



# **BODHI**

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The genesis of subaltern emerged as a critical concept. The concept of subaltern studies prominence is derived from Marxism and Post-structuralism. One of the most recent sub divisions of post-colonial theory is the subaltern studies. It is also interdisciplinary subject. The Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci used the term 'Subaltern' and emphasized the significance of the word in terms of class, gender, caste, marginalization, race and culture of the society. The subaltern refers to any specific marginalized situation in any given cultural or social context. The advent of literary and cultural theories in the literary field has brought major changes in the way of rereading, reinterpreting and better understanding literature and culture. Subaltern consciousness is one of the characteristics of subalternity. The innovative, exciting, and intellectual discussion by the scholars of all domains will induce a high order to instigate and instil the aspirants and the experts of multifaceted disciplines to a considerable empowerment of the peak to achieve the best out of this Book which is of course literally one of the aims targeted too.

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 edited volume.

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.

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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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**CONTENTS**

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<b>S. No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page. No</b>
1	Breaking the State of Incarceration in 'Daughters of Shame' by Jasvinder Sanghera <b>Dr.Kuljeet Kaur</b>	1
2	Quest for Identify in Chitra Baneerjee Divakaruni's Sister of My Heart <b>H.Surya Prabha</b>	4
3	Feminist Ideology in Margaret Atwood's Novel of Surfacing <b>S.Malathi</b>	8
4	Things Fall Apart: A Deep Analysis <b>Ankush Mahajan</b>	11
5	A Comparative Study of White's <i>Big Toys</i> and Tendulkar's <i>Kamala</i> <b>I.Kanaga Priya</b>	15
6	A Study on the Female Characters in the Short Stories of James Alan Mcpherson <b>Mrs.S.R.Vanitha</b>	19
7	Identity Crisis as Perceived in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'Namesake' <b>A.Benazir &amp; Dr.M.Vennila</b>	22
8	The Intricacy of Reel and Real Life Woven in Shashi Tharoor's <i>Show Business</i> <b>Dr.P.Sruthi</b>	25
9	Portrayal of Women in J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan: Feminist Perspective <b>Mrs.S.Tamizharasi</b>	28
10	Impact of Colonial Religion and Culture on People's Identity in Adichie's <i>Purple Hibiscus</i> <b>P.Sivashankari</b>	30
11	Quest for Identity in <i>Akkarmashi</i> by Sharankumar Limbale <b>Sneha Sebastian</b>	36

12	The Pathetic Plight of the Subalterns with Reference to Munshi Premchand's "The Shroud"	39	28	Casticism Problem in Sharankumar Limbale's the Outcaste	97
	<b>K.Pamme Nesakumari</b>			<b>A.Princy</b>	
13	Language Style of Chitra Banerjee in Her Selected Novels	43	29	A Scrutiny of Shekhar Kapur's Biographical Film <i>Bandit Queen</i>	102
	<b>S.Jayalakshmi</b>			<b>J.Anula</b>	
14	Feminism: Is <i>Gone Girl</i> a Feministic Novel?	47	30	A Study of Female Consciousness in Doris Lessing's <i>The Grass is Singing</i>	105
	<b>Dr.Irene Philip</b>			<b>M.Thangeswari</b>	
15	The Picture of Gender Discrimination in Anita Desai's Voices in the City	51			
	<b>V.Rohini</b>				
16	Postmodern Concerns in the Poetry of Shiv K Kumar	55			
	<b>S.V.Sundari</b>				
17	An Analysis of Eco Feminism in Anitha Desai's Fire on the Mountain	59			
	<b>C.Gnanasekar &amp; V.Gayathri</b>				
18	Mental Colonization in Toni Morrison's <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	62			
	<b>T.R.Varsha</b>				
19	The Inner Conflicts of Ashima in Jhumpa Lahiri's <i>Novel 'The Namesake'</i>	65			
	<b>Miss.Sunita &amp; M.Gumashetti</b>				
20	'Culture' If Avoided a Void: Explicit through Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Novel <i>Neela: Victory Song</i>	68			
	<b>K.Chorna Deepa</b>				
21	A Reader Response Analysis of Shashi Deshpande's <i>Lucid Moments</i>	71			
	<b>Ms.Anis Fathima Faisal</b>				
22	Subaltern Voice in Rohinton Mistry's <i>A Fine Balance</i>	75			
	<b>Dr.P.Balamurugan</b>				
23	The Concept of Indianness in R.K. Narayan's <i>The Guide</i>	79			
	<b>Gargi Gohil</b>				
24	Misconstruction of Feminism in Digital Space: A Study on Online Trolling Culture	83			
	<b>Aarcha</b>				
25	Women and Motherhood: A Study on Buchi Emecheta's "Second Class Citizen"	86			
	<b>S.Balaji</b>				
26	Gender Dimensions in the Fiction of Ngugi WA Thiongo	89			
	<b>S.Balaji</b>				
27	Harassment on Women in Chima Manda's <i>The Purple Hibiscus</i>	93			
	<b>J.Gracy</b>				

## BREAKING THE STATE OF INCARCERATION IN 'DAUGHTERS OF SHAME' BY JASVINDER SANGHERA

**Dr.Kuljeet kaur**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, SSS Shasun Jain College for Women, Chennai*

### Abstract

*An empowered and independent minded woman Jasvinder Sanghera is a highly acclaimed international speaker and an author. Her memoir 'Shame' was Times Top 10 Bestseller. She showed the courage in bringing the issue of forced marriage into the public domain. Her thoughts were revolutionary, her action was exemplary and her initiative 'Karma nirvana' for the past 25 years is extending support to victims of forced marriage and honour based abuse. The present paper on Jasvinder Sanghera's book 'Daughters of Shame' reveals gruesome realities of few women at the hands of so called patriarchal societal structure in Asian population of UK. It is a fearless, heart wrenching and naked truth of their struggle and courage. The author herself lends a helping hand for such women and even fights for their rights. If you abuse or kill, it is not an honour and pride but a shame. The paper locates the book in this context and presents counter –narrative to its discourse.*

**Keywords:** Honour, women, shame, courage.

### Introduction

Published in 2009, 'Daughters of Shame' by Jasvinder Sanghera looks like a sequel to her first memoir 'Shame' which was autobiographical in nature. 'Shame' portrayed the turbulence, sadness, confusions, pangs of separation and courage of author's own life. Jasvinder Sanghera started 'Karma nirvana' to rescue and help women and men who are victims of abuse and forced marriages. In 'Daughters of Shame' she narrates the real stories of sufferers and their unknown hidden horrified experiences with their loved ones. The book begins with the story of Uzma Rahan who "was battered to death by a basement ball wielded by her husband, who had bought it specifically for the purpose." (p.6) The conjugal relationship is considered to be a very respected and lawful association between two individuals. But here the way a woman is victimised at the hands of her husband is horrifying. Even he did not spare their own three children aged 11, 8 and 6 and killed them one by one. Is this the sanctity of marriage? What kind of a father and husband he is? Is there any justification for this heinous act? Jasvinder Sanghera started 'Karma Nirvana' as a tribute to her sister Robina, who burnt herself to death because she was denied the option to leave him as it would be shameful for the

family. She was startled when young girls used to come and tell her instances of torture inflicted them by their families. The author tried talking to school going girls and get the details if they need any kind of help. Sanah, a 15 year old girl explains her ordeal where her mother is biased towards her and is not happy if she goes to school. "You are not going to sit in office or do a levels so what you got a book out for?" (p.17). World is progressing at the fastest speed, but still people believe and practice Gender discrimination. The saddest part is that a mother is using such derogatory words for her daughter. This is enough to do the irremedial harm to her existence.

In the book, the author has elaborately discussed about the concept of 'Honour' and its forced meaning for women, in particular. "Honour-izzat – is the cornerstone of the Asian community and since the beginning of time it's the job of girls and women to keep it polished" (p.25). Sanghera's own family was against her because they thought she brought disgrace and shame to the family by running away from a forced marriage with a man whom she never met. To Exercise the right to live as any other human being on this earth, is it a crime for a woman? There was a woman named Aaliyah, mother of five daughters who tries to raise her voice and asks justice. When her eldest daughter, aged

15 , tells her about the sexual abuse by her own father since she was 12 , after initial hesitation, Aaliyah goes to police and complains. Under familial pressures, she withdraws but something terrible happens and she changes her mind when her younger daughter of 7 years narrates her same nightmarish act done to her now by their father. She calls Karma nirvana for help and after immediate assistance the father was arrested and was behind the bars. It takes immense courage to go against your own family, but it is the most righteous thing to do when you feel imprisoned and terrified with your own people.

The concept of Honour killing is not an alien one to anyone. In simple words, Killing a person who brings shame to the family. Is it so easy to accept? How one can associate honour with the act of killing or ending a life. In the book, When a girl named Shabana was informed by her mother about the guy she has to get married, she shows reluctance as she was in love. Then “Her father punched her face and tried to strangle her; her sister scratched her, kicked her, pulled her hair.” (p.82) When she disclosed the name “Henderson? A White man? Her father roared as, with his hands embedded in her hair, he yanked her to her feet. You are a disgrace, you disgust me, you are no better than a prostitute”. (p.82) Such abusive language and pejorative behaviour is hard and painful to accept and believe. She was badly injured and had to crawl to go upstairs in her room. Physically abusing a girl, own daughter, would this bring honour to the family? After striving for five months, Karma Nirvana helped Shabana in getting a safer place, where she could breathe without any fear. The author has also shared about 17 year old Imran, who was suffering because he refused to get married with the girl of his mother’s choice. He was beaten up by his brother in law and then thrown at a desolate place. When he asks the reason for all the shackles on his body , the reply he gets is , “ This is what your mother wants. I am not to take the shackles off until you have read the whole Koran and ready in yourself to be a better

person.” (p.91). Somehow he managed to fled , but then he was informed about his mother illness and he had to relent and come back and get married to the bride of their choice. But Imran still had a secluded life and finally he gave divorce to his wife and left. His mother was completely indifferent to the entire episode. He started holding his life together and volunteered to help people in need. Another story is of Yasmin, a young girl, from a very orthodox family who dared to fall in love with a black. When the parents were apprised, the words uttered by her mother “The shame, it will kill me , the shame”(p.121) devastated Yasmin. The elders in the family have their responsibilities and social issues but the way to put it across to their children makes a lot of difference. Are we behaving in a civilized manner in dominating other’s lives and make them live in a fearful state? It would be appropriate if there is a sensitive and an open talk between Parents and Children which can be helpful in resolving conflicts.

The story of Tarvinder Kaur, a school going girl is under full control and scrutiny of her parents. In her own words, “Once term is over I will be trapped at home, I’ ll be trapped , no one will help me.”(p.141) She resisted and did not accept the agony anymore. She showed courage and with the assistance of Karma nirvana came out of the living hell. Such instances makes me think that whether this concept of ‘Women Empowerment’ is a reality or myth? The cry of women for justice, female infanticide, dowry deaths, domestic violence and cases of honour killing is of real serious concern. It is extremely distressing to see such savagery of human emotions and relationships. Surjit, a young girl of 13 when got her first menstrual period asks her mother about it and the response was “ Now you’re a woman not a girl , behave like one and don’t shame us”(p.190). She was forced to get married at the age of 16 and instructed to obey her husband whatever it takes. She was raped repeatedly for the next eight and a half years by her life partner. Psychologically distraught Surjit gathers some courage and escapes from the turmoil.

Sanghera witnessed the changes in the lives of all these women at various stages in their lives. In one of the instances depicted in the book, she shares about her pain about living with the fact of being 'Disowned' by her own family for the last 27 years. Yet she had the endurance and commitment to help others. In the concluding chapters, Sanghera talks about the ghastly face of honour killing. The case of Sajida Bibi, who was stabbed to death on the day of her wedding. The hypocrisy of this so called honour based killing has been summed up by Nazir Afzal, "A man is like a piece of Gold: if you drop it in the mud, you can wipe it clean, A woman is like a piece of silk: if you drop it in the mud it is stained for ever"(p.276). He has been striving hard to get justice for victims of such cases and had no fear in saying the unacceptable. Is it a violation of some code of conduct or ethics to fall in love or to live a life on your own terms? It depends on the families and the individuals. For some it may be a matter of prestige and honour. With due respect to everything what if they could find a solution for it rather than giving a punishment in the name of honour. How can an act of killing be called as honourable. Ending someone's life is a matter of shame and disgust. If we talk about equality. Why it is so hard to put in practice. It might be difficult but not beyond the bounds of possibility for sure. There is just a need for understanding and compassion. Tolerance is a quality to possess but not if it is doing injustice to your existence. It is a crime to shed tears in silence and bear the pangs of remorse which you have not committed yet paying the price. The book ends on an affirmative note with a promise to yourself and to make "The decision to stand up to your family. To face them. To refuse to allow them to control you any more. Think about it..You can't keep on running for the rest of your life."(p.282)

Shabana, Sanah, Yasmin are the few women who faced the challenges, came out of the dearth of emotions and insensitive surroundings and had a fresh lease of life.

Karma Nirvana received 4,000 calls in the first year after it opened the helpline and is now taking 300 calls a month from people under threat of honour-based violence, often linked to forced marriage. 'Karma nirvana' continues to be a lifeline and a ray of hope for many. Daughters are pride not shame and it is our collective responsibility to safeguard their dignity and strengthen their confidence. Let her make a choice and learn through experience. It is significant to treat both the genders as human beings without any bias. To practice Empowerment of Women rather than preaching about it is always appreciated. Women should be made aware about the judiciary laws to protect themselves and fight their own battle. It is crystal clear that a well educated society is defined by the way you treat your woman and give her the respect as you want it for yourself. It is vital to have a healthy relationship embedded with mutual trust, respect and understanding. Raise your voice and make them heard if not feel. Do not suffer the threat and humiliation in any form and protest against injustice. It is important to instil empathy through Gender sensitization and come out of the fixed mind set of suppressing the subaltern.

For her compassionate and strong conviction to help women through her charity Karma Nirvana, Jasvinder Sanghera was awarded The Pride of Britain in 2009 and in 2011 was listed in the Guardian top 100 Most Inspirational Women in the World. In June 2013 Sanghera was made a CBE – which, she says, was "unexpected and remarkable". She is an inspiration, a survivor and a writer with a purpose!

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## QUEST FOR IDENTIFY IN CHITRA BANEERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S SISTER OF MY HEART

**H.Surya Prabha**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, M.V.Muthaiah Government Arts College for Women, Dindigul*

### Abstract

*In the field of Indian writing in English women writers have proved their eminence in projecting the problems of women. The Indian women diasporic writers are more dominant than the other South Asian women writers. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the leading voices of Indian Diaspora. As an Indian, she gives more importance to Indian culture and tradition. Quest for identity is one of the main themes of most of her novels. Sister of My Heart is one such novel. The story of the novel revolves around two young women named Anju and Sudha. These two young ladies love each other from the depth of their heart and they treat themselves as sisters. After marriage, Anju goes to America with her husband and Sudha settles in India. Their sufferings and their search for identity is vividly portrayed by Chitra in Sister of My Heart.*

The colonized countries faced many changes during the period of Colonization. The colonized people were compelled to follow the dictations of their rulers. Colonization made a great impact on the colonized countries. The forced people slowly become addicts to the rites and rituals of their colonial rulers. People started imitating the style and culture of their rulers and became a mixture of their culture and that of their rulers and gradually they lost their identity. In the era of globalization and post modernism, the migration has assumed different characteristics as observed by sociologists like Ajay Sahoo and Brij Maharaj: "Globalization transcends territory, location distance and borders and has been accompanied by rapid migration of people across borders and has raised questions about identity, citizen ship and nationality"

The post colonial period generates a number of Indo- Anglian writers. These writers focus on the immigrants and their immigrant problems. During colonization the people are forced to move from place to place as slaves or workers but in the post colonial era again the people migrate from county to country willingly or unwillingly. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Bharati Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, Uma Parameswaran, etc., are some of the note worthy writers who write

about the trials and tribulations of the immigrants in their novels. Most of the diasporic literature is therefore marked by the issues of identity, home and nation in relation to the migrants.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in 1957 in Culcutta, India. In 1976, at the age of 19, she immigrated to the United States. She continued her education in the United States by earning a Master's degree in English from Wright State University in Dayton Ohio, and a Ph.D., from the University of California at Berkely. Divakaruni held many different jobs to pay for education. Divakaruni's novel *The Mistress of Spices* was released as a film of the same name in 2005. In addition, her novel *Sister of My Heart* was made into a television series in Tamil and aired in India, as *Anbulla Snegithiye*. Divakaruni is the recipient of several prestigious awards such as 'National Book Award,' 'the PEN Faulkner Award,' 'American Book Award,' etc.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is known for her portrayals of her own experiences and those of her other immigrant Indian women in her novels. *Sister of My Heart* is a realistic treatment of the relationship between two cousins, Sudha and Anju, who narrate the alternating chapters of this novel that develops over decades. Their fathers Gopal and Bijoy die on a ruby hunting expedition. *Sister of My Heart* is a novel about feminism

and search for identity. The novel also focuses on the sufferings of women in our patriarchal society. Chaterjee's family was a well known aristocratic family in Calcutta. Three generations before Chaterjee ladies were not allowed outside their house. The protagonists of the story, Sudha and Anju are sisters of their heart and these two sisters are brought up by the three ladies of their family – Nalini, Sudha's mother, Gourima, Anju's mother and Abha Pishi, their widow aunt. These three elders also do not know their identity and have been living as a typical Indian born females.

Abha Pishi often tells mythological stories and fairy tales to the girls Sudha and Anju. One day she tells about the story of 'Bidhata Purush', a mythological figure who comes down to earth and decides the fortune of men. On hearing this Anju becomes angry and asks if he comes only for male and writes the good things for them, and not the female that is why the lives of the female are like that. Pishi shakes her head and replies,

"May be the Bidhata Purush does not come for girl babies.... For girl babies who are so much bad luck that they cause their fathers to die even before they are born" (6)

The sudden death of their fathers has affected the hearts of Anju and Sudha. On seeing the bad luck of the ladies of their family these two girls want to come out of traditional clutches and want to search their own identity. Gourima leads a book shop, run by the deceased. Nalini helps Gouri and Pishi in taking care of their kids. The two girls Sudha and Anju watch their mother, follow their foot steps but they want to create the identity of their own. In their world, there is no place for male. Even when they play roles in their favourite tales, Sudha wants to play only the character of Princess. Anju Says,

"Our favourite game was acting out the fairy tales Pishi told us; Sudha was always the Princess and I the Prince who rescued her" (12)

Their love and affection for each other irritates even the teachers of their school. They want to separate these two girls and they change their class. This makes Sudha and Anju very upset and sad. Anju Says,

"As we grew older the nuns who ran our convent school were concerned at our closeness. It wasn't normal they said it would stunt our development. They put us in different classes but all it did was made me sick and it made Sudha cry" (12)

Both the girls grew up and become young and charming ladies. Once Sudha happens to meet a young man called Ashok who belongs to a low caste. Both are attracted by each other and fall in love with each other. Sudha wants to elope with Ashok and feels that it is the right time for her to free herself from all the bounds of her family.

"When the time comes for me to break out of my prison will I have the strength? Or will I be like a too – tame house bird that prefers her cage to the vast frightening blue of the sky?" (76)

But her entire idea is changed when Anju's mother falls in sudden illness. She starts feeling about her family and she cannot think about a world without Anju and her mothers. She drops the idea of eloping with Ashok and marries Ramesh, a young man, working in Railways from Birdhaman. As per the culture of our country, it is an unwritten law for every women to migrate to her husband's house after marriage. Sudha is also forced to move from her father's house to her husband's house in Birdhaman. On the same day Anju is also married to Sunil, who is a computer Engineer, settled in America. Anju has dreams about America and wants to live there always after marriage. From her childhood days Anju wants to have independence and self identity in life and she likes English writers and she often reads the novels of Virginia wolf, Thomas Hardy and E.M Forster. With a lot of dreams about America and married life Anju flies to America leaving Sudha the sister of her heart.

Sudha's life becomes pathetic in India in the patriarchal society, women are treated as pleasure giving things to men. Like machines, They should begin their duty early in the morning and go to bed late at night. They cannot think beyond their horizon (ie.) their family Sudha is not an exception to this. Her mother - in law is the predominant characters of the family. Nobody can raise voice against her. She wants Sudha to become pregnant soon after the marriage and she also wants a male baby as the heir to their family. Unfortunately Sudha has not been conceived. So her mother -in-law takes her to a specialist in Calcutta for testing her, who confirms that Sudha does not have any problem. Further the doctor says,

"Instead of dragging this poor girl uselessly all over the place have you considered the fact that the fault might lie in your own genes? Here's the name of a colleague of mine your son should see if you are really interested in grandchild"(198).

In this male dominated society if men have any problem, they will not be blamed as punished but if the women have the same of problem, they will get severe punishment. Being without any problem, Sudha is continuously treated and blamed by her mother in law and her husband, which makes her mentally upset. Anju is happy with her husband after marriage. she always wants to be with him and does not like anybody to disturb them she even forgets the love and affection of Sudha. "when I'm with Sunil, I am like a dog with new puppies, I resent all intruders and every one is an intruder" (161).

But after reaching America, she feels a lot of changes in the behaviours of her husband. He is fully westernized, always sits in front of the computer. He compels her to be western and buys jeans and boots and forces her to have a short hair. He returns home at midnight with alcohol smell. Anju is irritated with this type of wrong attitude of her westernized husband. She decides to leave her husband and wants to come back to India.

Being brought up in a traditional family, her mind does not allow her to go to her home without Sunil. Anju is not an exception from the same problem faced by any immigrant after leaving their native country.

Sudha in Bridhaman is very happy due to her pregnancy. Her mother -in-law's attitude is changed completely and she treats Sudha with love and affection. The old lady urges Sudha to go for a test to know whether the baby is male or female. When the test proves that the baby is female all the happiness of their family has gone away. Now the storm starts blowing in the life of Sudha. Her mother-in law forces her to abort the baby but she refuses and she also eagerly longs for the support of her husband Ramesh. But her expectation is not fulfilled. Irritated by the behavior of her family members she leaves Ramesh and goes to her mother's home at Calcutta.

After reaching Calcutta, Sudha gets a warm welcome from her mother and aunt, but when they notice that she comes alone without Ramesh she narrates all what happened in her husband's house. All the ladies are shocked and at last her aunt Pishi accepts her by saying that she became a widow at the age of eighteen and her mothers became widows at the age of nineteen and thus they all have to search for their identity by their own without any male in their life and Sudha can also join with them. After few days Sudha receives a divorce notice from Ramesh and she accepts it happily. Thus she becomes another member in the group of deserted women of that family.

Sudha delivers a female baby and Anju delivers a male baby but it is dead unfortunately. Sudha feels sorry for that and wants to console Anju. At that same time she receives a call from Anju from America. Anju pleads her to come to America because she is psychologically affected due to alienation. Sudha also wants a relief from the patriarchal society and decides to go to America with her child. Both the sisters do not want to be



identified by the names of their husbands. They want to have their own identity in this world.

After a through examination of the novel *Sister of My Heart*, the readers can understand the deep love of the two sisters and how their true love unites them after their marriage itself. Usually friendship among girls will stop after their marriage. Only the men can enjoy their friendship till the end of their life. This ageold tradition is broken by Chitra in this novel. She uses this novel as a tool to break the traditional customs of our male –dominated society. She also clearly portrays how women in India are suffering in the name of culture and tradition

and how they have been searching their identity throughout their life after marriage.

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## FEMINIST IDEOLOGY IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S NOVEL OF SURFACING

**S.Malathi**

*Assistant Professor, Shri Sakthikailash Womens College*

### **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the Feminist Ideology in the novel of Margaret Atwood Surfacing. In the existential problems of the heroine. In Surfacing woman who identify themselves with the benevolent aspects of nature renounce materialism and strike back. The protagonist suffers from varying forms of victimization and overcome countless obstacles. She struggle and strive to succeed in this attempt of affirming their identities. In addition to accepting responsibilities for her identities, responsibility for their own victimization, she is able to find her voice and her identity. She comes recognize the necessity of personal expression and creativity. The unnamed heroine in Surfacing reflects Atwood feminist ideology.*

### **Canadian Literature**

Great literature presupposes an advanced and well-integrated society, a mature body and a self-conscious soul. The stirring records of explorers and pioneers, the cumulative chronicle provided in the journals of discoverers, in the memoirs of master-builders and in the pages of political and constitutional history, show clearly enough how the physical outline of Canada gradually took shape. By discovery and exploration, confederation agreements and purchase, the frontiers were ultimately set. The chronicle, if it were complete, should also tell of the parallel romance of industry, of commerce, of democratic government, of the Church, of education, art, and literature. The dim beginnings of literature in many a nation are concerned with wanderings, quests, and pilgrimages of every sort. The literature of Canadian travel and exploration is rich in romance, but it rarely achieves literary excellence.

### **Re-constructions of self –identity in surfacing**

The term feminism has many different uses and its meanings are often contested for example, some writers use the term “feminism” to refer to a historically specific political movement in the US and Europe, other writers use it to refer to the belief that there are injustices against women, though there is no consensus on the exact list of these injustices. Although the term “feminism” has a history in English linked with women’s

activism from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, it is useful to distinguish feminist ideas or beliefs from feminist political movements, for even in periods where there has been no significant political activism around women’s subordination, individuals have been concerned with and theorized about justice for women. So for example, it makes sense to ask whether Plato was a feminist, given his view that women should be trained to rule ( Republic book v).even though he was an exception in his historical context.

Margaret Atwood is recognized as a major figure in Canadian literature. she was born in Ottawa in 1939 and grew up in Toronto. Atwood is a poet, novelist, essayist and feminist, social campaigner and short story writer. Atwood using such devices as irony, symbolism and self-conscious narrators, she explores the relationship between humanity and nature, the dark side of human and power as it pertains to gender and politics. Atwood has helped to define and identity the goals of contemporary Canadian Literature and has earned a disputation among feminist writers for her exploration of women’s issues. Her works are acclaimed internationally and have been published around the world. She has been awarded booker prize for the novels. The Hand Maids Tale, Robber Bride, Alias Grace, Blind Assassin. She has received honorary degree from universities across Canada.

The futuristic vision that Attwood presents in the novel depicts the total appropriation of the women’s identity in the

repressive Canadian society. Gender roles are well-defined.

Men are the rulers and women their subjects. In fact, as in primitive societies, women are reduced to being men's possessions, mere objects. Atwood sums herself up quite rightly. When she says: "it's being constant interest of mind: change from one state to another change from one thing in to another". In her novels Atwood explores the power politics in inter personal relationship and relate the women's or Canada's crisis of identity not only to the patriarchal structure of power dominion but also the woman's or Canada's own positivity and complicity in the power structures that subjects and subjugate them. Atwood's feminist polemics against sexual and gender roles imposed upon women in paternalist society. As a result, she acquires a surfeit of identities, all of them fictional, and ends up having an authentic or recognized identity.

In *Surfacing*, the narrator protagonist's journey begins as a physical or geographical journey

In search of her father who has been missing for many days. However, as the novel progresses,

The physical or geographical journey triggers off a parallel psychological or spiritual journey and the narrator's discovery of the father's corpse triggers of discoveries about herself.

Hence, when the protagonist surface with a new knowledge about herself that entails a reassessment of herself in relation to the world. The psychological or spiritual journey towards self-discovery finds its culmination in a ritualistic re-alignment with the primitive world and a subsequent re-alignment with the lived-world with altered perspective and a new ideology.

In *surfacing* the unnamed central character narrates the entire novel in the first person. Before the story opens, Narrator, while studying to be an art illustrator, was seduced by her professor, a married man with two children. After she conceived, Narrator was persuaded to accept an abortion. Later,

she refused to continue the affair. By this time words of love and promise seem only a trap to her. Watching him from her coverts, she realizes that she is ready to accept him, for by this time her instinct and her parents have taught her that besides those of elemental nature there are other powers which must also be reckoned with: the forces of language, of mind, of society. She realizes that being human she cannot simply live in the wilderness, but must live with other people, in society and city. Having faced her guilt, having relieved her psyche of its immense burden of repression, she can summon her fall resources to live, to bear children, to raise "the first true human" (Within 223). One in which body and mind, emotions and languages are united.

This novel surfacing is a great feminist novel capable of transcending the world of feminism. The distinct feminist voice of *Surfacing* is heard through the desperate and anguished voice of a protagonist who surfaces from the depths of exploration and oppression. The protagonist uneasy relationship with her art teacher and her abortion, she develops hatred for life in the city. for her, the city life represents nothing but meaningless relationships and hypocrisy. She feels an urge to go to Northern Quebec Island where she spent her childhood. Her intention to return to the place of her birth is a quest to return to her roots in order to discover her identity.

The protagonist not only struggles to survive with dignity in society and to face the reality but she also desires to organize all the weak, victims to protest against the oppression of the strong, victimizers. Thus the protagonist becomes a spokesperson of all the vulnerable and explored creatures by turning a feminist theme into a universal one in which the battle is not only between the two sexes but also between the strong and weak. She ends up an activist. *Surfacing* emphasizes that women need to recognize their inner potential and power themselves. It suggest that women artist can create the myths necessary to depict the integrity of a female

who is both courageous and warmly. It leaves the task to future mothers and daughters. This portrayal of women's place in the society, their search for identity and their struggle to come to terms with existence, the self and the land gives a new dimension to the Canadian landscape which portrays the changing character of their country.

Her return to northern Quebec bring her in contact, with her past, especially as she investigates and imagines the life of her father, who seems to symbolize the various attempts Canadians have made to adjust to their land. The rediscovery of the past, in contrast to modern, Americanized, urban Canada, is the equivalent of a national search for identity and authenticity.

Bruce King himself admits, the real or rather the deeper theme of the novel seems to be that of a woman stripping her social mask, defenses and ideas to discover her essential self. He wants to recognize as it is evident from the following reflection of hers:

That is the real danger now, the hospital or the zoo, Where we are put, species and individual, when we can, No longer cope. They would never believe its

Only a natural woman, state of nature, they think of That as a tanned body on a beach....skin grimed and Scabby, hair like a frayed bathmat stuck with leaves and twigs. A new kind Of centerfold.(Bruce 210)

In a novel which steadily moves towards this "new kind of centerfold, "towards the discovery of the self, the landscape across which the journey takes place can never really be either geophysical or cultural but the interior landscape which transcends all local, regional, nationalistic or cultural concerns.

With an aim to construct a universal women archetype, not defined or concretized in specific socio cultural, economic or racial terms, the narrator is deliberately left unnamed because naming it may have given her a class and race specific identity.

### Conclusion

The novel surfacing describes man's imposition on women in matters of profession,

marriage and motherhood which cripples her intellectually, emotionally and morally. The protagonist of the novel surfaces from under the swamp of the male discourse by narrating her experiences in her own discourse that is distinctly feminine. Surfacing is structured like a journey of the nameless narrator in which through her association with the people and nature, she become aware of different victims and victimizers. Atwood's women to be deemed survivors she must accept some responsibility for their own victimization. They need to become "creative non-victims" (surfacing 38).

Portrayals of women characters in literature in literature are as varied as the authors who create them. Female protagonist has represented an interminable array of roles throughout literary history. Whether women are represented as angels or metaphorical monsters, it is obvious that female characters have been pigeon holed and stereotyped for centuries. The heroin of the two novels surfaces from the swamp of the male discourse by narrating their experiences in their own discourse that is distinctly feminine.

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## THINGS FALL APART: A DEEP ANALYSIS

**Ankush Mahajan**

*Assistant Professor of English, R.R.M.K. Arya Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Pathankot*

### Abstract

*The African postcolonial novel is an influential branch of the worldly postcolonial narrative. As a part of the worldly postcolonial ideology it presents, it responds and tackles the European intellectual colonial discourse. It further responds to the problems and consequences of the newly independent ex-colonies. Authors wrote during the colonial and post-colonial eras consider themselves as social reformist and political activists whose works reconsider their cultures global status and identify their countries' political and cultural problems during and after colonization.*

*The European invasion of Africa has generated a state of political and cultural reactive influences against the foreign domination. Literature, as stated in chapter two, is given a distinctive significance as it has simultaneously emerged with the resistance movements. However, the colonizer's languages have become a part of the African culture, but still the native sensibility has restored its cultural terrain within that language. A war has been waged to fuel the social commitment and protest the colonialist influences. Africa had to suffer under the colonial rule for decades. Therefore, the African nationalists have adopted variety of resistance modes to oppose the colonial political and cultural invasion. African people had been politically and culturally exploited by the colonialist power. Consequently, they have to undergo a crisis of clashing values generated by the imperial ruling power. In a mode of protest, The Africans have confronted the new values and habits that have targeted their cultural background. To do that, they have made use of the colonialist education for the sake of spreading the African actual image. African writers deliberately focus on presenting myths and legends as integral part of the African culture, which, as they suppose, are not less impressive than other ingredients of worldly cultures.*

**Keywords:** Africa, Post colonial, Culture, Transformation, colonizers

### Introduction

The novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is written by Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) who was a Nigerian author. The setting of the novel is in the outskirts of Nigeria in a small fictional village, Umuofia just before the arrival of white missionaries into their land. Due to the unexpected arrival of white missionaries in Umuofia, the villagers do not know how to react to the sudden cultural changes that the missionaries threaten to change with their new political structure and institutions. Hence, this essay aims at analysing the effects of European colonization on Igbo culture.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century most European states migrated to Africa and other parts of the world where they established colonies. Nigeria was amongst other African nations that received visitors who were on a colonizing mission; introducing their religion and culture that is later imposed on Igbo. The culture of the

people of Umuofia (Igbo culture) is immensely threatened by this change.

Achebe's primary purpose of writing the novel is because he wants to educate his readers about the value of his culture as an African. *Things Fall Apart* provides readers with an insight of Igbo society right before the white missionaries' invasion on their land. The invasion of the colonizing force threatens to change almost every aspect of Igbo society; from religion, traditional gender roles and relations, family structure to trade.

Consequently, Achebe blames the white missionaries' colonial rule and/or invasion for the post-colonial oppressed Igbo culture; this oppression can be seen in terms of the oppressed social coherence between the individual and their society. Furthermore, Achebe educates readers extensively about Igbo society's myths and proverbs.

Before Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart*, all the novels that had been written about Africa and Africans were written by Europeans. Mostly, the European writings

described Africans as uncivilised and uneducated persons. The Europeans, seeing that they thought of themselves as more advanced than Africans, were determined to help Africans shift from the old era into the modern era of civilisation and education.

Heart of Darkness, for instance, by Joseph Conrad was one of the most read novels around the time of its publication in 1899. Conrad described Africa as a “wild, ‘dark’, and uncivilized continent”. Following Conrad’s novel in 1952 was Mister Johnson, a novel by Joyce Cary. Like Heart of Darkness, Mister Johnson was also quite a popular read; its reviews suggest it was a more popular read than Heart of Darkness.

### Plot Summary of the Novel

The title Things Fall Apart was adopted from William Butler Yeats’ poem “The Second Coming” (1921). The poem foresees the end of the present age and the world’s approach to another phase that is completely different:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity

(Yeats: 1921) Things Fall Apart is centered on the life of the protagonist of the novel, Okonkwo. As the novel develops Okonkwo accidentally kills a man and he and his family are exiled from Umuofia. During his exile white missionaries arrive in Umuofia and change the village. When Okonkwo returns to his village he sees the major transformations that Umuofia has undergone during his exile. Unhappy with the change, Okonkwo and other villagers come together to drive the white missionaries out of their land. Their efforts are in vain as the missionaries send their messengers to abort the meeting. Okonkwo kills one of the messengers and in shock at his actions the villagers let the other

messengers escape. The messengers report back to the missionaries and they take off to bring Okonkwo to justice only to find him dead.

### Okonkwo’s Life Falls Apart

At the beginning of the novel we see Okonkwo as a prosperous leader of the Igbo people. But the novel ends with his tragic end. Thus, we can say that the novel Things Fall Apart depicts how Okonkwo’s life falls apart. Okonkwo is definitely a man of importance for his society. He is a well-known person throughout the nine villages and beyond.

He is a warrior and wrestler who gains respect through his athletics. He is a fierce-free individual. He hasn’t lost one fight or any battles. And for this the people of the village love him. He is also respected because of his wealth. Okonkwo's life first begins to fall apart when he kills Ikemefuna, a prisoner who stayed at Okonkwo's home. Okonkwo considers Ikemefuna as one of his own sons. It has been decided from the oracle that Ikemefuna will be killed. Okonkwo takes part in his murder, despite warning from his friend, “That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death.” But when he hears Ikemefuna’s crying, ““My father, they have killed me!” as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down.” Okonkwo’s fear of being weak, which is one of his tragic flaws, drives him to rashness, and in the end it contributes to his own tragedy that his own life falls apart.

Another significant incidence where Okonkwo's life falls apart was when he was thrown out of the clan for seven years. From this event, one can see that Okonkwo's hopes dreams have begun to fall apart. His hopes of being a rich and popular individual had drifted away with this disturbing incident.

Okonkwo had no longer had his farm or animals. Also Okonkwo lost faith with most of his friends. This goes to show that Okonkwo lost faith with his friends, like his father lost faith with his friends. Another episode that showed the downfall in Okonkwo's life was

when Nwoye, his oldest and favorite son, converted to the white mans.

Okonkwo's life finally shattered after his returning to his village where he finds that everything is changed. After the clansman burn the Church building down, the District Commissioner asks the leaders of the clan, Okonkwo among them, to go and see him for a peaceful meeting. The leaders arrive, and are quickly seized.

While they are in detention waiting for the fine to be collected from their people, they are beaten severely by the court messengers and their heads are shaved. They are held in jail until the clan pays a heavy fine. Embittered and grieving for the destruction of his clan's independence, and fearing the humiliation of dying under white law, Okonkwo commits suicide and his life totally falls apart.

### **Igbo Society Falls Apart**

Like Okonkwo his Igbo society also falls apart. In the first part of the book we see a socially, politically and religiously organic Igbo society. But this organic society becomes divided and virtually loses all energy at the end of the book.

Thus, the novel documents the falling apart of the Igbo tribe due to its own brutal rules as well as the coming of the Christian missionaries and the rule of the English government.

### **The Society Itself Responsible For Falling Apart**

At the beginning of the book we see that the Igbo people have a strong faith in their traditional religion. The religion of the Igbos consisted in the belief that there is a suspense God, the creator of the universe and the lesser gods. The supreme God was called Chukwu. The other gods were made by Chukwu to act his messengers so that people could approach him through them. People made sacrifices to the smaller gods, but when they failed, the people turned to Chukwu. Ancestor worship was also an equally important feature of the religion of the Ibo people. There were many

superstitious ideas related with their religious belief. They believed in evil spirits and oracle. One of such Oracles is responsible for Okonkwo's sacrifice of Ikemefuna. This incident underlines the superstitious brutality of traditional Igbo society. We also find the brutality, injustice and the inhuman activities in some other rituals or rules such as – people who are affected by some severe diseases are carried on the Evil Forest to die and they do not get any burial and twain babies are thrown out in the Evil Forest just after their birth. The ultimate result of such brutality is when the people, who are dissatisfied with these rules such as- Nwoye, the mother of three twin babies, get the opportunity to change their religion they do it and the society ultimately falls apart.

### **Igbo Society Encounters the Colonial Masters and Falls Apart:**

Prior to the coming of the white the political life of the Igbo people was also very organic and strong. They were very loyal to their political leaders. After the entrance of colonial masters, the colonial religion, mostly replaces the traditional religion. When the white man arrives, however, they ignore the Igbo's values and try to enforce his own beliefs and religious practices. Missionaries would convince these tribesmen that their tribe worshipped false gods and that its false gods did not have the ability to punish them if they chose to join the mission. Like many others, Okonko's son Nwoye is also affected by the colonial religion.

The only point in the book in which the title is referenced is Chapter Twenty, when the main character, Okonkwo, and his friend, Obierika, are discussing the invasion of white men into their community. Obierika says, "The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart." his passage clearly ties the destruction of the Igbo

people's way of life to sneaky, divisive action on the part of European missionaries and imperialists.

The colonial politics affects the Igbo society. Okonko's life is also affected by the colonial politics. The Igbo people become the victims of the colonial politics and many people die as a result of colonialism. The same things happen to Okonkwo.

The novel concludes with the end of the Igbo society and the death of the hero. In the face of the chaos caused by the incursion of Christianity, Okonkwo becomes a murderer and then hangs himself. His world has literally fallen apart, and it symbolically represents that Igbo society has fallen apart. Thus, we can say, the title of the novel, *Things Fall Apart* denotes its theme appropriately.

### **Conflict between Traditional Decision-Making and Colonial Decision-Making**

Towards the end of the novel, Obierika accuses the District Commissioner and says, "That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog". Thus the white man failed in crushing the native African religious beliefs of the African society. The natives refused to accept the white man's authority as far as decision making was concerned. Before the arrival of the colonial powers, they lived in a patriarchal- collective political system. Decisions were made by the elder males in the village and by the husband in the house.

### **Conclusion**

*Things Fall Apart* is the story of Okonkwo's sacrifice at the altar of his society. He is typical Ibo, representative of their ethics, morality, socio-cultural set up, and traditional society, who fights against all the unjust forces, which were breaking down his society, culture and history. It is in this way that *Things Fall Apart* becomes a strong response to the assertion that Africa has no history. It is as if in it, Achebe returns to the

African a humanity which the supposed European Enlightenment had denied her. It has indeed become common sense to suppose that Okonkwo, eponymously, is the representative and typical of his fictive Igbo clan, a clan that in turn, is symbolic of African in the world community. Thus, metonymically, Okonkwo stands as Africa, and his tale becomes Africa's history. Hence, through Okonkwo's death, Achebe points out the idea that 'this suicide is collective suicide of Umuofia'. Consequently, we can find in the final stage that the performance and skill Achebe showed in depicting the social-cultural and historical values of the Ibo society, in a very clearer way, with a diligent detail that it characterizes the work of a social-anthropologist. He documented the social codes, traditions, conventions and customs in a very sharp and minute detail and their hemiplegic transformation crossing a phase of history in colonial set up that gave it the element of uniqueness and universality.

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## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WHITE'S *BIG TOYS* AND TENDULKAR'S *KAMALA*

I.Kanaga Priya

Assistant Professor, Sri Kaliswari College, Sivakasi

### Abstract

*This Paper deals with a comparative study of White's Big Toys and Tendulkar's Kamala. Comparative Literature is an interdisciplinary field which involves comparison of themes, genres, movements and trends of a minimal pair of two literatures going beyond the context of one country and through translation. Though these two playwrights belong to different nation, they are noted for their female characters in their plays. In Big Toys, White brings out the social problems and also how women are treated as toys by their husband in this male dominated society. Mag Bosanquet is the protagonist of the play. She is treated as a toy by her husband Ritchie Bosanquet. The title of the play Big Toys is very apt and appropriate because White has depicted Mag as a toy and Ritchie as her toy master in this play. Meanwhile, Tendulkar's play Kamala is based on the real life incident, reported in The Indian Express by Ashwin Sarin, a journalist, who really bought a woman, 'Kamla' for Rs.2300 in a rural flesh market and resented her at the press conference to establish the trafficking of women in Shivpuri Village. Women in the plays Big Toys and Kamala are treated as slave and also as an object by men for their own purpose. Once their purpose becomes fulfilled, they throw out of the women like an object. In all over the world, Women are treated as an object and so women started to fight for their equal rights but their voice become voiceless like Mag, Kamala and Sarita. Thus both the playwrights bring out the condition, Status and sufferings of women through their female characters in their plays.*

Comparative Literature occupies a prominent place in world literature. The term "Comparative Literature" was first used in 1829 by the French Scholar, Villemain and popularized by the influential critic, Sainte-Beuve, and rendered in English as Comparative literature by Matthew Arnold. Comparative literature is a literary discipline which has its origin in France. It was an outcome of the interest of French Scholars for finding the impact of culture on European literature.

It studies literature across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the other arts such as music, painting, dance, film, etc. and across disciplines: literature, psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, politics, etc. The ultimate aim of Comparative literature is to enhance the understanding of two literatures, cultures, transcending the historical or the geographical and the linguistic barriers. It enables the scholar to enjoy global literature through comparison. Henry Remak has stated

in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of Knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g. painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences, (e.g. politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression (qtd. in Kumar and Roy 1-2).

Translation studies are essential in Comparative literature because through translations, literatures influence each other, and people understand one another better. For example, when an English text is translated in Turkish, one can explore the similarities or differences between the two literatures. Translation unites two or more literatures. Translation also influenced writers and works. Montaigne, the famous

French essayist, influenced Francis Bacon in English to produce his famous Essays. The Classics of Greece and Rome were translated into many European languages and this led to a great literary revolution, the Renaissance.

This paper deals with a comparative study of Patrick white's *Big Toys* (1977) and Vijay Tendulkar's *Kamala*. Even though these playwrights belong to different countries, they are noted for their strong female characters. The female protagonists of the two playwrights are strikingly similar in many ways and yet so distinctly dissimilar in other ways.

Patrick Victor Martindale White was an Australian Playwright, short story writer and novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. Most of his plays deal with the lives of Australian and their society. In his play *Big Toys*, White brings out the social problems and also how women are treated as toys by their husband in this male dominated society. Mag Bosanquet, the protagonist of the play is treated as a toy by her husband Ritchie Bosanquet. The title of the play *Big Toys* is very apt and appropriate because White has depicted Mag as a toy and Ritchie as her toy master in this play. Similarly, Vijay Tendulkar who was an Indian playwright, literary essayist, political journalist and social commentator illustrates how women are exploited in various ways in this male dominated society. Women who receive the heartless treatment from the male dominated society show that they lose their self-freedom and self-respect and later their lives for the sake of men. It is expressed more deeply and elaborately in Tendulkar's play *Kamala* (1981). The play is based on the real life incident, reported in The Indian Express by Ashwin Sarin, a journalist, who really bought a woman, 'Kamla' for Rs.2300 in a rural flesh market and resented her at the press conference to establish the trafficking of women in Shivpuri Village.

Both Mag and Kamala is victim in this dominated society. They were not given equal

status and they were viewed as inferior to men. Even Virginia Woolf in her work *A Room of One's Own* asserts:

Men have treated women as inferior for many years.

It is the men who define everything in the society. (28)

Though we are living in the 21st century, the condition and status of women remain secondary. They were considered as weaker sex and exploited by the male society in many ways. They were not given the chance to express their inner feelings not only in the house but also in the society. Their roles remain within the house as an ideal wife to cook, to rear the children and to be obedient to her husband. Still they were caged bird in this society and these facts of women community are brought out to the world by White and Tendulkar in their plays.

White's *Big Toys* begins with the thirty years old stylish woman Mag who wants to join the Labour party at the East Sidney. Her husband Ritchie Bosanquet is fifty years old lawyer. Mag gives more importance to her make-up and jewels. One day when Ritchie enters into his bedroom, he saw his wife Mag is speaking with Terry. But he doesn't scold his wife because he wants Terry to act as a witness against Douglas Stannard's case. When Ritchie asks Terry to act as a witness against Douglas Stannard, he refuses to act. He says to Ritchie that Douglas Stannard is a person who offers money to him to save his wife Mary from cancer. But unfortunately Mary died when she was at her sick bed. So Ritchie plans to use Mag as a key to play on Terry. He wants his wife to have a relationship with Terry. He offers an emerald necklace as a bribe to his wife Mag to make Terry Legge as a witness against Douglas Stannard's case. Her husband's presentation of an emerald necklace makes her speechless and she does not turn to Terry. So Terry moves from Mag's house into the Trades hall. By giving presentation, Ritchie makes his wife as a submissive toy according to his

wishes. She also understands that her husband uses her as a toy in which he can play for his own purpose. She says,

Mag: ... of the big toys. A big toy puts everything right... keeps the children quiet. [RITCHIE stands a moment looking down at her.] (BT 20)

Finally Ritchie wins the case and his wife Mag appreciates Terry for his genuine attitude in the witness box. She offers him a gift which is made of a thread of gold plaited together with elephant hair. But he refuses her gift because he knows that Ritchie even makes him as a toy for his personal. Douglas Stannard offers a Ferrari car to Terry through Ritchie. Terry takes it for a drive. After he has gone, Ritchie reveals the truth to Mag that the entire plan was designed by Douglas Stannard.

When Mag comes to know the truth, she argues with her husband Ritchie and feels guilty and sad for Terry. At last, Terry returns the keys of house and Ferrari car to Ritchie and leaves the place with disappointment. Mag looks sadly at the gift which is refused by Terry. Just as how children like to play with big toys for their game, the lawyer Ritchie has used his wife Mag as a big toy for his real game.

Mag: Oh yeah? You don't have to rub my nose on the bonnet.

You are written all over it. Ritchie Bosanquet's

Big Toys...Big Circus... Big Shit... (BT 53)

Meanwhile in the Play *Kamala*, Tendulkar brings out the unacceptable state of women who are merely treated as objects to be butchered, bought and sold. They play is based on the real life incident which was reported in the newspaper. So Tendulkar gives importance to Media in this play. Jaisingh Jadhav is the protagonist of the play. He is a young and dynamic journalist who purchases a woman called Kamala from flesh market to expose the issue of women-selling as a slave. His wife Sarita doesn't support her

husband's act because he keeps his wife as a slave even though he fights for the freedom and equality of women. Though Sarita is an educated woman, she acts only as Jaisingh's secretary by noting down all his messages in this play. Her life becomes tragedy when Kamala considers herself as another purchased slave by her master Jaisingh. She expresses to Sarita: "The master bought you; he bought me, too. He spent a lot of money on the two of us" (KL 35). She tells her that it is their duty to keep their master happy and prosperous. She even makes a deal with Sarita "Fifteen days of the month, you sleep with the master the other fifteen, I'll sleep with him" (KL 35). Through their conversation, Tendulkar expresses that not only Kamala but also Sarita was purchased legally through marriage transactions.

When Kamala asks Sarita to lend her one of her saris, Jaisingh tells Sari not to give her sari. He wants to produce Kamala in the same clothes in the press conference. In the conference men behave shamefully to Kamala. Finally after the press conference, Jaisingh sends Kamala to the Orphanage. So Sarita argues with her husband not to send Kamala to the orphanage but he tells her about the Indian Penal Code and the Crime he has done. During that time Sarita's uncle Kakasaheb tells her that Kamala is just a pawn in Jaisingh game of chess. So Sarita says:

SARITA: Not just Kamala, Kakasaheb. [Trying to control her misery.]

Not just Kamala, Kakasaheb. Me too... me too. (KL 43)

From this incident, Sarita realizes that like Kamala, she is also treated as a pawn by Jaisingh in his game. Before the society Jaisingh fights for the freedom of women but in his home he plays the role of master who oppresses his wife Sarita. So Sarita says:

SARITA: Kamala showed me everything. Because of her, I suddenly saw things clearly. I saw that the man I thought my partner was the master of a slave". (KL 46)

Here Tendulkar shows that the auction of an illiterate rural woman is not very different from the marriage transaction of an educated urban woman.

Women in the plays *Big Toys* and *Kamala* are treated as slave and also as an object by men for their own purpose. Once their purpose becomes fulfilled, they throw out of the women like an object. In all over the world, Women are treated as an object and so women started to fight for their equal rights but their voice become voiceless like Mag, Kamala and Sarita. Thus both the playwrights bring out the condition, Status and sufferings of women through their female characters in their plays.

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## A STUDY ON THE FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE SHORT STORIES OF JAMES ALAN MCPHERSON

**Mrs.S.R.Vanitha**

*Assistant Professor of English, Seethalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur*

### Abstract

*James Alan McPherson was born on 1943 in Savannah Georgia, grew up in segregationist Georgia that brought him an exposure to an atmosphere of multiculturalism. McPherson an essayist, short-story writer and critic, is among the generation of African American writers and intellectuals who were inspired and mentored by Ralph Ellison. He became the first African American man to win the Pulitzer Prize for his story collection *Elbow Room*. Another collection *Hue and Cry* have attracted and retained a dedicated circle of readers. McPherson views himself as a practitioner of short story. McPherson shows a wide range of women, many of whom still retain a trace of humanity. Most are complicated, quietly desperate and driven only into themselves. He doesn't push his people through the standard manipulations of a standard plot. Edith Blick Silver examines the female characters in several of the short stories of McPherson, stating that McPherson "is at his artistic best when he depicts weak and dispossessed women who still are sympathetic creatures. We may not like them, but we understand what complex terrors motivate them".*

**Keywords:** *Sympathetic Creatures, Ever fanatic, Conservative Traditionalism, Community change and Admonishing.*

James Alan McPherson was born on 1943 in Savannah Georgia, grew up in segregationist Georgia that brought him an exposure to an atmosphere of multiculturalism. McPherson an essayist, short-story writer and critic, is among the generation of African American writers and intellectuals who were inspired and mentored by Ralph Ellison. He became the first African American man to win the Pulitzer Prize for his story collection *Elbow Room*. Another collection *Hue and Cry* have attracted and retained a dedicated circle of readers. McPherson views himself as a practitioner of short story. Edith Blick Silver examines the female characters in several of the short stories of McPherson, stating that McPherson "is at his artistic best when he depicts weak and dispossessed women who still are sympathetic creatures. We may not like them, but we understand what complex terrors motivate them" (102-197).

In *Gold Coast*, the most remarkable story of *Hue and Cry*, ever fanatic, obsessively clean Miss O'Hara, whose energies are directed toward disrupting the pitiful lives of the bigoted old Irish Janitor, James Sullivan, and his endlessly screaming, mad wife Meg, are

sketched with sympathy and even with some measure of respect for all the sufferings that old age and lonely despair can bring. Murphy, the celebrated Irishman in *Gold Coast*, was used by Miss O'Hara, who had always dominated him. When he had first come to the apartment building "fresh from Montgomery's Campaign, he must have had a will of his own" but Miss O'Hara, who called him "Frank Dear," had drained it all away, so that now he would "do anything just agreeable," even sign a complaint about mad Meg's pitiful dog, although he did not "really mind the dog: he did not really mind anything" (101).

Usually older black women are treated with respect although sometimes they are never fully developed. They transmit wise sayings from one generation to another, being in a unique position to look forward and backward, to decide how much of the past is worth salvaging such as the jaded woman with the scar in *The Story of the Scar* in *Elbow Room*, who remembered that his friend, Reb Bones, had advised her to avoid putting on airs by quoting grandmamma, "It don't make no difference how well you fox-trot if everybody else is dancing the two- step" (125).

The venture-outward thirteen year old narrator in the story *A Matter of vocabulary*, in *Hue and Cry* was very obedient to her mother, afraid to disobey her or his teacher nuns and skip church services. His mother exerts a powerful influence in his life, teaching him both morals and manners. He must "Speak to people in streets because Southern blacks do not know how to live without neighbors" (3). But when strangers do respond to his greetings, he wonders if he has been rejected by whites because he is black. He therefore begins to question his mother's wisdom. When she claims that she knows exactly who will be damned and who will be saved on the Day of Judgment, he is fearful of disobeying her.

The hour's gonna come when the horn will blow, the horns gonna blow

All through the world on that great morning and all them in the graves will hear it and be raised up...Even Daddy, Everybody, She said, both the quick and the dead and everybody that's alive. Then the stars are gonna fall and all the sinners will be crying and trying to hide in the corners..... Especially for those who do not repent and go to church.(5-6).

After all, she has been raised as a Southern Baptist, going to the same minister all her life. When young Thomas is caught, after seeing several deacons keep some of the children's collection money, he secretly stops going to church in spite of fearing both damnation and his mother's wrath. He became a model student in the school, afraid of violence, because he had learned that in complete silence lay his safety when angry nuns slapped students with a wooden ruler. So his mother and the nuns represented the fear-filled authority symbols of home, school and church.

Another older black woman, Ella in *The Faithful*, in *Elbow Room* symbolizes instead of conservative traditionalism, the need for community change when she reprimands her barber-minister husband because he refuses

to give up Afro haircuts, unable to recognize outside of his shop that the world is changing. She reminds him that he is too possessive about the past and determined not to allow the present to slip into focus.

In the same story, another woman, Marie Gilmore, the wife of a church leader who threatens to transfer to a more liberal congregation, is understanding and compassionate, admonishing her husband not to cause trouble because the elderly barber ain't got much longer to go. Finally even Marie became exasperated with the mass's uncompromising rigidity and she came to church, no longer to hear the sermon. Instead she sat in at the back of the room wearing a purple dress instead of her traditional white one. When the minister-barber calls his parishioners stiff-necked people who will be judged for their actions, Marie replies with fiery determination, "Who's to say what's to be judged and what ain't?. Who's left to say for certain he knows the rules or can show us where they written down? (92).

In another story, *The Silver Bullet*, in *Elbow Room*, in which McPherson described the actions of an exploitive street gang that is seeking acceptance through violence as they test their manhood, matronly Bertha Ray, sweating the kitchen bar, admonishes the boys, and she tells them to go home. "You ought to be shame of yourselves", (66), she says, but one youthful offender comments with worldly wisdom, "A fat mouth make a soft ass" (66). Finally, when extortion attempt fails, Bertha's chastising stern voice is the only one they here as they face derision and shamefully flee, "Your mamma outtha give you a good whippin!" (66). Here perhaps the female is a castration symbol, robbing these young men of their macho victory.

So the older women in the McPherson stories are not cut out of one pattern although his black characters tend to be strong-willed, religious matriarchs frequently representing the conservative elements of the establishment: Southern good manners, the

laws of an ordered society and traditional morality. They are forceful without being abrasive within the save confines of the black community. They do not threaten the precarious dignified position of their elderly black husbands when these men venture out in to the most powerful, less safe white society.

Younger black women are not treated as much dignity in many of McPherson's stories they are exploited by selfish pleasure seeking men as the women in *All the Lonely People* and in *Of Cabbages and kings* in *Hue and Cry*. Some women mistake exploitation of love. The seared women claimed that her jealous lover disfigured her because he loved her so much that he chose violence rather than accept rejection and betrayal. Some women are bored restless with good men, as was this same scared woman with Billy Crawford. She looked instead for a sweet talking young dude.

Girls are used as sex objects in several of McPherson's stories. In *Of Cabbages and King* Claude, the slightly mad adherent of the black power mystique uses blonde white women to reinforce his own faltering sense of self-worth. He was not comfortable with any of the girls and was never in control. McPherson's purpose in using women as sex objects in obvious, and he shows that objectively coupled with close observation and technical skill can evoke strong emotions. In spite of just using women as sex objects, the author in *Of Cabbages and Kings* focuses

upon a superbly moving and haunting description of the exploitation resulting in tension among black men, between brotherhood and separateness, actually between the irrational and the rational in men of all colors.

Yet, even Philomena Brown in *An Act of Prostitution* in the same collection, is an understandable human being, one of those pitiful people more sinned against than sinning, and we simultaneously despise her and understand why she will be victimized by men all her life. We have more sympathy with her because she sells her body with no deception involved; we have less respect for her cheap lawyer, who trades his integrity for a hollow victory. McPherson shows a wide range of women, many of whom still retain a trace of humanity. Most are complicated, quietly desperate and driven only into themselves. He doesn't push his people through the standard manipulations of a standard plot.

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## IDENTITY CRISIS AS PERCEIVED IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S 'NAMESAKE'

**A.Benazir**

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English & Research Centre, Seethalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur

**Dr.M.Vennila**

Research Supervisor, Associate Professor & Head, Department of English & Research Centre,  
Seethalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur

### Abstract

*Belonging to the second generation immigrant writers, Jhumpa Lahiri has portrayed in her writings some of the problems engendered by the experience of migration and diaspora such as displacement, rootlessness, fragmentation, discrimination, marginalization and crisis of identity. While the first generation immigrant feels proud of their cultural past, the second generation expresses its aberrations and deviations. In the process of self actualization the former do not like to violate the cultural dignity of their past while the latter neither demand it nor demonstrate it, living as they do in the American plenitude of cultural availability. This article endeavours to portray every facet of their upbringing in the transnational cross-cultural space- their acculturation, borderland inhabitation, formation of hybridized reality and most significantly, creation of a new amalgamated culture as pen pictured by the author in the work Namesake.*

**Keywords:** Indian Immigrants, distant territories, marginalization, crisis of identity, alienation, homeland, Native residents.

Migration has become one of the most important issues of the contemporary world. There is a great deal of Indian writers with few themes that link with the issues of identity and language. The writings of any diaspora have, talk of alienation exile, loneliness, cultural conflicts, the sense of rejection by the host community, the questions of identity.

Jhumpa Lahiri, an American born Indian has portrayed the agonies of non-resident Indians. The immigrants really find it difficult to get on easily with the people in America and in a strange backdrop find themselves alienated. The Indian Diaspora is marked by a strong pride in its cultural heritage and a shared nostalgia for the activities that formed part of the experiences of the home. Adherence to cultural roots is an essentiality of the globalization experience. On the practical side, the Indian American community needs to use its common identity which has Indian roots as a bargaining chip. In recent times, Indians in America have come to be known as a part of NRI community around the world. This diasporic community realizes that it is very difficult to leave the

country behind even though one has left it in a palpable sense. The internal character of this community is inescapably Indian.

The question of identity is always a difficult one especially for those who are culturally displaced and grow up in two worlds simultaneously. For the first generation immigrants, the challenges of exile, the loneliness, the constant sense of alienation, the knowledge of longing for a lost world are more explicit and distressing than for their children..

The question of identity and location finds a dominant presence throughout her novel, "The Namesake." This novel reflects perpetual dilemmas of immigrants who arrive in a foreign country. The characters who struggle to maintain their identities and face difficult choices in their daily lives. It revolves round the difficulties faced by a Bengali couple in a different country. The clash of cultures, the relationship between parents and children, the generation gap, identity problems etc. The cultural dilemmas experienced by them and their American born children in different ways; the spatial, cultural and emotional



dislocation suffered by them in their efforts to settle 'home' in the new land.

In the novel "The Namesake", the first generation immigrant Ashima and Ashoke emigrate from India to the U.S as young adults. Their children Gogol and Sonia, the second generation born and educated in American soil. The novel depicts numerous differences between the two generations of Indian Immigrants and their life in a new homeland. The second generation of the Gangulis' feels very different. They consider themselves Americans and look forward more celebrations than to the worship of Hindu Gods. The immigrant continues to live in two worlds almost two mutually exclusive ones. At work, his origin, race, colour etc; do not intrude or matter; at home, they do not ever change or impinge on him in any way.

The first generation authentic Indian immigrants wore their ethnic identity like a protective cloak over the other, the American identity. These first generation immigrants carefully cultivated values of Indians culture which contrasted sharply with the 'western culture', a culture to their minds was degenerate. The authentic immigrant sees the nationalistic values inherited from an old country as vital to his survival in a new alien land. These atavistic interpretations of natal culture are then rigorously enforced and in doing so the parents who consider themselves as guardians or upholders of the natal culture, expect their children to follow their footsteps.

To preserve their culture in the foreign land, the first generation immigrants train their children in the Bengali language, literature, history and expose them to their religious customs, traditions, beliefs, food habits, social mannerism. Along with, they also train them in the ways of new land and its social customs. Though they try their best to preserve the heritage and culture; they cannot help but imbibe the social and cultural traditions of the host country. But their children are more Americanized than what

they wish them to be. The children too groomed to be bilingual, face the cultural dilemmas and displacement. In adapting themselves to the new culture, in adapting new values and ideas.

The second generation Indians who have spent their formative years in a country different from that of their parents find themselves constantly negotiating their allegiance to their parents' natal culture and the culture of their adopted home. Gogol like many second generation immigrants can never quite find his place in the world. There are problems on generational level. The conflict of Gogol with his family is more about the tension between the imperatives of the culture in which he is growing and those that his parents think are simply corrupt and not genuinely respectful as those they had brought with them. The second generational issues are of main concern to the internal mechanics of how the Indian community functions and how it treads the waters of an aggressively and rapidly changing culture in United States.

The identity crisis, the feeling of "in-between" and belonging "no where" is experienced by him more intensely during his school trip to the cemetery where finding no grave of his ancestors he felt that being a Hindu "he himself will be burned not buried, that his body will occupy no plot of earth, that no stone in this country will bear his name beyond life." The conflict between the unconscious Bengali cultural way and the conscious adaptation to the American 'way' make him 'a boy sandwich,' broken and fragmented. Lahiri herself clarifies her aim in creating such a character in **The Namesake**, "I just wanted to write something focusing on the experiences of Bengali-American kid."

In other matters too, like dating of their children, their courtship period during which young boys and girls stay together as Nikhil (Gogol), and Ruth do, and as Nikhil stays in the house of Maxine's parents, the hugging of Maxine of Nikhil's parents, and pairing her

fingers in Nikhil's hair showing her intimacy, though Nikhil's parents do not show their approval and Moushumi's parents too did not like her going out with any boy when she turned fourteen, but these first generation immigrants do not react openly to their children's going "the American way" as they know that their children cannot be forced to live by "the Bengali way" they reconcile to their children's adaptation to the "American common sense" whom earlier "pressure" cannot bind together.

"Migrants," says Salman Rushdie, "straddle two cultures...fall between two stools" and they suffer "a triple disruption" comprising the loss of roots, the linguistic and also the social dislocation. Gogol and his parents suffer all these in different ways. But all the second generation immigrants do not react the same way. Her novel presents not only the Indian migrants who feel dislocated in other countries and face cultural dilemmas, the immigrants from any culture feel the same in other "dominant cultures."

The question of identity and location finds a dominant throughout the novel. Lahiri is

more concerned with Bengali traditional, socio-cultural fabric, more of the 'high culture' of the Indian Renaissance. She often shares the glory that Ashima would time and again look back to. In the West, such glory may seem to be fading in the face of a superior hegemonic class structure but Ashima can well be identified with the middle-class Bengali resurgent chauvinism. The Subaltern Indian does not completely accept the West but poses only a non-uniform response from Indian multi-cultural identity towards the Western culture.

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## THE INTRICACY OF REEL AND REAL LIFE WOVEN IN SHASHI THAROOR'S *SHOW BUSINESS*

Dr.P.Sruthi

Assistant Professor of English, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women, Chennai

### Abstract

An author, politician, former international civil servant, and now a member of the Indian parliament from Thiruvananthapuram constituency, Shashi Tharoor is the award winning author of sixteen books, as well as hundreds of articles and book reviews in a wide range of publication, both in India and overseas. His literary works includes four fictions, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories* (1990), *Show Business* (1992), *Riot* (2001). His books have been translated into French, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Malayalam and Marathi.

*Show Business* narrates about the real and reel life of the protagonist Ashok Banjara through a series of flashbacks. He hangs between life and death in a hospital when he thinks about his past. The life as a Bollywood star, his marriage, illegitimate affairs and the political stint is reflected through the memories. His end in political career makes him to go back to previous career as an actor but in vain.

Ashok emerges as a hero in the typical Bollywood movies that he enacted, who thrashes the villains and save the common man but his real life might seem to be unreal to an average Indian. The novel is narrated with the delicacy of real and cinematic life of make-believe.

Shashi Tharoor is the award winning author of sixteen books, as well as hundreds of articles and book reviews in a wide range of publication, both in India and overseas. His literary works includes four fiction, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories* (1990), *Show Business* (1992) and *Riot* (2001). His non-fiction consist of *Reasons of State* (1982), *India: From Midnight to the Millennium* (1997), *Nehru: The Invention of India* (2003), *Bookless in Baghdad* (2005), *The Elephant, The Tiger, And The Cell Phone: Reflections on India - The Emerging 21st-Century Power* (2007), *Shadows Across the Playing Field: Sixty Years of India-Pakistan Cricket* (2009) along with Shaharyar Khan), *PaxIndica: India and the World of the 21st Century* (2012), his other two illustrated books are *Kerala: God's own Country* (2002) (along with artist M.F. Husain), *Inde* (in French) or *India* (in English) (2008) along with photographer Ferranti.

Shashi Tharoor appeared on the Indian Literary horizon in 1982 with the publication of his novel *Reasons of State*. The novel received wide acclaim from the readers and critics. It is considered as a trend-setting novel as it deals with the political situation

which naturally demands a writer's involvement with the political if not politics. His three works are the classic, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), which is required reading in several courses on Post-colonial Literature. *Riot* (2001) a searing examination of Hindu-Muslim violence in contemporary India, and *Show Business* (1992) which received a front page accolade in the New York Times book Review and has since been made into a motion picture *Bollywood*. His books have been translated into French, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Malayalam and Marathi.

Author, Peace-keeper, refugee worker, human rights activist, formerly served as an Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Human Resource Development, now a member of the Indian parliament from the Thiruvananthapuram constituency in Kerala, Shashi Tharoor bestrides several world of experience. He is also an internationally known speaker on India's recent transformation and future prospects which includes globalization freedom of the press, human rights, literacy, Indian culture and India's present potential.

The author has explained in many interviews that the title *Show Business* does

not only refer to Bollywood but also politics. It is divided in six parts that is called 'takes' like the takes during shooting for a movie. It is said that the novel is based on Amitabh Bachchan's life. This novel is about Bollywood and a young film-star, Ashok Banjara, who seems to happily fall into just about everything in his life. He becomes a star in Bollywood and eventually a politician. The story of the protagonist is revealed through flashbacks when he was admitted in hospital due to an accident that made his life hang in between life and death. The Hindi film industry of Mumbai serves as the setting of the novel *Show Business*. Ashok Banjara leads a money spinning and glamorous life and becomes the megastar in Bollywood. Overnight fame made him a successful star with his second movie 'Godambo', married his co-star Maya and became a father of triplets. He made wealth out of his hollow and meaningless movies that became successful. The accumulation of wealth in Swiss bank directed him to be distant from family and morality and lead a path of fame, lust and success.

Ashok had an effortless time to enter into politics as he was from a political family. His honest father Kulbhushan Banjara was asked to step down from his seat in government to pave way for Ashok. It was blows for his younger son Ashwin too as he toiled hard in his father's constituency in order to become heir to the position in future. His father and Ashwin were sidelined as Ashok was eager to accept the proposal from the government. This made an end to Kulbhushan Banjara's and Ashwin's political career as well as Ashok's reel life. His movie *Mechanic* proved to be a debacle but he achieved victory in elections. He realized that success in Bollywood does not necessarily guarantee a success in politics. He was put down from his political career due to allegations and scandals with Swiss Bank account and could not see a success in his reel life either though he tried for it. His desperation is shown when he made a mythological movie 'Kalki' to revive his career but it turned out to be the cause of destruction of many lives in set due

to an accident. He was hospitalized, family members and fans and from different parts of the country offered prayers for the well being of Ashok but he never recovered. The reel life of Ashok Banjara provides the backdrop of the novel. His political career shows the corrupted and distorted Indian politics.

Tharoor uses language in a laboratory manner so as to carve a niche to account for the Indian usage of English. It is thus the literary effort to account for the use of English in post-colonial spaces. For example, a conversation in a scene between Ashok Banjara, the protagonist and the dance master, Gopi goes on:

Sorry? *Is my* good name you will be ruining-What all is this, that will be saying. Gopi Master has forgotten what is dance. His pectorals quiver in indignation. For you maybe doesn't matter. You are *baccha*. I am having fifteen years of experience in this business. What they will say about me, hanh? (4).

Tharoor has reflected the reel life in Bollywood and has transformed reality into the work of art in this novel. *Show Business* makes a distinction between appearance and reality, the illusory world of films and the actual world of realities. It shows an ironic and satirical view of modern life. Chelva Kanaganyakam in his article "Exile and Expatriates" describes the entire novel is devoted to "the complex relation between the carefully structured binarism of the movie world and the multiplicity of everyday life" (97). He has written a novel on the Indian film industry representing unrealistic social reality in India. However some serious social concerns-morality, violence, family life the Swiss bank accounts and religion are the film scripts like *Musafir*, *Godambo* and *Dil Ek Quila*.

Though an imaginary character, Ashok Banajara's life shows his real interests, intentions, strengths and weaknesses and his concept of his happiness which can be contrary to an average Indian. Ashok's principle and his attitude to life are superficial. He has been playing roles in films, in life and in politics. But all his real life

situations are illusory but his unreal cinematic image seems to be real to the masses that are the ardent fans. His brother Ashwin tells him that he is “a larger than life figure to millions, but the few around you, weren’t quite as large as life” (252). Many times Ashok Banjara has asked, “I can’t believe I’m doing this” (3, 67, 127, 199, 259, and 303). The celluloid world became real and his real world became unreal. The unreal world includes his chase for Abha Patel, his seduction by Radha Sabnis, his role as a father of triplets, his entry into politics, the back bencher in the House of Parliament and his resignation and finally the disastrous accident at the time of the shooting of the film Kalki.

Bombay is the capital of Indian films. Ashok Banjara says, “Hindi films are real, much more real in India than anything we are doing” (7). The movies are based on themes love, sex, arranged marriage, adultery, exploitation corruption, criminality and mendacity. According to him, “It’s endemic, it’s ingrained, it’s part of reality” (218). Ashok’s first hit film ‘Godamba’ is simply a fighting between Inspector Ashok and the villain for abduction. Shadowed part of Bollywood is presented through Ashok-Abha Patel intrigue and Pranay-Sunita illegitimate affair. Ashok marries Maya, a simple and good natured, “the nation’s ideal bahu” (83) who gave up her film career after marriage. He has an extra marital affair with Mehnaz who is from an aristocratic Hyderabad family becomes not Ashok’s “Lawfully wedded wife but awfully bedded wife” (185). Their move opposing Pranay’s slum demolition, made slum dwellers homeless. He stands for the slum dwellers and eventually defeats Mr. Pranay in Assembly elections.

According to Ashwin all the fantasies in the Hindi films, “fly in the face of every single class, caste and social consideration of the real India” (248). Corruption, black money, the justified Swiss bank accounts and furthermore, the smugglers are rationalized with Indian laws because the laws which do not allow foreign goods into India “protect Indians industrialists” (17), who produce

duplicate things and sell them at higher prices without any fear of foreign competition. Ashok’s father comments that in India, “even challenging a vested interest becomes a vested interest” (117). The incidents shown in the movies are a social reality in India but there is a distinction between reality and what is represented in movies. The thread of reality is intricately woven with illusion of movies. The fusion of both reality and illusion without any distinction lays the success of *Show Business*. Ashok feels that reality is leaving him when he was dying. He addresses the mob, “you are not real. None of you is real. This is not real. This is not real, only the pain is real. And me I am not real either, and I will never be real again.” (306). He dies without accepting a film-like ending and craved for a miraculous turn of justice.

Amrendra Sharma, in his article “Dynamics of ‘reel life’ and ‘real life’ in Tharoor’s *Show Business*” comments:

Shashi Tharoor’s *Show Business*, likewise, brings to the fore the ‘reel life’ as well as the ‘real life’ of an actor and tries to convince us that at times these two lives complement each other but at other times they appear diametrically opposed to each other.

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## PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN J.M. BARRIE'S PETER PAN: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

**Mrs.S.Tamizharasi**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, N.M.S.Sermathai Vasan College for Women*

### Abstract

*Peter Pan is the story of "the boy who never grew up", who lived in Neverland, flew through the air, and fought villainous pirates. He is also the boy who took a young girl named Wendy back to Neverland with him. The two characters embody and perpetuate gender stereotypes, and mirror the stereotypes embodied by the adult characters in the story, namely Mr. and Mrs. Darling. Mrs. Darling puts everything in order, including her children's minds, perhaps a metaphor for the morals that she instructs in them. Although she has a mind of her own, she is still somewhat subservient to her husband. Wendy and Peter fall into these stereotypes within the story when they go to Neverland. Wendy, as a girl, is given a much narrower scope than the boys to behave, that there are roles designated to her that she willingly takes due to her female identity development, and other roles that she does not play, parts seen as male or masculine. In the novel Wendy acts the part of a hostess, a seamstress, a mother, housewife and a storyteller. All parts suited for six well-behaved female characters. Other actions as for example fighting pirates are not suitable and she does not take an active part in activities of that kind. This paper will show that this novel helps to confirm patriarchal ideals and female oppression.*

In recent years, there has been a large increase in the amount of discussions being had about gender roles and feminism. We are slowly starting to break away from the idea that women should stay in the kitchen and cook and clean, while men should go out and make money. Men and women all around the world are embracing the term "feminism."

J.M Barrie created Peter Pan as a character in 1902 and staged his most popular version of the play in 1904, so we are talking about a play that was constructed through the lens of The London Victorian era, you know, way before Western media truly considered the negative impact of racial and gender-based caricatures and stereotypes.

According to Shipley's examination of the subject, "women are regulated to the role of male prescription fantasy" (Shipley 150). This discourse between men and women can be seen paralleled in Peter and Wendy's adventure together in Neverland. Heather E. Shipley considers the exploration of the ordering of gendered relationships between men and women, demonstrated through Peter's interactions with the female characters, as well as the interactions

between women, in order to critique the idea of structured economies and societies. Wendy's actions are mandated by Peter's wishes and definition of her role for his benefit. Wendy's role as a product of the male characters' necessity of a mother reveals Wendy's true or instinctual nature as a female. Along with Wendy, the women of Neverland fully subject themselves to the demands of the male figure. First, Wendy is introduced to Tinker Bell, a highly sexualized and independent female, as well as Peter Pan right-hand woman. Tinker Bell's jealousy of Wendy's closeness to Peter encourages her to lash out: Tinker Bell answered insolently.

"What does she say, Peter?"

He had to translate. "She is not very polite. She says you are a great ugly girl, and that she is my fairy." (Barrie 43)

When Wendy is introduced to the lost boys Peter Pan calls her their mother (Barrie 62) and he is their presumed father. Wendy, Peter Pan and the lost boys form a type of family, and according to Madsen, "family is an important instrument of socialization where we learn to adopt particular postures in

relation to the patriarchal power structure” (185). It means one who has the dominant or male positions and who has subordinate or female positions. The family structure Wendy and her brothers have grown up with is applied by them when they arrive in Neverland and Wendy, as a good mother, teaches everyone to act accordingly.

To conclude the novel *Peter and Wendy* is ultimately a novel that is not entirely for children. Perhaps Barrie's

intentions with this novel were to provide an exposition of the oppression of women in the patriarchal system of the era under the mask of a grandiose depiction of a child's fantastical journey to Neverland, where growing up can be ignored, but it is inevitable. With the vast and current circulation of many different pop culture adaptations and publishing of critical editions, it can be said that the context of *Peter and Wendy* is at present worth the exploration of its cultural significance.

## IMPACT OF COLONIAL RELIGION AND CULTURE ON PEOPLE'S IDENTITY IN ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

P.Sivashankari

Assistant Professor of English, Don Bosco College of Arts & Science, Keelaeral, Tuticorin

### Abstract

*Being rich in tradition and folklore, African literature is developed from Oral tradition. Written literature was born out of Western colonization. After World War II, the writers began to write about the impact of colonization and its great havoc done to culture and tradition of aboriginal people. Contemporary African literature reveals the writers' disillusionment and disagreement of the current events of the society. Of the many African writers, one who deals elaborately with the contemporary issues is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She explicates intelligibly the impact of colonial religion and culture on people's identity in her first novel Purple Hibiscus. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to figure out the post-colonial identity of African culture with a special focus on identity crisis in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus.*

**Keywords:** post-colonialism, identity crisis, culture, religious fanaticism, discrimination

"The African continent has so many stories to tell, it's about time they are told, by them – not us", says Akilnathan Logeswaran. Yes! African Literature is rich in tradition and folklore. It has its roots from the ancient days and developed through different languages. It includes various genres and is ranging from oral literature to written literature in colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese. It included the stories, proverbs, dramas and riddles which present the stories of great heroes and warriors. Most African writers therefore condemn the mishappenings of the society in their writing. Today, there are also many women writers focus on the struggles of people and women in particular due to colonialism.

Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo, Margaret Atwood, Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, Bessie Head, Nadine Gardiner and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are the most well-known writers of African Literature. Of these prominent writers, one who deals elaborately with the contemporary issues such as quest for identity, the conflicts faced by women in the society and women empowerment is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This paper is therefore an attempt to figure out the identity crisis in the post-colonial

African culture as presented in *Purple Hibiscus*.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria. Her parents are Grace Ifeoma and James Nwoye Adichie. She was the fifth of six children of her parents. She grew up in Nsukka in the house which was formerly occupied by the most prolific Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Her father was the first professor of Statistics in Nigeria. He was working in the University of Nigeria and later he became the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Her mother was the first female registrar of the University of Nigeria. Besides other writings, Chimamanda has written three novels namely; *Purple Hibiscus*, published in 2003, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, published in 2006, and *Americanah*, published in 2013.

*Purple Hibiscus* is set in the Postcolonial Nigeria. She presents the political and economic instability of the country in this novel. Adichie introduces many themes in this novel such as the difficulties of adolescence, violence, silence, brutality of patriarchal society, religious zeal, and personal sacrifice. The central character and the narrator of the novel is Kambili Achike, a fifteen year old girl. She is living in Enugu, Nigeria. Her father is Eugene Achike, a wealthy factory owner and is an active philanthropist and an



upstanding Catholic. He is both a religious zealot and a violent figure in the house, subjecting his wife Beatrice (Mama), Kambili and her brother Chukwuku (Jaja) to beatings and psychological cruelty. He owns a Newspaper called *Standard*, which criticizes the new Nigerian Head of State.

The story is told through Kambili's eyes and is essentially about the disintegration of her family unit and her struggle to grow to maturity. The most important period is the time Kambili and her brother spent at the house of her Aunt Ifeoma, and her three children. Aunt Ifeoma's house was in total contrast to what Kambili and Jaja are used to. Though Catholic, yet practiced a completely different form of Catholicism, where there was lots of happiness, freedom and space to speak their minds. In the environment, both Kambili and Jaja were more open and able to voice their own opinions. Moreover, at Aunt Ifeoma's house, Kambili falls in love with Father Amadi, a young priest, which awakens her sense of her own sexuality.

Back at home, unable to cope with Eugene's violence, Beatrice poisons him. Jaja takes the blame for the crime and is put behind bars. In the course of time, Aunt Ifeoma and her family go to America after she is unfairly dismissed from her job as the lecturer at the University of Nigeria. The novel ends on a cautiously optimistic note. Kambili is now eighteen years old, more confident than before, while her brother Jaja is about to be released from prison. Their mother Beatrice, psychologically ill is now shows small signs of improvement. The novel ends with the possibility of better future.

Post-colonialism is a term used to refer to the effects of colonisation among the people, and their culture, history, politics and economy. During colonialism the land was conquered by the missionaries, clergymen, businessmen and soldiers. Bill Ashcraft and et al state in their book *The Empire Writes Back* that "more than three-quarters of the people living of the world today have had

their life shaped by the experience of colonialism." The colonizers came with the mission to rescue the Africans and make them civilized people in their unnamed continent. But in the bargain, the whites have imposed the European ideas in the minds of Africans in the name of civilization. It affected their cultural habits, tradition, way of thinking, language, and their own identity. Chinua Achebe in his *The Novelist as a Teacher* says that political colonisation leads to the cultural colonisation. Cultural colonisation discards all the tradition and culture of Africa and imposes the western culture among them. Thus Achebe says that cultural colonisation is more dangerous than political colonization.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is different from other post-colonial novels such as Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Arrow of God and Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. Adichie demonstrates different ways in which colonialism spread into the local country and remained even after the freedom of the country. Christianity is one of the major post-colonial identities in *Purple Hibiscus*. It presents both positive and negative imprints in the life of Kambili Achike. Adichie presents the negative imprints of Christianity through the character of Eugene Achike. In an interview with Ike Anya she says that,

Religion is such a huge force, so easily corruptible and yet so capable of doing incredible good. The streak of intolerance I see masquerading itself as faith and the way we create an image of God that suits us, are things I am interesting in questioning. I am also interested in colonized religion, how people like me can profess and preach an aspect of their indigenous culture and yet cling so tenaciously to a religion that considers most that indigenous culture evil. (201)

Adichie presents religion as one of the most important elements behind post-colonial identity. Eugene Achike was an ardent follower of Catholicism. He imposed religion

with strict rules and regulation to his family members. He used religion as a weapon to protect his family from sin. He was a blind follower of Christianity. He wanted to educate and indoctrinate his children in Christianity. In the bargain he oppressed his family members. He imposed many rules and regulation to his daughter Kambili, his son Jaja, and his wife Beatrice (Mama). If they had violated the rules, he would punish them severely. This created a kind of insecurity and fear in them. There are many incidents which present Eugene as a victim of post-colonialism. When Mama refused to meet Father Benedict after the mass, Papa considered it as a sin and beat her brutally after returning home, until she had miscarriage. On another occasion, Kambili had cramps due to a painful menstruation, so Mama asked her to eat little corn flakes before taking Panadol which will cure the cramps. When she was about to finish the corn flakes, Eugene entered the room, and he got rage on seeing Kambili breaking the Eucharistic fast, and said: "You are eating ten minutes before Mass? Ten minutes before Mass?" (Adichie, Purple 101). Then he began to beat them all with the belt and said, "Has the devil asked you all to go on errands for him?" The Igbo words burst out of Papa's mouth. "Has the devil built a tent in my house?" He turned to Mama. You sit there and watch her desecrate the Eucharistic fast, makannidi?" (102)

Eugene did not allow his children to enjoy life as the other children. He used to prepare a schedule for them to follow throughout the day. He allotted time for their study, family, prayer, washing of clothes and so on. If they had missed anything, they would be punished severely. Once Kambili came late from school, Papa slapped her with full force. He taught religious discipline through violence and force.

According to Eugene, following the Igbo traditional religion was considered as sin. He did not want his family to mingle with

persons who followed the traditional religion. He considered them as sinners and he did not want their sins pollute his family. So, he discouraged his family members from socializing with their relatives. He neither visited his father, nor allowed him to visit his house, because his father Papa-Nnukwu was still following Igbo traditional religion and did not get converted to Christianity. Papa considered him as a 'Pagan'. He allowed Jaja and Kambili to visit their grandfather Papa-Nnukwu only for fifteen minutes once in a year. "Your father said you are to stay fifteen minutes," Kevin said, as he parked on the roadside near Papa-Nnukwu's thatch-enclosed compound." (63). They were forbidden to eat or drink anything in Papa-Nnukwu's house. If they stayed long or ate food they were punished cruelly.

"Kevin said you stayed up to twenty-five minutes with your grandfather. Is that what I told you?" Papa's voice was low.

"I wasted the time, it was my fault," Jaja said.

"What did you do there? Did you eat food sacrificed to idols? Did you desecrate your Christian tongue?"

Papa slapped Jaja's face and it sounded "like a heavy book falling from library shelf in school." (69)

Father Benedict played a major role in Eugene's life and his catholic beliefs. He imposed the negative thoughts of traditional religion in the mind of Eugene. Aunt Ifeoma took Kambili and Jaja to watch *mmuo* masquerades with Papa-Nnukwu. Eugene wanted them to make confession to Father Benedict. When Kambili said that she had enjoyed the pagan ritual that is *mmuomasquerades*, Father Benedict said "You understood that it is wrong to take joy in pagan rituals, because it breaks the first commandment. Pagan rituals are misinformed superstition, and they are the gateway to hell." (106).

Eugene's belief in Catholicism was so strong that he did not even take part in his

father's funeral. He refused to take part in a pagan's ritual and he gave the money to his sister Ifeoma and asked her to take care of the funeral. Actually, Eugene wanted Papa-Nnukwu to be converted to Christianity before his burial, but Ifeoma refused that. She respected her father's traditional worship, even though she had converted to Christianity. She shouted at Eugene and threw off the money he gave for the funeral and asked him to leave her house. Love for religion dominated the love for his family. Eugene poured hot water on the feet of Kambili and Jaja for staying with Papa-Nnukwu in Aunt Ifeoma's house at Nsukka. He scolded them for not communicating this news to him. He says to Kambili:

You knew your grandfather was coming to Nsukka, didn't you?... You knew you would be sleeping in the same house with a heathen? So you saw the sin clearly and walked right into it? ...He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it towards my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly... The pain of contact was so pure, so scalding... That it is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet (194)

Eugene went to the extent of killing his children Jaja and Kambili for bringing Papa-Nnukwu's, a heathen's, portrait into his house. The instances mentioned above clearly shows Eugene's religious fanaticism. His mind was so obsessed with Christianity. He started thinking like the colonizers as they had considered themselves as the medium through which God wanted to civilize the "Savages". Eugene also thought that it is his responsibility to save his family from sin and hell. Fear of sin and hell reproduced its effects on others around him.

The impact colonial religion and cultural legacy is identity crisis. In *Purple Hibiscus* the issue of identity crisis is seen through the character of Eugene, Kambili, and Ifeoma. Eugene was educated in the Missionary school and therefore greatly influenced by the

Christian ideology. Being a Nigerian by birth, Eugene always wanted himself to be identified with the Westerners. His fear of sin and hell separated him from his own father and sister who respected and followed the traditional worship. He was one of the chief members of his native village and he was called as "Omelora" by the people. He loved to be called with this title. Eugene's nativity was deeply rooted in him but he refused to accept that outwardly. Though he wanted to speak in English always, he spoke in Igbo with the elders of the village. His native language was exposed, when he got rage to the extreme. Thus, the effect of colonialism did not allow him to identify himself with his native culture and tradition.

When Eugene came to know the death of his father Papa-Nnukwu, he did not do his duty as his son. He lost his identity as a son of his own father. He asked his sister Ifeoma, "Did you call a priest to give him extreme unction?" (188). He further says, "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but we can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral." (188). He wanted to do his duty, but his identification with Christianity did not allow him to do that. He lost his roots and nativity because of colonization.

Eugene was a great anthropologist. Being a rich man, he was ready to help to the poor. But he acted as a dictator with his family members. He showed his love towards his family in a cruel way. He did not share his public life with his family. They came to know his fame and popularity only through the newspaper. He failed to show his love towards his family. Being identified as a great man in the society, he lost his own identity in his family. Missionary education made him two faced man. Among his identity with the society and his family, he lost his own identity. Thus, Adichie effectively draws the character of Eugene with traces of identity crisis.

Kambili is another major character of the novel who suffered out of identity crisis.

There is a lack of self-consciousness in her character. Kambili saw the world through his father's eyes. She accepted her father's rigid rules and schedules as part of her life. She did not have the knowledge of how other girls of her age enjoying their life. Her life was full of difficulties. She lived with constant fear of her father. She silently submitted herself under the tyranny of her father. Katarina Adolfsson comments, "She thereby builds up a self-hatred for her inferior African Identity" (16). In the beginning, Kambili accepted her father's enforced silence and Christianity. Kambili observes that "Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as our Sundays: the silence of waiting until Papa was done with his siesta so we could have lunch; the silence of reflection time, when Papa gave us a scripture... to read and meditate on" (31). Kambili expressed these lines in a matter-of-fact tone. According to her this was a normal life. She did not have any identity of her own. She was what her Papa wanted her to be.

Kambili experienced the happiest way of life, when she visited her Aunt Ifeoma's house in Nsukka. Though Aunt Ifeoma was economically poor, her house was filled with laughter and happiness. Kambili found herself alienated in the beginning. She felt that her shadow was there in Nsukka and her real self was there in Enugu. Though Jaja soon broke the wall around him and started enjoying the freedom of his life, Kambili remained silent for long. She did not even know to laugh. She was confused between her life and Christianity followed by her father and the life and Christianity followed by Aunt Ifeoma. Kambili felt amazed with the friendly behaviour of Father Amadi, who was a priest and family friend of Ifeoma. She could not identify who is right whether Papa or Ifeoma or Father Amadi. As the days passed, Kambili came to her realization. Father Amadi helped her to identify herself. He brought out her real self. Father Amadi brought a marvelous change in Kambili. Kambili and

Amaka became good friends and she learned to laugh wholeheartedly and started to live the life very lively. Thus, Adichie presents the difficulties of adolescence through the character of Kambili. She paints the character of Kambili with identity crisis.

Jaja also suffered out of identity crisis like Kambili. He also had gone through the dictatorship of his father. But soon he realized himself in Nsukka. His identity was revealed through the purple hibiscus flower. Jaja was fascinated by the purple hibiscus. It served as a symbol of freedom and independence. So Jaja found himself and his own identity in Nsukka. His visit to Nsukka made him rebel against his father's religious fanaticism. He brought the seeds of the purple hibiscus to Enugu and planted them in his garden. It symbolically represented Jaja's freedom and independence in Enugu. He wanted to enjoy his freedom and his own identity in Enugu as he enjoyed in Nsukka. So he started to move away from his father. He tried to rebel against him in all the ways. He refused to get the Holy Communion at the Church. This made his Papa very angry. Papa's anger did not affect Jaja. He became matured psychologically. His maturity made him accept the crime instead of his mother. Thus, Adichie presents the character of Jaja with proper development at each stage of his life.

Aunt Ifeoma also had her identity crisis. Adichie presents her character with both traditional as well as Colonial belief. Ifeoma converted herself to Catholicism. But she also had a great respect for the Igbo traditional religion. She had a great respect for her father Papa-Nnukwu's ancestral worship too. Her understanding of Christianity was different from Eugene's understanding of Christianity. She enjoyed Christianity with her nativity. When she visited Abba on the day of Christmas, she took Kambili and Jaja with her children and Papa-Nnukwu to enjoy *mmuomasquerades*. Though she had converted to Christianity, she had a great respect for her tradition and culture. She did

not blindly follow the Christianity and refuse the nativity like Eugene. She tried to strike a balance between Christianity and her nativity. She worked as a professor at the University of Nsukka. She was able to feed her children in the absence of her husband. She stood as an empowered post-colonial woman in this novel.

Adichie presents the character of Ifeoma as stable, firm, reasonable and focused. In fact, Ifeoma gives freedom to her children to express their opinion. She was very brave in her expression. She expressed herself against the Head of the University, where she found the system went wrong in appointing the administrators. She was also threatened by the goons, the supporters of the Head of the University. A group of men entered into Aunt Ifeoma's house and said: "Look at this yeye woman oh! I said we are from the special security unit!" The tribal marks curved even more on the man's face as he frowned and pushed Aunt Ifeoma aside." (231). So, Ifeoma decided to leave the country for America. She was very much bold enough to take the decision. At the end, she left to America with her family and finds a job there. She played an effective role in Kambili and Jaja's life. She made them realize themselves through her filial love.

Adichie presents the character of Ifeoma in contrast to Eugene. Unlike Ifeoma, Eugene forced the children to talk only in English. If they communicated in English with him, he appreciated them and gave some money as a token of appreciation. He always preferred the Mass to be celebrated in English. He did not like the Mass that was conducted in Igbo, the traditional language. On the other hand, Ifeoma used to talk in Igbo. Her children also talk in Igbo. They used to sing Igbo songs during the prayer. She gives importance to

the traditional language at the same time to English. But Eugene was so much obsessed with colonial religion, culture and language that he could not come out of it. As a result, almost all the prominent characters undergo identity crisis. However, there is a way out and Ifeoma is an example for such an endeavor.

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## QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN *AKKARMASHI* BY SHARANKUMAR LIMBALE

Sneha Sebastian

Guest Lecturer, Mercy College, Palakkad

### Abstract

*Akkarmashi* written by Sharankumar Limbale in 1984 describes the pain and travesty of the cultural turmoil that opened up Marathi literature to Dalit writing. Through his words, he portrayed the miserable life he lived as an untouchable, as a half-caste, and as an impoverished man. This work was translated into English by Santosh Bhoomkar in 2003. *The Outcaste* is revelatory as it asserts inner quest for Dalit identity using original language, idiom, metaphor and imagery. The book strikes the heart of a social issue in such a manner that it becomes impossible for any sensitive reader to return to the old values with any sense of comfort. Dalit literary movement has been flourishing in Marathi as in several other Indian languages such as Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Gujarati during the last four decades. A reflection of the darker side of Indian society, this book is a bitter critique of the lack of compassion that the lower castes have endured for centuries. Silenced for generations of prejudice and oppression, Dalits found expression in a wave of writing which exploded in poetry, fiction and autobiography, providing critical insights on the question of their identity.

*The Outcaste* is a world wide Dalit autobiography, which is written by Sharankumar Limbale. It narrates the story of a child born to a Dalit (Mahar) mother, who was raped by the upper caste man. She had to carry her rape and deliver a baby, named as Sharankumar. As a result of this rape, Sharankumar neither belongs to Mahar community nor Marata caste, he is Akkarmashi. It is the first-person account of the struggle against deprivation, discrimination and violence.

The story captures the dehumanizing impact of caste oppression in Hindu society.

*The Outcaste* is revelatory as it asserts inner quest for Dalit identity using original language, idiom, metaphor and imagery. *Akkarmashi* described the pain and travesty of the cultural turmoil that opened up Marathi literature to Dalit writing. Due to his fractured identity, the narrator suffered his entire life was the fact that he had no identity, no home or place of belonging. He could not get certain papers signed for school because he could not properly identify his caste by his mother or father, and they would not accept his grandmother as his guardian because she lived with a Muslim. When it came time for marriage, he could not even get married to an outcaste girl because his blood

was not pure; he was not wanted anywhere. The clouds of doubt and identity hung over this poor outcaste boy his entire life. However, in several acts of incredible strength and bravery, he did not allow these socially constructed walls to stop him from getting an education and eventually publishing his story. He came to realize the depth of division caused by the conflict between Hindus and Muslims and chose a separate path for him in what he considered to be the warm embrace of Buddhism.

*The Outcaste* is about an untouchable family in general and community struggles in particular. It reflects the conditions of a particular oppressed class, namely the Mahar community about half a century back and at the same time gives a true and realistic picture of the darker side of the Indian society. The best way to find out the sufferings of the Dalits and the other marginalised sections is through the words and emotions of those who have lived through the experience and who have the education and talent to write so vividly about it. One obvious source is Sharankumar Limbale's autobiography, *Akkarmashi*. He has also written many other novels and short stories on Dalit life.

Limbale has used a personal descriptive style in his auto-biography to show the life experiences of a Dalit, which includes inequality, discrimination and indifference towards them and their culture. The author describes about his pathetic situation of not having an identity, a home or place of belonging. Limbale was born as an illegal son of a high caste Patil and a poor, landless, untouchable mother. As a result, Limbale neither belongs to Mahar community nor the Marata caste; he is an *Akkarmashi*, i.e. an Outcaste. His mother lived in a hut, and his father in a mansion. Hence, the son was branded illegitimate. Due to this reason, he could not get certain papers signed for school and the school authorities would not accept his grandmother as his guardian because she lived with a Muslim and for obvious reasons, they could not accept his last name since it belonged to a higher caste. When it was time for marriage, he could not even get married to a low caste girl because his blood was not pure; he was not wanted anywhere. Eventually, a drunkard who had offered Limbale his daughter would not allow her to leave after the wedding because of Limbale's background. Due to his fractured identity, the narrator suffered his entire life. However, because of his incredible strength and bravery, he did not allow these socially constructed walls to stop him from getting an education and eventually publishing his story. Dalits lived in huts outside the Village (this depicts their status in the society).

They spent most of the time inside the bus stand. Regarding the House, Sharankumar said: "To us the bus stand was like home... we lay like discarded bus tickets". They totally depended on upper caste people. They ate leftover food, did sub-ordinate work and wore clothes discarded by upper class society. It is said that for filling stomachs men become thieves and women become whores. However, due to the pathetic life situations, Limbale goes to the extent of saying that God had made a mistake by giving stomachs to the

Dalits. The condition of the untouchables is such that they steal, beg, sort grain from dung, fetch dead animals and eat them, in order to appease their hunger.

In the caste hierarchy, Brahmins were the superior ones, then the Kshatriyas and then the Vaishayas and the Shudras. The fifth, which was not even considered as part of the caste system, was Dalits, which were often referred to as the polluting caste. The cruelty reached its height when the Dalits were imposed with murder, rape, and many more such allegations. Influenced by people like Shahu, Phule, Gandhiji and Ambedkar, Dalit writers started emphasizing on their existing issues. Following the path of these legends, Dalit writers began writing, focusing on themes such as cruelty on Dalits, demand of social equality, justice, and social and economic democracy. The teachings of Dr. Ambedkar woke up the Dalits. Ambedkar himself was a Dalit, born in the Mahar community who went on to become a social activist, a legal expert and a nationally respected leader of Dalits in India. The new found political independence also helped a lot in improving the living conditions of the untouchables. During this period, Dalits began to refuse to do the low caste jobs that they once did for the upper caste. They also started demanding equality, which was unacceptable to the upper castes.

The Dalits realised that being educated alone cannot help their community detach themselves from the influence of the caste system. So, they hoped to bring about a revolution through literature, by including their experiences. Therefore, autobiographical narratives constitute a significant segment of Dalit literature. Autobiography has become an important means to convey the bitter experience of humiliation and injustice that the Dalits of India had been going through. The roots of this injustice and humiliation went deep into history, for many thousands of years. It is this pain, agony and suffering which persuaded Dalit writers to voice out

their life-long experiences through literature. It throws light on their culture, traditions, beliefs and thinking as well. Sharankumar Limbale's autobiography *The Outcaste* portrays the most humiliating events and insults that Sharankumar and his family endured. The narrator criticises the rotten social system and emphasises on the change of this system.

Dalit literature represents a powerful, emerging trend in the Indian literary field. Dalit literature began as a voice of protest against an unjust social order. Today, it has attained the status of a creative literary world, reflecting the plight of the marginalised people of the world, and highlighting the struggles of the human spirit against the age-old oppressive practices against them. In the changed circumstances, Dalits are getting education and are becoming aware of their rights. The policy of reservation ensures jobs for the educated ones.

The issues related to Dalit women have hardly been taken up seriously either by political leaders or by scholars until very recently. Dalit women were left out of the social reform processes and remained untouchables among untouchables. The onset of globalization in India enabled Dalits to raise the issue of discrimination based on caste in the international forums. Dalit activists and intellectuals introduced a case for recognition of caste-based discrimination in India as being similar to racial discrimination in the West, in the World Conference against Racism on 31st August to 7th September 2001 at Durban, South Africa. The debates on caste and Dalit rights at the global level gave a new dimension to the

struggle against the caste system, with the emergence of non-governmental organisations and Dalit organisations as representatives of Dalits in India. These debates on caste in the global arena created a new interest in Dalits and their literature.

Limbale portrays the pathetic and miserable life of a poor and oppressed community in the hands of an unthinking privileged class in a simple yet touching and unique style. Santhosh Bhoomkar has done a good service by translating this work from the Mahar dialect to English. Through his autobiographical work, Limbale revealed a world of poverty and discrimination in which the Dalits had lived for thousands of years. He raises some valid questions to be answered by people who consider themselves civilized and modern- 'How is a person born with his caste? How does he become an untouchable as soon as he is born? How can he be a criminal?' etc. Limbale's autobiography is a good quick read that would interest any student taking a course on modern India. The author includes an excellent introduction that describes the caste system to the Western reader.

Autobiography and poetry writings found in Dalit literature had significant and massive influence on the society as they depicted first hand experiences. Dalit literature is not simply literature. It is associated with a movement that is to bring about a change. Dalits are masses, exploited and oppressed economically, socially, culturally, in the name of religion and other factors. Dalit writers like Limbale hope that this exploited group of people will bring about a socio-cultural revolution in India. Hence *Akkarmashi* is indeed a true milestone that publicized the Dalit cause.



## THE PATHETIC PLIGHT OF THE SUBALTERNS WITH REFERENCE TO MUNSHI PREMCHAND'S "THE SHROUD"

**K.Pamme Nesakumari**

Associate Professor of English, Thiruthangal Nadar College, Selavayal, Chennai

### Abstract

*The history of the persecution of Dalits in India shows innumerable incidents where Dalits were subjected to the most inhuman treatment by the affluent cadres of the society. The Sanskrit word 'Dalit' means suppressed. Dalits have been suffering humiliation and experience the agony of identity crisis by depth in all walks of life- social, economic and political. The present paper titled 'The Pathetic Plight of the Subalterns with reference to Munshi Premchand's "The Shroud"' throws light on the degraded and helpless state of Dalits. The paper showcases the whole gamut of subaltern experiences which is a record of invisible violence inflicted by the dehumanizing effect of poverty. Nirmal Verma hailed 'The Shroud' as the first modern story of Hindi that marks the birth of pure individual consciousness unshackled by any kind of social bondage.*

*Munshi Premchand's "The Shroud" is a masterpiece of the world literature which brings out the dark humour, irony and tragedy in the life of Ghisu, Madhav and Budhiya. The story focuses on the poignant and major event of the mayhem that takes place in a family when the lady of the house dies in childbirth. Ghisu and Madhav having collected a tidy sum of five rupees for the cremation negotiate the hypocrisies and the sentiments of the society and shamelessly indulge in intoxication and gluttony and fall down in stupor forgetting everything. The economic deprivation had dehumanized both to an extent where human relations were meaningless to them. Premchand's range and diversity were limitless as he tackled themes of satire, gender politics and social inequality with an unmatched skill and compassion.*

De Bonald considers Literature as an expression of society. The history of the persecution of Dalits in India shows innumerable incidents where Dalits were subjected to the most inhuman treatment by the affluent cadres of the society. The Sanskrit word 'Dalit' means ground, suppressed, crushed or broken to pieces. Dalits have been suffering humiliation and experience the agony of identity crisis by depth in all walks of life- social, economic and political. The present paper titled 'The Pathetic Plight of the Subalterns with reference to Munshi Premchand's "The Shroud"' throws light on the degraded state of Dalits.

Dalits were made practically invisible from the main stream art and literature. Wherever they appear, they are shown in poor light. They are projected as they are born to be doomed, damned, thrash, and crush. They are shown as just a thing of utility which is to be used when required to be discarded and ultimately. The present paper is an attempt

to bring into discussion the pathetic Plight in the portrayal of Dalit by Premchand in his short story The Shroud (Kafan).

Munshi Premchand was the most celebrated and progressive writer of modern Hindi and Urdu who wrote more than 300 short stories, more than a dozen novels, several essays, plays and translation of a number of foreign literary works into Hindi. Though there is considerable discussion and debate of Premchand's novels in Hindi literary circles, but much is desired to bring it in national and international literary circles. Writing in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century he exposes the socio-economic deprivation of the dispossessed sections of the colonial India. Many of his works are translated into English and other Indian languages. The short story The Shroud is a masterpiece in the world literature which brings out the dark humour, irony and tragedy in the life of Ghisu, Madhav and Budhiya.

The Shroud (Kafan) is about the Father Ghisu and his son Madhav. Both are poor and belong to the community of Chamar [an untouchable community] and are lethargic, slothful, work shy and notorious. The paper showcases the whole gamut of subaltern experiences which is a record of invisible violence inflicted by the dehumanizing effect of poverty. It depicts the emotions and struggles of Ghisu and Madhav, the poor father and son duo, who are too lazy and passive to do anything about their situation and take up menial jobs once in a while when there's dire need.

Ghisu and his son Madhav belong to the chammar community, 'the lowest among the untouchable castes'. They sat at the door outside their hut, beside a dead fire, digging out roasted potatoes, their only food since two days, while inside Madhav's wife laboured in pain. Ghisu's wife had died long time back while Madhav married only the previous year. Their value in the society is measured in terms of their utility to the dominant class. As Premchand puts it, 'And these two had earned a particularly bad name for themselves in the entire village'. Ghisu was notorious for working for one day and taking off for three days. Madhav was such a shirker that if he worked for half an hour, he would stop and smoke his pipe for an hour, so both of them seldom found work. If they had even a handful of grain in the house, they would swear off work. A couple of days' starvation would induce Ghisu to climb a tree and break some twigs for firewood, which Madhav would sell in the market. After this the two would loiter for as long as money would last' (45).

Ghisu and Madhav were victims of the worst kind of economic deprivation. In his life of sixty years he had only once eaten to his stomach's full, that too in a wedding of Thakur some twenty years back. 'Their home could boast of no other worldly possession beside a pair of clay pots. They covered the nakedness of their bodies with a few tattered rags and went the business of living' (46). The

story is a record also of the invisible violence inflicted by and the dehumanizing effect of poverty. While Madhav's wife Budhiya was in throes of labour with no help hand, Ghisu and Madhav sat inactive. They couldn't get medicine, neither a doctor, for everything needs money and they were neck deep in debt already. Yet they knew the society which refused them money now would help, if a child was born or Budhiya died. So they sat still waiting for either of the two to happen. They could hear Budhiya screaming and thrashing yet refused to go inside, lest the other finished off the potatoes. The father and son were probably waiting for her to die, so that they could go to sleep in peace and quiet. In the author's words, "They ate potatoes, drank water, covered themselves with their Dhotis (loincloth) and slept like crocodiles in the same place leaving Budhiya still moaning in labour". Old Ghisu was wise enough to know the inverted logic of civility. He says to Madhav, "The same people, who now refuse to give us even one paisa, will call us tomorrow to give us rupees. I had nine sons and there was never anything in the house, but each time God saw us through somehow or the other" (47).

As expected by them Budhiya was found dead in the morning. Budhiya's death stirred them to action. With Budhiya's death they rushed to the Zamindar for help for Budhiya's cremation. Notwithstanding his detestation, the Zamindar couldn't but offer them a sum of two rupees, because 'he knew it was not the right moment for giving vent to his anger or meting out punishment' (50). They manipulated the rest of the merchants and moneylenders to extract money propogating Zamindar's benevolence and so they engage in begging around to arrange for a decent cremation of Budhiya. Within an hour, they succeeded to collect a tidy sum of five rupees and went to the market to buy a Shroud (Kafan) for the deceased.

Both the father and son, negotiate the hypocrisies and sentiments of the society

which gave precedence to social pretensions and values like kindness, sympathy, donation etc., over sharing resources in the real sense. Ghisu knew, the society didn't care how they buried their women, they were offered money not out of sympathy, but because of social obligations. So, if Ghisu and his son were victims of economic deprivation, the civil society was a victim of social mores too that can be negotiated. So, when Madhav heckled Ghisu for failing to provide Budhiya a shroud even, Ghisu assured him: "I tell you, she will get the shroud. Why don't you believe me?" (53). "Hell, we'll say the money slipped and fell from our waist-bands. We searched all over but couldn't find it. They might not believe us but the same people will again give us the money" (52). This awareness gave Ghisu an upperhand over the upper caste and he succeeded in subverting the latter's superiority to his advantage. Such subaltern resistance and subversion is unique and rare though not impossible to find in the real society. It inverts their position as the dispossessed.

We see Ghisu and Madhav for the first time having a goodtime in life though not without any niggles of conscience, "she was a good woman, poor thing! Even in her death, she ensured us a hearty meal!" (52). Ghisu's philosophical justification of expedience in relation to Budhiya echoes the logic of domination often put forward by the upper castes vis a vis the lower castes. "If, because of her, our souls are gladdened, won't it ring her God's grace?" (52). Yes son, she'll certainly go to heaven. She never hurt a fly, never bothered a soul all her life. Even in her death she managed to fulfil our dearest desires. If she won't go to heaven, who will? These rich, fat slob who fleece the poor and then, to wash away their sins, take a dip in the Ganga River or offer its holy water in the temples?" (54).

The privileged has always justified exploitation to serve his self-interests, be it the feudal master or the patriarchal father.

This is the nature of power and the logic of exploitation. At this point of the story, Premchand comments through the words of Ghisu on the paradox and futility of the custom of buying a new shroud for one did not even have rag to cover living body. Thus inside the market, they ditched the idea of buying a shroud, deeming it a useless luxury. They rather indulged themselves in a rare feast of choicest foods and drinks. Soon after, they broke into dancing and singing bout, falling down eventually in a drunken stupor. Thus Budhiya was crushed under the threesome forces of feudalism, patriarchy and poverty.

Even though Ghisu as a subaltern could resist the forces of exploitation, surprisingly and tragically Budhiya, the woman in the family, who had catapulted Ghisu and Madhav to a position of bargaining, even if for a day, had been left without a voice. She suffered silently her fate, her death. Yet she provided the locus on which the subaltern and the master, the exploited and the exploiter worked out their relations with each other. Ghisu and Madhav exploited Budhiya to earn the extra buck, even though it cost her life. We may say that the economic deprivation had dehumanized both to an extent where human relations were meaningless to them.

Ghisu and Madhav could put up resistance, however manipulative and survived. Budhiya gave her everything and was vanquished. This story though exemplifies subaltern resistance. The subaltern in Premchand's story 'The Shroud' not only resists the forces of exploitation, but subverts dominant social mores and traditions to gain an advantage over the master class, forcing them to shell out money which they wouldn't have otherwise in ordinary circumstances. This glory of victory is attenuated by the realization that the subaltern in turn is also an exploiter of the woman in the family, who in life and death is used for sustaining self-interests of the males of the family. The pathetic plight of the Dalits

and their abject poverty leads to loss of sensitivity and emotions.

'The shroud' has drawn maximum flak from Dalit writers and critics identifying it as "Anti-Dalit Story" on account of the negative portrayal of the Dalit characters but actually Premchand made an attempt to highlight the level of exploitation, which is inherent in the caste system, and described the traumatic and painful life through which the Dalit community was undergoing during the period when India was facing Colonialism, imperialism and National liberation Movement. It is important to note that literary expression is being optimally utilized by Premchand as a weapon in the movement of equality and dignity. The protagonists of the story have a predilection to enjoy their idleness at the cost of their personal and social responsibilities.

Reading any work by Premchand is a delight and gut wrenching experience. The Shroud is a seminal piece of work which should be read and discussed for its philosophical, moral and social implications in a dispassionate, disinterested manner sans a personal axe to grind. He wrote about the truth which was often hidden by his contemporaries in the face of splendor and pastoral romance. He can be deemed as the first Hindi author to introduce Realism in his writings. He pioneered this new art form with a social purpose of exposing the condition of the Subalterns.

A life of suffering and want has completely dehumanized Ghisu and Madhav.

Premchand poignantly presented the agony of exclusion, discrimination and exploitation faced by the subalterns in his 'The Shroud'. The Dalit characters are shown in poor light but, it has been tried to project them as stereotype or representative of whole community. The caste is deliberately imposed on character. Premchand's range and diversity were limitless as he tackled themes of satire, gender politics and social inequality with an unmatched skill and compassion. The paper focuses on the pathetic plight of the Subalterns.

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## LANGUAGE STYLE OF CHITRA BANERJEE IN HER SELECTED NOVELS

**S.Jayalakshmi**

*Assistant Professor of English (SF), Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam*

Chitra Banerjee writes about what she knows and feels. She is at her best exploring the themes of love, friendship, assimilation, self-analysis, and discovery. Divakaruni has carved out a very special place in Indian literature that of being a storyteller of immigrants, especially women, who must face the contradictions between the country they left behind and the one that they must call home. In that aspect, the award-winning author and poet's work always holds autobiographical elements. The lyrical language of Divakaruni allows her readers to imagine the atmosphere of her characters' lives and to feel their joy, disappointment, sisterhood and sorrow. Divakaruni with her writing, whether in a novel, short story or poem casts a spell. Her words flow swiftly, sweeping readers along; at times they whisper softly, tempting, at others they thunder emphatically, daring. Throughout her novels, she uses her chameleon-like voice and mastery of rhythm to create unforgettable characters and weave stories that are exotic and familiar, at once fresh and universal. The novelist has an uncanny way of saving the cliché from its superficiality. She is able to divert the reader's focus from the clichés through the beauty of her writing. Her poetic language, elaborate descriptions, and symbolism place in different circumstances cliché themes on a higher level.

The novel *Sister of My Heart* which considered to be exceptionally moving, dramatic, and exquisitely rendered, is a passionate novel about the extraordinary bond between two women, and the jealousies, loves, and family histories that threaten to tear them apart. The writer creates a tale as potent as it is poignant, and as true to the complexities of the human heart. The *Vine of*

*Desire* stands on its own as a novel of extraordinary depth and sensitivity. Through the eyes of people caught in the clash of cultures, the novelist reveals the rewards and the perils of breaking free from the past and the complicated, often contradictory emotions that shape the passage to independence. This novel represents one perspective from a personal point of view. Writing is a means of expressing yourself, by using your own experience and knowledge to narrate a story. *The Vine of Desire* is a fine piece of prose about the Indian Culture. It is beautifully written, with sharp observations, colourful language and unique writing style.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has struggled with contemporary subjects and a range of themes- marginalization, marriage, motherhood, conflicts, mothering, class, individuation, woman as mother, wife, sister and lastly yet considerable woman as a human being not just as a second sex or sex object. She seeks cynical about customs and tradition, yet she finds out in their heritage the keys for the longings and needs of women in current time. She is "modernist" writer since her writing highlights the idea of the trivial woman with an endocentric set up, widespread in the "non first world" and the "first world". In her works, insights take preference over the compulsion of technique. She recognizes the paradoxes in a given area and also pays an ideological, cultural, philosophical, artistic struggle. In this sense, the author hypothesizes the sign of modernism, ego, freedom, love, sex as challenging through her modern emotional responses.

Myth is found in many cultures. It is about self-imitation stories about people who pretend and in effect masquerading as

themselves. This great theme, in literature and in life, tells us that people put on masks to discover who they really are. Therefore the mask reveals rather than conceals the self. A myth refers to something that is widely believed but false.

This pejorative usage arose from labeling the religious stories and beliefs of other cultures as being incorrect. The term 'myth' denotes supernatural tales that are deliberately invented by their authors. It is a prominent term in literary analysis. The evolution of the modern novel is associated with the rise of realism in its various forms. The elements of fantasy, dream and hallucination as well as interactions of the world of the humans with that of the gods and other super personal forces are found in the novels of a few modern writers. The use of myth listed below is used by Chitra Banerjee in her novels based on the thematic level.

Divakaruni's narrative in *Vine of Desire* is as gracefully structured as a piece of chamber music, with its interplay of themes and voices, ensemble and solo, working their way toward a final resolving chord. Divakaruni's originality and talent lie in her technique of narration. She has used various techniques in writing such as alternative narrative, first and third person narrative, stream of consciousness, letter and diary writing, myth and magic realism particularly to express disordered and tragic condition of Indian immigrants while establishing themselves to the new civilization.

As magic and myth have been a perpetual source of themes for literary writers all over the world since times immemorial. Therefore, magic realism is an artistic genre or style of fiction in which magical essentials combines with the real world. In this technique the story explains these magical elements as real episodes presented in a direct way places fantastic and the real in the similar stream of thought, it is originated in the German art criticism of painting of Weimer Republic and invented by Franz Roh. Hypothetically, the

term was born in the twentieth century linking it to post modernism and for this reason it is used in modern fiction to blend fantastic and fabulous events in a narrative to uphold reliable tone of objective genuine report. It ascribes a novel the characteristics like fable, folktale, legend, myth, fantasy, romance, dream, meta narration, mysticism, especially related to the culture.

The author strikes a fragile balance between fantasy and realism in her other novels also. In all her books like *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dream* (2004), and *Palace of Illusion* (2008) there is a mixture of fantasy and realism. *Sister of My Heart* has numerous reference of Bidhata Purush, whom the mother visits frequently to get knowledge about the future. "The old tales say this also: In the wake of Bidhata Purush come the demons, for this is the world's nature, good and evil mingled. That is why they leave an oil lamp burning"<sup>11</sup>. The incident of fathers' death in the caves of Sunderban, where a million rubies grew up and the caves protected by demons are all essentials of fantasy. All these are elements of fantasy which are intermingled with the story. But they are very well appended in the text. Even in *Queen of Dreams* also Rakhi's mother can forecast people's future with her dreams and assist them to get out of the nastiest situations. While describing the common experiences of the Indian diasporic society, *Queen of Dreams* creates an Indian-American experience with magic realism. The narrative of this novel presents the connection between the subconscious and wakefulness. The author has whirled a delightful story of a second generation immigrant Rakhi who is trying to discover her identity, with her dream-interpreting mother contributing to the mystery and magic. Her mother Mrs. Gupta interprets dreams - the other people's lives depend on her, used to warn them and aid them because of her, "a dream is a telegram from the hidden world"<sup>12</sup>. The essence of the whole novel rests on the words

of Mrs. Gupta as she explains the dream and construes the meaning of it. Thus, this novel portrays an amusing typical tale of self-discovery which is full of supernatural elements, mystery, suspense, and real experiences of an immigrant.

Divakaruni is stylistically different; she uses the combination of first person and third person narrative joined with flashback devices to provide realism and force in the novel. The writer used the flashback in time using a type of methods such as retelling of memories and dream sequences. Flashback breaks in a narrative's linear time flow. She deals with the heroine's self-analysis and also tries to include several other themes. To gain the interest of the reader, sometime she evades the simple technique of straight forward narration and takes up the flashback method. Divakaruni's novels begin in the present but for a while move back and onward in time. As we know how much important characters are in a story and Chitra Banerjee usually portrays women characters as a protagonist. Her story focuses on the life of a woman specially an immigrant. Through them she tries to depict their inner feeling and experiences. Though we know the characters and their dialogues play a very important role to narrate a story. Characters can be approached from a lot of theoretical points of view, each yielding a different theory and conception of the characters.

Chitra Divakaruni has expressed herself in English mainly but her work is translated in 29 languages. She has abundantly used the Indian and foreign phrases in her novels. She herself admits in an interview with Sujata Shekhar, "It has definitely influenced my writing. I put appropriate Bengali words in among the English ones because I want that weaving of languages. Concepts from Bengali are sometimes difficult to translate but I want them to have a role. It's complicated". Many Hindi words are also used such as paisa, palash, anchal, bindi, yatra, shani, Jamai shahthi, puja, sindoor, salwar kameez,

kurtas, Khaki pants, name of Hindi month Such as Ashwin, Nakashtra such as Bhadra in both the novels for the better understanding.

Proverbs are the nuggets of popular wisdom which are simple and concrete sayings, popularly known and repeated, that expresses a truth based on common sense or experience. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim. Proverbs fall into the category of formulaic language. They are an important and frequent element in ordinary conversation. The proverbs provide evidence for considerable similarities across cultures where these similarities are largely due to the universality of human experience. Several extensive collections of proverbs have been used by Divakaruni. These proverbs show her style of language employed in the novels. 1. Good daughters are bright lamps, lighting their mother's name; wicked daughters are firebrands, scorching their family's fame. (SMH 10) 2. As Pishi says, 'why go to the lake to fetch water when you have a well in your own house already?' (SMH 14) 3. Then we both burst out laughing, because the letters read, 'Pati Param Guru, the husband is the supreme lord'. (SMH 49)

The writer's use of proverb brings out the parallelism between the incidences in terms of wise sayings. Some of these proverbs show the flavour of the Indian language and make the Indian dialogues more authentic. Besides telling the reader that the characters are basically Indian, brought up in the Indian soil, Divakaruni with the help of proverbs gives us a glimpse of the wise sayings of the people. The use of proverbs can itself differentiate characters.

Slang is a colloquial departure from standard usage; it is often imaginative, vivid, and ingenious in its construction. Although Divakaruni has not used much of slang still some expression are found in her language. At some places 'nah' (no), 'hola' (hello), 'nope' (no), 'gonna' (going to) etc. are used.

Conversational pieces of Divakaruni do carry the Indian flavor, while at the same time inner thoughts are couched in standardized English. A good blend, indeed. Unlike the writers of cross-cultural fiction in the past (especially those who wrote within and on Chinese contexts), who preferred to translate the names of characters (as in the writings of Pearl S. Buck), Indian writers have followed the convention of directly adopting Indian names to their characters. Divakaruni continues this practice admirably. If there are only a limited number of characters, and if the events are not many, complex and varied, it becomes easier to follow the story. Divakaruni's sequel has a small number of characters, but the events and processes depicted are based on complex relations.

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## FEMINISM: IS *GONE GIRL* A FEMINISTIC NOVEL?

Dr.Irene Philip

Senior Lecturer (SG) in English, Karaikal Polytechnic College, Varichikudy, Karaikal

### Abstract

*Feminism is still one among the hot topics which can heat up conversations in any debate. Feminism and its concepts are formulated to bring an empowered woman into limelight. Feminism and its ideas was never a threat to men. "Feminism isn't about making a woman stronger. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength." – G.D Anderson. Modern feminism is the most active feminism with many successful conferences and units to its credit. Literature is always a good source to express the feminist ideas. Many novels and works were released in order to spread the concept of feminism from early nineteenth century. Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn is a controversial novel claimed to have both feminist and misogynistic ideas. When analysed, Gone Girl has some extreme feminist idea with a tinge of evilness which makes the critics call the author a misogynistic woman. Modern feminism mainly focusses on the sexual protection to woman. The main goal, educational and professional equality is achieved during the early twentieth century. The struggle of protecting woman from sexual harassment and work place equality is set as the main goal in modern day feminism.*

**Keywords:** *Gone Girl, Feminism, Misogyny, Modern Feminism, Modern English Literature, Gillian Flynn.*

### Introduction to Feminism

Feminism is a political ideology that has many aspects of definition according to the time and era. Feminism is a term coined long time ago but did not gain any widespread usage until the 1970s. 'Feminism' and 'Feminist' are words which were developed after witnessing some kind of depressing events took place in the society against women of a cast/creed or in general. The events very much triggered the feelings of women. The discrimination led to diverse views on feminism. It was all started as a fight for the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of sexes. Their common goal was to achieve, define, establish equality in political, economic, social and personal lives of women. The moment of feminism started with the rights to vote. Evolution of Feminism was influenced by different countries and their law frame on liberty to women. On the whole, feminism was to give women the right to contract, property, voting, bodily integrity, autonomy, abortion, reproduction (access to contraception, parental care), domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, workplace rights (Maternity leave, equal pay), gender-specific discrimination. Modern feminism has many diverse views on the term. Mostly feminism is mistaken with the sexuality and

sexual harassment towards women. Even though there are many good views on modern feminism few literary works and statements work as portraying women as a vessel of victim and shame rather than to work towards the empowerment of women. The concept of feminism is pretty much clear and emphasizes on the equality. It tends to prevent the harassment and degrading nature towards women. It takes a clear mind to understand the motive of feminism.

### History of Feminism

Feminism is a word coined during the early eighteenth century which had no prominent use until the late nineteenth century. The idea of feminism started with the struggle to get women their rights. The ultimate goal was to demolish the social difference in men and women. The idea of feminism was more popular in European countries. Most of the feminist movements were led by the middle class European and North American women. They were predominantly active in feminism. According to the time of breakout, the feminism protests are categorized into waves. Movies and literature dated back are the best evidence that feminism has been existing since then. According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca

Walker, there are three waves of feminism. Recent developments are that there is a new wave added to the waves of feminism and called the fourth wave.

### Waves of Feminism

There are four waves of feminism till date. The *first wave of feminism* is dated back to the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The proof that feminism existed back then is a film released in 1942 named '*Woman of the Year*' has a character *Katherine Hepburn* who talks about the feminist movements. Even though there were protests and self-groups they were not at a prominent level. Most of them are left unknown. The first wave concentrated on the concept of getting the rights to vote for women. Back that time there was lesser significance to women. In India, most of the literature suggests women as a symbol of family and one who protects or build the family.

*The second wave of feminism* was much more strong and prominent when compared to the first wave. This wave was global and it created a situation where the idea of feminism was widespread and many leaders supported this. Literature was always there supporting this cause. Works and poems were released keeping feminism as the main concept. This helped even more in creating an awareness about the concept of feminism. The second wave of feminism concentrated in ideas and actions associated with the liberation towards women. They focused on getting social and legal rights to women. This strengthened the women power in various countries.

*The third wave* is an unforgettable era where there were many events which led feminism spread worldwide. This feminism was a worldwide one which much acceptance and awareness. There are some twisted meanings of feminism and many negative comments have raised regarding this wave. This wave started from 1990 to 2008. This feminism has most active members including various celebrities and public figures. There are many advantages of the third wave. This

is the continuation of the second wave which is a new version of reframed ideologies from the second wave.

*The fourth wave of feminism* starts from 2008 and is still running. Stages or waves of feminism have many literary works, poems, and movies to reflect the intensity of the feminist movements and works. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming were the main criteria in this wave that let man and woman have their rights secured. Women's rights were set up and incorporated with human rights and worked for women upliftment and security in politics, economics, social and cultural development. This feminist wave is much popular on social media sites. It is also called as the technology feminism as it uses social media to the fullest. Blogs and websites regarding this are updated. This wave has conducted many successful campaigns and still counting.

Third and fourth wave focuses on the sexual feminism. Women empowerment and job equality are almost achieved with the first two waves of feminism. These waves particularly the fourth wave concentrates on the sexual safety of women. Many studies suggest that many working women suffer either sexual harassment or are a victim of catcalling or eve teasing. The percentage of brutal rape is also high in number. Literature plays an important role depicting the ideas of modern feminism.

### The concept of Feminism in 'The Holy Bible'

The Holy Bible talks no ill about women. Women right from Eve, who is considered as the mother of all living is portrayed in a beautiful manner. When God created Eve, he made sure the female made from man will neither rule over him nor be overpowered by him. This is one of the exponential examples to give this world about feminism in Bible. Considering women as a weaker sex, second sex is all made up by the society we live in. The creator never suggested one such concept. Not only Eve, but many other prominent

characters were in Bible to throw some light on the virtue of women.

Women in Bible were courageous, independent and are the virtue how women should have her faith in family, Creator and in this world. Women in Bible were great and bold with the speech to match with fear of God. The women from The Bible are an inspiration to women. Bible never gets old so it fits all kinds of women even in today's world. The next woman who made headlines of modern era through controversial films and novels is Mary Madelene.

Mary Magdalene was a devoted follower of Jesus Christ while its well known all his disciples were men. She has always been the subject of mystery and controversy. The controversies suggest Mary Magdalene as the sister of Lazarus, woman healed by Jesus, and the repentant prostitute. While the made-up version of the modern novels and film suggest a completely different thing, Mary Magdalene has much importance in the Gospel of Thomas and has a prominent place in The Bible along with many wise, courageous women.

On concluding all the facts that Bible suggests, it's clear that Jesus never created or seen women as the second or weaker sex. While Bible suggests a different version of view on an ideal woman or in better words a married family woman, it never curtailed a woman or cornered her to a corner of the society or her house.

### **Literature that talks about Feminism**

In 1947 French author and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir wrote a detailed analysis of women's oppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism in her book 'The Second Sex.' Mary Ellman's 'Thinking about Women' (1968), Kate Millet's 'Sexual Politics' (1969) and Germaine Greer's 'The Female Eunuch' (1970) are some of the works that are dated from the first wave era that made a huge impact on people who wanted to know about Feminism.

Modern feminism concentrates on working women either in business or any

other firms as the center of the fiction. With time the literary works on feminism grew abundantly. The plot is set to revolve around her and her success. Chick literature is the genre name given for such novels and works that talks about a woman in a lead role. While talking about the recent days' fiction they have a new touch and differ a lot from the contemporary fiction. 'Gone Girl' by Gillian Flynn is the best example when talking about the modern feminism novels.

### **Feminism in Gone Girl**

Gillian Flynn, the author of Gone Girl was accused and bashed for writing a novel on misogyny being a woman herself. Gone Girl was never an anti-feminism book instead it has a strong shade of feminism hidden under various layers. Critics claim that this work should be tagged under misogyny because Amy hurts herself and fakes her own death. They categorize self-harming and fake rape assault illusion as an extremely evil and mentally unstable nature. That does not make Amy completely evil. And giving a darker shade to Amy will never help Nick to get a better image in this novel. Bringing the idea of misogyny is a bit absurd, as the reasons why, this novel is a feministic novel is much stronger.

What exactly makes 'Gone Girl' a feministic novel? While analyzing the character of Amy even without taking her out of her evil nature she will be a feministic character. The feminism in this novel can be explained in two ways.

1. Amy being the evil woman.
2. Amy being the cool girl.

Amy is a confident, independent woman in 'Gone Girl' who has brilliant ideas and got some intelligent and a bit sadistic way of making them work. Her independent life before and post-marriage can be clearly seen in this novel.

### **Amy being the evil woman**

Even Amy is maintained the evil woman who faked her death and framed her own husband in a murder case, she was still

compromising many things in her life. The extramarital affair is a sensitive issue where no woman in a marriage is expected to go easy with this. Amy was not anything evil right from the beginning. The deeds of Nick were clearly mentioned which triggered Amy to take such evil measures to teach him a lesson. Being the evil woman Amy was framing her husband who had an extramarital affair with his student. She planned her murder and framed him in the case. She was a strong woman who had a plan and had the courage enough to put it into action. As a female, she did her part in showing how important her feelings were in their marital relationship. Marriage needs hard work and time, somewhere down the line Amy was emphasizing this fact to Nick who has no idea of what is going on inside Amy's head.

### **Amy being the cool girl**

Amy never let Nick suspect her while she was making the perfect plan. There are two evident reasons for this, a) Nick was so into himself and concentrated in his extramarital affairs. b) It evidently shows how potential a woman is. How potential she is about hiding her feelings or her plan. Even though Nick had no intention of giving her the proper attention she never left a clue behind. This shows the courage and guts of a female role which can make a massive plan in her head and show no signs outside. Her plan was nothing small. She planned a storm for Nick's life still there were no clues which she left behind. Secondly, Nick being the careless husband had known what his wife is capable of.

### **The reasons how 'Gone Girl' cannot be called as misogynistic novel Independent**

Amy was an independent woman who never needed anyone for her help to execute the plan. The ultimate question will be her ex-boyfriend who helped her when she was left running out of money. It also has another point of view that being superior Amy used him as her shield from the camera and media.

### **Nick's Extra Marital Affair**

The ultimate thing which any woman would dislike in her marital life would be the interference of a third woman in their life. Since Amy was put through this is more of a depressing factor for Amy rather than to Nick here.

### **End Notes**

Feminism is not an easy crisis to handle. It takes time to understand the real motive behind the idea feminism. There are many twisted meanings available on the basis of sexuality. Beyond that feminism is something which every woman should cherish.

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## THE PICTURE OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN ANITA DESAI'S VOICES IN THE CITY

V.Rohini

Assistant Professor, The M.D.T.Hindu College, Un-Aided Courses, Department of English, Tirunelveli

### Abstract

Anita Desai is a remarkable writer in Indian English Literature. She is a voracious reader. She has started her career as a short story writer in 1963 and still surviving in literary horizon. This novel tells how Monisha is tortured by the structural traditional Bengali family. She has been no privacy in her room. Though she works very hard in the house she has treated by them without humanity. Monisha lives like a caged bird. This novel shows how women in India is treated in a bad manner if she does not bear child. Monisha has not been able to bear a child because her fallopian tubes are blocked. She is never left alone to read the books she has brought with her-Kafka, Hopkins, Dostoevsky. She feels loneliness and emptiness in her life. The result is she prefers death. In India when women are suppressed they used to prefer death. They think that death is the only relief from miseries.

**Keywords:** traditional, loneliness, emptiness, caged bird, suppressed.

### Introduction

"The only way to solve the problem of women's subordination is

To change people's mind set and to plant the new idea of gender equality into every mind". - Qingrog Ma

The world of Anita Desai's novel are an ambivalent one. Though she does not admit herself as a feminist she says in an interview "I am interested in people who live in a kind of exile from the rest of society". Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*, *Voices in the City*, *Bye Bye Black Bird* and *Where shall we go this Summer* deals husband wife relationship. She concentrates on the psychic angle and mental problems of women through her female protagonists.

Anita Desai is an important writer in the field of Indian fiction in English. Desai came to the Indian literary horizon in the year 1963 when her first novel *Cry the Peacock* was published. Her second novel *Voices in the City* which was published in 1965 and won Sahitya Academic Award in 1978.

*Voices in the city* is the unforgettable story of Bohemia brother and his two sister. Nirode, Monisha and Amla are presented as a main characters. Nirode and Amla feel the elder sister leads a life of hardness in the traditional Hindu family. Desai has made the

city of Calcutta a vital character of the novel. It is described as a monster city, the city of Goddess kali, the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. Madhusudan Prasad remarks that Desai's novels have a "mosaic textual density" because of "Desai's imagery about the city Calcutta".

All the character get entangled in their physical, emotional and spiritual relationship with the city. The city is an echo of the London of Dickens. The whole city of Calcutta is pictured as a city of Death. Monisha lives in Calcutta lives with death. Not only Monisha, Nirode the chief protagonist of the novel tells his critical experience of the city Calcutta. The city has been described as a monster city "that this monster city lived no normal healthy, red-blooded life but one that was subterranean, underlit, stealthy and odorous of morality had captured and enchanted or disenchanted both her sister and brother". (VC 150)

The story of the novel begins with the departure of Arun to England for higher studies. Nirode leaves for Calcutta as a clerk in the newspaper office. His sister Monisha is married to Jiban with a large joint family. The younger sister Amla has received training in Bombay as a commercial artist come to Calcutta to join in an advertisement

firm. But all her wishes, hopes becomes vain. Monisha, Nirode's sister is married against her wishes in a middle class stolid family. In that family Monisha is tormented by her loneliness and lack of communication. She is always haunted by a sense of her life dedicated to nothing.

In the beginning of the novel Monisha attempts to make a success of her marriage to be Jiban's wife in the traditional Bengali family. But her initial efforts to adopt the language of her married family becomes vain. Her mother in law accuses her of stealing money from Jiban. Jiban neglects his duty to defend his wife. This makes depression with Monisha and she lives in an iron -barred large house with her husband's extended family in Bow Bazaar in Calcutta. A painful tendency to exploit the daughter-in-law is exposed to massage her mother-in law's legs "for the aunts' are all worn out. I go and massage them".( VC 139)

Monisha's life with her husband is not at all good. Her marriage life does not give peace, happiness. She lost all her hope with her husband. The result is she prefers suicide. "Married to a pathetically wooden and insensitive husband, she knows no intimacies no communion, no mutual understanding, no real sharing with us, but Jiban is never with us at all." (VC 115)

Monisha's restlessness is simply because of her circumstances. She is considered as bare woman who can't bear a child because her fallopian tubes are blocked. In the family all of them treated her without human tendency. They talk not only about her barrens but also about the body, her organ etc...

More terrible condition in her life is the arrival of her cynical sister-in-law kalyani teases her about asking the number of sarees Monisha had brought from her birth place. This incident presents the social evil of dowry. Sister-in-Law across her bed discussing her ovaries and tubes. Monisha has no privacy in her room. She is never left alone to read the

books that she has brought with her. Kafka, Hopkins and Doestoevsky. This passage shows her wish of privacy

"I am glad they give me so much work to do. I am glad to be occupied in cutting vegetables, serving food, brushing small children's hair. Only I wish I were given some tasks I could do alone, in privacy away from the aunts and uncles, the cousins and I should feel more whole. But less and less there is privacy."(VC 115-116)

Monisha fills her wardrobe with books instead of clothes. But in the joint family she has no time to read it. Her days are moving with household works like serving fresh chappati to her uncle and listening the instruction of her mother-in-law. When she is going to cook fish her mother-in-law tells many ways of how to cook fish. Monisha is treated as a servant, most of the time she spends her time in the kitchen. In the traditional Indian joint family system, the daughter-in-law is always treated a outsider. She has no freedom to do what she thinks. The pathetic condition is her husband Jiban also thinks that women's role in the family is to bear child, to cook, to cut vegetables and serve the food.

She realizes that if she wins a war over the mind she will get victory. She thinks of the freeness of the bird. The bird image sharply brings into focus the caged condition of the individual woman. Monisha's plight is a typical representation of the social situation of women in India. Monisha's dying words "No! No! reflects the womanhood in the patriarchal society.

Monisha has nothing in her life. She feels the emptiness of her life. She waits for a long time. That is revealed from the words "Waiting for nothing. Waiting as men self -centred and indifferent and hungry and demanding and critical, waiting for death and dying misunderstood always behind bars, those Terrifying black bars that shut us in." (VC 120)

Monisha's suffering begins on the first day of her marriage life. There is a tradition in the Bengali family the newly married couple is expected to prostrate at the feet of elders and get their blessings. During the marriage reception, Jiban harshly pushes Monisha to bow to his mother. Monisha goes down on her knees to touch her mother-in-law's feet to take her blessings. But her mother-in-law pushes her little harder in the mean time of her blessing. Monisha is forced to fall at the number of feet of others in the name of gain blessing.

Monisha is the victim of the crippling life in the joint family. Her dairy clearly shows that she has surrounded by the unsympathetic relatives. As educated girl her life is shattered into pieces because of her failure in marriage life. Monisha's body goes on withering and shrinking. Day by day she goes on thin and pale. she feels; "I grow smaller every day, shrink and lose more and more of my weight, my appurtenances, the symbols of my existence that used to establish me in the eyes of this world. I'm already too small to be regarded much by anyone. I will be invisible yet". (VC 139)

When Monisha is accused of theft by her mother-in-law. Jiban also becomes a part of their collective allegations. After this incident Monisha does not feel at ease in her husband's home. The institution of marriage is blamed by Monisha. Though her marriage is an arranged one she hates it because of the unhappiness, loneliness in the house. Monisha being sensitive, loves privacy and loneliness. But she is forced to live in an extent family those who have no love with Monisha.

The absence of the element of love in her husband's family makes her feel bitter. Of her failure marriage as Santha Krishnasamy says: "Her marriage is the excruciating, destructive and negative of all social institutions that trap and torture her isolated, sensitive psyche". (Krishnasamy -251)

Desai points out that Monisha whose life has no attachments, no enthusiasm, no inspiration. Her life and privacy has destroyed by the small circle created by our tradition in India. Desai vividly portrays how daughter-in-law is treated very badly in their mother-in-law's house. Women has no right to read, or whatever they think. Their life is prisoned in the four walls. Desai portrays gender discrimination through her character Monisha.

The most crucial issue regarding women's freedom is taken up by Desai in *Voices in the City* through the portrayal of Monisha. Her thirst for love becomes failure and the absence of love is doomed to destruction. Monisha says "unattached drifting bird-creature that vital element that is missing from Nirode and myself- " the element of love,"...In place of this love... we possess a darker, fiercer element-fear". (VC 136)

Anita Desai describes the habits and attitudes of traditional women: "They are all covered with many thick, slack layers of prejudice, convention, ignorance and reticence". (VC 221) Monisha's death in the novel, more than anything else, is a subject of great social significance. In India woman's life is to be lived for others, self – negating the desires of self fulfilment. Desai's stories are concerned with the inner life, they are not commentaries on social condition or even political conditions. It is true that man is a social being, having marriage for the society without real attachment. Desai closely examines the serious world of women in India. Desai closely presents the emotional world of her heroines. Monisha's tragedy describes the pathetic condition of young brides in the society. She says "If I had religious faith, I could easily renounce all this. But I have no faith no-alterative to my confused despair, there is nothing I can give myself to, and so I must stay. The family, here, and their surroundings, tell me such a life cannot be lived a life dedicated to nothing

that this husk is a protection from death". (VC 122)

Several of her favourite themes include youth, age, death; the human relationships; art and life, illusion and reality; time and change. Desai considers these themes in the context of Indian culture and histories. Desai portrays the Indian culture and society through the character of Monisha in *Voices in the City*

### Abbreviation

VC - Voices in the City

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## POSTMODERN CONCERNS IN THE POETRY OF SHIV K KUMAR

S.V.Sundari

Assistant Professor of English, Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam

### Abstract

Post Independence era witnessed the emergence of Postmodern Indian poetry in English in 1980. Nizzim Ezekiel, A.K.Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Kamala Das, Shiv K.Kumar, and Keki N.Daruwalla, can be categorized as postmodern poets. Shiv K.Kumar one of the leading voices in Indian poetry was influenced by the British counterparts. This article tries to explore, interpret and discuss in detail the theory postmodernism and some of the postmodern traits like parody in Shiv K. Kumar's poetry.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism, Counterparts, interpret, traits, parody.

Postmodernism is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in arts, architecture, and criticism that was a departure from modernism. Postmodernism includes incredulous interpretations of ethnicity literature, art, philosophy, history, economics, architecture, fiction and literary criticism. According to Linda Hutcheon postmodernism, "takes the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining statement" (48) and one of the most successful strategies to create a contradictory stance on any statement is the use of parody. Parody is considered central to postmodernism. As Linda Hutcheon puts it:

Parody is a typical postmodern paradoxical form because it uses and abuses the texts and conventions of the tradition. It also contests both the authority of that tradition and the claims of art to originality ... It simultaneously exploits and undercuts several recognizable traditions of the representation of women: the passive female on her pedestal is here poised for action, compete with unglamorous bathing cap: the erotic pin-up bathing beauty now refuses to engage the gaze of her (conventionally male) viewer ...". (5)

Shiv K Kumar as a postmodern poet was influenced by T.S.Eliot, W.B.Yeats, Thomas Hardy, and Leo Tolstoy, and that is explicitly seen in poems like *Insomnia*, *Rickshaw-Wallah*, *Cerebral Love*, *Adam to Eve*, *Border Guards*, *Siesta* and *Broken Columns* Section X.

*Insomnia* is Kumar's magnificent poem in which the poet has presented the nervousness and torment of a man who is the victim of restlessness. His restlessness is the result of the modern world's distortions and dullness. The poem also reminds us of the famous poem of T.S.Eliot. Eliot in *The Waste Land* has presented the restlessness, boredom and illusions of the modern people. Kumar has presented in the poem that the modern man has to suffer because of the modern complications and problems. Thus, the poet unfolds the reality of modern life through various impressions.

The poet has used irony and humour as his successful tools to indicate the monotony and anxiety of the modern man. In the very opening lines, the poet develops the tension in the minds of the readers thus:

My wife snores. My son's dream  
fingers have reached the sideboard's  
top-shelf for Cadbury.

The sky grins through a handful  
of stars while I hold the defiant  
pills in my torpid hand. (1-6)

Then the protagonist of the poem is caught in the state of sub-consciousness. The protagonists accept the fact that he knows the secret of his wife. The poet writes:

I'm a double agent. I'll drug  
my watchdog to burgle my own house.  
I know where my wife's secrets  
lie sealed. Each night I hear

the same tattoo in my skull's chamber.  
(7-11)

The protagonist is impatient and does not sleep the whole night. He is restless and hopeless and counts the stars in the sky. The poem is quite analytical in projecting the image of tedium and bewilderment. He writes mockingly:

I have counted all the stars over my terrace. The steel bars in my neighbour's balcony are twenty one and three suburban freight trains rumble past the rail-crossing between two and four.

Darkness now snaps at the seams.  
A hymn floats across the sky  
like a bird's warble. (12-19)

The protagonist of the poem is the victim of sleeplessness and he is trying his best to triumph over, but his effort is futile. In the last lines, the poet has used two suggestive images – “day's fire” (23) and “moon demolish me” (24) to imply the chaos and turmoil of the heart and mind. After the day's fire the poet is ready for another night.

And somewhere down the lane a hand-pump

creaks – the milkman's bottle  
jingles at my doorstep.  
I must walk through the day's fire  
to let another moon demolish me.  
(20-24)

Kumar portrays the miseries of a poor rickshaw – wallah in *Rickshaw-Wallah* as:

Pulling his cross  
on a bellyful of questions,  
with obesity belching complacency  
on the cushioned seat behind,  
he computes the patches  
on the street's tattered shirt. (1-6)

The image of “cross” (1) and “tattered shirt” (6) evoke empathy for the poor labourer and dislike for the municipal authorities respectively. The road revives to our memory W.B. Yeats' image of ‘a tattered coat’ used for an ‘aged man’.

The poem *Cerebral Love* brings out the poet as lost in a state of metaphysical conjecture. It deals with the theme of sex. Indeed, the poet uses sex as an option for transcending the confines of existence. This is what Eliot does in poetry, Lawrence in fiction and Tennessee Williams, and Albee, in drama. In this poem total failure in sex-act disturbs poet and he wants to get some relief.

The poet states:

Even in bed  
my self  
copulates with its own dry bones  
leaving her body  
frozen on the tide's crest. (1-5)

The poet in the above quoted extract, however, shows that now he is not interested in love-making. He is leaving, may be his wife's or female friend's body without having any sexual intercourse. It reveals the poet as rising above any base sexual act. At a deeper level, it is his succession towards assimilation with his desire- motive projected upon a woman figure.

The poem *Adam to Eve* deals with the theme of ignorance turning into knowledge which Aristotle also has used in his amazing work *Poetics* as anagnorisis which means the recognition of truth. But here Adam asks Eve:

that every creature that moves  
has a still axis, that no herb  
will ever heal our new wound  
that sings as it bleeds.  
And if to know is to die,  
why not perish together? (34-39)

The poem *Border Guards* reminds us of Thomas Hardy's *The Man He Killed*. The persona suffers from situational anguish. He is an army personal posted at a post on border to guard the boundary of his country. There is another soldier of the neighbouring country on the other side of the border. Their countries are hostile to each other. This situation makes them each other's enemy. The soldier on the other side of the fence has received a letter from his home that conveys some unwelcome message. It has made him

weep or sob. The persona perceives his melancholy reflected on his face. He conjectures that the letter has either conveyed the message of his wife's illness or son's death. Both of them are away from their families and homes. As human beings their feelings and sentiments are alike. He wishes to sympathize with his counterpart on the other side of the fence prevents him to do so. Though they are designate enemies yet suffer from the same agony in similar situation. The protagonist's anguish is apparent in the following lines:

My fingers bleed to think  
of the fence's spikes  
that will not let me caress  
the anguished face  
of this other man –  
my country's alleged enemy  
but my soul's brother  
in loneliness. (10-17)

The persona in Hardy's poem, treats his counterpart, whom he kills, was, only as a fellow human being. On the other hand, the persona in Kumar's poem calls him, "my soul's brother" (16) all-embracing Indian Hindu philosophy. However, both Hardy and Kumar uphold all men as equal enjoying and suffering that transform innocent human beings into blood thirsty enemies. The protagonist, in Kumar's poem thinks about his counterpart and describes him in these words:

On the other side  
of the impregnable fence  
enmeshed with warlord's gory  
threats and counter threats  
whimpers my counterpart  
over a letter from home  
(his wife's illness? His son's death?)  
his recoilless gun sitting negligently  
between his knees. (1-9)

The poem *Siesta* is a temporary release from the burden of pain for "All doors of perception sealed" (13) during the period. It is recuperative. Man is afraid of tomorrow because it pay him to a fresh trial. That is

why he seeks 'rebirth' each morning to face the music of the day. This is nothing but to rejuvenate oneself, to gather spiritual strength, to make the best use of the present moment of life because man has no control over the past or the future. The living present is the only time to act, as Tolstoy also conveyed through his story *Three Questions* or as H.W. Long fellow said in his poem, *A Psalm of Life*.

In *Broken Columns* Section X he is wedded to a woman "only half known / seven circles round the holy fire / incensed by rice, turmeric and camphor" (240-242) But, instead of merger, there takes a recoil in this ritualistic marriage – "I look at my bride's crabbed fingers / closing into a fist" (256-257) And when the 'burden of darkness becomes unbearable at the birth of a child, the protagonist parts company through legal divorce in section – XII. The whole exercise of the priest, the bride and the groom thus becomes meaningless. However he tells his child how deeply he loved him even when whom he lost him to the lady, "My clairvoyance prompted me to action. / I bolted, sealed a high rampart to flee / abandoning you to the enemy. / But I loved you most when I forsook you" (302-305). Like Leontes, the jealous husband in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* who suspects the legitimacy of his own son, Mamillus, the protagonist here doubts in anger his child's genesis but soon finds solace in the archetypal image of Father and child:

In anger, once, I even doubted your  
genesis  
(which one of your mother's men?)  
but my father's portrait peered  
from the mantlepiece, its contours  
merged into your, ring upon ring,  
and I cursed myself for the sacrilege. (306-311)

In the concluding lines, the protagonist views a new cycle of harmony in the life of his child far away in, "to a country where the mother-hen / doesn't cackle away / the doors

don't slam / and your bed is your own" (322-325). Here lies Kumar's fantasy of a happy optimism, an ideal poetic vision of life, which makes his poem a symbolic search for harmony.

All these poems discussed above establish the fact that Kumar was influenced by the British writers.

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## AN ANALYSIS OF ECO FEMINISM IN ANITHA DESAI'S FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

**C.Gnanasekar**

Lecturer / English

**V.Gayathri**

Lecturer / English, Christ the King Polytechnic College, Coimbatore

Understanding of the after effects of industrialization on ecological balance it is helpful to study human culture through a reunion of the theme of 'nature' as it is depicted in the works of different writers who write for nature; and thereby highlight the harmful effects of human alliance with nature.

Anita Desai belongs to the genre of such writers who fits herself with the basic ideas of the environmentalists and ecologists. *Fire on the Mountain* publicises eco-awareness by acknowledging the landscape, by expressing human actions in animal terms, by representing to us the diverse nature of mountain biosphere and connecting them with various moods of feminist behaviour; and thus aims at achieving an integral relationship between woman and nature.

Ecofeminism is a concept which has been in circulation for some time but is still at a nascent stage. Aecofeminist perspective would involve the coming together of ecocriticism and ecofeminism into one analytical focus, where it would be necessary to recognize that the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women are intimately bound up with notions of class, caste, race, colonialism and neo-colonialism. In discourses of purity concerning environment literature and criticism, women as the colonized, have been "repeatedly naturalized as objects of heritage to be owned, preserved, or patronized rather than as subjects of their own land and legacies". It is important then to bring together feminism and environmental issues so that continuing imperialist modes and colonialist attitudes of social and environmental dominance can be challenged.

If we were to look at some of the postcolonial countries such as those in Africa and South Asia, particularly India, we realize that these nations have a history of environmental activism and movements even before ecofeminism emerged as an academic discipline in the Western world.

Women-led environmental activism and writing in India In India, the Chipko movement has gained iconic status and is now cited as a highly successful example of grassroots environmentalism in India. This movement is also key for the way in which it mobilised women. This movement brought about the concept of tree-hugging to stop activities such as deforestation, lumbering and mining. The movement originated in the Garhwal region of Uttaranchal in Uttar Pradesh, India.

The state's increasing commercialisation and underdevelopment of the Garhwal region was instrumental in the conceptualisation of this movement, where local women were affected by state-level decisions such as granting private contractors harvest rights for the trees to manufacture cricket bats. Due to excessive deforestation, the year 1970 saw its most devastating flood and equally destructive landslides.

Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* portray the darker shades of nature and the simultaneous conjunction of the darker aspects of the women concerned. She is free occupied with imaginary landscape of natural beauty, which propels her to draw solace and happiness out of it in the midst of troubles, difficulties and heaviness of daily life. Nanda Kaul is the protagonist of *Fire on the*

Mountain. She as an individual tries to escape from the clutches of human hands.

She wants to do away with Raka who wants to come to the hill country to recuperate in Kasauli. Because everyone she meets tells her to go to Kasauli, where nature works more than the medicines do, but her grandmother Nanda Kaul doesn't have positive attitudes on her arrival. The depiction of characters suggests certain situations in their lives and the typical images as nature has its relationship towards living organisms. The novel employs trajectories of life and externalizes multidimensional forms of living. These images have been employed to examine human relationships and their significance.

The untrodden path taken by Nanda may not be highly appreciated but she is weighed down by the modern predicaments. She is quite sure that she has completed her duty in life and takes a decision to "be left to the pines and cicadas alone she hoped she would not stop". She is well tuned with the place and landscape around her. "Everything she wanted was here, at Carignano, in Kasauli. Here, on the ridge of the mountain, in this quiet house". Due to the passage of time she enters in the world of old age.

She embodies a tree out there to bear the unpredictable seasonal difference of life. "Whatever else came, or happened here, would be an unwelcome intrusion and distraction". She is grey, tall and thin and she fancies "she could merge with the pine trees and could be mistaken for one. To be a tree, no more and no less, was all she was prepared to undertake". As Indira says, "Nanda's sense of identification with the pine trees suggests her desire for absolute stillness and withdrawal from life. They may even be an unconscious death-wish in desiring to become a tree". (Anita Desai as an Artist 97) Nanda is attracted to Carignano for 'its barrenness that equalizes her. The lonely house is symbolic of the solitary life of Nanda.

Dryness of life has engulfed her and thus, she is absolutely against social life which is essential aspect of living human condition.

The barrenness and starkness associated with it symbolizes the essential human condition alienation. Anita Desai has correctly brought out the sight of an eagle or a bright hope served to delight her otherwise solitary existence. Ecocriticism evolves not only through the ecological concerns but through description of landscape and imagination of nature and climatic intervention. It draws a meaningful link between animate and inanimate relationships.

As Anita Desai writes: I kept animals, too, you know, for my children, remembering how much I'd enjoyed having them as a child, she plunged in recklessly. Not only dogs and cats but unusual ones too, Monkeys. We had a pair of monkeys that we kept chained to the veranda rails because they were too destructive to let loose. They were gibbons-long-limbed, black-faced and silvery, like langurs, such fun (99).

Nanda was concerned with the present life she was leading and suddenly she encountered the arrival of Raka has turned her face gloomy and dejected. She was immensely triggered and felt something is disturbing and burning in her inner self. Here the author portrays, Raka as a symbol of fire. And Nanda is a symbol of forest. Ironically she wants to say that Nanda's life has become the hell by the presence of Raka.

She was her own granddaughter but she dealt with her as a distant relative or a stranger, who is not appreciated from Nanda's part as Desai says: "To Nanda Kaul she was still an intruder, an outsider, a mosquito flown up from the plain to tease and worry". (40)

Raka wondered at the different sites of Carignano, and peeped through the windows, one day she saw tin sheds and cooked houses built on bricks and concrete walls, looked like a factory. Later on she remembered and puzzled at the scenic beauties as Desai says:

Her father and grandmother had extolled the beauties and delights of a Himalaya hill-station to her, but said nothing of factories. Here was such an enormous one that Raka wondered at their ignorance of it. To her, it

seemed to dominate the landscape-a square dragon, boxed, bricked and stoked. (42)

Raka has come here to recuperate from her sickness and to explore the natural beauty of Carignano, but Nanda is doesn't appreciate, when she sees her granddaughter wondering around in the jungle "as if she were a thousand black mosquitoes, a stilly humming conglomerate of them and did not know whether to contain or release this dire seething" (45). Nanda was surprised to discover that child has a gift of disappearance suddenly and silently for hours, sometimes she was seen in the midst of stony hills, "wondering down a lane in a slow, straying manner, stopping to strip a thorny bush of its few berries or to examine an insect under a leaf" (46). She was not a part of Nanda Kaul, now but she has discovered her own place to stay in it.

One fine day when the sun was in the sky "babbling in an out of the dust clouds, lighting them up in a great conflagration- s splendid bone that burnt in the heart of yellow clouds. The whole world was livid, inflamed" (53). Raka was surprised to see flames erupting from the distant clouds and enquired whether "will it set the hill on fire" (53). Ram Lal in reply says:

This is how forest fires starts. I can tell you how many forest fires we can see each year in Kasauli. Some have come up as far as our Riling. You can see how many of the trees are burnt, and houses too. Once the house down the hill, South View, was burnt to the ground before the fire engine arrived (53).

IlaDas's rape in Desai's novel is mercilessly carried out in the darkness of the fields that are supposed to sustain life. The atrocities that the women suffer in Desai's novel find their culmination in Raka who sets the forest on fire in the end. Anita Desai has clearly mentioned the efficacy of forest fire which leads to ecological imbalance; consequently human beings become the tragic victims. Here what we notice is that the ecological concerns and man- nature interface

have been clearly reflected. Mountain is the symbol of Nanda Kaul and Raka represents wild nature. She is very silent and very swift like a forest fire. Forest fire is main concern for the mountain regions, especially in summer.

Sometimes it is accidental and sometimes it is deliberately burn the forest for forest cultivation or shifting cultivation of tribal folk which causes massive loss of life and property and degradation of natural resources. Raka was imagining the natural catastrophe "she thought she heard the cries of animals and birds burning in that fire" (75). The expedition of nature has invigorated the drooping spirit of Raka to enjoy the natural sites of Carignano.

Desai's novel is a blend of nature and characters and she has written her novel in unique manner that they represent their own individuality. Man has turned into machine now because it depends largely on modern technology, and uses natural resources to satisfy his desire.

In Carignano once upon a time garden house was the most beautiful garden in Kasauli, now it has been used as an army camp. It clearly depicts the insensitivity of man to towards nature and patriarchal attitude in destroying the natural phenomena. Literally man has exploited nature like an object for his own pleasure.

Here Anita Desai wants us to draw the attention of the degradation of the ecological balance. She depicts the aesthetic experiences drawn from the nature and that makes the human beings live in peace and harmony regardless of our pathetic life in the world. In fact Anita Desai has incorporated environmental attitudes in her novels, which speak about animate and inanimate things that surround the entire natural ecosystem.

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## MENTAL COLONIZATION IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE*

T.R.Varsha

Assistant Professor on Contract, Department of English, Sree Krishna College, Guruvayur

### Abstract

*African and Afro-American Literatures tell primarily the tales of colonization, hegemony, oppression, slavery, exploitation, resistance, inequality, pride in the past indigenous culture, identity crisis etc. In this multicultural world it is the duty of the political, religious and intellectual personalities to give special care and attention to the less fortunate people of the Dark Continent; help them redeem their self respect and thus bring them to the main stream of the global family. This paper identifies how Toni Morrison presents the sources and impact of mental colonization in her novel "The Bluest Eye." To reveal it we need to read in between lines and examine images of African American women, analyzing what stereotypes defined them, and how Toni Morrison had opened possibilities in her novel for African American women to be alert of this mental colonization and need of reclaiming their identities. Individual identity is recognition of who we are and what we constitute. Crisis of identity arise when we cannot construct a positive self image of ourselves alone or with in a community. In this novel, most of the characters are dejecting their own identity and yearn for western standards of beauty for enjoying an acceptance in the so called sophisticated society. This internalization of white standards of beauty is made possible through mass media, books, movies, advertisements, toys etc. Colonization of mind through poison wrapped in sweet candies!*

**Keywords:** Afro American society, identity crisis, mental colonization, internalization etc.

### Mental colonization

The greatest colonization is the colonization of mind. In the initial stages of colonization the conquered people are enslaved and controlled with the force of arms. The weakness of this form of colonization is that the colonized people can rise up in revolution and send the colonizer packing permanently. However, the colonizer has other weapons in his arsenal and these are used to colonize the minds of the conquered people, since colonization of the mind has more permanency. This subjugation is introduced through mass media and commercialism that results in internalized racism and oppression. One may think that those people adopting western norms over their indigenous ones are responsible for their mental slavery but the fact is that the modern cultural colonialism via mass media influence people's mind and dominate them. Preference of white skin, blue eyes and blond hair that are equal to luxury, success, status, beauty, health and self control make everyone, who lacks these features, seem inferior. The big guns for this colonization are the televisions, radios and newspapers. The media adds to the

colonization by controlled education. Books and curriculum are chosen more or less by the existing powers reflecting their wishes. The mentally colonized individual even looks for his heritage in the land of the colonizer. They feel pride in the colonizers' history and glory. Slaves just without chains! People abandon their own culture and traditions as they are taught to think that their culture and traditions are primitive and uncivilized.

### Pecola

The Bluest Eye is a novel concerning a victimized adolescent black girl who is obsessed by white standards of beauty and longs to have blue eyes. The standard of beauty that Pecola's peers subscribe to her is represented by the white child actress, Shirley Temple, who has the desired blue eyes. She is deeply affected by the illustrations of white beauty around her. "While at the Mac Teers, she grows addicted to the children's Shirley Temple mug and ends up drinking three quarts of milk, just to be able to stare at Shirley's blue eyes and blond, curly hair." (The Bluest Eye), she also likes Mary Janes, candies that have a picture



of a white, blonde and blue-eyed girl. Her identification with Shirley's beauty and blue eyes lead her to reach to dangerous conclusions that she and her family are ugly and that if she had blue eyes, her life and her family would be different, that is, beautiful and love deserving. Claudia Mac Teer, the narrator of the novel, tells that it occurs to Pecola from time to time that if her eyes were different and beautiful.

Pecola's longing to have blue eyes is marked by her perception of a world where unkindness and the hardships that she suffers are a consequence of her appearance as a repulsive black child with dark eyes. This is demonstrated when Pecola is teased by the little boys on the playground, but when Maureen approaches staring at them with her light eyes, the boys back down and behave in a more respectable manner. Pecola's desire for blue eyes makes a connection between how a person is seen and what he or she sees. She suffers from disgrace in white American society. Eventually her submission to white beauty standards leads to a disaster, which is nothing but her insanity. As a child, Claudia also wonders why people are in awe of little white girls:

"The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little white girls. The indifference with which I could have axed them was shaken only by my desire to do so. To discover what eluded me: the secret of the magic they weaved on others. What make people look at them and say, 'Awwwww' but not at me ? "(The Bluest Eye).

### **Pecola's Family**

Pecola's mother and father are also caught up in their own racial oppression, self – hatred, and misery that they cannot provide warmth and love for their children. They blocked Pecola's avenues toward self-reconciliation. They feel less concern for loving their children than they do for succeeding in standards set by white America.

An incident at Mrs. Breedlove's work place starts Pecola's journey from being an innocent, troubled little girl to becoming insane. While Pauline is in downstairs collecting the laundry, Pecola accidentally knocks over a blueberry cobbler. Instead of comforting Pecola her mother scolds her. She hits Pecola and calls her a crazy fool before she walks over and comforts the Fisher girl. The fact that the white girl can call her Polly while even Pecola has to call her Mrs. Breedlove signals her mother's preference for tie white girl; furthermore, Pauline does not seem to want to acknowledge that Pecola is her daughter.

Pick up that wash and get on out of here, so I can get this mess cleaned up. As Pecola put the laundry bag in the wagon, we could here Miss. Breedlove hushing and soothing the tears of the little pink and yellow girl... "Who were they, Polly ?" "Don't worry none, baby," she whispered, and the honey in her words complemented the sundown spilling on the lake. (The Bluest Eye)

### **Society**

Pecola is invisible not only to her parents but also to everyone. This is demonstrated when she buy sweets in a shop.

" But she has seen the interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes... She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So the distaste must be for her, her blackness... She holds the money toward him. He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand." (The Bluest Eye)

Pecola encounter with Mr. Yakobowsky, who won't touch her hand, confirms to her, her own insignificance and invisibility in the community. Anger and shame are what she is left with after meeting him. Symbolically the white immigrant sells Pecola racial hatred, ignoring her and giving the poor black girl unattainable useless dreams through the white Mary Janes.

Another example of racial self-contempt and internalized racism in the community is Geraldine, Pecola's schoolmate Junior's mother. Geraldine is a light-skinned black and very particular about keeping her distance from the dark and poor blacks. She also makes sure her son does not associate with the common black children. "She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers...Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud." (The Bluest Eye)

Pecola's eyes present the depth of her misery and self-loathing of the whole community. Their reactions push Pecola into madness, in which she believes she finally has acquired the bluest eyes. The bluest eyes symbolize promise of love and hope. She gives up her blackbody and life simply through a strong desire to possess blue eyes. Her mental breakdown shows traces of self-hatred, racism and internalized racism. Her quest for blue eyes is merely a symbol of her many faceted oppression.

## Conclusion

Implicit messages that whiteness is superior are everywhere, including the white baby doll given to Claudia, the idealization of Shirley Temple, the consensus that light-skinned Maureen is cuter than the other black girls, the idealization of white beauty in the movies, and Pauline Breedlove's preference for the little white girl she works for over her daughter. Adult women, having learned to hate the blackness of their own bodies, take this hatred out on their children. Mrs. Breedlove shares the conviction that Pecola is ugly, and lighter-skinned Geraldine curses Pecola's blackness. The person who suffers most from white beauty standards is, of course Pecola. She connects beauty with being loved and believes that if she possesses blue eyes, the cruelty in her life will be

replaced by affection and respect. This hopeless desire leads ultimately to madness, suggesting that the fulfillment of the wish for white beauty maybe even more tragic than the wish impulse itself.

However not all the black characters adore western standards of beauty. The novel also demonstrates black peoples who are aware of the danger of adopting western standards of beauty. Claudia's insight can also be read as decolonizing her mind from colonial suppression as she frees herself from white standards imposed on black people.

Toni Morrison creates African American women characters who are either destroyed by or protest against their African American communities. These women characters represent the steps which African American women need to take in order to regain their individual identity. Because the primary focus in her literature is African American women. Having these women characters as the focus in her novels gives them a voice with which they tell their story.

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## THE INNER CONFLICTS OF ASHIMA IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S NOVEL 'THE NAMESAKE'

Miss.Sunita & M.Gumashetti

Guest Lecturer, Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur, Karnataka

### Abstract

*Ashima as an Immigrant always feel alienation and cultural shock throughout her stay in foreign land. She dwells between to change or to adopt the culture of the host country. But she always follows her motherland culture. She views the new land with uneasiness. And she wishes to go back to her homeland. Her nostalgia makes her difficult to breath in a new land. Even though she has a company of her husband and children, still she suffers. She is surrounded with a constant burden.*

**Keywords:** immigrant, alienation, cultural shock, nostalgia.

### Introduction

Jhumpa Lahiri has stamped out a niche for herself among the contemporary popular Diaspora women writers. Jhumpa was born in London on July 11, 1967. Her parents are of Indian origin. Later in 1969, the family, moved to America. Lahiri grew up in Kingston, Rhode Island, where her father works as a librarian. Lahiri's debut short story collection, 'Interpreter of Maladies', won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and her first novel, 'The Namesake', was published in 2003. It deals with the life of an Indian immigrant family over the period 1968 to 2000A.D. It is the story of the Ganguli family's life.

*The Namesake* follows the Ganguli family through its journey from Calcutta to Cambridge to the Boston suburbs. The novel describes the struggles and hardships of a Bengali couple i.e. Ashoke and Ashima, who migrated to the United States. Ashima is the heart of the story. Ashima as an Immigrant always feel alienation in foreign land.

Ashima presents the image of a simple, sober and traditional housewife. Her life presents very few instances of the enthusiastic or the exotic in married life. As for her children, she performs her duties silently and scrupulously, without expecting anything in return.

The writer describes Ashima for the first time as a pretty and tall girl. Her complexion is on the "dark side of fair" (NS 9). She

resembles the film actress Madhabi Mukherjee. At the age of nineteen, she faces the prospect of being married to Ashoke, an Indian Bengali studying in the United States. As is common in India, the girl is given a brief test. In the present case, she is asked to recite a few stanzas from Wordsworth's poem 'The daffodils' which she does conscientiously. When asked if she was capable of living alone in that cold country, she poses the innocent counter-question: "Won't he be there?" (NS 9)

The marriage ceremony does not take long to be solemnized and when she leaves in the company of her husband for America, there are a large number of her relatives at the airport to see her off.

Moving to the US after her marriage, Ashima's status as an expatriate is handled in great detail. Ashima represents the majority of expatriate women, including Indians, who are reluctant to change or to adopt the culture of the host country. This could be due to the fact that Ashima does not work outside the home, she did not pursue higher education in the host country; reluctance to change can also be a direct result of the fact that she and others like her are not fully exposed to the cultural mores of this new society. She always follows her motherland dressing style like wearing only *Saris*. We see her dependence on husband and family for comfort and support.

She reaches eight thousand kilometres from her home in Cambridge, where she settles into a routine where her role is

traditional: to wait for her husband to come back from the university and prepare food for him. She sees the world around her differently than her husband. She comes to the United States as a devoted wife, not asking questions and without an opinion of hers. She sees the new land with unease, disinclined (the feeling of not wanting) to make her home:

For the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all. It's not so much the pain, which she knows, somehow she will survive. It's the consequence; motherhood in a foreign land.... That it was happening so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved, had made it more miraculous still. But she is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and sparse (NS 5-6).

She wishes to return to her homeland, the land of her birth. As she tells her husband, "I'm saying I don't want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It's not right. I want to go back" (NS 33). Ashima looks at this foreign land where she must now stay and every change of place leaves her more disconcerted than the previous one. When they move to a university town near Boston,

For Ashima, migrating to the suburbs feels more drastic, more distressing than the move from Calcutta to Cambridge had been.... For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts.... Like pregnancy, being a foreigner, Ashima believes, is something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect (NS 49-50).

The loneliness of Ashima after the birth of her son Gogol is portrayed realistically. She wants to go home where her child will have her adorable grandparents and a host of relatives. The loneliness and claustrophobia

of being shut up in her home leave Ashima in a very morose mood:

... on her own with Gogol for the first time in the silent house, suffering from a sleep deprivation far worse than the first of her jet lag, (Ashima) sits by the three-sided window in the living room on one of the triangular chairs and cries the whole day. She cries as she feeds him, and as she puts him to sleep, and as he cries between sleeping and feeding.....One day she cries when she goes to the kitchen to make dinner and discovers that they've run out of rice (NS 34).

As her life turns more and more around her child, she slowly begins to make incursions into the outside world - pushing the small parmon shopping expeditions:

For the first time, she pushes him through the balmy streets of Cambridge ... The errand takes longer than usual; for now she is repeatedly stopped on the street, and in the aisles of the supermarket by perfect strangers, all Americans, suddenly taking notice of her, smiling, congratulating her for what she's done. They look curiously, appreciatively, into the pram (NS 34).

But the most gruelling experience is "motherhood in a foreign land" because it is to happen "so far from home, unmonitored and unobserved by those she loved" (NS 6). After the birth of her son, she wants to go back to Calcutta to raise him there among her relatives but she knows she can't do it for sake of her husband. Ashima "is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare" (NS 6).

Alone at home, she holds out her baby, singing lullabies and crying too, moved as she is by her state of loneliness. This feeling of loneliness increases when they move from university apartments to a university town outside of Boston. To her the entire stay in a foreign land appears nothing less than a life-long pregnancy, "a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts" (NS 49).

After her baby grows up in a toddler, she takes him to the public library on Friday for Children's Story Time. To keep herself busy, once a week, she sells thirty Samosas at the international coffee shop, for twenty-five cents each. After Gogol turns four, she drops him off and fetches him from the university-run nursery school three mornings a week. When Gogol is at school, she passes time sullenly all by herself. She starts sitting in the reading room of the public library writing letters to her mother or reading magazines.

Two years later, they move into their own house at 67, Pemberton Road. The neighbourhood is all American. Her Indian sense of cleanliness and purity is offended by their messy ways, like wearing shoes inside home but she can do little to change it. There are some Bengalis living in America with who the Gangulis are in contact and on occasions like birthdays or festivals, they organize get-togethers. Events like these do give them strength to live in this alien land. She also takes up the job of an assistant in a library to pass time since Gogol has grown up and joined school.

The problems of parenting do come her way. Gogol's name is a big problem for her son and therefore for her also. Much against their wishes, they cannot change the name at the school level. Finally, Gogol himself does it when he graduates. She also has a daughter named Sonia now but her growth does not cause any such problem. As a mother, Ashima performs her role very well. In this, she lives up to the image of an Indian mother. It is only when she expects her children to grow as traditional Bengalis that disenchantment awaits her.

In Ashoke's absence Ashima takes a job at the library just to pass the time; especially since she sees her 'children's independence' growing from more to more, she feels she has given birth to vagabonds. She is naturally shocked beyond words to hear the news of her husband's sudden death. Everything changes, especially with her, at this unexpected news: "For the first time in her life, Ashima has no desire to escape to Calcutta" (NS 183).

After the death of her husband, she does not wish to leave America because her husband breathed his last here. "Now I know why he went to Cleveland," she tells people, refusing, even in death, to utter her husband's name. "He was teaching me how to live alone" (NS 183).

The Pemberton Road flat is sold and Ashima decides to spend six months in the States and six months in India. "It is a solitary, somewhat premature version of the future she and her husband had planned when he was alive" (NS 275). Her ideal world is shattered to pieces: "Ashima feels lonely suddenly, horribly, permanently alone" (NS 278). She missed her life in India for thirty-three years and now she will miss the country in which she had loved her husband. She decides to move away desperately after the last celebration of Christmas together with her children.

Ashima has learnt to adjust with the reality of multiculturalism in America. On the whole, she presents the image of an ideal, all-giving and all-suffering Indian mother. She pursued her interest in music, but here also she does not assert her individuality, rather she follows in the footsteps of her late husband who idolized the life of a wanderer.

### Conclusion

Ashima has changed according to the situation. She did not completely abandon her culture but she is now no more rigid in accepting the new culture. She changed according to the need of the hour. But her beginning life in new country is struggling one with mental conflicts.

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## ‘CULTURE’ IF AVOIDED A VOID: EXPLICIT THROUGH CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI’S NOVEL *NEELA: VICTORY SONG*

**K.Chorna Deepa**

Guest Lecturer in English, Sri Parasakthi College for Women, Courtallam

### Abstract

*Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels mainly focus on the culture and tradition. Heritage, tradition and culture are innate, it is handed over from generations to generations. Heritage is something which is inherited from one's ancestors. Tradition is the handing down of statements, beliefs, customs, and so on, especially by words or by practice. Culture is defined as the behaviours and beliefs of a particular social, ethnic, or age group, as well as the ways of living built up by people. In the novel, Victory Song, Neela, as a protagonist stand as a prototype in accepting the traditions but taking brave decisions to bring in great social changes. The current study is about the decades during freedom struggle depicted in the novel, through the prism of New Historicism.*

**Keywords:** *New Historicism, Culture, Tradition, Freedom Struggle, Courage, Brave.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the major novelists of Indian diaspora who have achieved desirable positions within a short artistic span. Belonging to the group of young Indian writers Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's position as a South Asian writer in English is as distinct as well established. She writes for children as well as adults and has published novels in multiple genres, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, and fantasy. She mainly focuses on the culture and tradition, her characters stick on to the culture in most of her novels. As a diasporic writer, culture plays well in the hands of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Set against a dramatic historical background, *Neela: Victory Song* not only educates young readers about India's culture and past but also manages to entertain brilliantly with a likable protagonist and a plot with full of suspense. All these make the novel interesting and at the same time it preaches the history and culture. The realistic dialog and description, made the readers to live in 1940s.

Indian cultural history has been derived by the fascinating customs, traditions, and rituals. India is one of the culturally and religiously diverse countries in the world. India's diversity has inspired many writers to ink down the way they comprehend the

country's culture. These writings presents a complex and sometimes conflicting picture of the culture of India since the concept of Indian culture is a very complex and complicated matter. It makes the realities of 'Indianness' awfully complicated. Core values, such as respect, kindness and integrity, are usually passed through families or generations.

*Neela: Victory Song* is Chitra Banerjee's refreshing tale, featuring a young female protagonist who joins the struggle against imperialistic white rule when Indian Independence movement was gaining momentum. Neela is the protagonist, a courageous girl. She has brave thoughts, opinions and hopes, even she is very stubborn about bringing back her father from prison to home who was imprisoned by the Britishers. Neela, later realizes that true courage is not only being fearless of the whole lot, but also the ability to face her own uncertainties. The setting of the story is the decade of 1940, when India was under the British rule. The author's attempt of writing from the perspective of a young teenager, creates lump in throat and the novel snatch away into the rustic world. It has the setting when things were a lot simpler and life wasn't easy at this time. It was the hard time when the British made it difficult for the Indians to execute

national dances and sing national songs, such as Vande Mataram. The protagonist, Neela made a brave attempt to learn to sing the national song. Neela and her family somehow managed to find a way to persuade their traditional mode of living. Through this novel the author made an attempt to explore issues of village life, gender equality, indifference, and reactions to oppression.

The prime tradition of Indian is people giving importance to the family values and family bondage. The bondage between relatives is quite pretty firm and appeals to everyone in this country. The bondage is obvious from the feelings of her for her father and from the steps taken by Neela to bring back his father who is jailed by the British. The very Indian culture doesn't allow a girl at the age of twelve to independently move around in a town like Calcutta during the period of 1940. But she makes it come possible and accepts the challenges in rescuing her father.

Marriage at the age of twelve is common and was prevalent in India, in those days. The arrangements for Neela's marriage were done by her mother when her father was in prison. Poverty in India has been cited as one of the cause for child marriage. Child marriage of girls is a way out of desperate economic conditions, and a way to reduce expenses of a poor family. The protagonist of the novel protests this and escapes from her marriage. She raises questions that why is there rules for women and not for men. It was a time where women are not allowed to voice out their feelings. But some women freedom fighters were emerged and can consider Neela as one of the representative character in one way.

Why does everyone feel they have to control girls even after they're married? Why are women expected to sit quietly and silently, embroidering and making pickles while men get to make all the important decisions and go to all the

exciting places? Why can't a girl be a freedom fighter? (40).

The words of Neela are vivacious and it creates curiosity for readers. Though her mother would not admit her moving to Calcutta alone, she tactfully escapes to Calcutta from the marriage. She is much aware of the deeds going on around her. In every possible way she makes her effort to meet Boaul who is the only person to bring tidings from Calcutta. She violates the protocols of girls in the society of 40's only out of her love for family and country. When she accomplishes her mission she is received with happiness and pride. By this very act she created a change in society also. It is explicit that social changes are brought about by the changes in personnel. It is obvious through the words of Dr.Ruchi Tandon who stated in his *Family Dynamics* that "Independently of any changes in the value patterns, institutional patterns, and quantitative distribution of possessions and rewards, changes may occur in the particular persons occupying the roles of a social system" (Tandon 263). Changes in social norms are inevitable and each and every individual is to be blamed for the overall changes brought in a society. The fire of feminism is there in Neela's ethics, ideals and motifs. Such a feminine role shouldering responsibility in a prominent family and society made a great shift in societal norms. Tandon, also states that "At a very concrete level of analysis, it is always important who occupies a particular social position. At this level, everyone is unique in his capacities and developed abilities" (Tandon 263).

Many of the events that took place in this historical story are believable and probably happened to many girls in that period of time. There were a lot of emotions that Neela and her mother had. She was very brave to risk being imprisoned by the British and search for her proud, but injured father. She was rewarded because of her valour and bravery and was able to bring her father back to their

home, near the city of Calcutta. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has written a wonderful book and created a firm and courageous character Neela. By fulfilling her dream, Neela shows us that it is never too late to try to accomplish anything.

Neela, a partial representative character breaks the ground and stands as a pioneer of today's Indian culture, tradition and heritage of India accepting the responsibilities of being an active member in a developing society to bring about great changes to happen.

Through her Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni skilfully portrayed the Indian historical events.

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## A READER RESPONSE ANALYSIS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE'S LUCID MOMENTS

**Ms. Anis Fathima Faisal**

Assistant Professor of English & Part Time Ph.D. Research Scholar  
Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women (Deshpande Autonomous), Chennai

### Abstract

*Shashi Deshpande, a well known Indian novelist began her writing career by writing short stories. Her stories are published in the collections titled Collected Stories Volume 1 and 2. The story Lucid Moments from the Collected Stories Volume 2 gives scope for a reader response analysis. The story Lucid Moments revolves around Sumati, an ailing mother who is obsessed in finding the name of her mother who died during childbirth. When Sumati is in her death bed, her obsession makes her pose questions to her daughter Sujata, who is at a loss to answer her mother. As the story unfolds, the readers get to understand the pain and suffering the protagonist goes through in her quest for her mother's name. The paper is an attempt to analyse Shashi Deshpande's short story Lucid Moments in a reader response perspective.*

Shashi Deshpande, a well known Indian novelist began her writing career by writing short stories. Her stories are published in the collections titled *Collected Stories Volume 1* and *2*. The story *Lucid Moments* from the *Collected Stories Volume 2* gives scope for a reader response Analysis.

The reader response analysis focuses on the relationship between the text and the reader. Wolfgang Iser has given his views on reader response approach as follows, "A literary work has two poles : the artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic is the author's creation and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader or the reading process" (Sinha 212).

The reading process leads to filling of the gaps in the text and according to Iser, "each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own ways [...] as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled" (285). When we read texts, Iser says we "oscillate between the building and breaking of illusions" (293). The interpretation of the text happens based on the act of recreation where "we look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their non-fulfillment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject" (Iser 295).

In *Lucid Moments*, the narrator Sujata's mother, Sumati is sick and is hospitalised.

The narrator and her father take care of her, as the story unfolds, we come to know that Sujata addresses her mother as Akka. As a reader one has the doubt as to why is a mother been addressed as Akka? Is there a particular reason behind addressing the mother as Akka.

The narrator's mother is moaning in pain, she wants her glasses, the narrator and her father try to concentrate and understand her utterances. Sujata analyses her relationship with her mother and she feels so strange, because she has never been so responsible with her mother. Here again the reader has a query as to what is the reason behind such a strained mother-daughter relationship. Since her mother fell sick in the hospital, she has been taking care of her. When Sumati wakes up, she questions her daughter why did she call her Akka? Sujata does not have a reply but the reader can understand the reason as the story unfolds. Sumati questions her daughter if she knows her name and Sujata replies affirmatively, Yes and then Sumati talks to her daughter about her mother, she says, "My mother ... I never ... never knew..." (Deshpande 21). The ellipsis used in the dialogue gives rise to the gaps that the reader has to fill. The reader comes to understand that Sumati did not know her mother's name and thus the reader can make assumptions about Sumati's life, may be her mother died in

childbirth or may be she was a child born out of wedlock. As the reader keeps guessing the sequence of the story, the author's explanation, makes the reader to change the perception and understand the story.

Sujata's mother, Sumati is disoriented and confused. Sometimes she calls Sujata as Vasanti, her sister-in-law or Shilpa, her younger daughter. Sumati again questions her daughter, "What is my mother's name?" and Sujata who does not know her grandmother's name replies, she does not know the name (Deshpande 21). When Sumati asks for her mother's name, the reader gets to understand Sumati's quest for her mother's name and her obsession is obvious with her posing repeated questions about her mother's name. Sujata knows that her grandmother died during her childbirth and wonders why is her mother asking her such questions.

Sumati knew whenever people addressed her they have always mentioned "your mother" and have not specified her name (Deshpande 22). She keeps asking her daughter and she in turn replies, "I don't know, Akka." (Deshpande 22).

Though Sujata was taking care of her mother in the hospital, it is her sister, Shilpa who had a good relationship with her mother. The relationship between Sumati and Sujata was tenuous and they did not share their needs with each other. The reason behind such a tenuous relationship is because Sujata had her own problems and she did not want anyone to interfere. When her mother showed grief regarding Sujata's childlessness, she did not like her mother's intrusion into her world of darkness. When Sujata watched her sister's children, she had felt a void within her. The reader is left with many questions to ponder, what could be the reason for Sujata's childlessness, What is Sumati's sickness and why is she obsessed in knowing her mother's name. While the reader ponders on, the narrator continues with the story to help in fill the gaps. Sujata gives a sponge wash to

her mother and looks at her mother's changed state. After her metastasis, she has lost a lot of weight, her face caved in and her eyes were sunk. She has removed her jewelry and the only thing that made her remind of her old self was her red sticker bindi. When Sujata was giving her mother a sponge bath and got her ready, she was reminded of her sister's conversation with her daughter and how she gave her bath and told her "you're all ready now" (Deshpande 23). Here the reader gets the hint that though Sujata does not have children, she play mother-substitute to Sumati, her mother who has been longing for her mother's love and care.

When she takes care of her mother, she becomes the mother and the reader can understand the role of Sujata as a lovable caring and affectionate daughter. Sujata and her father take turns to take care of Sumati. They decide to take lunch when Sumati is asleep. The father sets the table and Sujata can understand her father's feelings. He was a strong man but when her mother fell sick, he had written letters to both the daughters and asked them to come home. Sujata had to leave her work and Shilpa had to leave her children and come. When the daughters came, he understood their commitments and wanted them to return.

Sujata stayed back to take care of her mother. When they had food, her father asked her about her mother's condition. Sujata tells him that her mother wanted to know her grandmother's name and if he knew her name, it would be helpful. But he too didn't know her name.

While Sumati sleeps, a neighbour visits them to invite her for her daughter's wedding. Sumati utters her name "Usha" but is disinterested. She then continues to talk about her mother:

I was ... first child ... she died ... very young ... don't know ... looks ...

No photos of her?

I never ... my father ...

He never spoke of her?

She looked like me?

I think ... you are ... different  
(Deshpande 24)

The ellipses in the dialogues gives scope for the reader to fill the mother's thoughts. The reader can understand that Sumati was the first child while mother died when was very young, She has not seen her mother's face, she does not know how her mother looked, for she has not seen a photo of her mother. She has never spoken to her father and her father too has never spoken about the mother to her. She questions herself if her mother looked like her and answers negatively that she does not have a resemblance to her mother.

She is reminded of the neighbour's daughter's wedding and then thinks of the pre wedding rites done and wonders why the priest utters the names of the father-grandfather, great grandfather and why don't they call the names of the mothers of the family. "Mother's name ... why don't they ...?" Sumati's words make Sujata too to question as to why don't the priest call the names of the matriarchs in the pre wedding rites. The reader gets to understand Sumati's desperate need to know her mother's name. Sumati is too obsessed to know her mother's name.

Sujata is reminded of an incident from the past, where her paternal grandmother was angry with her mother. When she questioned her mother, she replied "I don't know" (Deshpande 25). She was not interested in questioning anyone but as she was nearing death, her attitudes have changed. Sujata wonders why she was angry and the questions posed by her mother makes her feel that her mother is in the verge of death and that is the reason why she is posing such questions about her mother. Sujata sits with a book and hears a lizard cluck and when the books slips she wakes to check her mother and both of them reassure their presence.

She reads her husband, Shyam's letter and wishes to be back home and continue with her routine job. She sleeps and in her

dream, she asks her mother's question "What is your name?" to a girl in the beach who sells beads (Deshpande 26). In her dream her mother screams that she is blind and dies, Sujata wakes up and finds her mother is alive. Her father wants her to help, as her mother is moaning. They plan to call the Doctor Ramesh. While her father went to call the doctor, Sujata prays to God for her mother to have a peaceful death. When her father comes back, his dialogue is incomplete. The gaps in the conversation can be easily filled by the reader to understand the difficult situation faced by the father and the daughter. He asks his daughter, "Is she..." (Deshpande 27). While Sujata who has understood her father's question, answers, "No" (Deshpande 27). The Doctor arrives and examines Sumati and he understands the plight of the patient. When Sujata calls his name, "Ramesh..." (Deshpande 28). He understands her unspoken question. He tells her that he will arrange for a nurse. She decides to inform people to come as she knew that her mother is in a critical condition. When she opened her eyes again, Sujata asked her if she wanted anything, She just replied, "You ... are you..." (Deshpande 28). The reader has to fill the blanks left of the incomplete dialogues of Sumati, you are my mother or are you my mother which shows her obsessive love for her mother.

When Ramesh brings a nurse, her mother was asleep. Sujata finds it difficult to see her mother's plight. She even thinks of killing her mother. Her mother continues to moan and the nurse then goes out of the room. Sujata gives her the moral support, "Akka, I'm with you" (Deshpande 28). She prays for her mother's soul to depart peacefully, "Go gently. Mother, don't struggle, go gently" (Deshpande 28). As she prays, her mother cries and the tears streak down. They don't stop her tears. She dies and her body relaxes. Her father puts her mother's hand by her side, while Sujata unable to tolerate the pain and anguish faints.

When she wakes up her sister and her husband have arrived. Her husband, Shyam, requests her to come back soon. He too talks to his wife and the dialogues have ellipses. "You look..." (Deshpande 29). Though her husband feels his wife is sick and miserable, Sujata feels she can manage the situation.

She gets her mother's picture enlarged and framed. While her sister questions her, "Why did you ...? It makes her so ... really dead" (Deshpande 29). The ellipses again gives scope for the reader to complete the sister's concern. She does not want to think that their mother is dead. The picture will symbolise her death. While she still lingers in their memory. So they decide to hang the picture but they will not keep kumkum or flowers.

Shilpa then cries, while complaining that it was she who took care of her rather than Sujata. Sujata was indifferent once, but with the mother's critical condition, Sujata had taken care of her so well. She tells her sister that their mother wanted to know their grandmother's name. Shilpa feels it is of no use after their mother's death, but for Sujata it matters a lot, she wants to trace and find the name of her maternal grandmother. Though she cannot prove to the late mother, for her self-satisfaction, she would like to know the name and that will give an identity to the anonymous grandmother.

When Shilpa's daughter comes to see the picture, Sujata lifts her and tells her, She is your grandmother and her name is "Sumati" (Deshpande 30). And Putti, her niece tells in

return, "I am Karuna." (Deshpande 30). Sujata and Shilpa too join and say, "am Sujata" and "am Shilpa" (Deshpande 30). They stand together and laugh, while Sujata feels her mother will have pleasure to hear the laughter of her children who knew the identity of the mother and the grandmother.

The author tries to create gaps in many places in the story, for the reader to fill and understand the conversation. The reader gains aesthetic experience by promptly filling the gaps and understanding the message conveyed by the various characters. In the interpretation of the story the reader experiences the act of recreation, where the reader tries to question, accept and reject and change the decisions and expectation as the story unfolds.

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## SUBALTERN VOICE IN ROHINTON MISTRY'S *A FINE BALANCE*

Dr.P.Balamurugan

Assistant Professor of English, NMSSVN College, Madurai

### Abstract

*Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance creates a picture of the rural India so backward with its landlordism and casteism. The novelist presents the corporate life of two Dalit tailors and two Parsi characters who are shattered by the Emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1975. Along with political motif, Mistry exposes the misfortunes, discrimination, oppression and the endless suffering of the Dalits in India*

**Rohinton Mistry**, the well known Parsi Novelist graphically presents the sufferings and problems of the untouchables in his epic-like novel *A Fine Balance*. In fact, Mistry in the novel devotes one chapter titled "In a Village By a River" to create a vision of the rural India so backward with its landlordism and casteism. Reading superficially, it seems that the plot of the novel centres round four characters who live through the Emergency declared by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of in 1975. The novel artistically narrates the corporate life of two Dalit tailors, Ishwar and Om Prakasj Darji, Maneck Kohlah, a Parsi student and Dina Dalal, an attractive Parsi widow and how the Emergency intrudes in it and destroys it. Mistry manipulates the story in such a way it unfolds each major political and communal upheaval in India from the Partition of 1947 to the macabre aftermath of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination in 1984. In the post-modernistic sense of blending of history and fantasy, Mistry weaves national history with the personal experiences of the central characters.

At the outset of the novel *A Fine Balance*, quoting Balzac Mistry declares that "this tragedy is not a fiction. All is true". Mistry in the novel fervently attempts to expose the misfortunes, discrimination, oppression and the endless suffering of the Dalits in India after independence. Though many Dalit writers and other reputed literary personalities have focused upon the stark realities of the pitiable existence of Dalits,

their problems are not properly represented. Ranjit Guha has rightly observed that "The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism and bourgeois nationalist elitism" (quoted in Stephen Morton 50). Lack of common language and a homogeneous identity prevent the Dalit and underprivileged finding due space in Indian literature. Therefore, Subhendu Mund stresses the exigent need of representing the cause of Dalits in literature. "I believe, is the want of good literature in an adequate magnitude that can create affirmative responses among the masses to change popular opinion"(71)

Living in distant Canada, Mistry is haunted by the excruciating experiences of the helpless underdogs who are crushed down by the so called upper class and the denial of their legitimate rights in India. His primary concern in the novel seems to show how Om Prakash and Ishwar, two characters in the novel leave their village harassed by the brutal caste system and come to the city to eke out their livelihood. But to give the novel a historic dimension, Mistry digresses away and portrays the backwardness of their village. With the symbolic title of the chapter "A Village By the River" Mistry claims this kind of oppression and discrimination is a common feature in Indian society

Mistry wants to affirm that it is impossible to separate casteism from Indian mind. S.G. Sardesai and Dilip Bose in their book *Marxism and Bhagvat Gita* remark, "If we cannot imagine other religions without

their church and institutionalized hierarchy, Hinduism is inconceivable without caste”(88). In a similar vein, Devendra Chaubey remarks, “Needless to say, this untouchability established by birth or caste is such that it is never ending”(65). Mistry too in *A Fine Balance* relates untouchability with the Hindu “darmic order”(88). In the novel the Brahmin Pandits of the village collectively declare:

There was a proper place for everyone in the world, and as long as each one minded his place, they would endure and emerge unharmed through the darkness of Kaliyug. But if there were transgressions – if the order was polluted – then there was no telling what calamities might befall the universe.(101)

Mistry presents a cogent illustration of the happenings in rural India in the novel. In the caste-oriented village, Dukhi Mochi, belonging to Chamaar caste of tanners and leather workers, has “accepted from childhood, the occupation preordained for his present incarnation” (95). The village is by a small river and the Chamaars are “permitted to live section down stream from the Brahmins and landlords” (96). There is an “invisible line of caste” (97) which the downtrodden can never cross. Like his ancestors, Dukhi ever fated to live “with humiliation and forbearance as his constant companions” (97). In this most backward village, where landlordism rules the roost, the poor untouchable women, in spite of all manmade segregations, are easily targeted by the land owning Zamindar. It is reported in the novel that Buddhu’s wife “refused to go to the field with Zamindar’s son, so they have shaved her head and waked her naked through the square” (97). The poverty stricken women who just live on the husk thrown out by their overlords, to save themselves and their children from hunger-pinch become vulnerable to sexual abuses. They are easily frightened with warnings and punishments by the upper class thugs who exploit their ignorance and innocence quite shamelessly. Thus, Roopa, Dukhi’s wife, who is ruthlessly

raped by a lecherous watchman of an orange orchard. She goes there in the dead of night to steal oranges for her starving children. The upper class watchman who pounces upon her, brings her around and appeases his sexual urges, frightening her off and on with his refrain “I only have to shout once” (Mistry 99).

The cruel landlords are green with envy at the birth of male issues in Dalit families. The caste Hindus fret and fume and blame it on the subversion of the time honoured social order.

What is happening in the world? They complained why two sons in an untouchable house, and not even one in ours? What could a chamaar pass on to his sons that the gods should reward him thus? Something was wrong, the Law of Manu had been subverted. Someone in the village had definitely committed an act to offend the deities. (100)

Therefore, the Thakurs and the Pandkts begin to “whip the world into shape” (101) by abusing, beating up and inflicting all kinds of horrible punishments on the Chamaars. Dukhi, for instance, gets a good thrashing as a substitute for a glass of goat’s milk which is his daily wage. Going down in memory lane, Dukhi recounts how brutally and inhumanly some of the elders in his caste were once punished. As a reportage in a journal he narrates the atrocities of the landlords.

For walking on the upper-caste side of the street Sita was stoned, though not to death, the stones had eased at first blood. Gambhir was less fortunate; he had molten lead poured into his ears because he ventured within hearing range of the temple while prayers were in progress. Dayaram, reneging on an agreement to plough a landlord’s field, had been forced to eat the landlord’s excrement in the village square. Dhiraj tried to negotiate in advance with Pandit Ghanshyam the wages for chopping wood, instead of settling for the few sticks he could expect at the end of the day; the Pandit got upset, accused Dhiraj of poisoning his cows, and had him hanged. (108-09)

As knowledge is the true deliverer of the marginalized from exploitation and oppression, the landlords by all means try to deny them education. Narayan and his brother Ishwar who were denied the chance of getting education, stealthily enters a school through the window. They take slates and chalks from a cupboard, sit cross-legged on the floor as they have so often watched the upper-caste children do and begin to draw lines. The teacher who enters in all on a sudden, catches hold of them and treat them as inhumanly as possible. Calling the boys "Chamaar rascals" he "twisted their ears till they yelped" he slapped Iswar six times in quick succession across the face. Later Dukhi, the father of the boys takes up the matter with Pandit Lalluram who is known "for the sacred knowledge locked inside his large, shiny cranium"(111). Poor Dukhi is safely dismissed by the learned Pandit with the usual exhortation that he has to adhere to caste rules. Then raising his voice in anger the Pandit shouts that, Your children entered the classroom. They polluted the place. They touched instruments of learning. They defiled slates and chalks, which upper-caste children would touch. You are lucky there wasn't a holy book like the Bhagavad Gita in that cupboard, no sacred texts. Or the punishment would have been more final. (113-14)

When Narayan and Iswar are very small boys, their father Dukhi sends them to the city where they live under the protection of Ashraf, a Muslim tailor. Ashraf has already advised Dukhi that he and his family are in danger because of the evil caste system. Ashraf has told Dukhi that the only possible way to escape is that he and his family should leave the village and settle in a city. What Mistry insists on through Ashraf is the common solution suggested by many for the age-old problem of casteism. There has been always an urge on the part of the rural youth to escape to cities in search of employment which may give them some fooling.

In the novel, Mistry brings in a few Gandhian leaders, who in a meeting address the city-dwellers and exhort them to "expunge all caste prejudice from their thoughts, words and deeds" (108). The people applaud the speakers as advised and take an oath. Dukhi listening to the speeches has the doubt whether "the Zamindars in our village would ever clap for a speech about getting rid of the caste system" (108). Ashraf replies, "they would clap, go on in the same old way" (108).

Mistry caricatures the Indian electoral system which is nothing but a farce in his view. During the elections the landlords cast the votes whereas the subaltern voters have to leave the thumb impression and the ballots. Since Narayan gains political awareness he refuses to leave the ballot with the landlords. The enraged landlords beat him to death and set his hut ablaze, burning the inmates alive, except Naryan's son Om Prakash and brother Ishwar who are away. Thus Om and Ishwar become helpless, leave the village and set out their journey to Bombay. Mukul Kesavan, while commenting on the tragic as well as realistic aspect of the novel says that this section of the novel "reads like the script of a bad Bengali film" (80).

Having lived in Bombay for a few years, Om and Ishwar return to the city where Ashraf lives to find a Chamaar bride for Om. They learn from Ashraf that the village landlord Thakur Dharmasi is powerful politician and his domain has extended to the cities and his monstrous activities still continue. He is also in charge of the Family Planning Centre, where he collects the cash and benefits for himself and denies what is due to those who undergo sterilization. Poor Om and Ishwar are forcibly taken into the centre at the connivance of Thakur and Om's testicles are removed. Finally, finding no way to live either in that city or in the village, they go back to Bombay only to become beggars. Mistry very carefully brings into the novel the transition of one time landlords into powerful politician in the democratic set up and

continuing their atrocities. Savita Goel in this connection observes that, "Mistry stresses the fact in postcolonial India the plight of common people has not ameliorated and they have to face the same exploitation and injustice" (192).

Mistry's description of the problems of untouchability with sordid details of age-old caste system, and the rural poverty-stricken peasantry reads like one culled from Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchables*. Unlike Anand, Mistry fails to indicate a solution to the problem of untouchability that has been eating into the vitals of the country. For instance, Ananta, in Anand's *The Big Heart* returns to his home town Amristar, organizes the Thathliars and finally lays down his life for their sake. He says: "I feel I ought to do something good before I die, so that the others who come after can be a little happier" (143). In *A Fine Balance* also Om Prakash has a dream of gathering "a small army of Chamaars" and providing them "with weapons, then march to the landlord's house" (149). Mistry's extreme skepticism and hopelessness do not allow him to offer any

sign of redemption and consequently Om's dream never materializes but he becomes an invalid beggar similarly, the Gandhians also fail in their mission.

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## THE CONCEPT OF INDIANNESS IN R.K. NARAYAN'S THE GUIDE

Gargi Gohil

Associate Professor (English), Shree Umiya Arts and Commerce College, Sola, Ahmedabad

### Abstract

*The Guide reveals the Indian way of life and also the culture and tradition of India. R.K. Narayan has used typical Indian characters and Indian atmosphere to portray Indian culture. The main characters of this novel are Raju, Rosie and Marco. R.K. Narayan has given a true social picture of India through 'The Guide'. The traits of Indian manners and customs are also reflected in this novel. Hospitality of Indians is a well known trait all over the world. Narayan has given a clear picture of India at the time of narration without idealizing the country and he has not also condemned it. The poverty of India has been reflected with a personal touch of the author. The villagers are shown as suffering from poverty and ignorance and their illiteracy has been reflected as the root cause for all their sufferings. There are as gullible and kind hearted as any Indian village habitats.*

This paper aims at annotating the concept of Indianness in the novel *The Guide* by R.K. Narayan. The task has been taken to analyse the Indian characters and Indian atmosphere as presented by Narayan in this novel to exemplify the culture and tradition of India. In 1930's three major Indian English novelists, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao based their novels on significant themes that they discovered such as emancipation from foreign rule, East – West relationship, the communal problems and the plight of untouchables, the landless poor and the economically exploited people. Mulk Raj Anand's major novels *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) are all written as a crusade against social exploitation. R. K. Narayan also touched the social evils like casteism, inequality, injustice, gender – bias and superstitious themes and had added them into the themes of Indian novels in English through his novels *The Guide* (1958), *The Financial Experts* (1951) and *The English Teacher* (1945). The Indian Sanskrit rhythm in the syntax of English has been created by Raja Rao in almost all his novels *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), and exhibited the myths and legends of Hinduism as well.

The writings of these authors – with their narrative techniques and style – make Indian

Literature in English to expand its literary landscape. They had created characters that are unique in World Literature. Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswamy was born on the tenth of October 1907 in Chennai (Madras) in a Brahmin family. He was nicknamed as Kunjappa at home. Because of his father's transfer of job, Narayan's family moved to Mysore. But Narayan was left behind to the care of his grandmother, Ammani, by his parents. As all Indian grandmother's, Narayan's grandmother was also a good narrator of bedtime stories. Her influence made him to learn the art of story – telling as well as the classical tradition of India in a primary level. Narayan himself portrays his grandmother's image and of how much talent she possessed at her old age, in his autobiography, *My Days*: "Grand motherhood was a wrong vocation for her: She ought to have been a school inspectress. She had an absolute passion to teach and mould a young mind." (1986:11). It was she who taught him Tamil alphabets as well as classical songs. This early education of Indian classical myths and tradition helped him to store everything in his mind and later helped him to add meaning to his life and work. R. K. Narayan started writing from his childhood. He observed the life of the people around with utter care. Later, he made use of those characters in his novels. Thus, his characters

have an Indian flavor and they are often drawn from middle class and lower middle class society. Narayan had a passion for journalism and he chose journalism as his career. He wrote for newspapers and magazines. In the fifties he had been to America and naturally, nothing could inspire our author's Indian heart from abroad. He remained an Indian throughout his life. He framed characters with an Indian artistic approach for over sixty years in Indian Writing in English. In all his Pre - Independence novels family is the matrix. Most of them were auto biographical. *Swami and His Friends* (1935) was his first novel which Narayan published because of the recommendation of Graham Greene. Narayan has written about ten novels and hundred and fifty one short stories. He chooses his characters from the middle class of South India. Like, other Regional Novelists, the locale of Narayan's novels is Malgudi and its surroundings. If one wants to appreciate the delicate humanity and culture of India, one should read Narayan's novels and this is a comment given by Margaret Parton. *The Guide* (1958) has won Narayan the Sahitya Academy Award. He heard about an incident in which some Brahmins prayed to God for rain in knee-deep water for twelve days and then it rained.

This became an inspirational factor for him to develop the plot for his novel 'The Guide'. He has portrayed typical Indian character in this novels filled with Indian emotions and also symbols representing Indian tradition. *The Guide* as a novel covers many sins and many virtues of its characters. The main characters of this novel is Raju, Rosie and Marco. R.K. Narayan has given a true social picture of India through *The Guide*. The protagonist, Raju, goes to the Mangala village on the Sarayu river and he stays in a temple on the river bank. There he meets Velan, a simple villager, and it was this meeting which was fated to involve him in endless trouble. It is to Velan, at a later date,

Raju narrates his past life as a successful tourist guide 'Railway Raju' and a rail road station food vendor. Once Raju, as a tourist, guide happened to meet a couple, Marco and Rosie. Marco concentrates more on other materialistic affairs and gives less attention towards his beautiful wife Rosie. Raju helped Marco in his researches at the same time he helped Rosie to realize her ambition of becoming a dancer. He becomes very close to her. He was too much infatuated by Rosie. He neglected his friend Gaffur's warning and even his mother's advice. He turned a deaf ear even to the voice of his own soul. The only reality in my life and consciousness was Rosie. All my mental powers were now turned to keep her within my reach, and keep her smiling all the time, neither of which was at all easy. I would willingly have kept at her side all the time, as a sort of parasite. (*The Guide*, 1958:104) His over familiarity with a married woman becomes a fatal flaw to his tragedy. Rosie with her dream of becoming a dancer forgot her husband and the sanctity of married life and was lured towards Raju. She asked permission to her husband for becoming a dancer. In agitation, she told Marco, about her intimacy with Raju and her husband abandoned her. She went and lived with Raju in his house bearing his mother's indifference. Raju helped Rosie in making her dreams come true. Rosie became a professional dancer. Raju played well the role of an impresario and became popular and rich. Raju was so possessive of Rosie and this possessive nature prevented him from showing the letter that came from a lawyer's firm in Madras asking for Rosie's signature on an application for the release of a box of jewellery. Raju forged her signature and mailed the document for which he was caught and sent to jail for two years. After coming out of the jail he has been accepted as a saint by the rustics of Mangala. The villagers approached Raju to undertake a fast to please the rain God and this made him to confess his past life to Velan. Even after listening to the

past life of Raju, Velan continued to acknowledge him as Swami; he took Raju's confession as a mark of humility and godliness. Instead of considering Raju as a traitor or fake, Velan, believed that Raju is the hope to do some good to the villagers of Mangala. He persuaded Raju for a fast and Raju finally agreed to fast: 'If by avoiding food I should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow, why not do it thoroughly?' (The Guide 1958: 237 -238) and that became his final decision. He slowly changed himself without his knowledge as a real sage. Sharan remarks that: In the course of his ordeals, he changes himself thoroughly and accepts the challenges of reality. He plays his role of a holy man with a ring of sincerity and embraces death at the end of the novel. Thus, 'Railway Raju', the guide becomes a 'spiritual guide' and all his imperfection and impersonation turn into a real act of self- sacrifice. (1993:21) Raju has no other way but to undergo the fast though unwillingly he gained strength to undergo the fast for real and this strength made him a martyr. After the twelve day Raju's health was very weak. He prayed and said to Velan, 'Velan it's raining in the hills. I can feel it coming up under my feet, up legs – He sagged down.' (The Guide, 1958: 247). Thus the fake swami Raju's life was dedicated to the welfare of the poor villagers of the Mangala as a divine martyr. It is true that R.K. Narayan has proved that typical Indian thoughts and feelings can be expressed in foreign language without trying to imitate the native speakers of English. He gave his characters Indian thoughts and feelings and expressed it in his scenes and backgrounds. Indian culture and tradition is rich and varied and it is not easy to summarize through few situations or characters. But Narayan made it exuberant and all his characters share Indianness. A close reading of the novel illustrates that Raju is not very bad person thoroughly. Though he flirts with Rosie, a married woman, his heart warns him of being in an Indian society and he is not at ease and peace. In his own words

he establishes his fear: "My thoughts dwelt on her golden touch. A part of my mind went on saying. 'No, no. It is not right. Marco is her husband, remember. It's not to be thought of.' (The Guide, 1958:77). Rosie, besides her modern – type relationship with Raju, regards Marco as her husband. Raju's mother is portrayed as a woman born and bred up in an orthodox, conservative class of Indians. In almost all the novels of Narayan, Malgudi is also a character. Malgudi represented Indian in many aspects. The influence of changes of modernity over India has been narrated by Narayan with the help of his fictional town. But Narayan has kept his characters within the grip of culture. The Malgudian society and its tradition represent the society and the tradition of India as a whole. Narayan represented Indianness through symbols also in many of his novels. In The Guide Narayan has used symbols which represent typical Indian tradition and culture. The Temple, River, The faith and the excessive innocence represents the old nature of Indian culture. The busy Railway Station as portrayed by the Narayan originally symbolizes the upcoming of the new culture and tradition. It represents the beginning of the modernity into Malgudi. The unwilling fast underwent by Raju is a symbol that indicates that a fake sanyasi has started his real sacrifice to the welfare of the Mangala villagers. The appearance of the swami represents the characteristics of an Indian swami as well. The traits of Indian manners and customs are also reflected in this novel. Hospitality of Indians is a well known trait all over the world. Indians are known for their custom of hospitality and altruism. Rosie has been accepted in Raju's house after being abandoned by her husband and Raju has been easily sheltered by the villagers of Mangala with the utmost honour of a sage. In all possible ways, the theme, the characterization, the use of language, the locale and the philosophy, the author has presented the novel as a typical Indian novel. Narayan has captured the Fauna and Flora,

the caste system, the social and political conditions and also every influence that has been enforced on Indian culture and tradition. Narayan has given a clear picture of India at the time of narration without idealizing the country and he has not also condemned it. The poverty of India has been reflected with a personal touch of the author. The villagers are shown as suffering from poverty and ignorance and their illiteracy has been reflected as the root cause for all their sufferings. There are as gullible and kind hearted as any Indian village habitats. India is glorified all over the world as a land of rich and varied heritage. Authors like R.K. Narayan have given justification for this fact through their creative writings in English. Professor Srinivasa Iyengar rightly says; "He is of India even of South India: he uses the

English language much as we used to wear dhoties manufactured in Lancashire – but the thoughts and feelings, the stirrings of the soul, the wayward movements of the consciousness, are all of the soil of India, recognizably autochthonous' (1962: 359).

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## MISCONSTRUCTION OF FEMINISM IN DIGITAL SPACE: A STUDY ON ONLINE TROLLING CULTURE

**Aarcha**

*Guest Lecturer in English, D.B.Pampa College, Parumala P.O.Mannar, Pathanamthitta, Kerala*

### Abstract

*From the time of its inception, feminism and the spirit that embodies the term and the movement have been misinterpreted and distorted. The multifarious perceptions people has about the term itself cements this very fact. For some feminism stands for anti men movement where women are desperately fighting to outsmart men, for others it simply means gender equality and yet others believe in gender equality but refuse to call themselves or be branded 'feminists'. The misconception of feminism as an extremist ideology and the mayhem ensued shows the ignorance and stagnation that prevails in spite of all the great strides the we witnessed in the last three decades. When this misconception meets the art of trolling, the latest version of rhetoric, what follows isn't stagnation but intellectual regression by leaps and bounds.*

*Urban Dictionary claims that the most essential part of trolling is "convincing your victim that either a) truly believe in what you are saying, no matter how outrageous, or b) give your victim malicious instructions, under the guise of help." Trolling thus by nature is persuasive and manipulative. A close examination of the most viral and celebrated trolls in the last few years will reveal how they, guided by ignorance, promote an anti-feminist culture especially among the youth.*

To err is human. But unfortunately sometimes a simple error in interpreting or understanding a word, or a concept or an ideology has the gravest repercussions. History itself is a witness that testifies to the fact that misconception or misconception has momentous consequences, often negative ones. Over the years, blood has been shed, lives have been lost and wars have been waged over petty misperceptions. Facts points towards the truth that The Cold War, which was catastrophic in its consequences was the result of miscommunication between U.S. and Soviet leaders. The consequence is manifold when the false impression is made upon ideas pertaining to gender equality, defined as the absence of disparities or discriminations, obvious or hidden, among individuals based on gender. The misconception of feminism, therefore, is an issue of great concern.

Feminism, is defined by Britannica Encyclopedia as "the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of the sexes." It is the ideology or movement founded on the ground of the equality of the sexes. Unfortunately the movement which propagates gender equality and took upon itself the task of bringing the most

progressive transformation of human society world wide, has been and continues to be in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. From the time of its inception, the ideology of Feminism and the spirit that embodies the term and the movement have been misinterpreted and distorted. The multifarious perceptions people has about the term itself cements this very fact. For some feminism is synonymous with gender equality, for others it stands for anti men movement where women are desperately fighting to outsmart men, and yet others believe in gender equality but refuse to call themselves or be branded 'feminists'. The misconception of feminism as an extremist ideology and the mayhem ensued shows the ignorance and stagnation that prevails in spite of all the great strides the witnessed in the last three decades. When this misconception meets the art of trolling, the latest version of rhetoric, what follows isn't stagnation but intellectual regression by leaps and bounds.

The Digital age to a great extent influenced the feminist movement and people's perception of it. It has provided through social medias, a platform for

activism, to fight sexism, bring oppressed women together and give voice to those who are often silenced. It also provided space to bring into the world's attention the issues and problems face by women globally but were never addressed before. All the advantages Feminism has gained in the digital and cyberspace are, however, greatly outweighed by the backlashes and negativity it faced in the same space. There isn't an iota of doubt that misconstruction of feminism is, nowadays, largely digitally driven. In an age marked by the dominance of social medias, we find ourselves undergoing a societal as well as a mental revolution. One of the way in which such medias exert far-reaching influence over human mind is through its troll-culture. Trolling by definition is the act or behaviour intended to frustrate and thereby provoke a response. *Urban Dictionary* claims that the most essential part of trolling is "convincing your victim that either a) truly believe in what you are saying, no matter how outrageous, or b) give your victim malicious instructions, under the guise of help." Trolling thus by nature is persuasive and manipulative. A close examination of the most viral and celebrated trolls in the last few years will reveal how they, guided by ignorance, promote an anti-feminist culture especially among the youth.

Trolling proves to be harmful when they with their easy-going sarcasm and wit confuse people into dismissing ideologies of profound importance or aggravating their misperceptions regarding them. Trolls blending humour with information and having graphic driven content is highly popular among youth. They can suppress an idea as well as construct new ideas and knowledge. Trolling blasts out messages and information to a good number of people, who hardly take time to check the validity of the information. The trolls which dominate the social media scene more than often has disseminated in members of our society the concept of feminism, which is a far cry from

what it actually stands for. An internet search of the trolls and memes well-celebrated in the social medias like facebook, twitter, myspace etc reveal plenty of images that turn the movement into something hypocritical or ugly. Such offensive memes that run wild in the cyberspace worsen the situation by feeding more and more to the already existing faulty interpretation of the movement. These offensive and derogatory trolls and memes portray that feminists as bitter, unattractive man-haters who wants special treatment for themselves and spread fallacious notions about them among more and more people. The most important task of trolling and memes is to generate belly laughs. When such humour gets dispensed with negative cultural connotation the aftermath is catastrophic. The reality that what happens in the internet, stays forever in the internet, in other words , the digital permanence intensifies the matters to such a level that complete elimination of the problem or the misinterpretation or misapplication of an idea becomes impossible. Negative messages about feminism are being fed into the minds of people everyday in the guise of good humour by such offensive trolling and memes. The characteristic negative bias of human minds i.e. the tendency to be highly attuned to negative news doesn't help either.

Internet which has now turned into a breeding ground for extremists, has proven to be a dangerous place for an opinionated and vocal feminist. Feminists who try to break the stereotypical notion of feminism, are often ridiculed, insulted and made the butt of jokes by the trolls who targets anybody who disagrees with their opinion. Such trolls, to discredit and trivialize the ideas that they are at odds with, will have no qualms in lying, exaggerating and twisting things out of context. In this sense, cyber trolling has now adorned a new mask of cyber bullying. The instances of trolling culture turned toxic towards feminism and feminism by shaming, intimidating and demeaning are far too many.

The cyber trolling faced by a few Malayalam actresses recently for simply calling themselves feminists and calling out the misogyny in the film industry is an attack of the similar sort. The derogatory terms like “feminazi” and “feminichi” which reeks of misogyny, have gained currency in the last decade as a result of the such offensive trolls. The hacking of a feminist community blog on the International Women’s Day in 2015, the flak and slut-shaming the acclaimed award winning actresses like Meryl Streep and Vidya Balan faced for their persistent efforts to promote feminism and for questioning the gender pay gap, all shows the contorted perception of feminism circulating in the cyberspace.

In an era where digital culture could bring about a mental and societal revolution, it is high time, we face and tackle the unfounded allegations placed on Feminism by ignorant trolls. Many attempts have been made to eliminate the discrepancy that surrounds the term feminism especially in the digital space. However most of these attempts failed in bringing about a substantial change in the situation. Putting an end to the misapplication of the term and bring forth the truth that gender equality and feminism are two sides of a same coin is not an easy task.

The best way to confront humour is with more humour. The best way to face anti-feminist trolls is with more pro-feminist trolls. Facebook pages like Vagabomb, Feminist Bollywood Gifs, Hellogiggles and twitter accounts like Feminist midwife, The Vagenda Team have already taken the step in the right direction. The road to gender equality is a long and bumpy one. In the meantime let’s hope these emerging humorous pro-feminist memes and trolls could, to some extent, overthrow the sexist and fallacious assumptions, bring a change in the mindset of our society and bring forth the truth that feminism is pro-men as much as it is pro-women.

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## WOMEN AND MOTHERHOOD: A STUDY ON BUCHI EMECHETA'S "SECOND CLASS CITIZEN"

S.Balaji

Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Krishna Arts and Science College, Krishnagiri

### Abstract

*In spite of many debates and exchanges of ideas on Post-Colonial Studies, the research on impact of colonization, Post-Colonial history, Science and Economics, Cultural influences of colonized society, Agency for marginalized people and contemporary issues with post-colonial perspectives grows like anything in Literature. The Post-Colonial Critique welcomes creative investigations on Femininity and Womanhood in various contexts. At this juncture, I would like to focus on Femininity and womanhood and how she overcame her desires in the novel "Second Class Citizen" written by Buchi Emecheta. Most of her works deal with the portrayal of the African woman. The main characters of her novels show what it means to be a woman and a mother in Nigerian society. Emecheta looks at how sexuality and the ability to bear children can sometimes be the only way by which to define femininity and womanhood.*

**Keywords:** Post-colonial Studies, Femininity and Motherhood, African Women.

### Introduction

Buchi Emecheta was born in Yaba Near Lagos in 1944. She spent her early childhood in an orphanage and educated at a Missionary School. She was married at the age of 16 to a student whom she was engaged at the age of 11. After their marriage she gave birth to five children in 6 years. Her first novel "in the Ditch", she portrays her life after leaving her husband and living at her own with children. She worked in a library at the British Museum. The protagonist of the novel, Adah, is forced to live in a housing estate. Her dignity is wounded here because of the charity she is forced to accept. *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta is about the struggle of Adah (the main character) and her survival, not only of herself but also her dreams, while growing into a woman, moving from a high class position in her native Nigeria to a very poor class in a predominantly white European society. She struggles with motherhood and with being a wife and supporting her entire family along with being her own independent person. Part of her struggle also deals with the issues of race and being black in the face of English racism. The novel focuses on determination of women, identity crisis and struggle for self-respect. These leads Adah get out of the ditch. The character Adah is differently portrayed

in her second novel "Second Class Citizen" her thirst for western education is neglected in her first novel. In this novel, Adah determined to get what she wants. The novel mainly focuses on her hatred at gender discrimination that often found in the culture of her people. Adah is also encumbered because of the gender discrimination that is the foundation of her marriage. Her husband, Francis, treats her as property. Adah is forced to support the family and is responsible for the children. In the meanwhile, Francis goes to school, studies, and continuously fails exams. Adah is in constant battle to try to preserve her womanhood, and when she finally leaves Francis she experiences a strong sense of relief. After leaving Francis, Adah has moments of loneliness and despair but in the end she comes out triumphant because of her willpower. The Novel highlights the struggle for women in receiving their education and surviving in a European white society while adapting to different religious beliefs and still following the beliefs of her own people.

The main character of *Second Class Citizen* is a woman named Adah who was born in Nigeria and belonged to the Ibo tribe. Adah is a young girl who begins to have this dream when she is about eight to get to the United Kingdom. The novel takes place seven



to eight years after World War II and, as part of the colonial educational system, outstanding students can travel to Europe to study. Because Nigeria was a British colony, the United Kingdom becomes the land that Adah often hears about as a child and also the place from which people in her town have come from. She hears her father speak of the United Kingdom one day, "The Ibuza women who lived in Lagos were preparing for the arrival of the town's first lawyer from the United Kingdom. The title "United Kingdom" when pronounced by Adah's father sounded so heavy, like the type of noise one associated with bombs. It was so deep, so mysterious, that Adah's father always voiced it as if he were speaking of God's Holiest of Holies. Going to the United Kingdom must surely be like paying God a visit. The United Kingdom, then, must be like heaven."

The story starts out with Adah as a young girl who is stuck at home with her mother who does not pay much attention to her. Adah's brother is away at school all day while her father is away working. Adah decides that she wants to go to school too and she sneaks away from her mother one day and runs all the way to school. For instance, when Adah was unable to get the money for her common entrance examination which she knew can only bring her a step forward towards her goal; she buried the two shillings given to her by her cousin to buy a pound of steak. She knows that she will be punished for this but damned the consequences because she is determined to be educated. The narrator says:

Then she saw the image again. It was going to be alright, the image was smiling, so Adah buried the money and went back home in fears, without the meat. (72).

She has met the teacher a few times before and she goes hoping that he will let her sit in on his class. When she arrives she disrupts the entire class by bursting into the room. The children all stare at her but the teacher just looks at her and smiles and lets

her sit in on the rest of the class. Adah's dream is to go to the United Kingdom to study and to see the greatness that she is sure is there. Her troubles begin from the first moment she realizes what her dream is. First she is not allowed to go to school because she is a girl and the family does not want to spend the money for her to go. She is a girl of her own mind though and she goes to school anyway which ends up getting her mother in trouble.

Her next set of problems occurs when her father dies and she is sent to live with her mother's brother. Any money that her family had went to her brother's education, and the only reason she was kept in school (though not very good ones) was because it was thought that her uncle would be able to get more money for her when they finally married her off. This desire to persevere and survive in her society is what leads Adah on her journey through life. It is also the driving force behind her desire to never give up on her dreams. She avoids marriage over and over until she realizes that marriage might be her only way to continue on with her dreams. She then uses her marriage in the sense that she gets a good job and takes care of her husband and her children and she saves money with the intent for her family to go over to United Kingdom. The plan is that she will go along with her husband and both of them will continue their educations and become prominent figures in society. Adah is alone hoping for her dream to come true,

"So she found herself alone once more, forced into a situation dictated by society in which, as an individual, she had little choice. She would rather that she and her husband, who she was beginning to love, moved to new surroundings, a new country and among new people. So she said special prayers to God, asking Him to make Pa, agree to their going to the land of her dreams, the United Kingdom! Just like her Pa, she still said the name United Kingdom in a whisper, even when talking to God about it, but now she felt it

was coming nearer to her. She was beginning to believe she would go to England" (27).

The news Adah receives from her husband is not that she will go to England, but that her husband will go to England to study to better himself while Adah will stay at home and continue to support the family. Her husband's father does not approve of women going to England and so he will not allow both of them to move there. At first Adah is filled with rage, but she controls her anger and she comes up with a plan. "'Be as cunning as a serpent but as harmless as a dove,' she quoted to herself." (28). Once again she uses her smarts to get what she wants. She sends Francis (her husband) off to England to study and in the meantime she works and sends him money.

Adah does not give up here, she keeps her hopes up and when her husband writes to her a few months later that he is going to be in England for at least four or five more years she decides it is time to make her move and she convinces her in-laws that it is necessary for her to be in England with her husband and that Francis wants her there, which he did say to her in his letter. She soon books herself and her two children first class tickets on a ship to England and as the real struggle begins for Adah she is arriving in England, welcomed by cold, rainy and cloudy skies. A foreshadowing of all that is to come for her, she is shocked by the grayness but she will not give up on her dream. Adah has arrived in the United Kingdom and this is where she goes from a first class citizen in her native Nigeria to a *Second Class Citizen* in England.

Some of the main points of struggle for Adah are being a black woman in a predominantly white society, learning of the women's rights movement during the seventies and the fact that there is birth control available to her, and her struggle to pursue her goal in becoming a writer and ultimately between four children and a lazy abusive husband the time to write. This book deals with many different issues and

movements and how they all interconnect and relate to one another and also one woman. Just as the reader starts to find hope for Adah another circumstance arises and as the book progresses one wonders how one woman can put up with so much and yet be so strong not only for herself but also for her children. She never gives up on them or on her dreams, not even when her first piece of work is burned by her husband. Emecheta advocates a change of attitude towards female and believes that this change should be initiated by women themselves. She believes that a woman can contribute meaningfully to the growth of the society just as men can do. The author portrays a woman who questions this dependent act of men and struggles to free herself so as to have a will of her own. She questions thus: Was it necessary to have a husband brought into an issue like that? Could not the woman be given the opportunity at exercising her own will? (1977:155).

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## GENDER DIMENSIONS IN THE FICTION OF NGUGI WA THIONGO

S.Balaji

Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Krishna Arts and Science College, Krishnagiri

### Abstract

*This paper provides a critical overview of the treatment of the questions of identity and gender in Kenyan novelist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's work. Specifically, the study analyses Ngugi's Weep Not, Child, The River Between, A Grain of Wheat, Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross, and Wizard of the Crow while paying attention to various strategies which women use to respond to patriarchy. The issue of identity is explored against the backdrop of the experiences of slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism and globalization in Africa. Finally the paper explores the maturity of the novelist's feminist vision. Ngugi's works witness the rebirth of women characters and how they begin to acquire new identities. The women move from self ignorance to awareness, assurance, and self-reliance. Ngugi has tried to recreate a living past.*

**Keywords:** Identity, Gender, Patriarchal society, Colonialism.

### Introduction

Thiongo is an internationally acclaimed African writer and human rights activist. Kenyan Novelist, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's latest work of fiction, Wizard of the Crow (2006), provides a continuum of the authors' literary career spanning over a period of 40 years. His novels, particularly, seem to present a consistent revision of thought, style, content and characterization all the way through Weep Not Child (1964), The River Between (1965), A Grain of Wheat (1967), Petals of Blood (1977), Devil on the Cross (1983) and Matigari (1986). His other publications include a collection of short stories, Secret Lives, (1977) the plays; The Black Hermit (1963) This Time Tomorrow (1970), The Trial of Dedan Kimathi - with Michere Mugo, (1976) and I Will Marry When I Want, - with Ngugi wa Mirii (1977).

He has frequently been regarded as a likely candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature. He has usually championed for the promotion of African women and other marginalized groups in the African society. Ngugi in his fictional works delineates the exploitation of the Africans by the Whites and the consequential effect of such exploitation on the lives of the Africans. He wants to project the African woman as a survivor of the harshest conditions. It exposes a number of the patriarchal challenges and constraints

imposed upon helpless women by traditional African societies.. The women move from self ignorance to awareness, assurance, and self-reliance. Ngugi has tried to recreate a living past. His female characters become primary sites for testing the reconciliation of betrayal and hope as well as the possibility of regeneration. The issue of identity is explored against the backdrop of the experiences of slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism and globalization in Africa. In this paper we propose to have a critical overview of the novelist's treatment of the question of identity, politics and gender in his novels.

### Identity

The question of Identity and the African personality runs deep into African history. Throughout history, the aim has been uniform; to uproot or distort the cultural identity of the African people for ultimate economic gain of the Western World. The continuum of subjugation of the African people through slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism and now globalization has led to the creation of a postcolonial personality who is trapped in a contradictory Western civilization. This process has been perfected through cultural imperialism over time. Ngugi's firm belief that change is a gradual process as reflected in the novel's subject of study. While the early three novels reflect

traditional African values of motherhood and are more connected to African feminism, Wizard of the Crow breaks new grounds as women acquire more experience and conquer more fields towards empowering themselves through the resistance devices based on such concepts as sisterhood and female consciousness. In this sense, they managed to prove themselves as superior to men. It exposes a number of the patriarchal challenges and constraints imposed upon helpless women by traditional African societies. Actually, the central themes of female assertiveness and post-independence dilemma of the motherland permeate Ngugi's novels. His approach evokes a veneration of the African woman with "mountains on her back." According to *The Wizard of the Crow*, Tajirika is suffering from a severe dose of 'White-ache.' (P. 180). This is after he realizes that with his new position he would end up being the richest man in Africa and the only thing missing to distinguish him from the other rich black people is a white skin (179-180). Tajirika is sick with colonial brainwashing. He is held captive by the mirage created by a postcolonial sickness in which the African petty bourgeoisie has continuously sought to be refined slaves of the West. In order for Tajirika to come to terms with his aspired white destiny, the Wizard of the Crow - Kamiti Wa Karimiri- suggest a number of options. He must begin by becoming a willing slave of the west and demonstrate this by giving up his name. Secondly he must lose his language and finally marry a white woman and become English. But the only English identity that he can assume is that of 'a punk, a prostitute or at best a homeless ex-colonial' (P. 179-188). This final option shocks Tajirika and his wife Virginia into a temporary cure: "No! No! Tajirika and Virginia shouted, opening their eyes in fright. "Black is beautiful. Give us back our blackness," they moaned as if the Wizard Njogu Waita International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature

(IJSELL) (P. 47) of the Crow had already shorn them of it (P.188). Nevertheless Tajirika cannot wholly be cured of this disease. When his fortune turns round for the better and he becomes a minister in the government, the demons of whiteness becom him. He identifies a company in the United States, Genetica International, which specializes in genetic engineering, cloning, transplants and plastic surgery. Here a person can be changed to any identity they desire. Tajirika engages this company to give him a white identity. By the time the company is exposed as fake, Tajirika has acquired a white arm and a white leg (P.741-742). Through the character of Tajirika, Ngugi attempts to understand the problems of identity for the African especially for the African elite. They are presented as akin to Amos Tutuola's 'complete gentleman' in *The Palm Wine Drinkard* (1958). The complete gentleman has no body of his own. In order to visit his fiancée, he borrows different body parts from different people but has to return them to the owners at some point (P. 240). The critical question raised in the novel is why the disease of contradicting identities continues to afflict the African, especially 'the educated and the rich' (p.223). The African identity seems to be in a permanent state of transition. The African then continues to exist in an unredeemed state of alienation. In order to emerge from this state the novel suggests that the African must recapture his identity in the mirror of the Wizard of the Crow.

### Gender

Wizard of the Crow presents the woman in the post colony is a person who is trapped in many ways. She is trapped in the patriarchal and the colonial past as well as by the emerging male elite in independent Aburiria. The novel captures the position of African woman as complicated by a composite of oppressive forces, making her condition unique and different from that of woman from the Western world. Apart from patriarchy, the

struggles of the African Woman and her sister in the African Diaspora have also been in the context of realities of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. In the discarded 'political catechism' of Nyawira, the black woman is presented as the most oppressed woman: She is oppressed on account of her colour like all black people in the world; she is oppressed on account of her gender like all women in the world; and she is exploited and oppressed on account of her class like all workers and peasants in the world. The ruthless of patriarchal oppression is epitomized in the treatment of Rachael by her husband the ruler of Aburiria. When she questions his sexual transgressions against school girls, she is banished to a mansion built on seven acres of land where the ruler attempts to freeze her life in time and space. Virginia, the wife of Tajirika on the other hand represents the woman who is trapped in postcolonial structures of the political elite. Although living in the modern age, her husband views her as a lesser being rather than an equal partner. She is continuously in dire need for domestication and her husband views beating her as his male prerogative. The novelist however rejects the gender stereotypes. He presents Virginia firstly as an astute and organized woman who manages the domestic and the business spheres excellently when her husband is incarcerated. Secondly when her husband metes violence against her, she overcomes her fears and demands to be treated humanely by her male partner. She reports the incident to the Wizard of the Crow who in turn organizes a women's court that punishes Tajirika. Nevertheless, in spite of her rising consciousness, Virginia is unable to transcend the glass box of her current middle class status.

To the very end of the novel, she still clings to her status as the wife of the political elite and savors the benefits of that position by having a face- and breast- lift for herself as her husband is partly transformed into a white man. (Njogu Waita, International

Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature). She apparently has been unable to transcend what De Beauvoir refers to the woman's 'otherness' and become 'self.' She is unable to overcome the definitions, labels and essences that limit her existence. In the character of Grace Nyawira, Wizard of the Crow provides insights to an emerging feminine consciousness that rejects traditional gender roles and moves beyond the traditional male/female dichotomy in gender analysis. The novel promotes a positive image of women, decries transgressions against women and projects what Learner refers to as 'a feminine vision and consciousness of society'. Nyawira is indeed a revision of the author's earlier female characters all the way from Nyambura (River Between) Mwihaki (Weep Not Child), Mumbi (A Grain of Wheat), Wanja (Petals of Blood), Waringa (Devil on the Cross) and Guthera in Matigari. In Nyawira, Ngugi creates a character that is at the centre striving to create a new identity. He presents a mature feminine vision of a woman ready to confront the social, cultural and political challenges of postcolonial Africa in the 21st Century. Nyawira is born into the middle class but as her consciousness develops, she rejects her father's empty materialism. She marries the poor artist, Kaniuru against her father's wishes. When she realizes that Kaniuru married her with his nose and eyes on her father's property, she divorces him and strikes out on her own. In the novel the author presents her as an astute organizer not only of women but for the larger Movement for the Voice of the People. She represents a new consciousness of a woman who can provide meaningful political leadership in a collective effort to heal the land. In her union with Kamiti Wa Karimiri, Nyawira is also 'the Wizard of the Crow' and in the pair is the symbol of the indomitable human spirit, a spirit that can never die, a spirit that can consistently resist the constant cycles of repression and exploitation in

postcolonial Africa. As the character, Constable Arigagai Gatherer puts it; "let nobody lie to you, the Wizard of the Crow will never die. True, Haki ya Mungu" (P.766).

The study attempts to mark the notable development in Ngugi's strategies of empowerment in novel after novel. Ngugi also seems to have a strong belief that change is gradual and needs long-term tactics. The article applies some feminist and Womanist theories to the novels under study. It is quite obvious that African women have often been subjected to negative stereotypes and their contributions have been neglected or even omitted. The exclusion of females from social settings and their being denied rightful opportunities to stand up for themselves in their communities also "give substance to the marginalization of females from important decision making processes in their communities and families." (Peter, 2010, p. 203) Ngugi attacks the traditional female discourse of the African woman as being dominated, exploited, abused and merely used as a beast of burden. Like many other African societies, the Kenyan society is essentially patriarchal; hence men are considered to be more superior to women. Such a society is characterized by "male super ordination and female subordination." Ngugi's early novels assume the influence of an African narrative tradition and culture, where portrayals of the African woman's experiences reaffirm her position and power within African conceptions of the world.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, Ngugi's novels argue that patriarchy is both oppressive and retrogressive to women and the society, and therefore it should be discontinued. As Ngugi suggests, the recognition of gender empowerment, equity, and partnership is the only fair and effective method of ensuring distribution of resources in the society. Indeed, for the progress of the society, this

principle should be guarded at all cost by both men and women.

The novels of Ngugi are fully contemporary. They reveal the authors' sincere striving, through the freedom of postcolonial fiction, to change Africa into a freer and more unbiased continent. In the words of Mphahlele (1974: 78), writers such as Ngugi "came in during the most exciting epoch in African life - at a time when things are taking shape". Ngugi himself succeeded in full filling their roles as the "sensitive needles" of society: they have definitely reflected "with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions" in their transforming societies.

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## HARASSMENT ON WOMEN IN CHIMA MANDA'S THE PURPLE HIBISCUS

J.Gracy

Assistant Professor in English, St. Antony's College of Art's and Sciences for Women, Thamarapadi, Dindigul

### Abstract

*Woman plays such a vital role of upbringing the future generation, but the fate is that woman is mostly degraded and dominated on the basis of gender. The woman is always considered as a "secondary sex". The fight for women right is not a new thing and women have been fighting for it from a very long time and it continues even today. Now women across the world no matter European or African or Asian all are coming forward to fight for their rights and status under the Umbrella term of feminism. In African many cultural practices are against women. Women are beaten by husbands and are always blamed for not been able to produce children. Married woman could be replaced at anytime by their husbands because culture supports that men could marry many women. Female children are not always given the best upbringing; they are trained in the kitchen, instead of school. Male children are brought up well because they are known to be the people who will take their family from generation to generation. This paper focus on the discrimination against women and to show that how women are opposed and not given equal rights in life.*

**Keywords:** Discrimination, oppressed, secondary sex cultural practice, domination, degradation feminism.

Chimamanda Adichie's "Purple Hibiscus" is the story of a 15 years old girl Kambili. Her brother Jaja her mother Beatrice is forced to live a life of another by her religiously fanatic father. Kambili and Jaja must abide by a time schedule every day, denied access to the television, visiting friends, and a situation which has turned them into stereotypes. Even at school, the children are not themselves, they cannot express themselves; they can hardly do anything on their own without being watch dogged by the fear of their robotic father.

The children becomes temporarily relieved of this physical as well as psychological incarceration when they visit their Aunty Ifeoma's house surprisingly to Kambili and free and bold and they can express themselves without fear. Kambili and Jaja meet a life that is completely different from and livelier than what is obtainable back home in Enugu.

Kambili for instance, gets the gut to fall in love with the liberal and immaterialist father Amadi, a catholic priest. Tired of the sufferings and persecution from Papa Beatrice, his wife poisons him and he dies. Jaja claims responsibility for the murder and is sent to jail. Mama suffers from nervous

breakdown and Jaja is eventually released from prison.

### Domestic Violence

On Several occasions, Papa beats his wife and children. Each time, he is provoked by an action that he deems immoral. When Mama does not want to visit with father Benedict because she is ill, Papa beats her and she miscarries. Kambili and Jaja share a home with a heathen, boiling water is poured on their feet because they have walked in sin. For owning a painting of Papa-Nnukwu, Kambili is kicked until she is hospitalized. Papa rationalizes the violence he inflicts on his family saying it is for their own good the beating have rendered his children mute. There is an underlying sexism at work in the abuse. When Mama tells Kambili she is pregnant, she mentions that she miscarried several times after Kambili was born. Mama loses two pregnancies at Papa's hands. The other miscarriage may have been caused by these beatings as well. Papa makes the children say special novenas for their mother's forgiveness. Mama believes that she cannot exist outside of her marriage. Ultimately she poisons Papa because she can see no other way out. The abuse has repressed

her to the point that she must resort to murder to escape.

### **Purple Hibiscus**

Symbol of Self – expression Chimamanda says about a young girl who tries to find her own voice and speak out against her violent oppressive father. The red hibiscuses are symbolic of the violence in Kambili's life. While the purple hibiscuses symbolise freedom, defiance and the freedom to speak out. The figurines are symbolic of Mama's quiet character and of the violence in her home. Purple is a colour that is often associated with royalty but also self – expression.

### **Silence**

The characters of this novel are gripped with silence throughout the novel. Kambili suffers the most unable to speak more than rehearsed platitudes without stuttering or coughing. Her silence is a product of the abuse that she endures at the hands of her father. Kambili and Jaja communicate through their eyes, not able to utter the ugly truth of their situation.

Mama like her daughter cannot speak freely in her own home. Only with Auntie Ifeoma she can behave authentically. Jaja's silence betrays a hardness that has taken hold of him in prison.

Silence is also used as punishment. When Kambili and Jaja arrive in Nsukka for Easter Jaja refuses to speak to his father when he calls. After the years of silence that he has imposed upon his children they use it as a weapon against him. Silence is a type of violence.

### **Two polar opposite women**

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a feminist work that challenges the tendency of men to dehumanize women and this is evident in the character of Mama (Beatrice) who exposes the African concept of an ideal woman; one who slays silent in the face of humiliation,

victimization and brutality, so as to be perceived as a good woman.

Adichie in her novel presented two types of woman, the good woman (Mama) and the real woman, (Auntie Ifeoma) which mirrors the two different types of feminism African feminism which is often seen as being liberal and tolerant of men and radical feminism, born from violence in order to gain freedom. Although Adichie tactically presented Mama as quiet and obedient at the beginning of the novel to show that she can react when pushed to the wall.

Adichie portrays the two polar opposite women though characterized dialogue. We understand their two dilemmas and that they both see eye on most subjects, however. Mama dismisses Ifeoma's words as 'University talk' Showing the cultural distance between the two women, that Mama feels a man is essential to life which is a very traditional and roman catholic view, that man is the centre of the family. However Ifeoma is a strong independent woman with 'shiny lipstick' which is a metaphor for her flamboyant 'larger than life' character and that it is indeed possible to thrive in Nigeria without a male accomplice. 'Shiny' shows she can sparkle even with no husbands.

### **Family Situation in Purple Hibiscus**

*Purple Hibiscus* takes place mostly on the familial level, dealing with relations between Papa, Mama Jaja and Kambili and then their relations with Papa Nunkwu, Auntie Ifeoma and her children. We can see the family dynamic of Kambili's family, where they all live in silence and fear following Papa's strict rules and schedule. This quiet order is based around the terror of Papa's sporadic violence for anything he sees as sinful or disobedient. Kambili and Jaja are very close through them rarely. Speak they also have very little contact with their grandfather aunt, or cousins and live secluded in their immediate family. In contrast Auntie Ifeoma and her children. Amaka, Obiora and Chima all speak



their minds, laugh often and are encouraged to debate and question. They are also close with Papa- Nnukwu as they don't see him as a "heathen" like Papa does. These two families overlap when Kambili and Jaja go to stay with Auntie Ifeoma's family and start to realize how unhealthy and rigid their own family dynamic is. Jaja and Kambili first discover freedom and joy there and they don't want to leave. Through Auntie Ifeoma and her children, Adichie represents her ideas of a healthy family. One that creates community and love, but also accepts differences and supports individuals as they grow and change.

### **Freedom Vs Tyranny**

Freedom and Tyranny exists among Adichie's individual characters as well. Though Papa bravely stands up for political freedom in the world of his own family. Where he is the one in control, he acts like a tyrant. He allows no freedom or independence for Mama, Kambili, or Jaja. He schedules his children's every minute and even chooses the color of the drapes. When anyone acts out or tries to assert their freedom, he responds with violence.

Kambili's assertion of freedom begins by keeping the painting of Papa – Nnukwu, while Jaja grows more openly rebellious, refusing to speak to his father and then refusing to go to church on Palm Sunday. The most surprising twist comes at the end, however, as Mama turns to her own kind of tyranny – murder to assert her freedom from Papa. This leads to prison for Jaja which ends up as just another version of the cycle of freedom and oppression.

### **The Role of Religion the mourning the characters**

There are two religions that are prominently featured in the novel. Catholicism and traditional Igbo practice. Papa can be viewed as a symbol of fundamentalism in Nigeria influenced by his

colonial education. Papa eradicates all traces of his traditional past and in doctrine his children into religion as it was preached to him. God seeks perfection and Papa's way to install perfection is to punish failure. Papa does not let his children spend much time with his own father for he is a 'heathen'. Papa's prejudice severs his ties with his ancestry. However, as Kambili realizes, there are faiths of Papa and Papa- Nnukwu. Auntie Ifeoma and later Kambili honor both faiths in their more modernized take on devotion.

### **Defiance – Key Force of the Novel**

Eugene's defiance of the military government makes him a hero; Jaja and his cousin Amaka both make a stand against religious practices, and Kambili, among others, must learn a productive personal defiance of the forces that would stifle her growth. Indeed much of the Novel is taken up with Kambili's struggle to find an avenue for defiance. For Kambili, defiance in the first step toward freedom; But defiance is never simple and certainly not always positive force. The act of defiance that opens the novel and shapes the story from beginning to end, although chronologically it occurs near the middle of the action, is a case in point. More often, personal, political and religious defiance are intertwined in painful ways. Jaja takes a stand over a religious practice – he refuses to attend communion – but he is really resisting his father's personal power over him. His cousin Amaka will refuse confirmation because the church insists on giving her an English confirmation name; her religious stand is an act of political defiance. When defiance becomes entangled with other emotions the mix is even more potent.

Kambili is locked in silence, unable to articulate a meaningful defiance, by her inability to resolve her love and respect for her father with her fear of him. Her mother, Beatrice remains torn between her love for children and a deep – seated sense of the obligation of marriage. Both Kambili and her

mother resort to a silent defiance that ends for Kambili in a violent beating and for Beatrice in the death of her husband and the loss of her son to prison.

On the eve of her brother's release from prison, Kambili visits her aunt's old home in the University town of Nsukka. In Nsukka, where Kambili and Jaja's defiance took root, Kambili finds hope.

### Conclusion

In "Purple Hibiscus" Adichie clearly presents women's poor rights and that they struggle to be taken seriously when religion and a career is concerned. However Adichie put on ironic twist in her plot, making women the successor against aggressive men in the end of the novel. In "Purple Hibiscus" although men are the seemingly dominant characters who oppress the women in light hearted and scarring ways, Adichie strangely makes almost the entire men die. Ade coker dies by political unrest, Papa Nnukwu by old

age and Papa by the hand of his own wife. The deaths of these men represent the strength of the female characters. Mama is able to murder Papa and became the upper hand in the relationship. However the only way she could conquer him, was through death showing the true domination of man over woman, this is the intention of Adichie.

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## CASTICISM PROBLEM IN SHARANKUMAR LIMBALE'S THE OUTCASTE

A.Princy

Assistant Professor in English, St.Antony's College of Arts and Sciences for Women, Thamarapadi, Dindigul

### Abstract

*Dalit Literature is literature written by the Dalits that is those who are oppressed by the Indian caste system. Sharankumar Limbale is a well-known Dalit writer his best-known autobiographical novel is Akkarmashi is written in Marathi language and it caught the attention of the world especially of the translated into English by Shanthose Bhoomkar. The novel **The Outcaste** reflects the oppressed condition of a Mahar community. The main theme of Limbale writing is to portray the pathetic unenviable life of a poor community. It tells the discrimination from to society. This novel **The Outcaste** is like a mirror for Dalits, it shows the condition of a suppressed class in Hindu society.*

**Keywords:** Discrimination, sufferings, caste problem, ill-treatment, human trauma.

### Introduction

Our society is divided into many groups and it is have a different origin, status and culture. The people's are together in the world for their supports and their needs. The people's are belonged to various caste and different religions.

"... Morphologically, the whole of Hindu society has been divided and subdivided into a large number of small and well- defined groups, ranked in an elaborate and complex hierarchy; it was this group, rather than individual, which constituted the building blocks of caste society".(Murickan 325)

The social orders of individuals are identified their birth. A child belongs to the caste in which his parents belong. To change caste is impossible. A child has to accept his parent's profession in which social order he is born. There are large numbers of caste in India. The following are the castes in North India the Barhari (Carpenter), the sonar (Gold Smith), the Lohar (black smith), the Teli (oil presser), the Nail( Barher), the Thather( copper smith). Stratification of society differentiates the humanbeing into upper and lower caste. This classification sets upper caste people are in high position in society and the lower caste people are dominated by the upper caste people. This division of labors as rigid caste system resulted in economic domination and

exploitation, social degradation and political marginalization of Shudras and untouchables.

### Caste - divided according to Varna

The religious word for caste is 'Varna'. Each Varna has certain duties and rights. Indian society is divided into numerous castes and sub-castes Caste has come out of ancient fourfold classification of society known as 'varna'.

- There are four Varnas:
- First group -Brahmins
- Second group - kshatriyas
- Third group - Vaishyas
- Fourth group -shudras
- Fifth group - Untouchables



Hindu religious belief reflects two thousand year old caste system. It associated with the four board occupational grouping: Brahmins on the top (soldiers and spiritual leaders), Kshatriyas followed it (soldiers and merchants), and Vaishyas (farmers and merchants), who occupied the next position and the last group is Shudras (Labours and artisans). Beneath the four, group the

“Untouchables or Dalits (“oppressed people”), who are avoided at all the caste”

Ramayana and Mahabharata are Hindu great epics. These two epics inflict the gods originated by the Varna system. In this epic the author declares that various functions and duties for different caste.



All caste peoples are performing their duties to God. These epics believe that a man is born in the world according to Karma. Birth, marriage and death rituals are different from caste to caste.

The Brahmins - from the mouth of God

The Kshatriyas - from the hand of God

The Vaishyas - from the thigh of God

The Sudras - from the feet of the God

Outcaste - under the feet of God

The people do the work according to their caste and birth position

- priest - Brahmins
- warrior - Kshatriyas
- landlords and traders - Vaishyas
- providers of services to the high caste people - Shudras
- manual workers - Untouchables.

In Hindu religion belief that the peoples belongs to the untouchable are sinners and polluted peoples.

### Background of the novel The Outcaste:

The Outcaste novel reflects the crisis between the high caste born people and low caste born people. But particularly, the protagonist is treated as an outcaste, untouchable and an illegitimate born, as his father's identity or genuineness remains hidden, he is subjected to hatred, and restricted to limits in the societal framework. In short, image of the protagonist remains broken or fractured one. Sharankumar, the protagonist has a quest for his own identity of legitimacy.

The literary meaning Akkarmashi is bastard; a child born in illegal relation. He

used a personal descriptive style in his autobiography to show the life experience of a Dalit, which includes inequality, discrimination and indifference towards them and their culture. The author describes about his pathetic situation of having an identity, a home or place of belonging. All the Dalit autobiographies reveal the everyday discrimination and fight to get equal status in the society but justice is denied every day.

His autobiography reflects the oppressed condition of a Mahar community. The main theme of Limbale's writing is portraying the pathetic and unenviable life of the poor community. He raised some questions and to by answers by those who consider themselves as civilized. How is a person instinctive with his caste? How does he convert as an untouchable as soon as he is born? They become untouchable in this condition because they do the menial work. They beg, skinned the dead animals and eat them in order to appease their hunger.

Sharankumar Limbale's Akkarmashi (The Outcaste) penned at an age of twenty five depicts the meta-realistic accounts of his Dalit in particular and which can be extended to the life of any individual of Mahar community in general. In the text, the narrator moves back and forth between the individual 'I' and the collective 'we'.

### Casteism problem faced by the writer Limbale:

Humans are identifying by their birth; the infant belongs to the caste, which the parents and family belongs to, Sharankumar Limbale is illegitimate son of lower caste mother and high caste father. His mother is an untouchable woman of Mahar community. His father is an upper caste wealthy man, so Limbale cannot accept by neither in upper caste, nor in Mahar caste. He was become a half-caste. He mentioned my father is in mansion and my mother is in hut and he was on the street. Limbale brings forth this rift between the two castes at the very beginning:

"My mother is an untouchable, while my father is a high caste from one of the privileged classes of India. Mother lives in a hut, father in a mansion. Father is a landlord; mother, landless. I am Akkaramashi. I am condemned, branded illegitimate." (Limbale, 1)

He opens the novel to describe the primary school life. He explains his childhood experience in school. In his school life, he gets the aware of he is an untouchable, because he belongs to Mahar community. In Maharashtra, the Mahar community is considered as lower caste. Therefore, the upper caste students in school not mingled to the lower caste students. The upper caste people separated the lower caste people in the class. In his school life, unknowingly he understands the difference between the upper caste and the Mahar caste. Each and every activity differentiates him from upper caste students such as eating and wearing dresses even in games.

"The Wani and Brahmin boys played Kabbadi. Being marked as Mahars, we could not join them. Therefore, Mallya, Umbrya, Parshya, all from my caste, began to touch –and-go. We played one kind of game while the high caste village boys played another. The two games were played separately like two separate whirlwinds. Play over, we settle down to eat. Boys and girls from the high-class castes like Wani, Brahmin, Marwari, Muslim, Maratha, Teli, Fishermen, Goldsmiths and all teachers about hundred or so sat in circle under a banyan tree. We, the Mahar boys and girls, were asked to sit under another tree" (Limbale, 5)

Through this work, Limbale reveals that the India is still under the clutches of caste system. Dalits are facing inhuman behavior and they are considered as subjugated community. The caste in Hindu society used to exploit the Dalits by making them to do most menial job the whole day just for piece of

bread. The Dalit are treated as marginalized. Dalit's children were discriminated at the school. Mahar students are not mingling with the upper caste students. They are separated the lower caste alone.

In his picnic, they went to eat, all the high caste students and teachers are sitting under the Banyan tree. The Mahar students are sitting separately under another one tree. The high caste people said prayer before they started to eat. But Limbale and his friends not aware of it. All the upper caste students are open their foods and they offered their food to their teachers.

Poverty is the main reason of caste divisions. It judges the people in society; the rich people followed the rich culture and traditions. They have all whatever they want. So they fulfill their needs using their power and money in society. However, Mahar people are not rich. They always struggle because of their poverty; they suffered a lot without money. They are not able to fulfill their needs. The untouchable people kept the religious zeal, in ignorance and unclean surrounding and they only have an unclean and non-nutritional food, with total lack of skills.

Limbale and his family are very poor. Not only his family, but also the Mahar community is poor.

### **Individual caste oppression in The Outcaste:**

The Hindu people are thinks that high status is associated with purity and low status is pollutions. They do not touch any one low caste people and their things. Because they believe that, the lower caste touch is pollution. The lower caste peoples are not allowed to enter inside of the temple. The untouchables are considered to the polluted people. So they are not allowed to enter into the temple and worship the god and goddess. If the untouchables are entered inside the temple, the upper caste people punish them. Because they believe that when the untouchables enter into the temple, it makes

the temple polluted. It was explained in Tamil auto-biography 'Vadu' by the author K.A.Gunasekaran, in his life experience,

"The Siva Temple in Elayankudi lay in the part of the city where the Arya Vysyas lived in large numbers. I have never been inside the temple even in today. But I have often touched the four feet stone figures Ammanavayan, sitting cross legged in front of this temple". (Gunasekaran.K.A., 1)

Limbale confused the discrimination of man-to-man. The God makes one man to rich and another one to poor and one to upper caste and other one to lower caste. Limbale asked question, what kind of God makes human being hate one to another. We are the Children of God, then why some people considered untouchable?

The people are saying that the children are flowers of god's gift. The human beings are identifying with their birth. The children are belonged to the caste which their parental caste. To change caste is impossible. A child has to accept his parents' profession in which social order he is born. Limbale was called by the people the name "son of a bitch". When next of picnic, the teacher asked the students to write about the picnic. But he looks outside of the class. So the teacher, scold him to the word of "You, son of a bitch". He always neglected by everybody because of his birth. One day his teacher decided to add his name in register. So the teacher was asked his father's name to enter in register. But he not knows his father name. Limbale was discriminated by his teacher.

Limbale describes instance where Mahars are not allowed to touch the public well and take water from it to quench their thirst despite of well dug by them. He explained that the Mahars are working for the upper caste but the upper caste people accept their work but not him.

The caste is dividing under the works of people. Under Vedas the Brahmins do the religious ceremonies and services. Limbale's

family is belongs to fifth groups according to varma Limbale's grandmother Santami is a sweeper. Whenever the animals died in his village the owner of the animal came to give contract to remove the dead animal from Mahar people. The Mahar people take the animal in cart. Two people pulled the cart and two people pushed the cart.

The cow was treated like a mother in Hindu. The owner weeps when the cow was died. In addition, the young ones of the cow saw the cow very sad. The Mahar, who are taking the animals away, get some grains from the owner. At the tight the contractors cut the animals. Next day all the Mahar people appeared with their vessels one by one. They shared the meats of the dead animal. They cooked and eat they never waste anything.

Poverty is the main suffering to the Mahar. They are very poor, the poverty is forced to beg and steal. They have no money to fulfill their needs. Every day they suffered a lot, because of poverty. Limbale also faced this bad situation.

He also asked some questions and explained the answer of their situation for stealing. "We know we shouldn't steal, but then how could we food ourselves?" poor steal to fulfill their hunger. One day Limbale beat his sister foe eating the skin of banana. But after he eat skins of banana for satisfied his stomach.

After complete Limbale's high school education he went to boarding school, in boarding school, Limbale become a well talented student. On the weak end he came to his house. On that day, Limbale and his friends went around the village and they walked with pride. But the high caste people hate his confidence. In the village if the Mahar went to drink a tea, they had separate place to sit and separate cup and saucer to drink tea. The upper caste people drink tea in separate cup and saucer. The tea master poured the water or tea without touch the Mahar. He avoids contacting the Mahar.

Limbale rebel against the untouchables in his village. He asked, "How long can we mutely suffer all this?" Limbale filed a complaint against the teashop owner. Because of this, the entire village turned against him.

Limbale is against the high caste people who ill-treated the low caste people. Limbale is took a way of Dr.Ambedhkar who is great contributor of the dalit movements and non-brahmin movements. Limbale started the war against the caste discrimination through writings.

### Conclusion

Dalit consciousness awakes them to fight for their right because they are not treated properly in schools, colleges and in public places. Untouchable, are known as lower caste people in Indian society. So each and every day the Dalit people face violence in society. The Outcaste is the first hand experience of the Dalit writer Sharankumar Limbale. Sharankumar portrayed this novel the caste of an individual determines everything about his life and his family,

including his food, clothes and house. Limbale describes a man, who got sufferings and pain experience in the caste system and its barring. In this novel, he explained about the miserable life experiences as an Untouchable, as a half-caste and impoverished man. it reflects about the half a century back and at the same time gives a true story and realistic picture of the condition of a particular oppressed caste, namely the Mahar community in Indian society.

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## A SCRUTINY OF SHEKHAR KAPUR'S BIOGRAPHICAL FILM *BANDIT QUEEN*

J.Anula

Guest Lecturer, D.B. Pampa College, Parumala, Thiruvalla, Kerala

### Abstract

*A biography is one of the oldest forms of literary expressions which seeks to re-create the life of an individual in words. A quick survey reveals the fact that biographies are either about men or written by men. But in recent years we could witness noticeable changes as biographies of women were found making their way into the literary world. Popular biographies were adapted into films and they were received by the name biopics. Biopics or biographical films represent the lives of historic figures with varying degrees of accuracy. Bandit Queen is one such biographical picture based on the life of Phoolan Devi an Indian Bandit who later became a Member of Parliament. The 1994 movie is directed by Shekhar Kapur. Having born into a lower caste family Phoolan who is forced to get married at a very young age frees herself from her abusive husband and later falls in love with Vikram Mallah (leader of the Gujjar gang) who is soon assassinated by Thakur Shri Ram (the real leader of Gujjar gang). Phoolan is abducted to the village of Behmai by Shri Ram who repeatedly rapes her along with other members of the gang. Phoolan is then stripped, beaten and paraded around Behmai. Eventually we see Phoolan emerging as the new leader of the gang and Phoolan becomes Phoolan Devi, the Bandit Queen. Her elevated status allows her to fight back, and the entire Thakur clan of Behmai is shot dead by her. This act brings her to the attention of the authorities and she is forced to hide out. The movie ends with the surrender of the bandit queen. This paper explores how the society treats a woman who attempts to transgress from the binding norms and how its effect is doubled when it is done by a lower caste woman.*

In 1983, India witnessed the surrender of a young lady, a fearsome dacoit who evaded police capture for two years. Phoolan Devi submitted herself to the authorities of the state after having terrorised the police forces in Uttar Pradesh for a while. For the 8,000 people gathered there to witness the surrender, Phoolan was not entirely a bandit who had a price on her head but, a hero, a goddess. Born to a lower caste household in 1963 in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, Phoolan was a revolutionary even as a child. For many, she might be a law breaker, who got what she deserved. But a closer look into her life, proves her worthy to be on the pages of Indian history. Mala Sen, an Indian-British writer and human rights activist penned down the life of Phoolan Devi under the title India's *Bandit Queen* (1991). The book was later adapted into a film, *Bandit Queen* (1994) by Shekhar Kapur which spoke out the life of Phoolan Devi with much accuracy.

'*Bandit Queen*' perspicuously depicts the society's handling of Phoolan (role played by Seema Biswas) a lower caste woman, how she survives the humiliations of an abusive marriage, the unanticipated killing of her lover, and a terrifying gang rape. Having born to a lower ranked Mallah subcaste, Phoolan is chained and silenced by the constraints of her caste. She is forced to get married at eleven, to a man named Puttilal who is much elder to her and she suffers at the hands of her husband who is physically and sexually abusive. Resultantly she runs away from him and returns to her village. As she grows older, Phoolan experiences incidents of assault and groping from the upper caste Thakur men, who banish her from the village for not consenting to their sexual advances.

Later, Phoolan falls in love with one of the bandits, whose death she soon witnesses. She is then abducted to the village of Behmai where she is gang raped. This brutality moulds her into a stronger human as we soon see her emerging as the leader of her new



gang, and thus Phoolan becomes Phoolan Devi, the bandit queen. Along with the members of her gang, Phoolan takes revenge on the entire Thakur clan of Behmai and shoots them down. This act brings her to the attention of the authorities and she is forced to hide out. Phoolan, after two years decides to surrender and this marks the end of the movie.

A proper dissection of the movie helps us to understand how the society treats a woman who attempts to transgress from the binding norms and how worse the situation can be, if it is done by a lower caste woman. Signs of oppression and subjugation can be spotted since the time Phoolan returns home seeking escape from her abusive husband. Though her mother seemed considerate, her father kept grumbling that, once married she is supposed to live with her husband, no matter how badly she is treated. When a woman is married, and separated from her husband, the society arrives at the delusion that she yearns for the warmth of a male. It must be this thought that made the upper caste men, the Thakurs, fondle her. When Phoolan refused to submit to their libido, it was decided in the town meeting that Phoolan be banished from the village. The Panchayath wielded their patriarchal authority to make the decision. Here, we witness how a woman is handled as a sub human material and Phoolan is silenced on the grounds of her gender and caste. Since the upper caste men, the Thakurs make the village council; Phoolan utters not a single word to defend her. She approaches the local police to have her ban lifted, but she is beaten and arrested by the police who rape her while in the custody. This torture highlights how the law makers themselves break the law and this underlines another instance of the maltreatment of a lower caste woman.

Phoolan once encounters the bandits of the Babu Gujar gang led by Babu Gujar, a callous mercenary who abducts Phoolan and assaults her, until one day Vikram Mallah played by Nirmal Pandey (member of the

gujarar gang) who is sympathetic towards Phoolan, finds him raping her and shoots him down. Vikram's empathy for her soon leads the two to get romantically involved and it eventually grows into a mature relationship. Phoolan does not seem to be destined to lead a contented life, as Vikram is soon assassinated by Thakur Shri Ram (Govind Namdeo), the real leader of the Gujar gang. Shri Ram abducts Phoolan and brings her to the village of Behmai, where she is repeatedly raped by him and the rest of the members of the gang for 'disrespecting' his previous advances and daring to be an equal. The humiliations end with her being, stripped and paraded around Behmai. We know Phoolan as a brave rape survivor but she has never spoken about the gang rape herself. Mala Sen, her biographer says "there are various versions of what happened to Phoolan devi after Vikram Mallah's death. When I spoke to her, she was reluctant to speak of her bezathi(dishonour) as she put it, at the hands of the Thakurs. She did not want to dwell on the details".

Unlike other rape survivors Phoolan chose to take revenge and this made us witness the bloodiest massacre, India had seen in a while. The pain she endures moulded her into a fearless woman, and she forms a gang of her own, with the help of Baba Mustakim, leader of another large gang of bandits. Baba initially doubts Phoolan's potential to lead a gang, as no woman has ever been the head of the bandit gang before. Phoolan escorted by other members of her gang march to Behmai, where she lines up 22 Thakurs and shoots them down. Memories of the brutality she experienced fuelled the vengeance in her and Phoolan repays for every wrong done to her. Her husband Puttilal too suffers at the hands of Phoolan as she confronts him and beats him up. Phoolan's killing of the Thakurs in Behmai rattles the political establishment of India and the police tried to track her. After being hunted for two years, Phoolan finally surrenders.

Shekhar Kapur chose to end the movie with the scene of Phoolan surrendering to the state. But that was just the dawn of her triumph over those who tried to crush her. Since Phoolan was charged with 48 crimes, she had to remain in jail for eleven years, but her story was far from over. Two years after her release in 1996, Phoolan Devi contested in the elections and won. On 25<sup>th</sup> July 2001, Phoolan was shot dead at the gate of her residence by Sher Singh Rana, in order to

avenge the 1981 Behmai massacre. Phoolan Devi who was a criminal in the eyes of the law, was a saviour in the eyes of some, and for many from the oppressed class, a hero to look up to with her defiant violence against the system of subjugation. Phoolan Devi was a rebel and knew what it meant to live like one.

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## A STUDY OF FEMALE CONSCIOUSNESS IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING*

**M.Thangeswari**

Assistant Professor of English, Aditanar college of Arts and Science, Tiruchendur

### Abstract

*"We are exhorted to be women, remain women and become women" (2) says Simone de Beauvoir. True to his words one is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman. In ancient period, women were considered and treated as slaves. They had many rules and restrictions to obey and follow. They were not supposed to go out and have education. Because according to them a woman has to do her household work and take care of her husband and children. So majority of women in olden days were illiterate. But John Ruskin supports women's education. He comments: "let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments....Give them advantage that you give their brothers....Teach them, also that courage and truth and the pillars of their being" (123). In this paper I would like to present the female consciousness in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing.*

"We are exhorted to be women, remain women and become women" (2) says Simone de Beauvoir. True to his words one is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman. In ancient period, women were considered and treated as slaves. They had many rules and restrictions to obey and follow. They were not supposed to go out and have education. Because according to them a woman has to do her household work and take care of her husband and children. So majority of women in olden days were illiterate. But John Ruskin supports women's education. He comments: "let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments....Give them advantage that you give their brothers....Teach them, also that courage and truth and the pillars of their being" (123).

There are many writers supporting and praising women. Of the small handful of writers producing women based books few have probed more deeply into the question of what it means to be a woman in today's complex society especially a woman, involved with politics, with writing, with love and sex. Among them, Doris Lessing presents the plight and activities of women in her works. Her novels and stories express some of the finest expressions of lostness, and simultaneous self awareness found in the

sensitive person today. It is a woman, writing about women; Lessing has articulated many of the issues that concern woman. In fact her protagonists or major characters are central figures in the role of twentieth century literary protagonists. Their efforts to understand and ultimately transcend the biological and social expectation incumbent upon them as woman occupy an important position in Lessing's fiction. She establishes herself as a great writer with the publication of her first novel *The Grass is Singing* in 1950. Then onwards she keeps on writing and publishing her novels.

In the present paper, I would like to proceed with the feminine elements in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. She is considered the most significant woman writer during 20<sup>th</sup> century. Earl G. Ingersol describes her as a writer who "possesses a unique sensitivity, writing out of her own intense experience, her own subjectivity but at the same time writing out of the spirit of the times"(40).

When the new feminist movement was in the embryonic stage, Lessing's novels brought to consciousness a quality of being which she herself had taken absolutely for granted. As she asserts and as Agate Krouse and Ellen Morgan have demonstrated, there is nothing explicitly 'feminist' about Anna Wulf,

(character in Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*) the quality that startles us in her character is not her freedom. But the fact is that a novel is presented whose person is an intelligent, a political activist and artist, as well as a lover, a mother – a woman. (Jonah 175)

All the protagonists of Lessing's works are women. John Ruskin comments on Shakespeare as: "Shakespeare had no heroes only heroines" (17). This statement is very apt to Lessing as she presents the story of women characters.

*The Grass is Singing* is more often considered a book about the colour bar. But Lessing has repeatedly asserted that one of the themes that seem to have got lost, missed in the obsession with 'colour' is the feminist reading of the book, an aspect brilliantly analysed by Jeanette King in her book on Doris Lessing. Lessing holds that colour feeling is basically money feeling, financial success is a guarantee of social superiority with it, the white man or woman would be reduced to the level of a native. A feminist reading explains the operation of these economic and social forces on Mary Turner. Mary initially resists the traditional role of wife by refusing adulthood, remaining 'girlish' and only finally marrying in reaction to gossip about her single state. She continues to evade the physical dimension of marriage, submitting to sex without giving herself and adopting a pseudo-maternal attitude to Dick, to avoid confronting him as a woman to man pregnancy it is totally repellent to her.

Mary experiences real satisfaction on the farm when she is forced through Dick's illness – to play a masculine role. She exploits to the full, the sense of power this situation gives her. She is a 'virago' whose adherence to the 'rules' makes the already appalling conditions of work so unbearable that many of the natives leave. She is also a more efficient farm manager than Dick, having a far keener eye for the best ways of maximizing profit. However, she is not allowed to assume the role of the white boss, since she-as a woman-

exists on the margin of the Black-White power structure. Her energy and efficiency threatens Dick's position; in this structure he needs 'masculine' talk; even with Charlie whom he dislikes to restore his self assurance. Her attempts to usurp male authority is indeed seized on as the popular explanation for her murder-'being a woman she did not know how to handle the natives properly'.

Denied this masculine role, and unable to confirm to the acceptable role of wife and mother, Mary lapses once more into positivity, taking on 'the voice of the suffering female', which she has seen her mother enact for many years. Her mental and physical breakdown can thus be seen as the result of the limitations imposed on this once active woman who ironically marries to be her own mistress. Living in an institution similar to her boarding house she is totally dependent on others, both domestically and socially expecting to be entertained by men without forming any emotional attachments, she lived and grew up in a repressive patriarchal society. Like all children Mary learns to repress what is forbidden, or disapproved by society in particular sexual desire. What is repressed then enters or rather forms the unconscious, manifesting itself in metaphoric substitution for that cannot be admitted to consciousness. In her case the repression of her desire for her father is reinforced by her close identification with her mother and thus with her mother's conflict with her father. The choice between identification with the father or the mother faces all infants, but is one which feminist critics identify as being acutely critical for the female child. For Mary, the choice is between the mother which means accepting a system in which patriarchal order is inscribed or raising herself to the symbolic stature of her father, deriving her identity and power from that order, and thus repressing those qualities labelled as female.

When Mary takes on the role of 'master', the repressed self that identifies with the

father is brought into play, and at this point the interface between sexual and racial ideology becomes clear. For the repressed anger, Mary feels towards Dick, can be turned against the natives in a farm which is legitimized as her anger against Dick cannot be. When she hits Moses with the whip, the violence underlying this system is brought vividly to the open. Mary is a more successful embodiment than Dick of the white settler myth- a far shrewder exploiter of the land and the natives. Nevertheless Mary's act of violence against Moses also represents an illegitimate usurpation male power, releasing feeling, so frightening to Mary's conforming self, and some way has to be found of countering this transgression. By a process of metaphoric substitution, the forbidden desire for her becomes a desire for Moses. In the relationship with Moses, Mary acts out the traditional female role. With Moses her will is suspended and she returns to the status of the weeping child, helplessly dependent on the male. Mary yields her dominating position, submitting to Moses' almost fatherly gentleness. She could hear his voice, firm and kind like a father commanding her and she surrenders responsibility for herself to him. She has finally succeeded in becoming what she was thought to be incapable of, as is evident from her triumphant cry. Mary's relationship with Moses on the one hand constitutes a regression, the triumph of the conforming female self, helplessly dependent on a father figure on the other hand; it represents a challenge to racist ideology, indicating a potential liberation from the ideology, indicating a potential liberation from the ideology. Mary's relationship with Moses challenges ideology at so many levels. When Charlie visits the Turners, he is horrified not simply by Mary's flirtation with a native but by the fact that she has gone native, wearing clothes sold for natives in the store.

Growing up as the only surviving child of a father who nightly drank himself 'into

sodden cheerfulness' and a mother whose bearing is always one of hardened, even a self-satisfied despair, and unrelieved attitude of contempt toward her husband; throughout her life Mary has been isolated, both in fact and feeling. Her real freedom comes only after her parents' death. Although she is free, she is not free to enter into other's lives. Even after her marriage, she still attempts to emulate the vague feminism she inherited from her mother.

The women who marry men, like Dick learns sooner or later that there are two things they can do, they can drive themselves mad, tear themselves to pieces in storms of futile anger and rebellions; or they can hold themselves tight and go bitter. Mary with the memory of her own mother recurring more and more frequently, like an older, sardonic double of walking besides her, followed the course her upbringing made inevitable. (TGS 110)

Mary's protective stance is supported by 'avid feminism'; she has inherited from her mother. In this prerogative reference to feminist sensibility, we find for the first time clue to what we come to recognize is later works of Lessing, as a revulsion against that facile feminism whose proponents see their suffering in isolation from broader themes of human oppression. Thus, Mary, who feels her mother's suffering, deeply cannot see that her father too might have suffered it. She would have retorted and had anyone suggested it. "He's a man, isn't he? He can do what he likes" (TGS 21). This arid feminism and its corollary the contempt for men unconsciously nurtured by Mary, ultimately fails to protect her from encroaching attacks on her false existential position. Her protective stance collapses when she is forced to see herself according to the standards of the world through which she has so far naively moved. Having unavoidably overheard unflattering comments about her age, her manner of dress, and her unmarried state, Mary fixes on one

line of the unwelcome gossip that refers to her failure to marry.

...the conversation she listened to, while her face burned and her hands went clammy. 'She's not fifteen any longer: It is ridiculous! Someone should tell her about her clothes'. How old is she? She must be well over thirty. She has been going strong for years. She was working long before I began working, and that was a good twelve years ago. Why doesn't she marry? She must have had plenty of chances. There was a dry chuckle. I don't think so. My husband was seen on her himself once, but he thinks she will never marry. She just isn't like that at all. Something is missing somewhere. Oh, I don't know. (TGS 40)

But Mary never undertakes to remodel herself into a socially acceptable image of a marriageable thirty year old woman. Finally she marries a weak, ineffectual Dick Turner. She accepts him because his worship restores her feeling of superiority to men, which is really at the bottom, what she has been living for all these days and years. Nor is she disappointed in that. Even wedding night is tolerable to Mary because Dick's timid adoration. But Dick's respect and his nervous wonder at her efficiently, her energy and her intelligence fail to save her from her mother's fate. Thus Mary's destiny determines and the remainder of the novel is a predictable by its treatment of the blacks.

She is disappointed and depressed by the ugly and primitive farm house. So she is forced to lead the oppressive loneliness of a farmer's wife. Her only social expression becomes her overwhelming hatred for the blacks whom she treats with exaggerated cruelty and impersonal.

...one hated the way they suckled their babies, with their breasts hanging down

for everyone to see, there was something in their calm satisfied maternity, that made her blood boil. Their babies hanging on them like leaches she said herself shuddering, for she thought with horror of a sucking child. The idea of a child lips on her breast made her feels quite sick. (TGS 143)

After the last hope for maternal success has failed and after she is denied her lingering desire for a baby that would give her something to do 'Mary gives way, finally submitting to Moses, whom she regards, with unconscious irony, as the strong and secure man, she has wanted Dick to be. It is a period of profound illness, a period when she is forced to confront her worst fears and to acknowledge her sexual desire and her attraction to a strong demanding man. At least her real self is exposed and she has come to accept a relationship with another person without, as she has always feared 'engulfment'.

Thus Lessing's fictions often present the women's point of view. In a conversation with Florence Howe she concedes that she writes from a woman's point of view, but she is essentially writing about the rights of the individual.

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