi's short stories show the *Mahajans* (moneylenders), the bureaucrats and the wrong Government policies as major oppressive forces against the *adivasis*. "Daini" [Witch] a short story in the collection Bitter Soil shows the manipulative operation of the upper

caste society to subvert the *adivasis* through beliefs in witchcraft.

"Daini" relates the story of Hanuman Misra, a *Mahajan*, who subverts the tribal people through their superstitious beliefs. The witch story changes the mental make-up of the people and a mysterious terror spreads from village to village. The daini hunt reveals victimised Somri, *pahaan's* daughter as the real witch and explodes the popular beliefs about witchcraft. Devi envisions a reawakened society with collective effort to end the feudal exploitative modes of the subaltern. The aim of the paper is to show the subversion of the Indian tribal people by the upper class using superstitious beliefs.

"Daini" elaborates the superstitious beliefs as subverting agencies of the *adivasis*. The upper caste people spread superstitious beliefs to keep the *adivasis* in thrall and servitude. A black cow is considered inauspicious. Daitar Dushad's mother in Hesadi calls out to a black cow in her dream. The incident becomes serious as the cow is black. Shortly afterwards, the mother falls down and dies. Birsa Dushad of Barudhiha kills his black cow. The death of the cow is said to

have ruined him. The cow turns into a young woman and beckons to him. He becomes mad and hangs himself. *Adivasis* abandon houses on fire and admit their children to Mission for their safety. An accidental break out of fire or an arson attack may result in mass evacuation of residential quarters of the *adivasis* and they remain homeless.

Suspicion of the unknown ladies is a superstition of the *adivasis*. They refuse to accept vaccinations from lady doctors. They also pelt stones at lady relief workers and hinder their service. The belief stops well-intentioned relief measures and hampers social uplift.

The *adivasis* bathe idols in milk and feed their children with it. Shiva idol in Misraji's temple is bathed in milk and Mahuri feeds the milk to Ramrik's daughter who dies. On *shivaratri*, the children begin to vomit milk and die. Feeding children with holy milk is a superstitious belief that mixes idol worship with religion. However, the practice only costs the lives of the innocent tribal children.

The roots of *goli* are the effective medicine for preventing still birth. *Goli* trees grow in Jilad field which is abandoned because of the haunting of the daini. The story of the daini is spread presumably to desist the *gunin* (medical expert) from going to the interior forest area to fetch medicinal roots for saving pregnant women.

Marriages and remarriages within the *adivasi* tribes are permissible. Baram Ganju promises to marry off his widowed sister Mani to the grown up younger brother-in-law. He tells her, "You, younger brother-in-law has grown up now, and he's interested." (74) Although widow remarriages are approved by tribal society, the inter-caste marriages are objectionable as they are viewed as tilting the social hierarchical structure. *Parsad*, Ramrik Dhobi's son and Mani, Baram Ganju's widowed sister get wedded. The Dhobi-Ganju intercaste marriage provokes the elders to see the hand of daini in the affair. They argue, "How can we be

sure that the daini is not behaving this? (73). The upper caste people disapprove inter-caste marriages and they link it with daini story.

It is said that the daini sucks blood with her eyes and devours the life of little children. Her breath drives the clouds away, makes trees barren and withers the maroa field crop.

Even *pahaan*, the chief priest is not immune to the grip of terror. He converses with his wife on the disappearance of his shadow:

Who're you calling?

My shadow. I went out to piss, my shadow went with me. I've come back inside, no shadow.

No shadow?

No.

How come?

It seems I've turned into a *daini*! (67-68)

The *adivasis* are economically weak and dependent for their survival. The upper class people keep the *adivasis* in abject poverty. Hanuman Misra owns many orchards, a lot of land and a colliery. He engages *adivasis* as coolies in coal mine and brick kilns and pays them minimum wages.

Hanuman Misra evades economic solution but provides a spiritual solution to the sufferings of the *adivasis*:

Hanuman Misra is desirous of feeding a sacrificial fire with one quintal of ghee over seven days . . ." (66)

Misra cleverly manipulates religious beliefs to sustain the belief on witches and keep the *adivasis* in poverty.

The mysterious story of daini spreads terror from village to village. Local government officials are also afraid of the daini. As per duty, the local official reports about daini-terror to the Adivasi Welfare Ministry and the police. However, personally, he pays Misra a sum of fifty one rupees for a sacred charm to ward off evil.

The dainy hunt explodes the myth created and fostered by Misra for his own exploitative purposes. The *daini* is a misshapen woman with

dishevelled hair screaming Anh-anh-anh! *pahaan* who takes leading role in rituals and ceremonies, leads the villagers to chase the *daini* to the forest. Initially, *daini* is mistaken for a bear or an ox. Eventually, it is identified as human and aggressive. She raises her hands and screams. The *daini* is not to be stoned as her blood is believed to breed a hundred *dainis*. The upper castes spread these beliefs to dissuade the *daini* hunt and perpetuate the mystery about the *daini*.

The *daini* enters the cave and it is smoked out. Surprisingly, Somri, *pahaan*'s daughter appears. She gives birth to a son and relates how Hanuman Misra's son has spoiled her. *Pahann* says, "Daini, *daini*, the thakur spread these stories about a *daini*. I never knew my Somri was the *daini*. I never knew!" (122). Rekha in "The Poetics of Space: A Reading of Mahasweta Devi's Subaltern Stories" observes,

"Somri's deafness and mental dwarf-ness, and her molestation and deliberate demonization (she is very cunningly marked as a *daini* by Thakurs of Tahar) and her consequent sub-human existence outside the periphery of civilisation, symbolically capture the forced silence, insubordination and commodification of a woman situated within the matrices of conflicting patriarchal domains." (147)

The *adivasis* decide to liberate themselves from their subverted positions through collective protest. They hold Misra as the author of their sufferings. They decide to cut off their earlier bindings to him. They refuse to work as his coolies. They vow not to permit outsiders to work for him either. They say, "We won't work as coolies for him. Won't let anyone work. Won't allow outside coolies in, either." (124)

To sum up, superstitious beliefs keep the *adivasis* under subjugation of the upper class society. The *adivasis* avoid black cows and feed their children with holy milk that costs lives. They abandon houses on fire, reject medical service from lady doctors and avoid medicinal plants with curative powers. The chief priest and the Government officials are also in the grip of terror of the *daini*. The hunt explores the *daini* mystery and holds Misra as the guilty. Collective protest is suggested as remedy for the sufferings of the *adivasis*.

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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN SHOBHA DE'S *SECOND THOUGHTS* – A SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

Every religious tradition and culture encourages marriage as a responsible adult act. Marriage is regarded as a duty incumbent upon all. In some cultures marriage is considered more crucial for women than for men. It is the most important social and religious occasion in a person's life. Even in a society where celibacy is a religious virtue, it is expected that to become a celibate ascetic one has to first experience marriage and parenthood. And it has been an important social institution. It is the basis for the family. The functions of marriage include regulation of sexual behaviour, reproduction, nurturance, protection of children, socialization, consumption and passing on the race.

Shobha de, the Indian woman novelist, whose novels show the struggle of woman against the predatory male-dominated society. In dealing with the problems of women in the androcentric society, she fails to provide viable solutions to the plight of the ailing woman. A woman in Indian society marries not just the man but also his family and subsequently loses her identity in marriage, relinquishes her freedom and sets about pleasing everybody.

Her novel **Second Thoughts** is a realistic representation of the psyche of the traditional Indian men and women. It deals with a young middle-class Bengali girl, born and bred in Calcutta who makes an arranged matrimony alliance with a Bombay-based, foreign-returned Bengali. Maya, the young bride is more fascinated and in love with Bombay than at the prospect of having married Ranjan. Once she lands in Bombay, after the marriage, her disillusionment begins. She realizes that despite Ranjan's stay abroad, he is very traditional and

above all, an insensitive husband. After marriage, Maya, with lots of dream, visits Bombay, with her husband Ranjan. For every girls, marriage ushers glamour, fascination, and freedom but once the ceremony is over, the dreams come crashing down and it is with a lot of bitterness that they face the harsher unknown realities. Maya was fascinated by "Bombay but was taken aback when she sensed that Bombay smelt of desperation and deceit". Desperation and deceit become the key words of her life when she becomes a part of Bombay.

Both Maya and Ranjan are strongly influenced by the traditional orthodoxy of their respective parents. Ranjan has studied abroad, lived in Bombay, but as far as his wife is concerned he imposes restrictions on her movements, she is not free to go anywhere in the city. She cannot feel free to live in the house as she would wish to. He imposes many restrictions to her. He asks her to stay at home and not to misuse his hard earned money in things like the "gajra of mogras" (26). He frights her against mop salesmen and vendors by mentioning them as "Useless ruffians". For this reason, he also asks her not to peep through the windows of the house. He never appreciates her for any work, dress, word or any other thing which belongs to her. His attitude towards Maya is derogatory and says to accept what he was saying because he does not like any kind of argument.

Ranjan's mother Mrs. Malik is rich and apparently seems quite modern and start. She has a very clear picture of her future daughter-in-law. Maya is often hurt by Ranjan's indifferent attitude and wonders why he did not pick up a Bengali girl from Bombay. She was an influential lady and she could have chosen for

her son a girl born and bred in Bombay. Once Maya had spoken to Ranjan on this issue and he had sharply replied : "Oh, no no. These Bombay Bengalis are different, they've lost their cultural identity. Their roots are not in our tradition. My mother wouldn't have been able to adjust to someone that" (116). And when Maya wants to know about his choice, he says that he had left in all to his mother. Maya finds that Ranjan can dare to speak in such a manner because he feels superior in some way to her and her background. For Hindus, marriage is a sacrosanct union. It is also an important social institution. Marriages in India are between two families, rather two individual. Arranged marriages and dowry are customary. The society as well as the Indian legislation attempt to protect marriage. Indian society is predominantly patriarchal. There are stringent gender roles, with women having a passive role and husband an active dominating role.

On the other hand, Maya's mother, reveals the traditional outlook of a girl's mother in Indian society, particularly the middle class. She is acutely worried about Maya's slightly dark complexion. It is a cause of great concern to her. She chooses a yellow saree, the colour which Maya dislikes, so that it makes her look fairer. She knows that the Maliks are very fair and as is the general Indian attitude, they certainly would not like a dark daughter-in-law. When Mrs. Malik lays down the rules and explains tersely that girls can only be moulded if they stop thinking of their parents' home as their own, Maya's mother Chitra agrees with her without any qualms. She seems to have understood this very well, by the comments of Mrs. Malik : "I believe in the same thing myself. A girl has to cut the cord of her family quickly and identify with her in-laws. The sooner she does this, the better" (222). Most of the marriages are arranged by parents or relatives even in the educated class. In India, marriage is a one-time event in life, which sanctified and glorified with much social approval. Marriage is a social

necessity, social values, customs, traditions and even legislation have attempted to ensure stability of marriage. The goal of marriage is to foster, not self-interest but self-restraint and love for the entire family, which keeps the family united and prevents its breakdown. Chitra issues the standard instructions to Maya that marriage involves sacrifice which has to be undertaken by the women. Chitra writes to Maya :

You are a married woman now. You belong to your husband's family. In traditional families such, as ours, it is simply not done for the bride's relatives. That prevents the girl from integrating into her husband's family. It may also lead to misunderstanding between the couple you have to get to know your new family and become one of them as quickly as possible. It is for your own good, for your sake that mamu is leaving you alone. Don't misunderstand that Girls who cling on to their own family for too long never succeed in adjusting to their husbands people. (67)

Ranjan has a certain mental picture of a wife and Maya has to conform it no lapses are to be permitted. Maya's longing for adventure and romance often suffers a setback. Her desires are rudely snapped and dissolved by sharp-edged words like, "There are certain rules. You have to abide by them whether you like them or not" (83). Ranjan's responsibility towards Maya is nothing beyond providing her financial support, a decent house and four square meals a day. He is completely indifferent to Maya's emotional desires. And this detached attitude of Ranjan that hurts Maya immensely. He constantly reminds Maya of her duties as a married woman. Maya cannot feel a sense of belonging. She experiences utter neglect. She can never gain the confidence and sense of belonging to be able to call the house her own. But at the same time, the prescription of marriage is more stringent for women. Women must get married. After marriage, her husband's home is her home. She should visit her natal

home only as a guest. She should never return to her parents' home. But the worst situation for women, they couldn't feel neither parent home nor marital home as their own. The primary duty of the woman is to be subservient and loyal to the husband and his relatives.

Their marriage is only one year old but monotony heavily erodes it. With Ranjan's non-communicative attitude, Maya sulks in the kitchen. She is constantly depressed because of her crippling loneliness. There is no one in Bombay with whom she can share her miseries. She pities herself for doing nothing in a city that is not her own. There is no one with whom she can giggle and gossip or confess her problems. She feels useless. The feeling of being unwanted gnaws her. In predisposed individuals marriage can cause mental-health problems. Indian society has a greater bias against women with mental illness. Many of them are abandoned like Maya are abandoned by their husbands and in-laws. They remain as a maid-servant in the marital home. This causes misery and stigma and further complicates their problems by making them susceptible to development of exacerbation of psychiatric disorders after marriage. Maya's suffering, subjugation and isolation and deprived condition turned her into a confused person unable to take any decision on anything. She is not strong enough to say 'no' to anybody on any issue. Like Maya, most of the Indian women are subjugated in the name of tradition. They are refused to uplift themselves in the society.

Women go into marriage for companionship, partnership, procreation, emotional support and legitimisation of sexual activities but invariable what is being experienced by many women is violence. Till date, the woman of the patriarchal society of India continues to be oppressed and ill-treated. She is dependent, weak, exploited and faces gender discrimination in every sphere of life. The gender based violence that threatens the well-being, dignity and rights of women extends across social, cultural, economic and regional boundaries. Maya, too, accepts to remain enveloped in the loneliness and sadness. On her second thoughts, she learns to survive the sultriness of not only Bombay but also of her marriage. Simone De Beavoir rightly comments : Marriage is a fate traditionally sanctioned to women by society. But marriage is not the same thing to a man as to a woman. The two sexes are different each other, though one has the necessity of the other.

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RENDERING OF SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY IN THE NOVEL *MAN IN THE MIRROR* AND THE ROLE OF TRANSITIONAL OBJECTS

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Abstract

Gerontology has become the topic of the day in the recent years. Many writers have begun to concentrate in this genre. The reason behind it is the drastic increase in the aging population and of the blooming awareness. Aged people are portrayed as submissive and meek characters in most of the fictions; shattered by the various demands and by facing numerous problems. This paper attempts to focus on the Alzheimer's affected aged population through the protagonist Aaron Young in the novel Man in the Mirror by Zoe Murdock with an aspect of gerontology. It further ascertains the role played by transitional objects as a means of comfort in Alzheimer's affected people.

Keywords: Gerontology, aging population, Alzheimer's disease, transitional objects.

Introduction

Merriam Webster dictionary defines Gerontology as "the comprehensive study of aging and the problems of the aged". It is the study of aging during the life course. The main focus would be on the social, psychological and biological aspects of the aging population. Gerontology is considered as a multidisciplinary field incorporating biology, psychology as well as sociology. There are numerous works of literature depicting gerontology. The hardships undergone by the aged population have been penned down as poems, prose pieces, articles, fictions and much more. Aged people usually face a lot of difficulties. They might have problem in managing finances, maintaining health and social relationships. They mostly face both the physical and mental decline at the same time, which becomes unbearable for them. The situation is worse in the case of Alzheimer's affected aged people. This paper attempts to throw light on the aspects of gerontology with respect to Alzheimer's disease and of the role played by transitional objects.

Alzheimer's Disease

Decline in mental ability and memory due to the damage created to the brain in general is termed as Dementia. Alzheimer's disease and dementia evoke people's deepest fears about losing their memory, their identity and their

independence. It is a term which represents decline in memory that stops the person from doing his routine activities. It is caused by the physical changes in the brain. The damage in the brain cells causes dementia. This restrains the brain cells to communicate in a normal way. Thus thinking, behavior and feelings are affected when the brain cells cannot communicate. When the cells in certain region of brain are affected, that region cannot carry out its function normally. Based on the damaged regions of the brain, dementia could be differentiated. Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia. It is a progressive deterioration of thinking ability and memory as the brain cells becomes damaged. The symptoms of dementia can be seen through impairment in communication and language, memory, reasoning, hallucinations, and inability to focus and concentrate. In the initial stage people may have problems with short-term memory alone, where it is difficult to keep track of the commonest things like keys, glasses, purse, appointments, etc. But in the progressive stage it gets worse. Alzheimer's is perhaps the disorder which most people dread, the one that eventually strips away all the sense of self.

Donald W. Winnicott's Transitional Objects

Donald W. Winnicott is the person who introduced the term "transitional objects". Transitional object is used to describe any object

which helps a child as he or she becomes a separate and individual person. A transitional object is a soft toy, blanket or any object carried by a child and of vital importance. According to Winnicott, these objects are particularly important during separation from important others, helping to ward off anxiety and depression.

Donald .W. Winnicott presented a paper to the British Psycho-Analytical Society: "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena- A study of the First Not- Me Possession." Transitional object is a term from developmental psychology coined by Winnicott. Transitional objects are also known as comfort objects or security items. It relates itself to objects of affection which the child uses to comfort itself as a substitute for the mother. He identified that having a comfort object helps a child in making a transition from depending on the mother figure to becoming independent. It can be considered as any property which a child uses in its efforts to test reality. The transitional object can be toys, blankets, photos, ornaments, clothing and pillows which a child hang on to relieve the stress. It can be anything that comforts a child. When a mother or care taker is unavailable, the child becomes upset by their absence. To compensate and comfort itself from the loss, they fill the gap by using some object substituting the mother. This item is called as transitional object in simple terms. Winnicott refers to any object which a child regards as special to them as transitional objects. The transitional object is comforting when the mother is not around or at any other time. The reason why kids hold onto such objects is because the smell and texture of it gives a familiar, safe and comforting feeling. It will do the job of soothing, reassuring, comforting a person and provide solace and security.

Transitional objects applicability in Alzheimer's affected adults

It is recognized that usage of transitional objects are continued even into adulthood.

When adults are taken into consideration, they might have different kinds of transitional objects. They might possess things owned by their parents, watch, photograph or a garment used by their loved one. Usage of transitional objects helps in reducing stress for all age groups. Grownups may inherit many things that serve as a reminder of their happy childhood and helps in comforting when stressed, depressed or anxious. Though it may seem childish, having a transitional object as adults is actually important and healthy. Objects with familiar smell, texture, taste, sound and appearance can bring to mind explicit memories, thoughts and feelings about the comforting relationships and experiences. Though usage of transitional object is palpable in children, adults too experience solace in using such objects in difficult times. They get relief by hugging a pillow, a pet or by seeing a photograph when they are distressed. Transitional object spring during childhood as the child begins to differentiate self from others, but it is also helpful for adults who face transition of some kind.

The concept of transitional object is highly discussed in child psychoanalytic literature. Whereas, there are only few studies on the transitional objects in adult development and specifically on literature of transitional object in Dementia related cases. The use of transitional objects continues throughout our lives as we fill objects with memories and meanings that are associated with ideas, people and places. The best part about these objects is that one can have complete autonomy over it, which is highly beneficial to dementia patients. It further aids in the emotional development during their distressed time of transition.

People living with dementia and other similar memory disorders like Alzheimer's utilize the transitional objects which serve as a bridge between their inner and outer world. These objects help the individual in holding on to the sense of selfhood. In case of a child,

transitional object help the child to make a shift from dependence to independence. Whereas, in case of dementia people it is different; they move from independence to dependence as their mental state deteriorates. It aids the person highly during their period of uncertainty to move to dependence and provide psychological comfort.

To define transitional objects concerning adults, it could be defined as an item that provides psychological comfort during an uncomfortable situation which might be due to traumatic experience, painful memories, due to some accident or illness. An attachment to the transitional objects helps in the re-establishment of sheltered feeling. The objects provide them with emotional memories which the experts call "essentialism", it is an idea that the objects are more than just physical properties.

Transitional object can be understood or considered as a substitute object for an important relationship, which serves the purpose of soothing and comforting. This concept applies to adults with memory problems, namely dementia. A concept mainly developed for infants is being stretched and applied for adults with degenerative mental process. Winnicott intended to apply this concept in adults too. The vital fraction of applying this concept in dementia is to appreciate the frame shift in its use. Dementia patients lose their sense of self. Winnicott states that even forms of art, music, play and such illusory experiences provide comfort and help in removing moments of distress. It is a self-created and independent consoler.

Man in the Mirror

In *Man in the Mirror* the protagonist of the novel Aaron Young has problems with memory related issues. Fate makes him to walk down the slippery slope of Alzheimer's disease. He is pained by the forgetfulness that begins to dominate him. Aaron longs for the freedom despite his mental chaos and craves to settle down in the red rock deserts, which he feels

would give him solace. Aaron undergoes mental, behavioral and communicative changes and amidst the mental conflict, he is able to retain the sense of self. He utilizes the transitional objects to obtain solace, identity and to retain memory.

Aaron Young is the protagonist of the novel *Man in the Mirror*. He is a man searching himself as he mislays himself to Alzheimer's. He is a man in his 70s who lives alone after the death of his wife. Aaron forgets why and for what he's doing things. He questions his actions, his unsure memories and even feelings about his relationship with his deceased wife, whose surprising poetry about their life together turns up to disturb him. When the disease begins to take away his recent memory, the memories of the outlying past grows stronger. He loved the times he spent in India during the First World War and he felt that it was the only time in his life when he felt free and at peace with himself. He wished to live a life free from being watched by his daughter Sarah. Though surrounded by his loved ones, he is never at peace. Whenever he gets a chance, he attempts to head towards the red rock desert of Southern Utah, where life would be simpler. His journey to the red rock landscape of Southern Utah is hindered by his memory loss, which continues to get him into trouble. Aaron also happens to meet various characters as he tried to head towards the desert. The activities of Aaron add worry and frustration to his daughter. The only thing that gives solace to him is the desert of Southern Utah. Aaron in spite of having memory issues, tries several times to escape to the place he loved and it was in vein. But at the end he somehow manages and takes refuge in the desert, free from all worries and memory issues. He finds solace through the deserts of Utah and attains memory and identity through the poems of Sarah and by the beauty of the desert.

As Aaron begins to realize that the disease is anguishing him, he craves for distant past. His memories of the past grow stronger and he

longs to be how he once was. Aaron loves the deserts of Southern Utah and the very thought of the desert and time spent in India during the war time gives him solace. The poems written by his wife Laura at times gives distress to him, yet it aids in retaining his identity and memory. Apart from nature and the inanimate objects, he also finds solace through his daughter Sarah and his grandchildren and the two hitch hikers Maya and Daniel. He finds his own coping up strategy to face the upcoming disasters. Aaron takes the aid of the objects both animate and inanimate found around him in retaining the sense of self. These objects largely help Aaron during his transitional period and he uses the transitional objects as a coping up strategy during his mental turmoil. The concept of transitional object framed originally for children is now being applied to Aaron who is undergoing transition.

Aaron is unsure of the life he had with his wife due to his forgetfulness, hence he decides to get the aid of Laura's writings to find the answers. The journal written by his wife serves as a transitional object helping him to recall his past memories. It is palpable through the below lines, "Then he had a hopeful thought. Maybe if he read everything in Laura's binder, he would find something that would help him understand. The entries all had dates, didn't they? Maybe if he went back far enough, he could find some happy ones, and he could figure out what had happened later on" (*MIM* 7). Each time he reads the poems of Laura, he is able to recall his past memories. The journal of poems written by his wife Laura thus serves as a transitional object, helping in recollection of memory.

When his forgetfulness increases, Aaron is worried if he might forget his wife and the life they had together. Thus he thinks of a way to always remember her. Aaron takes their wedding picture from the dresser and writes the name of his wife on the glass across the white of her dress. Then he doubts what if he forgets

what that name meant. So he writes, 'My wife, my love, my little Lori, my Laura' which ruins the picture, but he doesn't mind it. He didn't want himself to forget Laura. A photograph taken on their wedding day serves as a transitional object for Aaron. He feels that seeing that photograph everyday will help in recalling his past memories.

Aaron feels that the warmth of the red rock desert will heal and comfort him. He believes that the desert will wash away his worries and frustrations. Thus he leaves for the property in the deserts. The desert plays the role of transitional object and helps Aaron in finding solace. He feels secure in the desert which is free from all complexities. At the times of confusion and forgetfulness, he ekes out the stress through such transitional objects. Transitional objects can be considered as adaptive mechanisms which helps a person during their transition of any kind. He feels that the desert is the best place to live in if not in India. Whenever he gets upset or distressed by the poems of his wife or by the forgetfulness, he takes shelter in nature. Once he gets saddened by reading one of the poems and then to find solace he seeks the help of nature. It is evident through the following lines. "He turned away in disgust and tried to think what he could do to escape his bad mood. It might help if he could get out of the toxic air. And the only place to do that was up in the mountains" (*MIM* 74). He goes to the mountains and the scents of the pine trees there bring back his memories of India. He is then able to attain harmony and recall the past as well. The nature thus gives solace and a sense of self.

The desert as a transitional object here gives him peace and saves him from the memory disturbances. When he is at the deserts, he need not bother to keep track of things or be very cautious about planning. Aaron senses that since his verbal communication is deteriorating and is sure of further decline, the desert will be the best place for him to live in. It is thus made more palpable through the following lines, "He

should just stay in the desert and be satisfied with that. It was the perfect place for a man without words. If he was surrounded by his wild friends and all the beauty of the desert, he'd be happy, and he'd be just fine" (*MIM 131*).

Inanimate objects like the photographs, the journal of poems, nature and places give solace, memory retention and identity to Aaron Young. The animate objects too play the same role as the inanimate objects. Daniel and Maya the hitch hikers, his daughter Sarah and granddaughter Annie too serve as transitional objects. Aaron holds on to them strongly at times of his transition. He is pained at their absence or departure and tries the means to retain them. Aaron tries hard and convinces Daniel, the hitch hiker to accompany him to the property and when he leaves he feels deserted. He even offers Daniel to stay along and help him in building the house. This shows how Aaron clings to Daniel, thus revealing the transitional role played by Daniel. On his yet another drive with a girl named Maya to the desert, the activities and the behavior of her bring the memories of Laura to Aaron. He likes Maya as she has a close resemblance of his wife. Aaron is able to recall his early days with his wife through Maya. He enjoys her company and has a nice time with her in the desert by going to the hot springs, conversing with her and eating together.

Conclusion

Aaron Young grips tightly to the transitional objects both animate and inanimate

as a means to cope up with his mental turmoil. The transitional objects that he utilizes give him solace at times of sorrow. The objects help in memory retention and in giving identity, thus creating a sense of self in him. He is able to cope up the memory loss with the aid of these objects. They help him in undergoing the transition. When it comes to animate objects, he first clings to the hitch hikers Daniel and then Maya and later on he depends on Sarah and her daughter Annie. The transitional objects that he utilizes thus aid him in attaining solace, memory and identity. It also helps in maintaining his sense of self. Thus transitional objects can be used as a coping up means for the adults to eke out their stress and especially in Alzheimer's affected people.

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MALE HEGEMONY IN SARA ABOOBACKER'S NOVEL "BREAKING TIES" (CHANDRAGIRI THEERADALLI)

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Abstract

From their inception, feminist theories have fought against the social domination of men over women. One of the central tenets of the feminist movement is that the reproduction of masculine domination within society impedes the achievement of full equality between genders. The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used in gender studies since the early-1980s to explain men's power over women. In gender studies, hegemonic masculinity is part of R.W. Connell's gender order theory, which recognizes multiple masculinities that vary across time, culture and the individual. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as a practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, and other marginalized ways of being a man

The root cause of gender inequality in Indian society lies in its patriarchy system. According to the famous sociologists Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is "a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". Women's exploitation is an age old cultural phenomenon of Indian society. The system of patriarchy finds its validity and sanction in our religious beliefs, whether it is Hindu, Muslim or any other religion.

"Chandragiri Theeradalli" the famous novel by Sara Aboobacker translated into English as "Breaking Ties" by Vanamala Vishwanath is unique in that it is the first, subjective account of women's lives in the Muslim communities of coastal Karnataka and Kerala and a critique of patriarchy in Muslim society and by extension in all societies, it is also an attack on the establishment without trying to hurt the religious hierarchy.

This paper belongs to qualitative research. There are two types of data source, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel and the secondary data is other material related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis. The objective of the study is to analyse how patriarchy manifests itself in different aspects of women's life like economic, sexual and religious in the context of the novel "Breaking Ties".

Keywords: *Hegemonic Masculinity, Patriarchy, Feminism, gender inequality, Religion*

Introduction

From their inception, feminist theories have fought against the social domination of men over women. One of the central tenets of the feminist movement is that the reproduction of masculine domination within society impedes the achievement of full equality between genders. Gender oppression and inequality take different forms throughout the world; and are especially pronounced in the 'global south', where the subjugation of women by men across the social-economic spectrum is widespread. The concept of hegemonic masculinity allows us to understand how the presence of plural masculinities generates hierarchical domination not only between men and women, but also between men themselves.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has been used in gender studies since the early-1980s to explain men's power over women.

In gender studies, hegemonic masculinity is part of R.W. Connell's gender order theory, which recognizes multiple masculinities that vary across time, culture and the individual. Hegemonic masculinity is defined as a practice that legitimizes men's dominant position in society and justifies the subordination of women, and other marginalized ways of being a man. Conceptually, hegemonic masculinity proposes to explain how and why men maintain dominant social roles over women, and other gender identities, which are perceived as "feminine" in a given society.

The root cause of gender inequality in Indian society lies in its patriarchy system. According to the famous sociologists Sylvia Walby, patriarchy is "a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women". Women's exploitation is an age old cultural phenomenon

of Indian society. The system of patriarchy finds its validity and sanction in our religious beliefs, whether it is Hindu, Muslim or any other religion.

For instance, as per ancient Hindu law giver Manu: "Women are supposed to be in the custody of their father when they are children, they must be under the custody of their husband when married and under the custody of her son in old age or as widows. In no circumstances she should be allowed to assert herself independently". In Muslims also the situation is same and there too sanction for discrimination or subordination is provided by religious texts and Islamic traditions. Similarly in other religious beliefs also women are being discriminated against in one way or other.

The unfortunate part of gender inequality in our society is that the women too, through, continued socio-cultural conditioning, have accepted their subordinate position to men. And they are also part and parcel of same patriarchal system. Extreme poverty and lack of education are also some of the reasons for women's low status in society. Poverty and lack of education derives countless women to work in low paying domestic service, organized prostitution or as migrant laborers. So the inequality or discrimination against women is at various levels in the society, either in home or outside home.

Objective of Study

This paper belongs to qualitative research. There are two types of data source, namely primary and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel and the secondary data is other material related to the study. Both data are collected through library research and analyzed by descriptive analysis. The objective of the study is to analyse how patriarchy manifests itself in different aspects of women's life like economic, sexual and religious in the context of the novel "*Breaking Ties*".

The Story

"*Chandragiri Theeradalli*" the famous novel by Sara Aboobacker translated into English as "*Breaking Ties*" by Vanamala Vishwanath is unique in that it is the first, subjective account of women's lives in the Muslim communities of coastal Karnataka and Kerala and a critique of patriarchy in Muslim society and by extension in all societies, it is also an attack on the establishment without trying to hurt the religious hierarchy. A heartless father, an uncompromising husband and a faint hearted mother look like a perfect recipe for disaster. Well, the unfortunate heroine of "*Breaking Ties*" has her fate sealed from the beginning, and any hope of escape is dashed by an even more sinister force; religious dogma.

It is a feminist novel, a women's narrative. The main protagonist Nadira: the daughter of Mohammad Khan, a typical representative of patriarchy and Fatimma, a docile and submissive woman, who was married of at an age of 11 to Khan, Nadira too gets married at a tender age of 14 to Rashid, a young man who in contrast to his father in law, is a man with progressive thoughts who wants to educate his wife and gives her more freedom than she had experienced in her parents' house. Naturally Nadira is happier at her husband's house with loving and caring husband and an affectionate and liberal mother in law. The birth of a son adds to the happiness of Nadira and her family.

But these fairy tale moments vanish as Nadira's wicked father Mohammed Khan due to his short temper creates a rift by first separating the husband and wife, which in turn leads to the separation of the mother and the child when the mother in law abducts the child in an attempt to draw Nadira back home. Consequently, through cunning machinations Mohammed Khan extracts a triple *talaq* from Rashid towards Nadira thus annulling their marriage.

Later on Mohammed Khan falls sick and knows that his days are numbered. This makes

him feel remorse that he has ruined his daughter's life and wants Nadira settled again into a family life. So at first he tries to get her married off to Selim, a rich man of his own age, with a house full of children and an ailing wife. But Nadira refuses to marry Selim and makes it clear that she cannot love anyone else apart from her ex-husband.

Mohammed Khan now tries to reunite his daughter with Rashid who is too willing to take her back. Unfortunately, choosing one's own course of life does not come easy for tradition-bound Indian women, this time the religious laws come in the way and Nadira can reunite with her ex-husband only if she goes through another marriage, and gets a Talaq from the second husband. Nadira refuses her family urges but realises that it is the only option left to go back to Rashid her ex-husband and her child. Nadira consents half heartedly. Thus one day marriage is arranged and a deal is made with a paunchy ugly man, Sheikh Ali who promises to give her talaq after the marriage. Nadira after the wedding and before she is taken to the bridegroom happens to take a glimpse at him and feels disgusted at his uncouth appearance. Unable to comprise of surrendering to this uncouth strange person, in an act of desperation, to avoid further humiliation, she jumps into the river *Chandragiri*, thus ending her life.

Sara Abbobacker the writer of this novel, hails from Kasargodu, a border town between Kerala and Karnataka. She is a first generation woman, from a muslim family to have received education till matriculation. In her novel she has also written a novella, giving an autobiographical account about her own life which had shaped the writer in her. For her writing was a medium to give vent to her anger against the absence of freedom in her society. She mentions how she could not go alone unaccompanied, without burkha and had to face many inconveniences due to the religious orthodoxy in her society. Her writing style is

that of a realist novel where she uses western rationality as a weapon to critique a hypocritical society. She comes from a lawyer's family, where women regularly approached their household seeking redressal and justice to their problems. After her marriage at an early age to a husband with progressive attitude, she had an opportunity to visit library which introduced her to the regional literature that gave her an impetus to write and express her feminist voice reflecting her Muslim identity.

Analysis

The novel *Breaking Ties* uses a stark and artless narrative and there is a direct expression of rage in the narrative voice. The plot is simple and uncomplicated, characterization black and white; with a real time unfolding of events and a melodramatic ending. The background is a political and without any kind of tumultuous social or political happenings or conflicts. In this novel, the writer critiques patriarchy, which turns and twists every religious edict to its own convenience and shows how the Muslim woman is at the receiving end. Though she has sincerely tried to express the religious practices to subjugate women, she doesn't attempt to go further to investigate the source of Islamic laws by studying the Quran herself and understanding its egalitarianism but remains content to sketch her plot based on a sketchy understanding of Islamic principles and laws.

One can say that patriarchy is a common hegemonic structure with which women live and struggle. The particular kinds of oppression women face differs depending on their location in caste, class, region and religion. I would here like to analyse how patriarchy manifests itself in different aspects of their life like economic, sexual and religious in the context of the novels. Firstly, the novel strikingly portrays their woman characters married at a very tender age and to men much older than them, almost their father's ages past twenty eight. She is a child bride. When Khan's father starts looking out for

a bride for his son, he has certain criteria in mind. *"Any girl wouldn't do. Her lineage was important. Equally, the money and property that would come with her. When all three expectations were met, did it matter how old the girl was?.... The elders reasoned thus.... Won't she grow up in a year or two? It's always good to marry a young girl, because when the man grows old and is bedridden, the woman will still have the strength to nurse him! After all, wasn't woman created for the service and pleasure of man?"* Thus is the patriarchal society, to which woman is a commodity to be used.

Further, the men show lack of mercy and insensitiveness when they are out to exercise their nuptial right. Sara Abbobacker describes how Mohammed Khan pounces on his young unsuspecting wife. Even she was lost in the joy of her new silk sari and the jewels that covered her from top to toe, the women had taken her to the groom's nuptial room, pushed her inside and shut the door..... *The moment he saw Fatimma, he pounced on her like a tiger.* All he needed was a female body to quench his thirst. He was in no state to see that she was attacked thus a frightened Fatimma opened her mouth to scream. Khan gagged her mouth and lowering his gruff voice as much as he could, said, *"If you open your mouth, I'll smother you to death. Just do what I tell you!?"* Nadira too gets married at fourteen and has a child within a year. But Rashid, surprisingly is a young handsome man and he wins over Nadira by tempting her with goodies. Thus the novel *"Breaking Ties"* foregrounds a woman's struggle over her body.

Besides physical consequences, women in a patriarchal set up also undergo economical consequences. In *"Breaking ties"* Mohammad Khan has control over the productive labour of Fatima who keeps the house, cooks for the household and rolls beedis. Nadira, when she returns home after separation, adds to the family income with her labour and that becomes an added reason for Khan to retain her at home. The gold given to Nadira and Jameela, her sister, is controlled by their respective husbands, and Jameela has to give away her

bangles to her sister in law to save her marriage. In other words, patriarchy does not give women any financial freedom or allow them to make their own financial choices.

It is commonly believed that all religions are discriminatory towards women, and the religious edicts are understood to be Gender-biased serving male hegemony. In *"Breaking Ties"* Sara brings to fore front the Islamic laws governing Divorce which she portrays as being oppressive towards women, Nadira has manipulated to do so by Mohammed Khan. This kind of Talaq when it happens in a monetary fit of anger is highly unjust to a woman because it may not have remorse and may not have been seriously thinking of divorcing his wife but situation, the solution, that of the divorced couple are allowed to remarry. The marriage to the ugly Sheikh Ali results in the tragedy with Nadira who takes her own life in desperation. Thus Sara Aboobaker wants to highlight the point that this solution is not a solution because it's the woman that is at the receiving end again. So the whole process hurts the woman twice unjustly for no fault of hers.

At this point in narration, the writer in a narrative voice laments that it is all due to irrational religious practices and rituals as she calls it, but fails to recognise that the tragedy resulted due to ignorance of the religious matters and also the twisting of religious edicts to suit the convenience of a male dominated society. Hence it is something to do entirely with a culture which is already hegemonic that has played with religious laws to suit itself. Then how can a religion be held at fault? The Triple talaq is regarded as valid according to Islamic Jurisprudence though it is not mentioned in Quran, is mainly because of the fact that Fiqh or Islamic law is also based on Hadiths, the prophet's sayings, which Sara doesn't seem to know about. First of all such a Talaq is rare and is ruled out as a very undesirable way of divorce despite being valid,

But still some opportunistic unjust men can give Talaq in this way to suit their purpose.

When someone has given talaq in a fit of anger and later regrets it. For such people this is a lesson because when someone can get such fits of rage that he handles his marriage in such an irresponsible way then he better learn it that rage is a heavy price to pay. Hence the difficulty of a reuniting couple who are divorced is in itself a just law that forces the couple especially the man not to treat his marriage in a light manner. Marriage is sacred and two adults who enter this bond have to treat it that way and can't be treating it like a child's play. That is the intention of the condition that another nikah of the wife has to take place with another man if the couple has to remarry. And if the people have found a short cut way of one day marriage, they are going against the Islamic edict. By arranging one day Nikah, Rashid and Nadira would actually be twisting the laws to their convenience. It's the ignorance and the habit of a historically and culturally patriarchal society to turn religious edicts to the convenience of the male and not the fault of Islamic laws that cause injustice to the woman.

People with a patriarchal biased mind fail to understand that Islam is an egalitarian religion, and as a religion is built upon a strong ideological and theological framework which its adherents believe makes it a perfect religion. It is gender neutral and Quran does not make statements about the constructed superiority of men over women though on contrary, the Muslim world on its own has followed patriarchal values. On the contrary, Quran clearly states that men and women are equal. The Holy Quran expresses the moral and spiritual equality of men and women by balancing virtues and rewards for both genders equality.

Further Islam has given honour and dignity to woman and has recognised her property, economic and sexual rights. The unequal

treatment of women that we see in Muslim societies is not part of the Islamic faith but of a male dominated society that has manipulated the edicts to suit its convenience. It is not the Quran but the social construct of patriarchal culture that accounts for Muslim women being deprived of equal status. The social conditions prevailing the indigeneous cultural values, patriarchal traditions, and dormant misogyny leads to gender inequality.

Conclusion

The text points out to the fact that in any society, be it Muslim or any other illiteracy, poverty, war conflicts, adverse situations and the pre existing patriarchal social and cultural values and modes and misogynist and oppressive mind sets and ignorance be it religious or other kinds are the root causes of inequities and injustices meted out to women leading to their marginalisation, oppression, subjugation, dehumanisation and degradation. If we need a just society then we have to deal with these causes and find solutions for them. Education, overall peace, removal of religious ignorance by studying can be the answers to the improvement of the conditions of women in the world.

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4. www.orfonline.org/research/how-dominant-man-subjugates-men/ Francesco Maria Morettini

THE ASPECT OF MIMICRY IN CARYL PHILLIP'S CROSSING THE RIVER AND FINAL PASSAGE

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the concept of Mimicry in 'Caryl Phillips's Crossing the River and Final Passage. It focuses on how the Caribbean people mimic the ways and lifestyle of the Europeans and how they begin to adhere to the English culture. It seeks to interpret the tragic experiences of those voiceless people who suffered the harsh sentence of history. The aspect looked into gives a clear analysis of the state of the Blacks and how their life was a meaningless one, one filled with sorrow and pain, the picture of reality was blurred, they were caught in the net of confusion of where they belonged. They were torn apart by locations, cultures, languages and power.

Keywords: *Mimicry, Caryl Phillips, Caribbean, Black British,*

Introduction

The next important aspect of Post-Colonial Literature is Mimicry. Mimicry is an important post-colonial term, as it goes on to describe the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. When the colonial discourse encourages the colonized to mimic the colonizers by adopting their culture, practices, assumptions, perspectives, the result is not a simple production of traits but a blurred image of the colonized.

As described in the Post-Colonial Studies : The Key Concepts, Macaulay suggested that the riches of European learning should be imparted by "...a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect". (125) Homi K Bhabha, felt that the consequence of Macaulay's view of mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as ".almost the same, but not quite" (125).

The exact copying of colonizing culture, opinion, values, behaviour and manners leads to both mockery as well as menace. Mimicry is both resemblance and threat as it represents the limitations of the Colonized, leading to their own destruction. As at some point this might mimicry by the colonized might go out of control of the colonial authority. The threat is

the development of an identity like the colonizer, in its likeness but not it.

Mimicry can be both ambivalent and multi-layered. In the novel *The Mimic Men*, V.S. Naipaul opens with a very subtle description of the complexity of mimicry when he describes his landlord:

I paid Mr. Shylock three guineas a week for a tall, multi mirrored, book-shaped room with a coffin-like wardrobe. And for Mr. Shylock, the recipient each week of fifteen times three guineas, the possessor of a mistress and of suits made of cloth so fine I felt I could eat it, I had nothing but admiration... I thought Mr. Shylock looked distinguished, like a lawyer or businessman or politician. He had the habit of stroking the fore of his ear inclining his head to listen. I thought the gesture was attractive; I copied it. I knew of recent events in Europe; they tormented me; and although I was trying to live on seven pounds a week I offered Mr. Shylock my fullest silent compassion. (Naipaul 7)

The narrator not only imitates the habits of the landlord, but also goes on to mimic the guilt of a post-war Europe with regard to the Jews, a guilt that is seen to be embedded in a cultural familiarity with the implications of the name 'Shylock' the Jew who is mentioned in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, who demands a pound of flesh as payment for a

debt. He is encouraged to mimic compassion for the one exploiting him. But the irony of the passage shows an inversion, a mockery beneath the surface; not a mockery of Shylock but of the entire process of colonization which is being enacted in the narrator's mimicry and cultural understanding.

Thus one can state that the mimicry of the post-colonial subjects is always destabilizing to colonial discourse, and locates an area of political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance.

In *Crossing the River*, in the first section Pagan Coast, Nash is sent to Liberia is seen to mimic the white. In spite of being a black, having lived along with the whites he is more or less like them in thought and attitude. Nash had got accustomed to the mode of English dressing that he is in need of it, even after he goes to Liberia. He writes "I am very much in want of clothing; you may send some coarse cloth and shoes" (CTR 22). His mind mimics the perspectives of the white that he calls the people "much-maligned and Liberia as "dark and benighted country" (CTR 31). And goes on to the extent of calling them "creatures". (CTR 9)

Even though Nash is in Liberia, he tries to live a life, like the one he lived when he was on the foreign soil. When Nash writes about his marriage to a native. He asks Edward to send him 'one bonnet and an umbrella..... And some cloth to make one white frock, as there is none to be found in this country." (CTR 35). He tries to envision an English wedding, where the Bride wears a white gown as she walks down the aisle, and a bonnet which English women then wore. Though his wife is a native of Liberia, he tries to instill the English dressing in her, mimicking the English culture.

Even the usage of words too, imitate the white culture, as he is addressed as Mr. Nash Williams. Later on settling in Liberia, he begins to mimic the native people. He embraces their culture as his own. He marries and has three wives just like the natives. He in the end gives

up the reason for his voyage to Liberia and goes native and lives among them as one of them, having found a freedom he had never sought before.

In the second section West, the mimic of the English language is clearly seen. Eliza Mae calls Martha "Moma" (CTR 77) which is quite symbolical of how the influence of the White has now become a part of them. Furthermore, Martha's dream of a better future, where Eliza Mae's children are "...dressed in their Sunday best" (CTR 94) even though it was not Sunday is inherent of the adaptation of the English culture, where people are dressed in their best as they go to church on Sundays.

In the fourth section Somewhere in England, Travis on his visit to Joyce's shop gives her flowers and she says 'That was him gone, leaving me with flowers' (CTR 167) which shows the act of giving flowers which is typically English, yet Travis a black man also does so to express his interest in a white woman like Joyce. Joyce states "He came into the shop with a big smile upon his face and a bunch of daffodils".(CTR167) He had told her that he didn't know what the flower was called as he had never seen them before in his land. This shows how Travis has taken the first initiative into mimicking the culture of the white soil.

Another imitation of the white culture was when 'He leaned forward and kissed her hand'. (CTR 210). In the English society, the gesture of kissing a girl's hand is regarded as courteous and done to exhibit politeness, admiration and devotion.

In the novel *Final Passage*, the mimic of European culture is clearly visible in wedding of Leila. "Leila dressed from head to foot in a lacy white dress, large raindrop-like earrings in both her ears, and Michael looking smart in a dark blue suit, a white shirt and tie"(TFP 49). Not only is the dress imitated but also the English tradition of cake cutting is included as part of the wedding ceremony.

The mimicry of language is also seen in this novel, where Leila is addressed as Miss Leila Franks by Arthur her first love, who writes her a letter of confession. This shows that in spite of being in the Caribbean Isles the formal way of addressing was entirely English in speech and vocabulary.

The game of cricket which is a game which originated from England during the Tudor times is played in this Island. Phillips describes the game as such: They heard late voices in a side street, then the hollow thud of a soft ball hitting an oil-drum wicket. The young boys whooped and hollered, then argued, then accepted the decision of the invisible umpire, democracy. The next man in, a stick like boy in stained shorts, otherwise naked apart from the heat and dust of the day, scratched a crease into the earth with his hopeless bat. (TFP 117)

It is also interesting to note that towards the end of the novel, the Christmas season is pictured. Little Calvin says "... him, mommy, that man there with the funny horse" (TFP 202) and Leila replies, "Yes, that's Santa Claus". (TFP 202) and Calvin questions as to why Santa is a white man and not coloured. The Christmas tradition of Santa Claus and the act of giving and receiving gifts has crept into their lives. The chapter ends with a Christmas card pushed through the door and it was from nobody. Thus this shows that the Christmas tradition of the Whites was soon mimicked by the Blacks. Along the way of life, it became a part of them as well.

Another prominent concept seen in Caryl Phillips' *Crossing the River* and *The Final Passage* is Marginalization. According to the text *Post-Colonial Studies* by Bill Ascroft, Marginality is "being on the margin." (121). This deals with the perception and the description of experiences as a marginal which arises from the result of dominant power of patriarchy or colonial imperialism. It is interesting to note that certain structures of power come into play in reality as to who the margin is and who the

centre is and how these operate. This is a continuous process and an ongoing process which operates and manifests itself through individuals and their mode of association with circumstances.

In the novel *The Final Passage*, Marginalization is quite visibly seen, as in when Leila is termed as a "white girl" (TFP 47) by Michael's grandmother. She is seen so differently by her own people as she is a mulatto. Furthermore when she sets her foot on English soil, she experiences and sees the highest level of marginalization. She notices that "...coloured people did not drive big cars and wear suits" (TFP 121) and the lettering which stated "If You Want a Nigger Neighbour Vote Labour." (TFP 122)

In the Caribbean itself, Michael's grandfather's view of the whites shows he knows how it feels to be marginalized. He states "...when was the last time you did see a white man doing any kind of coloured man work" (TFP 40). This statement shows how he feels about the whites and the status of the Blacks in terms of labour.

The people of the village itself say that "Leila was too good for Michael." (TFP 48) This shows how people felt that their own dark skinned Michael wasn't good for the mulatto girl Leila.

In the novel *Crossing the River*, Marginality is a fundamental feature. In the section *The Pagan Coast* marginality is seen not only by Nash who is a black man but also by Edward Williams who is a white man. It is the one in dominant power who marginalizes the less powerful one. When Edward a white man enters a bar in Africa, he is informed that "...he was not welcome either as a visitor or as a member" (CTR 57).

In the last section *Somewhere in England* Joyce gives up her child Geer, because of the marginalization she experiences in the society where she lives. At the birth of her son, she calls him "Beautiful" (CTR 228). She even states that

he was like "Coffee" (TFP 228). Being a white woman, in fear of her own people she gives the child up for adoption. Marginality affects the life of people to give up their hearts desire, as a mother she would have wanted to care for her child, the child born of love but it wasn't so.

When one day, Geer comes to visit her she tries to tell him about her relationship with his father Travis. "...Your father and I, Geer. We couldn't show off. We had to be careful. And bold. We started a dance once. My God, I remember that. And for weeks afterwards, every time I thought of him I was sure my knees were going to give way. Then, later they took him away from me, to Italy." (CTR 223)

It is even more sad to see that when Geer comes to see Joyce as a young man. She is in a dilemma whether she should talk to him or not. "...I stared at Geer and longed for him to stay as clearly as I longed for him to leave. I'd explained that I thought he should go before the children came back. He said he understood." (CTR 223). She is forced to hide her feelings for him. For she states "...My God, I wanted to hug him. I wanted him to know that I did have feelings for him. Both then and now. He was my son." (CTR 224)

Marginality is also seen in the section West. Martha is a marginalized house slave. She has to see the auction of her own family. She had to let

go of her own daughter Eliza Mae and her loving husband Lucas and stand aback helplessly without any power to hold on to the ones she loved. "The auctioneer is dressed formally. Dark vest, colourful cutaway coat. He continues to yell. A trader prods Lucas's biceps with a stick. If a trader buys a man, it is down to the river to die. That much we all know." (CTR 77).

Thus it is quite likely to see that marginality divides people and tears them apart. The centre is not always the one with power and none can say that the centre will remain constant as it will keep shifting as it goes.

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DEPICTION OF MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS IN NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S MISTAKEN IDENTITY

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Abstract

History is a record of particular events of a period. Every day it changes. This novel, *Mistaken Identity* has dealt with many important historical events of nineteen twenties. Nayantara Sahgal naturally has Political background and historical influences mix with her blood. This is evident from her father Ranjit Sitaram Pandit had sent to prison and died in the Lucknow prison Jail in 1944. He went there for the freedom struggle of India. Nayantara Sahgal's maternal uncle Jawaharlal Nehru. These things have helped Nayantara Sahgal in her writing much. When she writes this novel, many historical events have taken place. These events have played vital role in writing of Nayantara Sahgal and also the hero of this novel Bhusan Singh. Some major events are Civil war in Turkey, the rise of Mussolini, Gandhi's Dandi March, Mass arrests and the death of hunger strikers in the Lahore prison Jail. These events' consequences reflected in the life of Bhusan Singh. Sahgal is a born genius from Nehru's family. And it makes an excellent Political writer who always related real life to the political situations. This paper attempt to arrange the important historical events.

Keywords: Political writer, Historical events, Dandi March, Mass arrests, Political surroundings of Bhusan, Hindu Muslim riot.

Introduction

Each literary work is an evident for history. Because it reflects the real life situation of people and country. And this novel is an historical evidence of nineteen twenties. It has dealt about before and after independence. And that time was the ruling period of Britishers . So they have appointed Rajas. That is why the hero of this novel *Mistaken Identity* introduced as a son of Raja of Vijayagarh. Nayantara Sahgal not only a feminist but also a Political writer. She always expresses the sufferings of womanhood. And in this novel Raja of Vijayagarh has married three times. His first wife, the mother of Bhusan remain as a statue. She never utters a word against her husband. She suffers a lot in the hands of Raja. She has gone for the pilgrimages for the boon of getting a son. After nine years of pilgrimage, she conceived and give birth to a child that is Bhusan. According to the words of A.V.Krishna Rao about Nayantara Sahgal characters,

“Characters are not real, for they really have lives; they are symbols representing Gandhian ideals or pragmatic politics of power” (150).

At that time many historical events have taken place are mentioned in this novel. It is known when Bhusan Singh says about his family.

My family had a praise worthy record, he intoned. Did I know Father had supported

The Age of Consent Bill which had raised the marriage age for females to twelve

Years? Mother had been betrothed at five, but She hadn't come here as a bride until

Her thirteenth birthday (77).

The Hindu Muslims riot are also have dealt by Nayantara Sahgal in *Mistaken Identity*. When Sahgal says about her family,

I grew up during the National Movement. My Parents went to Jail repeatedly during our

Fight for freedom. My father has died as a result of his last imprisonment released too

Late to be cured of the serious illness contracted in Jail. My uncle become our first Prime Minister (55).

The Mongol's ruler's victory against Prithviraj that made Mohammed Ghori master of Delhi in 1192. During that time bring up a female children remained as a risky task. But Bhusan's grandfather had grown up three daughters. It is a pride of their family. The hero Bhusan Singh loves a Muslim girl Razia, when it is known by the both of their parents and villagers, there comes a riot between Hindus and Muslims. Many people were killed in this riot. "Fifteen Hindus, ten Mussalmans and two Policemen have been killed in the riot" (71).

Another important problem is Infanticide had casually done by the People. They followed the simple method, "Very safe and simple this was. The midwife put the pill on the infant's tongue and it Slid down the throat like a sweetie, or she smeared the mother's nipple with it and the Infant swallowed it with the first suck" (78).

And Prisoners are in hunger strike and many are died in the strike. They have told about facilities for the British prisoners and sufferings of Indian prisoners. This is real situation of the prisoners. "A European criminal is entitled to word like a bungalow, with fans and table lamps, a proper bathroom, milk, butter, meat and toast to eat, suits and ties to wear. Our politicians get shirts with cut-off sleeves and pyjamas with cut-off legs, foot unfit to eat" (83).

That time All India Congress Committee has been growing up to some extent. In the Lahore prison, the prisoners are kicked and beaten for shouting slogans against them.

Mahatma Gandhi has marched to Dandi beach in 1930 for two hundred and forty-one miles distance to disobey the Salt Act and manufacture salt on the seacoast. Many young people and women have participated in the Dandi March. Their slogan is Inquilab zindabad and Mahatma Gandhijuku jai. Mostly persons

are arrested and put in to the prison. A hundred thousand Salt march prisoners have been taken by the Government. The English Police officer Lajput Roy has been assassinated and the public felt with full happiness and excitement. And the assassigators are in the Lahore Jail and the people has made them as heroes. Richard Lannoy says about satyagraha in *The Speaking tree*,

Gandhi was arrested after midnight sleeping under a tree in camp near Dandi and

Sent to jail. On his release eight months later he concluded the Gandhi-Irwin pact, after Which the government abandoned it repressive measures and released political prisoners.

This was the occasion when...Nehru wept (400-401).

Bhaiji has said that hunger strike is worse torture than hanging. The Republican Army of Chittakong has been created the people. The Facist Mussolini has raised in this time. He had the Roman salute and symbol. It is one among the important event in that period. India has developed in many ways. But Malladi Subbamma says in her *Women: Tradition and Culture*, "India is philosophically in the 16th century, socially in the 19th century and technologically in the 20th century. That means our ideas are 400 hundred years old" (35).

This novel also has dealt with Khilafat. It was rot to the Moguls. The meaning of Khilafat is Abode of the Caliphate. The great Sultan has inscribed on his gold coin to prove it as exalted khilafat. It is nothing but the abode is Constantinople now and the Hindus and Muslims are all supporting cause. It is a big Hindu Muslim cause. Sahgal writes her own view as an Indian,

As an Indian, I am mix of cultures and confluences of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity of east and west. The interplay of variety of his historical and educational

Factors in my upbringing should perhaps have torn me apart...curiously enough they Have had the opposite effect (91).

Conclusion

Entirely Nayantara Sahgal's novels are dealt with political themes and women suffering. This present novel *Mistaken Identity* is a mixture of all important historical events. So it is the record of that time in the aspect of politics as well as society. So this is not only mistaken identity of Bhusan but also the right written history of India.

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CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE: A WALK THROUGH A FEW BEST SELLERS

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Abstract

"Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers – such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a façade. Such literature loses the confidence of its own people, and its published works are used as wastepaper instead of being read", says, Aleksander Isayevich Solzhenitsyn, a Russian novelist, historian and short story writer. The word 'contemporary' means, living, belonging to, or occurring in the present. Contemporary literature is defined as literature written after World War II through the current day. Although difficult to comprehensively define, some of the most obvious characteristics include multiple narrators, literature that comments upon itself, a mixture or pastiche of subjects and genres, and experimentation with form and structure. They reject the authorities of the past and look for new structures and models for viewing the world. As a natural result of this experimentation, mixed genre writing has increased in popularity and turn out to be 'best sellers'. The basic dictionary definition of 'bestseller' is self-evident, "a popular, top-selling book". Bestsellers play a significant role in the mainstream movie industry. This article explores four best sellers of contemporary literature : 'The Da Vinci Code', 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows', 'Memoirs of a Geisha' and 'Things Fall Apart'. The Da Vinci Code is a thriller, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, a fantasy novel, Memoirs of a Geisha, a historic novel and Things Fall Apart is a tragedy.

Keywords: *salient features, change vs. tradition, conflict between faith and knowledge, vs. Free Will, sales record.*

Introduction

Contemporary literature reflects current trends in life and culture and it reflects the author's perspective that can come across as cynical. After World War II, the world had a different perspective on things. It changed rapidly and literature changed with it, almost as rapidly, despite the fact that some authors held onto their existing beliefs. These changes stemmed from a belief that continues to grow today, the belief that there is no God. After the horrors of the war, many people came to the conclusion that God was either dead or did not exist in the first place, which brought with it the idea that maybe life was meaningless. Writers struggled to communicate in a way that showed the world how to cope with this "truth."

Salient Features

- Well-defined, realistic, and highly developed characters are important in classifying a written work as contemporary, and most writing in this category features stories that are more character driven than plot driven.

- The literature may reflect a growing scepticism in the existence of God as well as distrust or lack of faith in traditional institutions.
- A new reality blossomed in the post-war mind, and it included a personal cynicism, disillusionment, and frustration that is common to this literary period.
- We need a lot of sensory stimulation in our books to compete with visual media. So more than ever our words have to draw our reader into the story, bringing them all the way into the heads and bodies of our point of view characters so that they can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell what our characters are experiencing.
- The literature is ironic and reflects current political, social and personal issues
- Facts are questioned as are historical perspectives
- Often presents two contradictory arguments

Best Sellers

Bestsellers have gained such great popularity that it has sometimes become

fashionable to purchase them. A book that is identified as a "bestseller" greatly improves its chance of selling to a much wider audience. In this way, bestseller has taken on its own popular meaning, rather independent of empirical data, by becoming a compromised product category and, in effect, attempting to create a marketing image.

The Da Vinci Code is a 2003 mystery thriller novel by Dan Brown.

Dan Brown's mega-bestseller takes readers from Paris to London on a breathless tour of famous landmarks and will remind fans everywhere why the New York Times calls *The Da Vinci Code* "blockbuster perfection." Robert Langdon, professor of religious symbology at Harvard, is in Paris to give a lecture. At the reception that follows, he is scheduled to meet with a revered curator from the world-famous Louvre museum. But the curator never shows up, and later that night Langdon is awakened by authorities and told that the curator has been found dead. He is then taken to the Louvre, the scene of the crime where he finds out those baffling clues has been left behind. Thus begins a race against time, as Robert Langdon becomes a suspect and, with the help of French cryptologist Sophie Neveu, must decipher a mystifying trail of clues that the two come to realize have been left specifically for them. If Robert and Sophie cannot solve the puzzle in time, an ancient truth could be lost forever and they themselves might end up as collateral damage. This write-up includes number of twists and turns that are capable enough to send thrill waves into the readers. The book was published in August, 2009 and became a New York Times best-seller within a week. Also, the book has been custom-made into a movie.

In an exhilarating blend of relentless adventure, scholarly intrigue, and cutting wit, symbologist Robert Langdon (first introduced in Dan Brown's bestselling *Angels & Demons*) is the most original character to appear in years. *The Da Vinci Code* heralds the arrival of a new

breed of lightning-paced, intelligent thriller...surprising at every twist, absorbing at every turn, and in the end, utterly unpredictable...right up to its astonishing conclusion.

Theme: The False Conflict between Faith and Knowledge

Dan Brown refuses to accept the idea that faith in God is rooted in ignorance of the truth. The ignorance that the Church has sometimes advocated is embodied in the character of Bishop Aringarosa, who does not think the Church should be involved in scientific investigation. According to *The Da Vinci Code*, the Church has also enforced ignorance about the existence of the descendents of Jesus. Although at one point in the novel Langdon says that perhaps the secrets of the Grail should be preserved in order to allow people to keep their faith, he also thinks that people who truly believe in God will be able to accept the idea that the Bible is full of metaphors, not literal transcripts of the truth. People's faith, in other words, can withstand the truth.

"History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books – books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon?'"

Although this theory is advanced by Leigh Teabing, who is later found to be unreliable and mentally unbalanced, Langdon agrees with it. The idea of history as a story written by winners is the fundamental underpinning of *The Da Vinci Code*. Throughout the narrative, Brown expounds on the ideas that Langdon and Teabing work with professionally: certain gospels were left out of the Bible because of the political desires of leaders; Mary Magdalene was of the royal blood of Benjamin and more likely was Jesus' wife rather than a prostitute; pagans were killed in order to further the political goals of the Church; and the meanings

of certain words and symbols were changed in order to force people to change their beliefs.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows is a fantasy novel written by British author J. K. Rowling and the seventh and final novel of the Harry Potter series. The novels chronicle the life of a young wizard, Harry Potter, and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, all of whom are students at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The main story arc concerns Harry's struggle against Lord Voldemort, a dark wizard who intends to become immortal, overthrow the wizard governing body known as the Ministry of Magic, and subjugate all wizards and muggles, a reference term that means non-magical people.

Deathly Hallows shattered sales records upon release, surpassing marks set by previous titles of the Potter series. It holds the Guinness World Record for most novels sold within 24 hours of release, with 8.3 million sold in the U.S. alone and 2.65 million in the U.K. Generally well-received by critics, the book won the 2008 Colorado Blue Spruce Book Award, and the American Library Association named it a "Best Book for Young Adults".

In a 2006 interview, J. K. Rowling said that the main theme of the series is Harry dealing with death, which was influenced by her mother's death in 1990, from multiple sclerosis. Lev Grossman of Time stated that the main theme of the series was the overwhelming importance of continuing to love in the face of death. The novels fall within the genre of fantasy literature, and qualify as a type of fantasy called "urban fantasy", "contemporary fantasy", or "low fantasy". They are mainly dramas, and maintain a fairly serious and dark tone throughout, though they do contain some notable instances of tragicomedy and black humour. In many respects, they are also examples coming of age novel, and contain elements of mystery, adventure, horror, thriller, and romance. The books are also, in the words

of Stephen King, "shrewd mystery tales", and each book is constructed in the manner of a Sherlock Holmes-style mystery adventure. Academics and journalists have developed many other interpretations of themes in the books, some more complex than others, and some including political subtexts. Themes such as normality, oppression, survival, and overcoming imposing odds have all been considered as prevalent throughout the series. Similarly, the theme of making one's way through adolescence and "going over one's most harrowing ordeals—and thus coming to terms with them" has also been considered. Rowling has stated that the books comprise "a prolonged argument for tolerance, a prolonged plea for an end to bigotry" and that also pass on a message to "question authority and ... not assume that the establishment or the press tells you all of the truth".

Originally written in English and published in 1958, *Things Fall Apart* was one of the first novels by an African author to garner worldwide acclaim. Though mostly fictional, Nigerian author Chinua Achebe claims that the book documents Africa's spiritual history - the civilized and rich life the Igbo lived before the arrival of Europeans and the ruinous social and cultural consequences that the arrival of European missionaries brought. Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* as a sharp criticism of imperialism, or the European colonization of countries outside of the European continent (especially Africa and the Americas). Achebe followed *Things Fall Apart* with two other novels, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*, both of which also depict the African experience with Europeans.

Many of the characters suffer from fear of some sort. Okonkwo fears becoming like his lazy, shameful father, Ekwefi fears losing her daughter, and Nwoye fears his father's wrath. While most characters fear events that are outside of their control, Okonkwo is consumed by a terrible internal worry about himself and

his identity. Rather than mastering his fear, he allows it to dominate him and drive his actions. Fear leads him to lash out in some pretty nasty ways: beating his wives, abusing and alienating his oldest son, partaking in the murder of his adoptive son, etc. Overall, fear in this novel leads characters to behave in negative ways that can bring the wrath of the gods, guilt, and the community disapproval upon them.

Reputation is extremely important to the men in the novel. Personal reputation is publicly denoted by the ankle bracelets men wear, which signify the number of "titles" they have earned. Reputation is based on merit – men gain reputation through bravery in battle, skill at wrestling, and hard work as seen through the size of their yam harvest. Reputation earns men positions of power and influence in the community as well as numerous wives. Okonkwo, the novel's protagonist, is extremely concerned with reputation because he grew up with a father who was shameful and lazy. Okonkwo overcompensates by working tirelessly on his farm and taking every opportunity available to prove his bravery and strength.

Change vs. Tradition

Important themes in Things Fall Apart include the struggle between change and tradition:

Interpretation #1

The following is a hypothetical conversation between Nwoye and a tribal elder:

Nwoye: I don't agree with some of these traditions.

Tribal Elder: My dad killed twins, drank palm wine, talked to egwuwu, oppressed women, and prayed to Agbala. His dad killed twins, drank palm wine, talked to egwuwu, oppressed women, and prayed to Agbala. I kill twins, drink palm wine, talk to egwuwu, oppress women, and pray to Agbala. Now get out before I beat you.

Interpretation #2

The Ibo need to scrap their traditions, implement national health care, start a dialogue with enemy spirits who terrorize them, rewrite their laws, and collect all their yams and divide them equally at the end of the harvest so everybody will be equal.

Interpretation #3

Confronted with change, individual members of Ibo society react differently. Those who stand to gain from change--the outcasts, title less, and oppressed--welcome it. Those who have risen to positions of authority by following the old way--Okonkwo, for example--resist change. The battle between the old and the new is highlighted by the arrival of Christian missionaries and colonial authority. Okonkwo and Obierika recognize that many of their clansmen adopt the new ways. Obierika realizes resistance is futile. Okonkwo chops the head off a colonial messenger, something the old tribe would have found heroic, but something the new tribe does not endorse.

Fate vs. Free Will

Another theme that is explored is the concept of free will versus fate.

Interpretation #1

Whatever the gods dictate happens. When the Earth goddess plans a drought, the crops are destroyed. When the Earth goddess calls for rain, there is a great harvest. When Agbala wants to talk, you talk or are struck down. Whatever you do, don't have twins. The gods hate twins.

Interpretation #2

Free will is valued in Igbo society. Okonkwo becomes wealthy from his hard work. His father achieves nothing on account of his laziness. Bad things happen to Okonkwo when he acts irrationally. Good things happen when the Umuofians make decisions that will gain them favour in the eyes of the colonialists.

Interpretation #3

Both free will and fate plays a role in the life of Okonkwo. He becomes wealthy because he works hard. While others curse their fate during the worst harvest ever, Okonkwo's first, Okonkwo perseveres and becomes successful. Okonkwo, however, is unable to change and control his temper. His poor choices doom him. On the other hand, fate intervened to destroy him. His gun explodes and kills a fellow villager, to no fault of his own, and tradition forces him into exile for seven years. It is during these seven years that Okonkwo loses his opportunity to gain stature in the eyes of the villagers. By the time he returns, Umuofia has changed too much for Okonkwo to matter.

According to the late author's literary agent, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* "has sold between 15 million and 20 million copies worldwide in 60 languages," The sales figures make Mr. Achebe's modern classic one of the bestselling literary novels and the most widely read book by an African author.

The early success of *Things Fall Apart* established Achebe's great and unique powers as a writer and cultural advocate and also gave a global impetus to creative works by other authors from an African continent emerging from a debilitating phase of colonial subjugation. While Mr. Achebe is most well known around the world for his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, many scholars and critics regard his third novel, *Arrow of God*, as his most powerful work, with the late Emmanuel Obiechina, a highly regarded literary scholar, praising the novel for its "composite grandeur."

A global literary luminary, Mr. Achebe inspired other writers as well as political figures in Africa and beyond. The revered South African leader, Nelson Mandela, once described Achebe as a writer "in whose company the prison walls fell down."

Memoirs of a Geisha is a historical novel by American author Arthur Golden, published in 1997. A literary sensation and runaway bestseller, this brilliant debut novel presents

with seamless authenticity and exquisite lyricism the true confessions of one of Japan's most celebrated geisha.

The novel, told in first person perspective, tells the story of a fictional geisha working in Kyoto, Japan, before and after World War II. *Memoirs of a Geisha* portrays the struggle of Sayuri, a young girl, to become a geisha. A key part of the story tells how her virginity was auctioned to the highest bidder. Sayuri glides readers through the arduous training and ceremony of geisha apprenticeship and the rigidly controlled structure of households and relations. This world of slivers of exposed skin, demure glances, secret passions, appearance and reputation nevertheless resonates with the hushed sound of financial machinations. Geisha needs a rich danna, or benefactor, but often, the danna isn't necessarily who the geisha desires most.

In many ways, *Memoirs of a Geisha* functions as a typical romance—poor girl climbs the social ladder—but Golden's exquisite execution never fails. The implicit risk of writing in a foreign voice never becomes an issue; indeed, it is forgotten as Sayuri's charm enraptures from the novel's first line. While her translucent gray eyes do guide the reader through nearly 40 years that spilled ink gracefully rolls onto Golden's pages forming the alluring curves and supple lines of this elegant debut.

Even though *Memoirs of a Geisha* was written by a white guy, it gives a voice to a person whose voice is taken away. It brought awareness to the world of the geisha, and it gave the real geisha who inspired this novel, Mineko Iwasaki, a platform to tell her own story. Most people wear makeup to enhance, change, or hide their looks. But the geisha in *Memoirs of a Geisha* take makeup to an entirely different level.

When she does it, she assumes a brandnew identity. Her makeup is almost impenetrable, like a shield. Who is this woman underneath all that makeup? You may never know.

Conclusion

Contemporary literature features a somewhat modern narrative, but it also contains a harsher reality. The four best sellers are a combination of materials and concepts that challenge traditional boundaries and allow readers to think for them. If science or 'truth' gives us facts and figures to solve problems, art especially literature creates space for ambiguity and wider meanings to 'truth'.

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