



# **BODHI**

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**Mr. P. ASHOK KUMAR**

*Secretary*

It is my pleasure to give this message for a one day International Conference on **"English Language, Literature and Linguistics"** organized by the Department of English and Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science. The English Language, Literature and Linguistics are an approach to understand English language acquisition and learning in a broader context.

This opens the window into unfamiliar world and offers a fresh look at Linguistics and Literature. In today's world, the exposure towards the English language teaching and Linguistics guide to build a better Language and Communication. I am sure you will undergo an immensely rewarding experience. I believe that you will benefit highly from this conference. My Hearty greetings should go to the faculty members of the Department of English and Bodhi International Journal of research in Humanities, Arts and Science for organizing a conference on an important topic of academic interest. My best wishes for the successful conduct of the international conference.





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**Er. A. SHAKTI PRANESH**

*Director*

At the very outset, I express my appreciation and sincere thanks to our young energetic and dedicated staff of English Department of our college and Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science for organizing an International conference on **“English Language, Literature and Linguistics”** and the publication of the book college is a main hub of various activities starting from teaching and learning, giving and sharing of ideas, imparting knowledge and experiences, inculcating ethics and values, Innovation of various programs.

I am sure that learning English language teaching methodology and curriculum development will bring drastic changes in the minds of the youth who look forward for the betterment of the acquisition of language. The theme of the conferences is enlightening which will enable the Organizers, Resource person and the Participants to bring together the ideas of English Language, Literature and Linguistic in a different ways. I hope that this book would go a long way in fulfilling the objectives of the organizers.





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**Dr. Mrs. S. RAJESWARI**

*Principal*

At this juncture I express my heartfelt gratitude to the faculty members of English department and Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science for organizing an international conference on **“English Language Literature and Linguistics”**. The past few decades have witnessed and extensive interest in linguistics perceptions in English Language and Literature. Contemporary Writers, Linguists have argued that the goals of Language and different aspects in Literature

I welcome with open mind the contemporary writers and the future writers who intend to be pioneers ready to sharpen their parts and expressions; who dare to dream, fulfill aspirations and can inspire others to dream and thus take strides along the line. I believe that you will benefit highly from this conference I wish you very success in your deliberations and a successful conference on behalf of our Institution.



## EDITORIAL

We use language and Linguistics as a means of expression, communication and interaction. Teaching and Learning is a process in academia where language is inevitable. Faculty members of any subject would accept that they require a language in the classroom to explain a concept. The study of the *English language and Linguistics* provides the perfect context for the analysis of *literature*, and the study of *English literature* enhances an understanding of the *language and Linguistics* working in practice. The three disciplines complement each other, and offer a great variety – of subject matter and learning and assessment methods.

The articles touch a area of the researchers' interest and emerging trends in language, Linguistics and literature. They also explore the new avenues where people find something could be filled in with. The published articles in this volume bridge the gap in the field of language, Linguistics and literature. The articles are highly informative with exhaustive research and outcomes are quite innovative and enlightening. The readers of these articles will have something to store for their life.

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

At this Moment we make our Sincere thanks to Management, Principal 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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**Aim & Objectives**

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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## GITA HARIHARAN'S *THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT*: CORRELATING MYTH WITH CONTEMPORARY INDIAN LIFE

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### Abstract

Contemporary Indian Women writers in English are innovative in handling their themes and techniques. Most of the women writers tend to deviate from the classical models to a powerful and authentic literary tradition. Gita Hariharan uses a special technique in which she exhibits the Indian myths and correlates them with the present life of the Indian Women. In her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, she has successfully depicted a thousand lives through a single face. This prolific writer traces the perpetual battles of the women in their relationships with men and others of the society. Gita Hariharan has wonderfully portrayed the multi-faceted women battle through her fictional characters. In most of her novels, she deals with the idea of the crisis of identity and how the characters struggle to locate them. *A Thousand Faces of Night* is her debut novel which depicts the lives of three different generations of Indian women. The names given by her to the characters represent divergent aspects like rebellious, submissive and marginally submissive nature of Indian women. She also has highlighted how the Indian women are oppressed in the institution of marriage.

**Keywords:** myths, reality, rebellion, submissive, marriage.

Gita Hariharan is an eminent personality in the realm of Indian fiction in English. Her contribution to English Indian literature discloses the exploration of contemporary Indian women situation. Her novels juxtapose the marginalized lives of women from the Vedic period till date. She has meticulously blended myth and reality. Her attempt to involve myth exposes some of the women related issues which are prevalent in contemporary society.

Since olden days, human societies tend to designate different roles and responsibilities, codes of behavior and morality, feelings and thoughts to men and women. Gender-based social distinction has been enforced by the patriarchal society. Women were assigned roles like daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers to devote themselves to the domestic sphere and they had to take care of their fathers, brothers, husband and children. They were expected to adopt modest behavior and moral code of sexual purity. They should accept the mode of self-sacrifice and avoid having strong desires, emotions, and opinions especially in opposition to the man who was considered to be their preserves. Indian mythology directed women to listen to what they are told, never protest and suppress their anger and emotion. They are praised for bearing atrocity. In Ramayana Sita had to prove her chastity despite being a goddess. Drupadi in Mahabharata was shared by five men as if she was an

object and none of them could protect her from the Kauravas. Each of these stories illustrates how women are suppressed by the patriarchal society and much of these atrocities continue even today. 'The Thousand Faces of Night' portrays the lives of these Indian women Devi, Sita and Mayamma and their names, allude to represent different voices like three Goddesses. Gita Hariharan no longer wants women to play a passive role. She expects women to protest against male domination. The novel blends the married lives of Devi, Sita, Mayamma, and Gauri with the mythological stories to portray the exploitation of women.

The thematic strand of marital exploitation is either physical or psychological. Sita, the mother of Devi and Mayamma the servant of Devi, are ideal married women. Both of them seem to accept their ordeals submissively. They tackle their experience in their way. But Devi protests against the male domination and breaks way from the institution of marriage.

The stories from epics narrated by Devi's grandmother tend to locate Devi in the cultural confinement of India. "Devi's grandmother's village house and her stories from the epics locate Devi, the child in the culture house of India. The timeless tales weave together past and present, emphasizing the link between the stories and life of the people she knew as part of the name continuum (Women in India 59). Devi is told about the

ideal women protagonists who sincerely follow their husband's footsteps. She has also listened to the stories of ferocious women like Kritya and Amba who took revenge on men who were the cause of their misery.

The grandmother narrates the story of Gandhari. She is a princess of Gandhara. She is regarded as an epitome of virtue. She is a beautiful and noblewoman. She is shocked to see his white eyes where the pupils are useless. In her pride and anger, she has a piece of cloth over her own eyes to be blind like her husband. It is considered a sign of dedication and love. But what she had in her mind is not depicted in the epic. It could also be an act of protest against her father for having selected a blind man to be her husband. Devi finds a parallel to Gandhari's character in her mother. Sita, Devi's mother, plays veena so beautifully that she inherits it as a part of her dowry. Her Father-in-law one day roared in anger when the things were not ready for morning prayers. When he shouted at Sita to put her veena away and be a wife and daughter in law, Sita pulled out the wooden base and answered sharply that she was a wife and daughter in law. "We never saw her touch the veena again. She became a dutiful daughter-in-law, the neighbors' praised, and our household never heard heart-rending music again (The Thousand Faces of Night p.30). Devi understands that her parents were afflicted by kind blindness and the one would lead the other grasping each other.

Another parallel to the myths is found in the life of Gauri, a servant maid in Devi's Grandmother's house. Gauri is a beautiful young girl who works in the Brahmin houses. With full of excitement and dreams, she marries a man who later turned out to be an 'animal.' Gauri falls in love with her young brother-in-law, an outcast due to leucoderma and runs away with him. When Devi enquires about the fate of Gauri, her grandmother says a story about a beautiful girl who married a snake and yet lived a happy life. A childless couple prayed for a baby, but a snake was born to them. They brought it up affectionately and searched for a bride. A host offered his beautiful daughter. The girl accepted her fortune and became a devoted wife. Fortunately, she found a handsome youth on her bed one morning. Devi relates this story to the life of Gauri. "Should Gauri, my happy down to earth Gauri, have married a snake? And who was the snake in her story-her bestial husband or her freakish lover?" (The Thousand Faces of Night p.34)

A myth of Amba and the story of Devi's cousin offer a similar parallel. Prince Bheesma kidnaps three beautiful

princesses of whom the eldest one Amba is already married to Salwa. Beeshma comes to know about this, and he lets her go. But Salwa insults her and says that he cannot feast on leftovers. A woman usually fights her battles alone, and Amba decides to fake revenge on Beeshma. Devi's cousin Uma goes through horrible married life. Both her husband and Father-in-law are drunkards, and the latter tries to assault her sexually. She seeks refuge in Grandmother's house whose story inspired the grandmother to narrate the myth of Amba.

The story of Nala and Damayanthi inspired the young mind of Devi who was then seven years old. This popular story from Indian mythology fascinated her by expressing the dignity and exaltation of swayamvara. Devi's grandmother narrated how the kings came dressed in their brilliance to win the hands of Damayanthi. Graceful and delicate Damayanthi dressed elegantly, and hair decorated with precious gems came there like a fresh lotus. When Devi's grandmother narrated the beauty of Damayanthi, young Devi longed to be like her in future. Grandmother's stories always had a happy ending which charmed Devi's young mind and projected in her mind the magnificence and grandeur of marriages. But ironically when Devi returned from the U.S., her suitors shopped for a wife, and Devi's mother chose her husband instead of her. Girls who are brought up by projecting a glorious image about married life get disappointed while facing reality. Devi says "I am glad my grandmother is no longer alive. I am glad she is no here to see me at my swayamvara, the princess' robe she lovingly stitched for me frayed round the edges and two sizes too large" (The Thousand Faces of Night p.20)

GitaHariharan's novel blends the married life of women with those of mythical ladies. In ancient Indian mythology, to women were suppressed and they suffered a lot. But their adversities and misfortunes are glorified by the patriarchal society to make women submissive. In reality, the new women are trying to search their identity to live for their self.

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## THE BREAKING OF THE LOVE RULES: THERAPEUTIC INCEST IN ARUNDATHI ROY'S *GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

Asha Mary Abraham

Research Scholar

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### Abstract

Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things* is a gripping tale of love, transgression of love rules and grave sibling incest. Incest is the sexual activity between people related by blood. It is tabooed all over the world, depending on the intensity of incest as a sexual transgression of social and moral codes. The novel is the fictional rendering of transgression, of all kinds, especially of the love laws that lay down who should be loved and how much. Of the few novels in Indian English literature that address incest, *God of Small Things* is prominent due to the intensity of the sexual transgression of the dizygotic twin Estha and Rahel. Roy was vehemently criticized for the incestuous climax of the novel. However, the climax has been foreshadowed right from the beginning and the revolutionary incest at the end had to be anticipated by the readers, given Roy's established nature of throwing conventions to the winds. The novel is all about being liberated from the clutches of conventions – Ammu, Estha, Rahel, Mammachi and Chacko to an extent are all struggling for liberation from the laws that bind them. The paper will explore the contours of incest in the novel, its psychological and emotional repercussions and the direst need of an incestuous physical union of the twins. It will also look into the narrative language that Roy employs, with particular emphasis on incest.

**Keywords:** Incest, Transgression, Trauma, Healing, Consent

Incest is the sexual intercourse between individuals related in certain degrees of kinship and thus prohibited from sexual intimacy. 'Incest', in the sense of proscribed and abhorred sexual behavior, is a cultural construct; its boundaries vary according to definitions that are specific to individual cultures. But the core of what constitutes incest remains the same in all cultures – an exclusion of certain close relatives from those considered as permissible sexual/ marriage partners. The definitions of incest vary culturally and temporally as to which blood relations are permissible and which are not. Parent-child and sibling-sibling incest is almost universally forbidden. Though the practice of incest is prevalent, due to the cultural and topical differences, generalizations are impossible. The incest taboo is a universal cultural constant and lies at the heart of human social evolution and civilization. Incest has played a crucial role in all influential theories of human behavior throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as psychoanalysis, structuralism and sociobiology. Incest and its avoidance occupy prominent positions in competing approaches to the understanding of human social behavior.

Whereas first-degree incest is almost universally prohibited, there are different cultural positions regarding

cousin marriage. L. H Morgan argues that avoidance of cousin marriage would increase the vigor of the stock. Anthropologists argue that cousin marriage is an expression of a wider Middle Eastern preference for solidarity with one's father's lineage. According to Sigmund Freud, all human beings repress incestuous desires. He theorized that we are imprinted from a young age to seek out the familiar by mating with people who resemble those who raised us. However, since incest is not a sexual orientation unlike homosexuality, it is more condemnable in all cultures. Incest, pedophilia, sexual orgies, homosexuality are all practiced in modern society and some of them, like incest and pedophilia, are forbidden by law. Laws regarding incest, its prohibition and its punishments also differ from religion to religion and place to place. All religions ban parent-child and sibling-sibling incest. Though the rules regarding whom to marry and whom not to marry vary from community to community, time to time, place to place and religion to religion, the taboo that hovers over incest always hold strong everywhere. The act of incest, the fear of the act and the prohibition imposed to ensure social order recur in literature. Oedipus, Electra, One Hundred Years of Solitude, Sons and Lovers, Moll Flanders etc. are some of

the texts that engage with incest. *God of Small Things* is one of the few Indian texts that engage with incest. The perspective employed by Arundhati Roy regarding this taboo topic is quite unparalleled; she employs incest as a therapeutic activity. It is not an act of tabooing but an act of liberating. It is an act that violates the socially established love rules.

*The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy is a gripping tale of sibling love, intimacy and the subsequent incest. The incestuous siblings in the novel are Estha and Rahel and given their intimate relationship ever since birth, incest can quite well be anticipated. Estha and Rahel knew each other even before life took shape. They were dizygotic twins. The telepathic and mysterious connection between the twins is hinted throughout the novel. They are complementary to each other and inseparable from each other. Roy builds up this connection from the beginning so that the final act of incest appears natural. The whole novel questions love laws. Roy talks about the need for the absence of love laws so that a touchable is free to love an untouchable and siblings are free to love each other and have consensual sex. Incest is only a minor theme in the novel, but it radically questions the love rules of who can be loved and how much. Roy shows the incest in the final chapter simply as a transgression of love rules. Incest, though is foreshadowed many times, is not discussed at all until the last chapter. Inter-caste sex appears an even bigger taboo than incest in the novel. The shock Estha and Rahel give to the readers with their consensual consummation is not very different from Baby Kochamma's shock on knowing her niece Ammu's affair with the untouchable Paravan named Velutha. The 'love laws' mentioned recurrently in the novel relates to kinship and incest taboo.

With Sophie's drowning and Ammu's affair with Velutha, Estha and Rahel are forced by circumstances to part from each other. When Estha parts, Rahel's agony is beyond words that "On the station platform, Rahel doubled over and screamed and screamed" (Roy 326). The departing Madras Mail disrupted the perfect harmony in which the twins lived, parting them, leaving each of them incomplete. With the separation that followed soon after a trauma, the twins thereafter led a terrible life, haunted by memories from which they tried to run away and the insatiable longing for the 'other half'. When they are divided, they live two lives of emptiness. Estha's trauma is double of that of Rahel. It was he who was molested by the orange drink-lemon drink man, it was he who had to bear

the brunt of Baby Kochamma's rage and it was he who had to give false testimony against Velutha that led to his death. He was so traumatized that he found all means of communication practically impossible and turned silent. His act of walking is an expression of his inner turmoil. The incestuous mating is only an outward expression of the interdependence and intimacy they shared. Their traumas which include their mother's death and the tremendous pain of parting, bottled for years are certainly bound to lead them to an incestuous physical union.

The story is essentially about a family infamous for breaking love rules in a stringent society which held fast to them. Probably, it was only the twins who never broke any love rules in the course of the novel, which makes it inevitable that they break them at the close. Estha could break the rules only with Rahel. Hence the incestuous coupling is inevitable and quite natural like all other pranks the twins did together during childhood. With the book questioning social taboos like inter-caste/cultural marriages, widowhood etc. since the beginning, the plot moves towards incest with natural ease. The twins can't get over their trauma in any ways acceptable to the society. Incest in the novel can be seen as Roy's way of demonstrating, through an absurd example, how warped the logic of endogamy and purity is. In *The God of Small Things*, it is not romantic "elective affinities" as Goethe would call it that leads to incest but sheer inevitable necessity (Goethe4).

There is no space between the scenes of Estha's parting and the incest. The only indication for the time that has passed is the statement "TWENTY THREE YEARS LATER" (Roy 327). It appears as though incest naturally follows the scene at the railway station. The parting and incest are placed together, in the same chapter.

TWENTY THREE YEARS LATER, Rahel, dark woman in a yellow T-shirt turns to Estha in the dark. "Esthapappychachen Kuttappen Peter Mon", she says. She whispers. She moves her mouth. Their beautiful mother's mouth. Estha, sitting very straight, waiting to be arrested, takes his fingers to it. To touch the words it makes. To keep the whisper. His fingers followed the shape of it. The touch of teeth. His hand is held and kissed. Pressed against the coldness of a cheek, wet with shattered rain. Then she sat up and put her hands around him. Drew him down beside her. They lay like that for a long time. Awake in the dark. Quietness and emptiness. Not old, not young. But a viable, die-able age. They were strangers who had met in a chance encounter. They had known each other

before life began. There is very little that anyone could say to clarify to clarify what happened next. Nothing that (in mammachi's book) would separate sex from love. Or needs from feelings... But what was there to say? Only that Quietness and Emptiness fitted together like stacked spoons. Only that there was a snuffling in the hollows at the base of a lovely throat. Only that a hard honey-colored shoulder had a semi-circle of teeth marks on it. Only that they held each other close, long after it was over. Only that what they shared that night was not happiness but hideous grief. Only that once again, they broke the love laws that lay down who should be loved, how and how much (Roy 327,328).

The scenes of incest are portrayed with such beauty that it appears anything but pornographic. The incest scene involves very little description. It is consensual and necessary to the plot that it is not incest, but the child molestation of Estha that is disturbing. The sex of the twins is not a celebration nor is it just for pleasure. It is the sharing of the deep-seated grief that they bore for long. Their sex is a way of acknowledging what each other had been through. It is an act of understanding more than an act of satisfaction.

The hints of incest lie in the harmonious and mutually complementary childhood of theirs. Their personalities seem to balance each other out, like popcorns and M and M's or peanut butter and jelly. Estha is the only reason for Rahel to return to Ayemenum after twenty-three years. Ever since Ammu's death, Rahel had deliberately tried to stay away from him but the connection shared by them leaves her no option but to return to him when Estha is "returned" (Roy 9). Rahel never wrote letters to Estha, her explanations being "There are things you cannot do – like writing letters to a part of yourself. To your feet or hair, or heart" (Roy 163,164). This makes it evident that even when they were separate, they did not consider the other half as a real 'other'. Even though he is away,

Rahel had a memory of waking up one night giggling at Estha's funny dream. She has other memories too that she has no right to have. She remembers, for instance, what the orange drink-lemon drink man did to Estha in Abhilash Talkies. She remembers the taste of the tomato sandwiches- Estha's sandwiches, that Estha ate- on the Madras Mail to Madras (Roy 92).

Whenever they are close, they don't even have to speak to know that the other is present. This is why Estha's silence doesn't trouble Rahel. Rahel and Estha

can't help the togetherness and intimacy shared, because that alone completes them.

The whole novel is a celebration of the transgression of love rules. The first is the cultural transgression by Chacko who marries a foreigner, Margaret. Roy then celebrates the deliberate transgression of the caste boundary by Velutha and Ammu. She depicts the transgression of the love rules and the incest taboo as the blind regressive desire for the tranquility of two broken beings and not as willful transgression. This prevents them from appearing pornographic or creating revulsion in the reader. The union of Ammu and Velutha, far from constituting an act of social progress, can be felt as the monstrous ultimate aim of phantasms of purity, while the incest of the twins point towards the longing for a better, happier future – far from being two similar transgressions, the two types of love scenes show that Roy is not interested in a purely abstract questioning of the origins and validity of the law, and especially of the universal taboo against incest. Both these transgressions are placed adjacently. This proximity is not out of coincidence. They are both related by the breach of social taboos involved in them.

Just a few days before separation, Ammu says to the twins "Promise me you will always love each other" (Roy 318). The twins kept the promise till the end, through the incest. The incest does not appear as an unhealthy closeness which is morally disturbing. It is consensual; for each twin, the other signifies all goodness of childhood that they have now lost. The sibling incest can be justified and acceptable since Estha and Rahel were not brother and sister in a conventional way.

In those early amorphous years when memory had only just begun, when life was full of Beginnings and no Ends, and everything was For Ever, Estha and Rahel thought of themselves together as Me and separately, individually, as We or Us. As though they were a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities... Anyway, now she thought of Estha and Rahel as Them, because separately, the two of them are no longer what they were or ever thought they'd be (Roy 2,3).

The necessity of incest is that it solves the inner deprivation of the twins, thereby completing them. Incest serves a therapeutic purpose for the twins. A Freudian reading of the novel reveals that the distressing memories from which the twins tried to run away are repressed in their psyche, creating emotional and mental trauma to them, and they take over their personality. Eventually,

these hidden things begin to reveal themselves, through dreams, through frequent flash backs and in bigger ways as in the consummatory incest. Rahel's body becomes Estha's medicine. Theirs is not just a union of bodies but souls. Incest can also be seen as the twin's attempt to straighten things up and is thus an attempt to return to the origins. Estha and Rahel see each other as a part of their body. Then, Estha and Rahel are not making love to each other, because for them, there is no each, no other.

On the other hand, they love themselves with a full understanding. There lies the healing quality of the incest. The twins' incest is an act that need not be hidden, unlike the love of Ammu and Velutha. They make love not out of passion but out of "hideous grief" (Roy 328). Their consummation marks the closure of a twenty-three year old wound that bled often.

Along with the explicit incest of Estha and Rahel, there are hints of an incestuous desire Mammachi harbors towards Chacko. It probably sprung from Chacko's saving of Mammachi from Pappachi's abuse. It was only after Pappachi's death that Chacko resigned his job and returned to Ayemenum. He christened Mammachi's factory as Paradise Pickles And Preserves, and always referred to it as "my factory, my pineapples, my pickles" (Roy 57) to which Mammachi remains a silent spectator. She remained a passive spectator, silently sanctioning Chacko's "men's needs" (Roy 77). During the family occasion of Sophie Mol's funeral, "Mammachi was almost blind and always wore dark glasses when she went out of the house. Her tears trickled down from behind them and trembled along her jaw like raindrops on the edge of a roof. She looked small and ill in her crisp off-white sari. Chacko was Mammachi's only son. Her own grief grieved her. His devastated her" (Roy5). The sparks of her incestuous desire are visible in her agitations when Chacko adores his ex-wife Margaret and praises her.

The novel *God of Small Things* is an open portrait of sibling incest, a theme Indians were not well exposed to at the time of publication of the novel. The novel created

quite a sensation and controversy following its publication. However the "emotional ambivalence (Lear182) towards the blood kins with which a child grows up is irresistible. The incestuous union of Estha and Rahel is unavoidable. The healing role it performs is the saving grace from 'unlawful sex', decriminalizing it. After all, "what desire can be contrary to nature since it was given to man by nature itself?" (Foucault, 23)

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## THE VICTIMS OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY IN NAYANTARA SAHGAL'S *MISTAKEN IDENTITY*

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*Mistaken Identity*, the eighth novel of Sahgal was published in 1988. It was dedicated to historian and Sahgal's friend E.P. Thompson and his wife Dorothy Thompson. The novel is a political novel replete with socio-political events in India during the British regime when the country was gradually awakening to Nationalism with an urge to seek freedom. The feminist concern finds reflection in the novel through the character Ranee of Vijaygarh. The novel is viewed through Bhushan Singh, son of a Land Lord Raja, whose identity is mistaken, charged with disloyalty and was thrown into jail. During his stay in jail, Bhushan along with other jail mates introspect his own life and the situation of his country in religious and social contexts.

The Ranee of Vijaygarh is a traditional woman who happens to stay behind the veil and silently work for her husband satisfying all his needs, who do not show any sympathy to her. We see through this character the feminist concern of Sahgal reaching its peak as Ranee feels inhuman kind of exploitation in the hands of her unconcerned husband. It is very difficult for her to live in a situation where she is isolated. Sahgal projects this character to show that even an important personality like Ranee is not spared from her male counterpart. She is left out as a tool that has to be used only when needed. Though uneducated, she defends her husband's power and pleasure for other Ranees. She happens to break herself through the bondage when the Raja happens to marry the third time. She was not able to accept such a position and challenged her husband in his own house without any physical and moral support. When it becomes unbearable, she walks out from the position of Ranee and marries Yusuf comrade in whom she finds love, comfort and warmth. The seeking of new love in communist Yusuf was indeed a bold decision. Sahgal created Ranee as an example of her women character who is ready to take her own independent decision.

The other women characters in the novel are Razia, a Muslim girl, Willie-May, daughter of Mr. Goldbager and Sylla, a Parsee girl. All three of them happen to be lovers of Bhushan Singh though he marries none of them. Razia is the first love of Bhushan and his youthful teenage affair with her is a kind of manifestation of freedom that he had been longing for. He was under his parent's strict guidance and rules. His mother Ranee was restricted from freedom and she wanted her son to be free and thus he was always longing for freedom. The love affair between the teenagers which they thought is a result of freedom from both the sides and had gone deeper into a sexual relationship which satisfied their pleasures. On the exposure of their affair to their family members, their relationship breaks up turning into a communal disturbance leading to carnage. Bhushan was sent to America by his father to save him from the violence. During his stay in the United States, he was haunted with all his earlier relationships.

Bhushan is an aimless man who lived easy life and this is the reason why he was not able to keep up the relationship with any of his lovers. After breaking up relationships from his lovers, Bhushan finally finds fulfillment in marriage with another girl who is the daughter of comrade Yusuf. Sahgal leaves a paradoxical relation in the novel with this marriage. We see in the novel that Bhushan's mother finds solace after breaking up from her husband in relation with Yusuf, but even before the union of this couple Bhushan, unknowingly gets into relation with Yusuf's daughter and marries her. The paradoxical relation between Bhushan's mother and Yusuf and his daughter in marital relation with Bhushan and Bhushan's earlier sexual relations with his three lovers all show Sahgal's creative concerns for women who suffer in silence. Sahgal also tried to make a secularist type of relations between the characters in the novel. The love between Razia and Bhushan, relation between Ranee and Yusuf and the marriage between Yusuf's daughter and Bhushan all in a

way suggest a secularist type of relation. At a time when the nation was torn by communal violence, Sahgal's characters transcend these barriers and lead a life beset with communal harmony. Thus, in the novel Sahgal, vividly presents the problems of women and their courage in making relation outside their community and religion.

*Mistaken Identity* is about the cultural and political life of India. The novel mentions the events of the freedom movement and the British Raj. The historical setting of the novel portrays the history of India and the world at large. It unites the people of the different religions with different political beliefs from different parts of the country. It is imbued with sociopolitical events in India during the British Raj. It was the time when the country was gradually awakening to nationalism and witnessing unrest, strikes and mass arrests. Sahgal combines the life stories of individuals with the history of the nation. The world of politics and personal relationship go side by side in her novels. In *Mistaken Identity*, glimpses of the stirrings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, strikes, suspicion and Hindu-Muslim unrest are given. Gandhiji's Dandi March, Civil Disobedience movement, execution of Bhagat Singh and the anger it erupts throughout the country have been vividly portrayed. Besides, referring to Gandhi and Kamal Pasha, the historical scene is made more immediately relevant by citing the Lahore Conspiracy case involving Bhagat Singh and others who had avenged the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. The novelist refers:

The Lahore Conspiracy Case is closed — with three hangings.... Bhagat Singh and his two close colleagues were executed in Lahore jail yesterday, March, 23 and surreptitiously cremated on the banks of the Sutlej river — Gandhi is out of jail but he could not get the execution stayed. (Sahgal, *Mistaken* 157)

Gandhiji's salt march to the sea at Dandi is vividly described in the novel as:

A civil disobedience campaign is in full swing. Our newspaper says immense crowds cheered him on and thousands joined the march. People are manufacturing salt in pans all over the country. (98)

*Mistaken Identity* is written from Bhushan Singh, the protagonist, the son of the Raja of Vijaygarh, is on his way home from college in America in 1929 when he is arrested on a mistaken charge of treason. He had to spend almost three years in jail, where his companions are idealistic followers of Mahatma Gandhi and militant trade union leaders, both trying to win freedom in their ways. Bhushan's interaction with them is at times quite comic. As the

months of awaiting trial stretch into years, Bhushan entertains his communist cell-mates with tales of his colourful past — of his veiled mother, of his very modern Parsee girlfriend, of the American flapper who taught him the Turkey Trot, of his forbidden boyhood affair which ignited two blood-spilling Hindu-Muslim riots and led to his banishment abroad.

The political events of the day are presented through the past of Bhushan. When Bhushan becomes a friend to the political prisoners, he narrates the stories of the past. He recollects his relation with a Muslim girl Razia which led to his banishment for communal riots. Among his several relationships, Bhushan recollects his love with Razia whose face tells his history. He reflects:

I thought of her face. It took me years to decipher its spells and understand why it haunted me. It defied unwritten laws. The Tartar cheekbones of the face should have had slanting eyes above them, but hers were long ovals, the lidded eyes of temple sculpture. Their width took me unawares when they pounced upon her tonga. It was the manifest racial impurity, a mix belonging to a vision of future, of communal union that made it unforgettable, and retreat impossible for me. (49)

The novel depicts the personal and political life of Bhushan through reminiscences of his trips abroad. The flashback technique used in novel gives us the picture of Bhushan's meaning of life in the present and the uncertainty of the future. It discloses the communal riots of the period, the relationship between Razia and Bhushan sparks off Hindu-Muslim riots at Vijaygarh and her father requests Bhushan's father to get him transferred out of Vijaygarh. When their affair is disclosed, the communal violence disrupts. Therefore, Bhushan was sent to America as the communal bloodshed was increasing day by day. In America, he meets Willie-May who encourages him to become an actor. Commenting on the differences between two women, Bhushan says:

The women of this country had the mathematical proportions of buildings, a dome-and-minaret beauty that made the beauty of other races look unplanned and haphazard. Their anatomies knew where to grow and stop growing.... The milk Willie May poured into her body by the glassful seemed to flow directly into her curves. Her skin glowed with chicken-gravy, creamed corn and blueberry muffins. Every line of her had succulent meat juices and fruit juices locked into it. (102-103)

Bhushan was obsessed with his childhood love and he was unable to make any plans for his life. To find his

obsessed love, Bhushan returns India. He comes across Sylla, a vibrant and modern Parsee girl with western fashion. They develop healthy, ideal and perfect love relationship. But Bhushan is a man with no ambition and no occupation. Sylla thinks that they cannot marry because Bhushan has no faith in any Religion. She decides to marry Nauzer, a Parsee young rising advocate. Thus, Bhushan's identity as a true lover is mistaken by Sylla also. The novel comes to an end when Bhushan comes to reality from his illusion of love. He decides not to interfere in Sylla's life. At Vijaygarh, he meets Yusuf, his prisonmate in jail and the communist social reformer. Yusuf proposes Bhushan to write songs, inspiring revolution in Vijaygarh, but Bhushan, can write poems only about Razia, in the Hindu-Muslim harmony line. Finally, he finds fulfillment in his marriage with comrade Yusuf's daughter. Bhushan also develops a composite culture and religion through his traditional Hindu mother with Hindi tongue and his father with Urdu tongue. The composition of cultures and religions was not accepted either by common people or the British Raj.

The novel portrays the contemporary political and personal life of Bhushan and his prison mates through the technique of stream of consciousness. Sahgal states:

My just-published novel, *Mistaken Identity*, is partly about religious fanaticism. I talk and write a good deal about Hinduism, but I am, of course, half-Muslim by culture, part Christian by education, and beholden to far-flung countries for the literature that forms part of my consciousness. My opportunities have given me a foot in two worlds, so I feel as comfortable in the skin of an English character as an Indian one. (Sahgal, *Passion* 247)

The novel is connected with the cultural design and the social, political and historical forces of India's past,

present and future. Full of mystery and gentle humour, *Mistaken Identity* is a story of love and obsession that brilliantly sums up the turmoil of India during the British period. The chaotic period of Indian history is discussed in the novel. The title of the novel itself suggests its mock-heroic representations of Indian history. The novel is provided with a historical perspective projecting the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity.

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## BLENDED LEARNING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: “A ROAD MAP TO OPTIMIZE LEARNING OUTCOMES”

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### Abstract

***“Blended learning refers to a mixing of different learning environments. The phrase has many exact meanings based on the background in which it is used. Blended learning provides learners and teachers a possible environment to learn and teach more successfully”.-Marsh (2012).***

A wave of changes is seen in all fields of education change alone is thy province, changes will bring innovation. Innovation leads to shifting has occurred from teacher-centered to learner-centered. In order to cater to the needs of learners, teachers should adopt appropriate innovate instructional strategies. Blended learning is one of the novel instructions for English language teaching. The potential which blended learning offers for independent learning. The online components can not only provide each learner with the possibility of recycling at their speed and in their own time what they have already experienced but can also offer extra opportunities for further learning both from course-specific materials and from materials from other web sources. Also, such experiences can help the General English student to become less dependent on teachers and more self-reliant both during the course and in subsequent language learning experiences that such independent experience can be enhanced by face-to-face preparation and follow up in class guided by a teacher. Preparation for future courses is another potential benefit for General English students in relation to future academic or professional courses, which are becoming increasingly likely to be delivered using a blended learning approach which the students to get to know each other, to become familiar with the objectives and procedures of the courses, to develop a shared community, and to be provided with the reassurance and reinforcement best achievable in one-to-one and group face-to-face interaction. The online elements of the courses added massively to the on-task time the students were able to devote to the courses, provided opportunities for far more exposure to, and use of, English than purely face-to-face courses could, allowed for individualized tasks and feedback and allowed the students to both work in their own time at their own pace and to collaborate with other students on shared projects in ways which they could not have done in the classroom. This paper focuses on Guiding principles of Blended Learning, English Language Teaching and how it makes the English classroom very effective and leads to achieve Outcome Based Education.

### Introduction

The expansion of online environments into language classrooms is now welcomed, to provide potentially better teaching and learning experience. Osgu Thorpe and Graham (2003) indicate that as the face-to-face and online learning environments have been combined, the inherent strengths and weaknesses associated with both have been recognized. This combination of online environments with face-to-face learning is called blended learning. The aim in blended learning is to merge the benefits of these two situations harmoniously. The combination of a face-to-face instruction environment with an online environment within the same course allows not only capitalizing on the advantages of each but also catering for diverse learning styles and the needs of different students. Allan (2007: 8) suggests that blended learning ‘appears to offer the opportunity to combine the best of some worlds in constructing a program that fits the particular needs

regarding time, space and technologies of a particular group of students or end-users’. Singh and Reed (2001: 1) describe blended learning as being ‘a learning program where more than one release mode is being used with the objective of optimizing the learning result and cost of program delivery’. Here the lead modes are recognized as technology and classroom instruction, although interestingly the ‘other modes’ are not particular. This reference to ‘other modes’ is of personal interest as the blend helped redesign had three modes, face-to-face, computer, and self-study that took place in self-access centers located in the same structure as the classrooms and computer room.

### Blended Learning

Blended Learning is an innovative pedagogy to modern classroom in which the technology and pedagogy are integrated for effective teaching-learning process.

Blended Learning blends both online and face to face teaching. There are different modes of Blended Learning where the teachers and students have more flexibility to choose and adopt any one model for learning and teaching. Blended Learning is considered as a potential pedagogy caters to the needs and interest of students. An effective teacher can make use of Blended Learning to achieve Outcome Based Education.

### Blended learning in ELT

Hockly (2011: 58) does not do again the reasons given by Sharma and Barrett (2007) for employing blended learning in ELT but gives us three additional ones:

- **Learners' expectations** – learners, nowadays be expecting technology to be included in their language classes.
- **Flexibility** – learners be expecting to be able to healthy learning into their busy lives, particularly experts adults and university students.

### Blended learning and main principles in the English language

- Maximize the student's exposure to English.
- Provide experience for all students of a variety of academic genres as well as opportunities for individual students to gain further experience in those genres relevant to their academic specialisms.
- Increase the likelihood of student affective and cognitive involvement by providing choices of texts and tasks (Tomlinson, 2013).
- Cater to differing levels and aspirations by providing choices of texts and tasks.
- Provide opportunities for students to make discoveries for themselves about how features of English are used to achieve intended outcomes (Tomlinson, 2013).
- Maximize the opportunities for students to communicate in English.
- Provide opportunities for students to use English to achieve intended communicative outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for students to seek ongoing feedback from peers and teachers on their communicative performance.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to monitor the progress of their students in ways which enable them to provide constructive criticism and responsive teaching when it is most needed.

Those wants and needs are not just linguistic; they are attitudinal too and I would advise blended learning course designers to not only provide choices within a mode but wherever possible to offer choices to students of which mode(s) to work with. For example, some students could be posting a presentation for others to listen to in their own time; some could be giving a presentation through video conferencing and others could be presenting face-to-face to a group of fellow students. Versatility and flexibility are the key benefits of blended learning courses and they should be exploited as much as possible.

### Guidelines of English Language Teaching Learning

1. Practice in person.
2. Follow good model
3. Listen, observe and initiate.
4. Rehearse in front of a mirror.
5. Simulate to foreign language speakers.
6. Teachers must make away from the fear in the students who are frightened of speaking English in public. They must give confidence them to speak in front of the whole class.
7. Support them to converse on very simple and easy topics in front of the class without any break or laughter but keep pathway of the mistakes they make while speaking.
8. Correct any speaking mistakes afterward in a one-on-one conversation as it will not humiliate the students who feel shy in front of their classmates. Do not over-rely on these deliberations because it will not allow the students to come out of their case.
9. Recommend the learners to read in English but begin off with the easy matter. This will help them to form ideas and thoughts in English and not in one's inhabitant language.
10. To speak fluently in English, students have to think in the language. Build sentences for them to speak. Translating from your native language to English is not attractive because it breaks the connection. Teach them to focus on thinking in English.
11. When teaching grammar, concentrate on feature that is essential to speak English correctly such as parts of speech, vocabulary, and idioms.
12. Parts of speech comprise nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and their various

uses. Be confident to use lots of examples from each day life when going over the concepts.

13. One thing to keep in mind when teaching is that the students must be chosen a period every day to speak in English. Therefore, grammar lessons should not consume the total class time. Regular put into practice of speaking is necessary.
14. With regular speaking practice in the class, students will strengthen their comfort with grammatical details as they develop self-confidence.
15. A group conversation is a very strong way to have a discussion. The students have to speak without a break. Listening becomes very significant here. Follow what the students say and give confidence others to offer counter questions, answers, and additional points.

### **Guiding Principles for Blended Learning:**

A teacher prepares their students for giving presentation first by discussing the topic, then by allowing them to practice fixed phrases using a CD-ROM, Then by watching a video on presentations, before finally they prepare and deliver.

1. Initially, they recommend you to 'divide the role of the teacher and the role of technology' as the roles are not interchangeable, but they are balancing.
2. Secondly, 'teach in an upright way' using means that best suit the learners' needs, i.e. pedagogically driven.
3. Thirdly, 'use technology to complement and enhance F2F teaching' meaning that the two form should complement each other, and which seems to suggest that face-to-face is completely the front mode.

### **Pains and Gains from Blended Learning**

Keeping the students motivated throughout the whole duration of the course was one of its worrying aspects. The other one was enabling the students to stick to the deadlines for wiki submissions. In the context as described this was crucial because of the students' dependence on their peers' feedback on their writing for further revision. Among the benefits of course blending the students enumerated the following: ease of access to the course materials and work written by the students' peers, an opportunity to receive feedback on their writing from their peers in addition to that given by the teacher, and to gain more confidence in their writing thanks to the opportunity

to compare their ability to write to that of their peers. Also, thanks to blending, students gain greater awareness of audience issues because peers provide a broader and more natural audience for their writing,. Some possible directions for the improvement of the blend include improving the criteria for assessing the students' contributions to the wiki, improving the students' wiki submission procedures and providing them with more opportunities for collaboration.

### **Outcome Based Education and Blended Learning**

Outcome-Based Education in need of the hour, where India has started implementing this in graduate programmes and technical education. A mandate was established by the National Board of Accreditation that offer Engineering, Pharmacy, Management programmes. Outcome-Based Learning provides the continuous improvement which is an essential cultural shift. Outcome-Based Education creates clarity and the clear expectation of what needs to be accomplished at the end of the course Outcome Based Education is meant as learner-centered model. Outcome-Based Education requires involvement in the classroom which is a key part of English Language Teaching. English Language Teaching major role is to enhance LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills. Skills could be acquired by involvement and practice and it must be revealed overt. Ability to do readily is possible via blended learning and able to move towards Outcome-Based Learning. A concrete output can be accomplished via Blended Learning.

### **Conclusion**

It is feasible to conclude that the use of blended learning supports better instruction and assessment than traditional face-to-face instruction only in English teaching. The results are indicative of the need for instructors to use blended learning to support English language teaching and learning. English language teachers should work collaboratively to come up with blended learning programs that support improved instruction and assessment. This will not only support language learning but also other areas of learning because English is a skill subject that is used for instruction in other subjects. Students need to learn how to express themselves using English. The usefulness of blended systems in language learning is therefore useful to other areas by extension. English language teachers should ensure that they leverage on each opportunity that supports the development and use of blended learning to

optimize learning outcomes. Hence, the ultimate goal of Blended Learning will lead to Outcome-Based Learning.

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## AN ANALOGICAL STUDY ON GIEVE PATEL'S *ON KILLING A TREE* AND EDWINA REIZER'S *THE DEATH OF A TREE*

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### Abstract

Eco-criticism explores the relationship between literature and biological environment and exposes the damage being caused on that environment by human activities. The present study focuses on the plea of two 20<sup>th</sup> century writers namely Gieve Patel in *On Killing a Tree* and Edwina Reizer in *Death of a Tree*, against cutting down the tree by human beings ruthlessly. Gieve Patel evinces how modern man is determined to cut down a tree which stands deep-rooted for throughout hundred years. Not merely the act of chopping and hacking but exposing it to sunlight and then cut into pieces for other commercial purposes. Edwina Reizer expresses her dislike towards the cutting down of the tree. She expects the sunlight to stop man from cutting the tree because it is a great gift of nature. In both the poems the sunlight which nourishes the tree also tortures the tree to be dry to satisfy the wishes of modern man.

**Keywords:** environment, nature, nurture, modern man, cutting down, killing, death, uproot.

Eco-criticism or Green Studies explores the relationship between the environment and literature and tries to bring in a kind of awareness of the damage being caused by human activities. England and America drew attention to the threat to the environment and later due to the increasing alarm many tried to join the environmental movement to preserve the remains of nature. This led to the rapid growth of literary study based on environment. The present study focuses on the plea of two 20<sup>th</sup> century writers namely Gieve Patel in *On Killing a Tree* and Edwina Reizer in *The Death of a Tree*, against cutting down the trees by human beings ruthlessly.

Gieve Patel is regarded as one of the greatest writers of Indian writing in English. He is a doctor by profession and he lives in Mumbai. He is member of the 'Green Peace Movement'. Many of his poems have been published in the Illustrated Weekly. This poem *On Killing a Tree* was published in 1966. He expresses his anxiety in this poem towards those who exploit nature and how they show their cruelty towards nature, here, a tree is being symbolized. The poet depicts a clear picture of the destruction done to a tree. Modern man is very selfish and greedy; he displays all kinds of atrocities towards nature. The first stanza explains how a tree has been germinated by using all sources of the earth. It takes some years to come out as a beautiful tree. In the meantime, it consumes

sunlight, air and water to grow. So it has strong roots to withstand the calamities of nature. So it is very difficult to kill a tree. It consumes a lot of time and effort to kill a tree because

-----it has grown  
Slowly consuming the earth,  
Rising out it, feeding  
Upon its crust, absorbing  
Years of sunlight, air, water----

The simple act of chopping and hacking are not enough to kill it because the trees are nature's soul. Moreover, it has stored the strength over a long period of hard work and patience which cannot be destroyed easily. Even if a tree is chopped, it sprouts again into small stems with the help of its roots. Even the cut bark gets healed and grows to its previous size. Man knows the power of a tree which can come to life immediately, so he decides to uproot the tree completely.

Unless the roots are exposed to the sunlight and air which had given the power to grow, it cannot be killed. If the tiny boughs are left unnoticed, they expand and become a big tree.

Miniature boughs  
Which if unchecked will expand again  
To former size

The roots are anchored to the earth and thus the trees are firmly secured. The roots like a mother feed and nourish the tree. That is why it is very difficult to pull out the roots. As long as the roots are safe the tree is safe. Man wants the tree to be cut by creating a deep cavity on the earth and hauling out the tree. The trees which stood happily over many years are cut down in a matter of minutes. He also subjects the felled tree to various methods such as browning, twisting, hardening and withering, only then the total killing of a tree is complete. Then the cut tree is subjected to many processes suitable for commercial purposes.

Edwina Resizer is a great American poet who has written 16 poetry books and more than 170 songs. In the poem *The Death of a Tree*, the poet expresses her feeling when she sees a tree is cut down. She cannot accept the fact that the tree which is a gift of nature is hacked and slain. She is shocked to find people cutting down a tree whose life is not yet complete; the tree has not attained the stage of death. The poet looks up to find out if anybody is there to help her overcome the unfair treatment of the tree. She then looks at the sun because everyone knows that the sun has nurtured every part of the tree. She longs for somebody to rescue the tree. She feels that the sun at least has a better chance to plead on behalf of the tree and convince the man not to cut the tree. The way she writes makes one feel that the poet looks at nature as a living being and the sap of the tree is the blood of its body.

"Don't cut me down  
Don't let me die,  
Don't let the sap  
Within me dry".

The poet says whatever grows on this earth is a gift of nature, especially the tree is a worthy gift of nature to man. The actual problem, according to the poet, is that she alone can witness all dangers befalling a tree. Others simply ignore it and are not able to open their eyes and see the great damage to nature itself.

Both the poets can perceive how a tree germinates from under the crust of the earth. Gieve Patel, *On Killing a Tree* says that the tree can strengthen itself with the help of air, water and sunlight. The sunlight which nurtures the tree is helpless and fails to save the tree. The killing of a tree is done by man by cutting down its bark and its long penetrated roots and making it dry to death. This cruel action of man has done it and nothing can stop him from doing so.

In *The Death of a Tree*, Edwina expects the sunlight to question man and stop his cruel action. Man is unaware of the environment which has given life to the tree and has made it grow and has stood over a long period on this earth. Man is blind to all the essentials of nature to nurture the tree and other living creatures.

Both the poems try to communicate to modern man the importance of the environment and nature's gift with special reference to a tree. When the poets see the tree is cut down they are not able to accept the cruelty done to the tree. They look at the tree as a living being. Both the words 'killing' and 'death' are negative and harsh terms to indicate the harmful action of man. They share the same feeling when they see the plight of the tree. Thus man plays the role of an antagonist in the story of life exploiting nature for selfish motives.

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## CULTURAL CONFLICTS IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *THE KITE RUNNER*

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Khaled Hosseini's novels, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Kite Runner*, fit solidly within the Anglo - European literary tradition of the novel. The novel can be defined simply as an extended fictional account of the day-to-day events, tragic and comic, of everyday human beings. Hosseini places his novels into the category of storytelling. He often refers to himself as a storyteller. He may simply say this out of humility, choosing not to attribute higher literary motives to his writing. He, however, does mention in more than one interview that there are many good storytellers in Afghanistan and that he grew up listening to stories. He thus separates himself and his writing in part from the Western novel tradition and links himself instead to a tradition that is part of the greater Afghan culture, or an oral tradition.

Ray Conlogue, in a 2003 article about Hosseini, writes, "Hosseini is not an admirer of the kind of self-conscious and artful fiction so admired in Western countries. Don't draw me into that, he says, laughing. 'I'm not a big fan of hard-core literary fiction. I like stories. I grew up with stories, and stories are all I can write. I can't write an amorphous plot. Nor does he want to: He believes storytelling is more important. "And the art of storytelling is endangered".

*The Kite Runner* is Hosseini's first published novel. There are many ways to describe this novel, but Hosseini calls it a love story. It is not a conventional love story, however. It is the story of love between two friends who are also servant and master; the sins of commission and omission that tear the friendship apart; and the loyalty and altruistic love that survives in spite of everything. It is also the story of the love between father and son, husband and wife, and parent and child. The novel takes place across generations and continents, offers adventure, and provides a fresh look at the country and culture of Afghanistan.

Hosseini's novel has two protagonists, one growing up with a sense of entitlement and privilege the other growing up under conditions circumscribed by poverty and

social expectation. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir is suddenly thrown back to his childhood when he receives a phone call. After years of struggling with a guilty conscience and a lifetime of finding a place for himself within a family and society in which he has not quite measured up to the status and expectations of his father, he is given a task or quest, a quest that will "make him good again". While Amir has left the country, completed his education, and successfully launched his career as a writer (literate not only in his native Dari but also in his new language, English), Hassan has learned to read and write and has established a family, in the midst of his new life.

Hassan is called on to return to his servant life and to protect Amir's family home. This is his task, and, born into a class that has been restricted to positions of servitude, he accepts this task, taking it out of a sense of loyalty to his former masters. Neither Amir nor Hassan is aware of the risks they will confront, nor do they set out with the expectation of sacrificing their lives to their task. Yet, this is what is asked of them. Hassan defiantly puts himself in the way of danger and ultimately loses his life and the life of his wife for the sake of the household of Baba and Amir. Realizing this, Amir reluctantly sets out on his quest to rescue Hassan's son, Sohrab, to honor Hassan's loyalty and to absolve himself of guilt. Unlike Hassan, Amir is fortunate and survives to accomplish his task.

The central characters of *The Kite Runner* are Amir, Hassan, Baba and Ali. Amir is the main character and narrator of the novel. The readers see everything from his perspective. As he looks back at his story, he has no kind words for himself. The strength Amir did have as a child, especially his knowledge and the ability to memorize the classic poetry of Afghanistan, are not appreciated by his father. Amir has not forgiven himself for his childhood betrayal of his servant and friend, Hassan, and so his view of his past is told through a lens of guilt and remorse.

Conversely, Amir portrays Hassan as a saint. He not only is smart and athletic, but also is a loving, selfless,

loyal, and patient friend. Hassan later returns to Kabul at Rahim Khan's request to help care for Baba and Amir's house, and in the end, he sacrifices his life in his attempt to protect the house from marauders. The fact of Hassan's servitude colors both Amir's attitude toward Hassan and Hassan's attitude toward Amir. Also, Amir is from the dominant ethnic group and religious sect. He is Pashtun and Sunni. Hassan is Hazara and Shi'a, The ethnic group most discriminated against in Afghanistan and the minority religious sect. When the bully Assef first expresses disgust toward Hassan because of his Hazaran ethnicity and then asks Amir how he can call Hassan his friend, Amir recalls nearly saying, "But he's not my friend!... He's my servant!". Amir goes on to wonder why, if Hassan is truly his friend, he only plays with him when no one else is around. As if these barriers were not significant enough, Amir is also deeply jealous of Hassan because of the affection and attention Baba shows to him. Baba is Amir's father and Ali is Hassan's father. Baba is a wealthy and influential man. Well connected, he is used to speaking his mind and having his way. Baba is noted for fighting bears and Amir likens him to a bear. His physicality and outgoing nature are a clear contrast to the insecure and bookish Amir. Baba is worldly. He has travelled to other countries and has an extensive library of which Amir makes heavy use. Ali is the lifelong servant of Baba. As such, he is unassuming and quiet. He is an object of ridicule for many of the children in the district who mock his Hazaran features and the paralysis that affects his face and legs. But, like Hassan, who perhaps learned this trait from him, Ali is patient and does not respond to his tormentors. Baba and Ali share a relationship similar to that of Amir and Hassan. Baba likes to talk about how he grew up playing daily with Ali as though they were brothers, and yet, Ali is Baba's servant. He lives in a mud hut in the yard, serves the needs of the household as did by his parents and as does his son. He was raised to serve and Baba to lead. Despite this inequitable situation, Hassan's childhood is possibly happier and more stable than Amir's. Despite the traumatic events that play out of Amir's betrayal, Hassan has the love and support of his father. When it becomes clear that it is an untenable situation for Hassan to continue to live near and to serve Amir, his father places loyalty to Baba's household second to his loyalty to his son. This causes Baba both shame and sorrow. When Rahim Khan describes Hassan's life after leaving Kabul for Hazarajat with his father, it is clear that he grew and prospered once out from under the limitations of his position of servitude.

Hosseini accomplishes three things with his novel *The Kite Runner*. He introduces the English - speaking reader to Afghanistan, he looks at the universal theme of transgression and forgiveness, and he explores the concept of homeland and exile. In his portrait of Afghanistan, Hosseini focuses on Kabul during the decades leading up to the Soviet invasion and under the Taliban. Hosseini presents not only the beauty and culture of the Afghanistan of his childhood but looks at its societal failings, including its religious divisions and ethnic discrimination. The theme of transgression and forgiveness is threaded throughout the entire novel. Primarily, Amir seeks forgiveness and redemption for his treatment of his childhood friend and servant Hassan, but other central and tangential characters in the novel also seek forgiveness and redemption. Finally, Hosseini follows his characters into exile in a strange country, the not-so-glamorous city of Fremont, California. Most dramatically, Amir's powerful and influential father is reduced to working in a gas station. The elite members of Amir's father's social network find their community at the local flea market. And although Amir breaks away from this community in some respects, he and his wife Soraya rely on this intricate familial and social network. The social network with Afghanistan, or more specifically Kabul, is apparent as Amir describes his father's prominent and influential position in government and with members of the community. Thereof mentioned in the photograph of Baba's father with King Nadir Shah provides evidence of their importance among the ruling elite of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a small country and the ruling elite are centered in Kabul, creating a world of their own. Baba is known by all and has helped many in the community from levels within the social structure of the city. Kabul is a bustling city and, through his characters, Hosseini describes abundance, beauty, and a socially vibrant environment. There are open markets, shops, and artisans; there are rich aromas; there is a sense of community and promise. Amir has everything and more than he wants materially. Hassan has nothing beyond his loving father and their mud hut and the castoffs from Amir, but he benefits from the affection and generosity of Baba. The boys attend the movies and grow up thinking Clint Eastwood speaks Farsi. This is a rich world, one in which people prosper and there is much to enjoy in daily life. This might be a different picture from what average news-watching Americans have in mind when they think of Afghanistan.

Amir has a great need for redemption. His betrayal and rejection of Hassan haunts him as a child and

throughout his adult years. He sees his wife's inability to have a child as his punishment for his history with Hassan. His antipathy to Hassan has roots in the neglect he feels from his father. Amir's mother died giving birth to him, and he carries this guilt with him. When his father shows so much interest in and affection for Hassan, Amir feels this intensely. He is jealous and resentful. These feelings drive him to cruelty. But it is also his youth, inexperience, and lack of guidance that mar his judgment. As Rahim Khan reminds him when they meet up again in Pakistan, he was just a child when all of these things happened. Amir achieves his redemption by rescuing Sohrab from Assef and, perhaps, even more important to him, through the brutal beating he receives at Assef's hands. But Amir is not the only person seeking forgiveness in this novel. The character Zaman, the director of the orphanage, is a striking example. Almost a saint, Zaman has sacrificed all that he has to keep the orphanage afloat during the years of the Taliban. The children have very little food, and many are there because their mothers are unable to provide them with food. But Zaman, when pressed, allows some of the children to be sold. He defends his actions by pointing out that if he were not to comply, all the children would suffer. He receives a small amount of money that he uses to feed the remaining children. Amir's guide, Farid, attacks Zaman physically, and Amir is disgusted with Zaman, but Zaman is in a complex situation, and there is no clear path to what is right. He can only choose from among bad choices. As Amir drives away, Zaman stands in front of the orphanage, his glasses smashed from Farid's blows and the children clinging to him. Sohrab must learn to forgive himself and Amir. Like Amir, Sohrab feels guilty for events beyond his control. Amir blames himself for his mother's death, and Sohrab blames himself for what Assef has forced him to do. Sohrab must also learn to forgive and trust Amir, who promises Sohrab that he will never go to an orphanage again, but within days, Amir retracts this promise, Sohrab's road to forgiveness and healing is long, but it is not impossible. Amir, as well as the other characters, must come to terms with their failings and find forgiveness from within. Hosseini does not ask the reader to feel sorry for his characters; he portrays them as proud and, for the most part, self-sufficient. But they treasure their relationships and prosper through ingenuity and mutual support. Eventually, Amir moves away from his Afghan community, but it is through these close ties, developed through family and social networks, that Amir and Soraya can expedite Sohrab's entrance into the United States.

These familial and social networks, often intertwined, are all that the members of the Afghan exiled community have left after leaving their homeland. They arrive on American shores with severely reduced means, reduced influence, a language barrier to overcome, and an inability to find work that meets their training and expertise. Surrounded by a culture quite different from their own, the parents begin to lose authority over their children as their children quickly adapt to their new surroundings. Amir's father finds work as a gas station attendant. He and Amir spend times on scavenging from garage sales at flea markets. Amir graduates from high school at the age of twenty and goes on to attend community college. Soraya's father was a general and refuses to work beneath his station in the United States, holding out hope that he will be able to return Afghanistan and resume his former responsibilities. As the children move away, customs become harder to maintain. Amir finds that when he returns to Afghanistan, he is barely welcome, and he is unfamiliar with the country he once considered home.

Hosseini does not just present an idyllic Afghanistan. The crises presented by Hosseini in the novel stem from inherent weaknesses in Afghanistan's social structure and its cultural prejudices. Hosseini's analysis of his work is straightforward. He looks to the tradition of storytelling and describes his novels as love stories, albeit uncommon love stories, with the universal theme of the power of love to bring redemption.

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## FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN MAYA ANGELOU'S SELECT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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### Abstract

*This paper proposes to examine feminist perspectives in Maya Angelou's select autobiographies. In African American literature, the genre 'Autobiography' plays a vital role because it gives an insight into the history of African Americans in the United States. Maya Angelou's autobiography is more of a documentary narrative that discusses the very themes of survival and liberation of African American women. By writing her life story, she records the history of the experiences of African American women from the early days of Civil Rights to the present day. She offers a women's perspective throughout her autobiographical volumes by boldly stating the issues of black women such as rape, discrimination, racism and so on. The depiction of her personal life includes both the issues faced by her as an African American woman and her emergence from a painful oppressive childhood to a leading figure in the political and literary movements of the contemporary American Society are analysed from a feminist perspective.*

**Keywords:** Racism, Slavery, Sexual Exploitation, Discrimination, Stereotype.

The African American writings speak to the deeper meaning of the African American presence in the United States. It explores the very issues of freedom, equality, racism, slavery and a sense of identity. In African American writings, autobiography has a distinct place. Autobiographies expand the boundaries of the slave narratives by exploring gender conflicts and tensions between black men and women. The African American autobiography is not a statement of one's personal experiences, but an authentic expression of the society. African American autobiographies contribute to the history of black experiences in the United States especially, the autobiographies of African American women portray their experience of being black and female in a specific society at a specific moment and over succeeding generations.

Maya Angelou, the most prominent African American woman writer, has an indisputable place in the canon of African American literature. Her autobiographies, though, narrated from her perspective, offer a deep insight into the social and political conditions of the period in the United States that is responsible for the conditions of African American women. Angelou set a precedent for the African American women autobiographers by discussing intensely personal issues like rape, marriage, talent, responsibility and so on. Her narratives are a narrative of confinement with a special significance for black women and their problems of sexual exploitation, rape, loss of dignity and forsaken children. Lyman B. Hagen in 'Twentieth Century

Adult Writers' says, "Her voice as a writer is the voice of her people. What her community endures, she endures. She writes about what she knows: the black experience" (6).

Her first autobiography, *I know why the caged bird sings* represents the women's imprisonment within the racist structure and their unequal educational opportunities. It is a personal version of her demoralizing childhood experiences with sexual assault. Like racism, sexism scarred the black women mentally and physically. Angelou conveys the pain of girl children trapped by time in the unsympathetic world of adults. The caged birds are black women who are struggling against physical abuse and racism. As a black child, she is trapped within the cage of her diminished self-image around which the social and natural forces act as bars. Abandoned by her parents, raped by her mother's boyfriend, the young Angelou is imprisoned and unable to claim her own identity. At the age of sixteen, she became a mother. She struggled to survive both as a teenage mother and as a black woman. She moved from job to job to survive in a hostile situation where men tried to take advantage of her naivete. The years of overcoming her upbringing and breaking through the walls of oppression are documented in her narratives.

Angelou wrote about her experience of rape as a child despite a culture of silence and shame around rape. Her psychological traumas as a girl and as a young mother shaped her against the norms of the society. Her strength

lies in choosing to keep her teenage pregnancy against all odds. The concept of mother plays a vital role in her autobiographies. When Angelou gives birth to her son, she realizes her womanhood and feels powerful over her social identity. The child's presence makes her feel like a worthy individual who has a dignified place in the society of caring adults. She emerges as a self-empowered woman triumphing over the social obstacles imposed by the patriarchal society.

Though African American women face many hurdles in their life, they epitomize the strong will to survive. It is evident in Angelou's description of her grandmother and mother who were great influences in her life. Her grandmother Annie Henderson, whom she calls 'Momma' was strong and independent. She was an indomitable woman, never submitted to any sort of discrimination. She even owned a store in the 1910s which at that time is against stereotypical roles. That proved her power and strength because the society has always seen the black women as housewives. Another important woman in Angelou's life is her mother, Vivian Baxter Johnson. She was an epitome of the unconventional woman. She was an exultant black feminine character who wore red lipstick which Angelou remembered: "Momma said it was a sin to wear lipstick" (IKWCBS 54).

Being both black and female is like doubly marginalized. Angelou has gone through a lot regarding racial and gender discrimination. But as she travels her life, she moves towards self-discovery, i.e., from racial oppression to a liberated life which is the ultimate hope for black women. As a black woman, she proves her competence in a series of adventures. In Los Angeles, she survived as a vagabond girl; she became the first black woman ticket collector in San Francisco cable cars. Her life journey is full of survival as a black woman. Elliot M. Jeffrey brings out Angelou's statement, "All my work, my life, everything I do is survival, not just bare, awful, plodding survival, but survival with grace and faith. While one may encounter many defeats, one must not be defeated" (13).

The gender and racial consciousness run throughout her narratives. When she married Vusumzi Make, a South African Civil Rights activist and lawyer, she was confronted with the struggle between being a homemaker and being a professional. As an African who had been trained to see women as subservient, Vusumzi was insensitive to her needs as a working woman. Once at a lavish party in Africa, he was infuriated when he discovered Angelou,

interacting with a cook. He shouted "No African lady would bring such disgrace on her husband" (HW 203). Instead of acknowledging her, he tried to implement African ways of behavior on her. Vusumzi expected Angelou to honour the Egyptian custom of the husband providing for the wife. To feminists, marriage is a platform for female subordination, which binds women to household labour, which is undermined by society. When Angelou accepted a position as an associate editor of *The Arab Observer* her husband yelled at her "You black woman. Who knows what to do with you?. Black and American. You think you can come to Egypt and just get a job? That's foolish. It shows the nerve of the black woman and the arrogance of the American" (HW 285). Angelou, as a free individual by nature, wanted to get away from his grip when she came to know her husband's infidelity when he said: "As an African man, in my society, I have the right to marry more than one woman" (HW 224).

For women, marriage is a serious personal commitment. Angelou wanted to get married for the sake of her son, Guy Johnson, to give identity to him. Her marital life with Tosh Angelos got shattered when he said, 'tired of being married'. Similarly, all her marriages gradually ended up in failure because she did not permit any of her sexual relationships to dominate her being. Angelou's relationship with men was not as pleasant as they were scheming and unfaithful to her. The betrayal and lessons turned her into a mature person.

The black woman is America's unconfessed symbol. Angelou went through a lot when it came to gender discrimination and stereotype. Her explorative revelation of self is the model that she holds before black woman. The main theme of her early autobiographies is feminism. How women are viewed, the importance of looks and gender stereotypes. All women are capable of being loved regardless of their appearance. The importance that is given only to physical beauty is stressed a lot as young Angelou feels inferior when she sees her mother's beauty. She thinks that beauty makes her mother, powerful. As young and black, she even developed an intense feeling of physical self-hatred like the colour of her skin and the fullness of her lips. In the view of Joyce L. Graham, says Bernard A. Drew, "In *I know why the caged bird sings* Angelou confronts her realization that only blond-haired, blue-eyed white girls are regarded as beautiful and that being black brings many apparent limitations to her life" (5).

In her early autobiographies, she questions her authenticity and her status as a woman who let her career interfere with her duties as a mother. But in her later autobiographies, she presents herself as a mature individual. Her autobiography *The Heart of a Woman* offers a woman-centered insights. In this work, she vividly records the African American feminine experience from the early days of Civil Rights movement to the present day. She has grown more of a public person and was committed to many women's organizations. She is engaged in the Civil Rights Movement, in political protests in feminism and thus emerges as a prominent African American woman. Her social and political commitment is indicative of her emerging feminism. She eradicates many stereotypes of the black women by demonstrating the trials, rejections and endurances which black women share. She defines herself as neither mother nor wife. She is simply herself. The last word of this autobiography is 'Myself'. The rise of her being, in her narratives, becomes a point of consciousness for the black women seeking to survive masculine prejudice. According to Dolly A. Mcpherson, says Mary Jane Lupton, Angelou's autobiography is "a quest that will encourage the development of an authentic self" (160).

Maya Angelou's autobiographies provide a new understanding of the lives and issues of the black women who have been marginalized. Her role as a mother, daughter and wife helped her in portraying the essence of womanhood in a true manner. Angelou's depiction of her personal life, issues, struggles and her emergence from

the state of oppression to the liberation are analyzed clearly from a feminist perspective.

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## MAPPING THE RHETORIC AND POETICS OF REPRESENTATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN NOVEL

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### **Abstract**

*African American history is about migration and displacement. African Americans searched for a place to settle down in the American society. The difficulties they had to go through was twofold. On the one hand they were denied their African past and on the other hand the ex-slaves had to repress their painful past caused by slavery to become psychically whole. They were denied a legitimate economic, social, and political place within the American society. They were also historically excluded and so characters in the contemporary African American novels look for ways to rediscover their cultural past and try to reconnect with history.*

**Keywords:** Representation, Identity, Racism, Agency, Subjectivity.

African American novel is about a history of achievement. There are cultural heritage and a unique history portrayed in each of these novels. African Americans had to go through segregation which caused them a lot of trauma. Till the middle of the twentieth century, not much attention was given to the African American novel by the mainstream literary criticism. Both Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison through their writing showed the literary taste of the age which had survived from two world wars and also domestic strife. The novel was a reminder which looked at race as a political minefield. It represented not only the concerns of African American people and culture but it absorbed different forms of expressive culture and also all types of human concerns which engages readers all across the globe. The Civil Rights Movement brought about a tremendous change in the novel regarding the social and the political realm.

Slowly, the status of the African American novel as a genre improved and many scholars found it as a rich and complex source for research. African American novelists are highly recognized and also they claim a significant share of the world's highest literary prizes and awards. There is a remarkable difference if one takes a look at the African American novels of the earlier times and present because in the present age there is more intensity and creativity with which the writers transform their own and other literary traditions. The slave narratives were of course considered to be the predecessor of the novel. There was also a double consciousness which they had to keep in mind while they were writing which resulted from barriers of discrimination and exclusion.

With the advent of critical theories like post structuralism, postmodernism and critical theories from the 1960's onwards there was a huge impact on the agency, authenticity and authority of contemporary African American novels. The early African American novelists had to define and celebrate the experiences of black people in the United States. One of the major cultural forms that contributed to the growth of the form of the novel is the slave narrative. Slave narratives and black autobiographies provide personal testimonies which are powerful and have shaped the form of the novel. The African American novel has its roots in the folk and oral literary tradition. The songs and stories reflected the agency, authority and authenticity of African American double consciousness. The spirituals and the blues helped the slaves to bond with each other. The myths had a moral purpose and were ethnic and archetypal as well. Novelists like Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Ellison and Margaret, used sermons, hymns, prayers and sayings which were part of the oral forms. Song and music is also part of the tradition of the African American novel.

The reader must confront the silences that pervade the novel. In the novels of Octavia Butler, Walter Mosley and California Cooper there is humor or satiric displacement through which the lives of black people are presented. The preoccupation of the African American novelist is that of being aware of a new relationship to the reader and critic of one which challenges and pleases at the same time.

There was a heightened autobiographical impulse in the African American novel. It stemmed from the conscious need to explain the self in a world which denied the existence of that self. This denial of the self led to focus on and add intensity to the act of writing a story about one's self. The African American through his writing aids the formation of cultural memory. For the African American author the act of writing has a larger social and cultural significance. Through their writing they sought ways to change the future and also to give meaning to a common past in many novel ways. Slavery was the common past that the African American writers shared and the slave narrative belonged to them. The writers had used the slave narrative as a way to delve deeply into the human consciousness to alter the world for the readers. Through the novels of Octavia Butler, Sherley Ann Williams, Charles Johnson and Toni Morrison there is reclaiming and returning to slavery which helps us to understand the psychic wound caused by it.

The rise and growth of the African American novel in the nineteenth century was both a literary and social phenomenon. The focus was on the slave heritage and the history of slavery. From the beginning of the twentieth-century themes of migration and the struggle for civil, human and equal rights has remained the main thrust in the African American novel. There is generally a remarkable increase in novel writing during times of radical social change African American novel was engaged in an ongoing dialogue about identity and race. The African American novel is about the journey, the journey from slavery to freedom. Since the slave narrative has memory as an important source it gives space for folklore, history and autobiography in a single text. The blues when utilized by the African American novelists served to sharpen our sensitivity and also broaden our vision to highlight the abilities and creativity of the people. The contemporary African American scenario that is novels written after 70's challenges the readers understanding. Situations of migration and exile became areas to explore by the novelist. There is certainly a postmodern impact to the contemporary African American novel. Bell Hooks the postmodern turn as a positive one. In her work *Postmodern Blackness*, she says "many other groups now share with black folks a sense of deep alienation, despair, uncertainty, loss of a sense of grounding even if not informed by shared circumstance" (8).

The African American fiction is rooted in the form of the slave narrative. Some of the famous slave narratives

are *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olandah Equiano*. The early African American fiction was a combination of slave narrative, satire, pastoral, document, Gothic and also a novel of manners. Slowly they started to explore international themes which meant their focus included not only Europe but also Africa and the Caribbean and also there was a heightened awareness to the contemporary literary movements. They created a new literary space for the representation of blacks in fiction. The novelists also focussed on the distinctive space for the representation of blacks in fiction. The novelists also focussed on the distinctive nature of their culture. With the publication of *Jubilee* in 1966 a subject of representation which would predominate the African American novel came to limelight. The politics of representation of slavery is closely tied with subjectivity, which is a result of the Black Power Movement which spurred these writers to begin their writing. With the notion of subjectivity, the focus is on the struggles and this acts as a mirror of their difficult past. Racism is a major event in the protagonist's life because the realization of it led to education. African Americans were led to define their identity based on concepts like belonging, ownership and dispossession. The coming of age is an inherent part of the African American novel. The term coming of age in the African American novel is a distinctive one because it traces the progress of the protagonist from childhood to adulthood and it is a journey towards maturity. This coming of age belongs to the genre of the bildungsroman. The coming of age journey is described differently by male writers and female writers. There is a difference also seen in the male and female slave narrative. In the male slave narrative, there is a prototypical transformation of the slave becoming a man who is civilized and ready to accept changes in the world and this can be seen in *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* whereas a novel like Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* critiques conventions of femininity.

Some elements of the blues tradition are evident in African American novels. The blues is a musical genre unique to the African American tradition. Blues are oral lyric works which had as its subject individual experience that reflected the communal interests. Blues reflected the sadness which was the result of slavery but there are many songs in the blues itself which are celebratory. Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) is an example of the typical African American blues novel which is not only rooted in the blues but also

followed the female blues tradition. The focus on individuality and originality is a unique feature of the blues tradition. A distinctive voice comes out of a community of voices which expresses the concerns of some section of the community. Zora Neale Hurston's novel is about that voice which is a woman discovering her own identity and expressing herself freely. The blues novel also focussed on the endurance and hope of the people of the community.

Many critical theories have influenced African American novels especially those written after 1970 which is inspired by themes and strategies of postmodernism. The linear progression of the plot is questioned, there is blurring of the lines of reality and fictionality, the narrator is not looked at as reliable and it is also about breaking the rules and conventions and it is done with a blend of irony and paradox. Ishmael Reed's most famous work *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) is the best example of black postmodernist fiction. It parodies the detective novel. Through this literary device Reed satirizes racial, gender and cultural issues. The strategies that he has employed in the fiction make it challenging.

The most widely read genre in black fiction in recent times is the detective fiction and African American writers have been writing in this genre from the beginning of the twentieth century. The detective tradition was used to critique racism. Detective fiction was flourishing with the *Devil in a Blue Dress* by Walter Mosley in 1990. Also today many women writers are writing detective fiction. Women writers like Nikki Barker and Valerie Wilson Wesley have brought womanist perspective to detective fiction.

African American fiction went through a lot of changes after the sixties. Fiction about American slaves and slavery gained momentum. One of the prominent features of American culture since the late 1960's has been the flowering of interest in African American history. There was a need to document the past and recover what had been lost or deliberately suppressed. The contemporary narratives can be referred to as trauma stories because they tell the truth of loss and survival and also look at the psychological and social effects of the suffering. The narratives also show the continued power of history to shape the black life. The stories are of people who had

lived their life in the extremes and their stories are represented as forgotten, suppressed or distorted. Trauma theory focuses on the need to tell the story of the past which is linked to suppression. The recreation of history of the suffering is what is portrayed in the contemporary African American narrative. In a trauma, narrative history is represented as one that is different from the dominant national discourse. There is a therapeutic side in revealing the trauma as it aids in healing the wounds etched in the memory. The stories of the past are central to American and African American identity, experience and culture. Though these African American narratives are traumatic, there is scope for empowerment, healing and love.

Slavery in African American novels is seen as a collective memory. If looked at from culture, trauma is mediated through various forms and is linked to cultural memory. The memory of slavery was ingrained in the mind of the writers and it was represented through their art and this was crucial for establishing African American identity. The cultural trauma faced by African Americans is the dramatic loss of identity. For a writer like Maya Angelou the memory of slavery colored almost all of her experience, especially about whites. The slave narratives created awareness about slavery among the readers. The brutal treatment of slaves is discussed extensively in these narratives. These narratives were written to expose the cruelty of the masters and also to create awareness among the slaves and to fight for their freedom and equal status in society. It served as a tool for the upliftment of the slaves.

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## LITERATURE AND SUBALTERNITY: CHANGING CONCERNS OF TEACHING LITERATURE IN THE MODERN WORLD

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### Abstract

*The contemporary society is highly complex and inextricably linked with the need-based relationship among the people. The people are desperately longing to know which is moral and which is amoral. Their mind is inordinately annulled between morality and immorality. The social construction which hitherto enslaved the people by their propositions re-questioned by the judiciary which emphasizes the equality among the social members of the society who are considered as the subalterns and to observe correctly, subalterns. In such a situation it is literature alone which can sustain the relationship spreading humanity among the people. Literature must be taught correctly to the students to comprehend the development which takes place in modern society. This paper focuses on the need, definition of literature and the subaltern perspectives.*

Teaching literature becomes a highly complicated task due to the development of science and technology which invariably and unflinchingly affects the life and social status of people. The effect of which is resulted in multiplicity of opinion in all the arts being in vogue. Two important criteria that challenge the teaching of literature understand what literature is rather than relying on the definition which focuses on what it is not and its interpretation in a multifaceted society which has undeniably complicated the relationship among the social institutions.

The emergence of subalterns thanks to educational opportunities which have made them realize their rights to live in the society fulfilling their needs in a reasonably respected way in the social frame work has paved the path for rereading a text voicing the subaltern notions and this practice rescues many literary characters from sharp criticism. For example, Shylock is portrayed as a tyrant in traditional criticism and the modern rereading acclaims that Shylock is taking revenge for what he has experienced previously. The rereading creates so many Ramayanas in the literary spectrum.

Defining the term literature is difficult and in many instances, it seems absurd. Since literature incorporates many constituent elements, it does not fit into a single definition. The very popular conception of literature – “Literature is the mirror of life” itself is defective in many senses. One of the very significant elements by which the definition seems to be rejected is that no literature,

produced in any period of its production represents the whole strata of the society based on which it is produced. For example during the Romantic age, the poets concentrated on the rural, rustic life; through which we cannot infer that there is no urban life. Some people consider that literature is an imaginative enterprise, it is not convincingly imaginative because Pope observes, “Copy nature is to copy them” (114) (the Ancients), copying cannot be more imaginative. While talking about the production of literature Pope advises the literary artists:

Be Homer's works your study and delight,

Read them day and meditate them by night;

Thence from your judgment, thence your maxim bring,

And trace the Muses upward to their spring. (124-27)

R.J.Rees describes literature as “writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feeling and attitudes”(2). Applying the standard to the set of writings, even the text book on history or cardiology is considered as literature. Do we have any literary or aesthetic sense like the use of similes, paradoxes, hyperboles, etc in any science texts? Is it not mandatory for literature to have used the literary devices? Analyzing the same definition, India has a long tradition where almost thousands of languages are spoken. Our tradition includes the “Oral literatures”. For instance in Tamil literature there are two prominent literary genres namely “Thalattu” (lullaby) and “Oppari” (dirge), for which there are no clear written records of any can we reject those oral literatures saying

that they are not considered as literature that there is no written record? Then what about the languages that have no script, but rich in oral tradition of literature

Literature is not only constituted by mere words, phrases or sentences though they are significant in the production of literature but also very prominently by the feelings of the people. Ramalinga Adigal in Tamil literature observes, “வாடிய பயிரைக் கண்டபோதெல்லாம் வாடினேன்” (whenever I saw the withered crops, I also felt faded) (Translation mine). It is the quality of literature; Ramalinga Adigal recorded his feelings on seeing the withered leaves. Keats records his happiness on the seeing the nightingale, “My heart leaps up/ and drowsy numbness pains/ My senses. . .”(1-2). People may argue that it is subjective, but to me, subjectivity is also a fervent quality of literature. The author may have subjective elements on observing any event and also there is a possibility of whims and fancies of the author playing a role; no one can deny.

Literature must be socially productive and useful. It should bring revolutions and transformations. The writings of Francois-Marie Arouet, popular known as Voltaire are the main reason behind the French revolution. In India, we have the history of creating the people aware of getting India free from the clutches of the colonial masters, the English. In Tamil culture Bharathiar is the finest example of creating awareness among people through his poems; he sang about various social evils like caste-based ostracism, gender bias, woman emancipation, superstitions and so on. Nothing to deny, he is the first poet who insisted on the Advaita philosophy through his short poem.

காக்கை குருவி எங்கள் ஜாதி  
நீள் கடலும் மலையும் எங்கள் கூட்டம்

.....  
நோக்கும் திசையெல்லாம் நாமன்றி வேறில்லை  
(Crow and sparrow belong to our caste  
Lengthy sea and mountains are our people

.....  
Where ever we see there are only human race)  
(translation mine)

This kinds of awareness lead to revolution among the people which may in turn lead them into liberation.

The entire spectrum of the literature of the marginalized insists on the liberation of people. But it is the human wit which marginalizes the literature too branding as “Woman literature” “Black literature”, “Dalit literature” and so on; but one has to note that no literature is identified even now as “Men literature,” “White literature,”

“Muslim literature” and Non-Dalit literature. Nothing to deny, the entire body of Indian writing in English, which includes Brahmin, Non-Brahmin (excluding Dalits) and Muslim writers is branded as “Indian literature” in the literary academia.

Literature must be able to provide solutions for the human existential predicament without making people confused. Bama's Karukku is the autobiographical fiction which instructs Dalits to come out of the religion which ostracises them and to lead a life of their own. Bama feels that it is a solution for untouchability. Mulk Raj Anand the founding father of English fiction in India handles the same problem Untouchability in his debut novel. The Untouchable, but presents a weak hero at the denouement, who is not able to decide the way he has to adopt, whether to adopt Gandhian ideology or communist ideologies or the Christian ideologies to protect himself from the tyranny of casteism. His existential predicament is swollen by the presentation of three ideologies by the novelist.

In my view literature is neither a “Spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” nor a “reflection of life” but a well thought out, seriously planned and thought to provoke “criticism of life”. It need not talk about “What is” but about what ‘ought to be’. Literature and society is inextricably linked to each other. So the social development must be taught to the students to comprehend the nature of literature.

Literature is not an independent entity. It is the replica of social structures, culture, history, politics and so on. Every literary text can be interpreted based on the above-mentioned criteria and all those interpretations receive equal and unique critical attention. In the social structures, one may find the gender stratifications, caste hierarchy, racial discrimination, ethnicity and ethnical glorification and dehumanization based on ethnicity and so on. There are many critics who significantly deal with the literary texts production and they conclude that literature is the production of particular social formation. Both literary texts and literary criticism are prejudiced on the fancies and whims of the literary critic, concerned.

Gender is one of the most critical things to consider in literature. All male produced literatures subjugate women, as the woman critics feel. They also say that male produced literatures ostracize and ill treat women. The women critics are more particular about the women emancipation through literature. They essentially demarcate the term “sex” and “gender”. Sex is biologically

determined where as gender is the social stigmatization. "Female" is the code which denotes sex but "woman" denotes gender. Simon De Beauvoir observes, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" in her seminal work, *The Second Sex*. The critics consider women as the readers of the male produced literatures and woman as producers of literature, which gives birth to the term, "gynocritics" in literary criticism by Elaine Showalter. They see the gender roles are culturally constructed. Every literature is gender biased. The women are commodified in literature; they are considered as the objects of lust. They are ill-described. They are represented as stereo type as obedient wives, mothers and daughters; no revolutionary character is accepted by the literary artist. The female critics has made aware of the insufficiencies of the traditional canon of the texts valorized for the study of literature and revealed the politics behind exclusive principles formulated by the male-dominated literature society. It constantly examines literary tradition from the women's point of view and seeking to expose insidious politics behind discriminatory practices. Women have questioned prevalent practices in their writing and there is a lot of subversive matter that has been unearthed by the feminist critics that were previously suppressed by the male-dominated and male-oriented critical canon.

Race is a socially constructed artifact that categorizes people based on visual differences, that are imputed to indicate invisible differences. These categorizations are amorphous and fluid over time which reflects their social rather than physical bias. Its significance arises out of the meanings we assign to it, and the way we structure race in our societies.

Racism is a policy, belief, attitude, action or inaction which subordinates individuals or groups based on their race. While the individual persons of color may well be discriminated against a white person of color because of their race. Afro American literature is the typical example which may focus the racial discrimination and the need for liberation from the clutches of the race and ethnicity. We have an array of writers who focus on the theme of Black Consciousness; prominent among them are Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou, J. California, Cooper,

Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, E.Lynn Harris, James Baldwin and so on. These genre in the sphere of the literary critical world is branded as "protest literature", "slave narratives", "Black literature" Fourth literature and so on. The post colonial space has given space for the establishment of these type of narratives, realizing the need for their freedom, and this space has established the concepts like "negritude" in the literary spectrum. By refuting the claims of the dominant culture, these writers attempt to subvert the literary and power traditions of the world.

The problems of racism can be equated with the problems of caste in India. In Indian scenario caste segregates the people, the dominated cultured people are questioned by the mass cultured people who are pushed to the peripheries. In India we have a branch of literature as Dalit literature. Babarao Bagul, Jatin Bala, Namdeo Dhasal, Bama, Raj Gautaman, Aravind Malagathi are a few Dalit writers of the present century.

Literature derives its enthusiasm from the outside world for its contextual base. Gender and race are the two significant strata where the effectiveness of literature is determined. Teaching literature includes understanding the need of the hour and how far it focuses the social values.

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## AN ECOCRITICAL READING ON RUSKIN BOND'S "A TIGER IN THE HOUSE"

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### Abstract

*In this modern era, ecology and ecological protection have turned out to be one of the major themes of discussion in all parts of human life. Though it was not given importance in the past decades, now it is foregrounded because of the indiscriminate use and misuse of nature. As technology reaches its highest peak, the need of the humans also gets its high level. In this situation as humans, we tend to destroy God's gift that is nature. In earlier days people used to love nature as they love themselves. Trees and rivers are considered to be sacred as well as birds and animals live freely without any restrictions and they have their own space to live which is now occupied by humans. But some of the writers with foresighted mind had brought out the consequences which the human faces if he destructs nature. Few Indian writers start to write the ecological imbalance. Among those, Ruskin Bond is considered to be nature lover more than a writer. His short stories as well as novels, poems are all based on his love for nature. So to sought out the significances many critics have emerged and developed an approach called Ecocriticism in late 1970's. On seeing the term Ecocriticism it is defined as the interrelationship between literature and environment. This paper thus attempts to read the short story from an Ecocritical perspective and how literature can be an instrument in salvaging nature from an imminent crisis.*

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, Nature, Terai, Tiger

### Introduction

Ecology is a way of thinking about Nature. In the book *What is Nature?* Kate Soper writes of our need to hold two contradictory perceptions. We need to value natural ecosystems and acknowledge our dependence on them without forgetting that "nature" is serious of changing cultural constructions that can be used to praise and blame. The term ecology derives from two Greek words, Oikos and Logos. Oikos means house or home and logos means reflection or study. Therefore, ecology means the study of the conditions and relations that make up the habitat of every person and indeed, organism in nature. Since ecology is the study of relations and interactions between nature and human beings, anything that causes an obstacle to the relation of the habitat of persons and organism in nature is an ecological crisis. When people break the cordial relation with nature and place themselves in the Centre of creation, disregarding other creatures, ecological disaster happens. Ecological problems are basically due to greed and shortsightedness. Ecology is built on the idea of kinship. Each one contributes to ecological imbalance. Human greed has caused ecological imbalance, they did not make any distinction between luxuries and need.

The word ecology is used in connection with the green movement. Everything is linked to everything else, and most importantly, the human mind must be linked to the natural environment. Man exploits nature for his benefits. Every tree, every animal, every human being is a significant part of a huge joint family. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, while speaking of India and her religious philosophy, which comprises ecosophy, says,

"There is no negation. All is harmonized. All the forces of life are grouped like forest, whose thousand waving arms are led by Nataraja, the Master of the dance. Everything has its place, every being has its function and all take part in the divine concert, their very dissonances, creating, in the phrase of Heraclites, a most beautiful harmony"(xiii).

While speaking of Anthropocentrism, it is opposite to ecocentrism. It is the placing of humanity at the Centre of everything so that other forms of life will be regarded only as resources to be consumed by human beings. Anthropomorphism is the attribution of a human form or personality to a god, animal, or thing. It also means the undue ascription of human qualities to a non-human animal. Humanities common link with the rest of the creation and have taken on a thorough going anthropocentric world-view that sees the world only regarding cultivation.

Kate Soper's frequently quoted remark that "it isn't language which has a hole in its ozone layer" (Barry, 151) The relationship between nature and literature is shown in the work of poets and other writers in almost all cultures of the world. Today the intimate relationship between the natural and social world is analyzed and emphasized in all departments of knowledge and development. Today ecology is defined as the way in which plants, animals, reptiles and people are related to each other and with their environment. India is a country with a variety of ecosystems which ranges from Himalayas in the north to plateaus of the south and from the Sunderbans in the east to dry Thar of the west. Ecosystems have been badly affected due to increasing population and avarice of mankind.

### Ecocriticism

Rebecca Douglass has provided a succinct definition in her article 'Ecocriticism and Middle English Literature' where she says: "Ecocriticism is reading with attention to treatments of nature, land, and place, informed by a desire to understand past and present connections between literature and human attitudes regarding the earth"(Douglass,138)

The first use of the term 'Ecocriticism' have been by US critic William Rueckert in 1978. Nature writing or environmental literature began to appear on the programs of annual literary conferences, perhaps most notably the MLA special session organized by Harold Fromm, entitled "Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies", and the 1992 American Literature Association Symposium chaired by Glen Love, entitled "American Nature Writing: New Contexts, new approaches". In 1992, at the annual meeting of the western literature association, a new Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed, with Scott Slovic elected the first president. ASLE's mission to promote the exchange of ideas and information about literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world and to encourage new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and inter- disciplinary environmental research. In 1993 Patrick Murphy established a new journal, ISLE: Inter- disciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment, to provide a forum for critical studies of the literary and performing arts proceeding from or addressing environmental considerations. These would include ecological theory, environmentalism, conceptions of nature and their depictions, the human/ nature dichotomy and related concerns.

### Ecocritical approach on A Tiger in the House

Most of the stories of Ruskin Bond is written out of his own experience. This story "A Tiger In The House" is also written out of his own experience. The dominant theme in his writing is ecology and environment. Through his stories he emphasis the importance of nature in our life. He emphasis on the friendly relationship between man and nature as both interdependent and interrelated. He feels pity for the unsympathetic and cruel actions and attitudes of modern humans towards nature. His empathy with nature and animals comes through in his unique collection of stories and poems. His stories are filled with deep love for nature and people. Many of the bond's stories are set in Landour and Cantonment in the upper reaches of Musoorie imbibing a love for nature from his grandfather.

This story about the tiger is written out of his experience in his grandfather's house. The tiger named Timothy was discovered by his grandfather on hunting expedition in the Terai jungle near Dehra when he was accompanied by several very important persons from Delhi to Terai jungle for a camp. They also take fifteen elephants along with them. By bringing the fifteen elephants in the eyes of readers, bond says about the cruel nature of man towards animals and the pitiest state of animals. Among the fifteen elephants four of them with howdahs for the shikaris and the others specially trained for taking part in the beat. Man makes use of animals for their purpose, but they also have their feelings. The selfishness of man is shown. The Shikaris hunt animals, they search tiger to hunt. But a tiger cub was taken home by Bond's grandfather. "he discovered a little tiger about eighteen inches long, hiding among the intricate roots of a banyan tree. Grandfather picked him up and brought him home". It was also provided with two companions Toto, the monkey and mongrel puppy. Though tiger is one among the ferocious animals, it was little scared of the monkey and the puppy. The tiger initially act as the pet to everyone in the house. They treat Timothy as one of the members in the house; equal importance is given to him.

When days passed, Timothy started showing his other side, the aggressive side. Every living being have two sides, the dark and the light. So the grandfather decides to transfer him to the zoo, which is at Lucknow. He reserves a first-class compartment only for Timothy and himself. The zoo authorities were glad to receive the well-fed and fairly civilized tiger. After six months Bond's grandparents visited the zoo. His grandfather visited the cage in which Timothy had been interned. The tiger

approached the bar and allowed grandfather to put both hands around his neck and it also licks his hands. 'Grandfather stroked the tiger's forehead and tickled his ears, and whenever he growled, smacked him across the mouth, which was his old way of keeping him quiet'(Bond, 324). When a leopard in the next cage snarled at him, he slinks back to his corner. These were noticed by a keeper and the grandfather recognized him as the keeper who had been there when Timothy had first come to the zoo. Grandfather ask him to transfer Timothy to another cage away from that leopard.

'but sir'- stammered the keeper 'it is not your tiger'.

'I know, I know' said grandfather testily. 'I realize he is no longer mine. but you might at least take a suggestion or two from me'

'I remember your tiger very well' said the keeper. 'He died two months ago'. Died! Exclaimed grandfather.(Bond, 324)

The tiger died because of pneumonia. The tiger inside the cage was very dangerous and it was trapped in the hills only last month said the keeper. But the tiger still licking his hand with increasing relish. With his face near the tiger, he mumbled " goodnight timothy"(Bond, 325). Grandfathers assumption that the tiger in the zoo is his precious Timothy causes him to act far too boldly. The people around him were surprised to see that this tiger does not attack grandfather. The readers might have expected it to devour him at the first provocation. But till last it lick his hands like the way of pet. It tends to develop a good relation with human.

## Conclusion

All men are not dishonest, selfish and cruel. Most people deeply love animals and care for them with a kind heart. Man has two different states, which is children's thoughts and the adult's reactions. Children love nature, birds and animals. This comes naturally to them. No ulterior consideration enters their innocent minds. They never harm the animals as well as environment for their self, gain or profit. Only the adults are driven by monetary considerations. The deep bond and intimacy grow between human and non-humans if only there is love and compassion. Everywhere birds and animals are finding it more difficult to survive because the humans are trying to destroy both them and their forest.

They, the animals try to create a friendly relationship. But in the present day world of all advancement, humans become blind toward Nature and natural surroundings. On

seeing, the character of tiger, they often hunt large animals such as deer, antelope and contrary to popular opinion, very rarely approach human. Aggressiveness is nature to tiger. Though it is aggressive it has a kind part on the other side. The incident which happens in Delhi itself is an example. To protect the boy as taking the cub in his mouth. It didn't hunt as it hunts animals. In this story also the tiger, which is marked as dangerous lick the hands of the grandfather only of his behavior which is love and compassion for other human beings. Human actions itself make the animals be ferocious. They live with their natural habit (character). They do not change as man changes according to the situations.

Ruskin bond, being a true lover of nature, natural surrounding and other creatures, he could feel deeply hurt for the creatures who are being shot for pleasure and other monetary gains "a delightful read...no one understands nature like Ruskin Bond and it takes his ability to put this wonder into words"- Deccan Chronicle

Tigers skin is taken to make rugs, clothes and the claws are used to make brooches and other decorating products. Every part of the tiger from whisker to tail is sold in illegal wildlife market. Their parts are used for traditional medicine, folk remedies and as the status symbol among Asian culture. In Saki's Mrs. Packletide's Tiger, the protagonist because of her envy with her friend Loona Bimberton tries to become famous by killing a tiger. July 29 is celebrated as world tiger day. The last all India census, occurred in 2014 says there were 2,226 Tigers alive in India. As we have gone through the story in the lens of ecocriticism it is our prime duty to be well-wisher of nature which includes all the birds, animals, reptiles, environment and all the living creature. As humans who rule this earth, it is our moral responsibility to protect the living companions. As humans, we try to preserve the beautiful things and pass it to the next generation. Likewise, it is our major responsibility to protect our beautiful environment and give it to the upcoming generation. Hence each creation is valuable and no species should be made to extinct.

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## A READING ON 'COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING'

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### **Abstract**

*The origins of Communicative Language Teaching is to found in the British Language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, situational Language Teaching represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. The writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Keith Johnson and other British applied linguists on the theoretical basis for a communicative or functional approach to language teaching, the rapid application of their ideas by text book writers and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching.*

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching is to be found in the British Language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Until then, Situational Language Teaching represented the major British approach to teaching English as a foreign language. In situational Language Teaching, language was taught by practicing basic structures in meaning full situation-based activities. But British applied linguists began to call in to question the theoretical assumptions underlying situational Language Teaching. This was partly a response to the sorts of criticisms the prominent American linguist, Noam Chomsky had leveled at the structural linguistic theory in his classic book, *Syntactic Structures* (1957). Chomsky in his classic had demonstrated that the current structural theories of language were in capable of accounting for the fundamental characteristics of language-the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences.

The British applied linguists emphasized another fundamental dimension of language-the functional and communicative potential of language. They saw the need to focus on language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on more mastery of structures. The scholars like Christopher Candlin, H.G.Widdowson advocated this view of language under the influence of the works written by John Firth, M.A.K. Halliday, William Labov as well as the works in philosophy.

In 1971, a group of experts began to investigate the possibility of developing language courses on a unit credit system. It is a system in which learning tasks are broken down into "portions of units, each of which corresponds to a component of a learner's needs and is systematically

related to all the other portions". D.A.Wilkins proposed a functional or communicative definition of language that could serve as a basis for developing communicative syllabuses for language teaching. Wilkins contribution was an analysis of the communicative meanings that language learner needs to understand and express. He attempted to demonstrate the system of meanings that lay behind the communicative uses of language. Wilkins later revised and expanded his 1972 document into a book called *National Syllabuses*, which had a significant impact on the development of Communicative Language Teaching.

The writings of Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, Keith Johnson and other British applied linguists on the theoretical basis for a communicative or functional approach to language teaching, the rapid application of their ideas by text book writers and the equally rapid acceptance of these new principles by British language teaching specialists gave prominence nationally and internationally to what came to be referred to as the Communicative Approach or Communicative Language Teaching.

Although the movement began as a largely British innovation, focusing on alternative conceptions of a syllabus since the 1970s the scope of Communicative Language Teaching has expanded. Both American and British proponents view it as an approach that aims to

- (a) Make communicative competence the goal of language teaching.
- (b) Develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledges the interdependence of language and communication.

Howatt makes a distinction between a "strong" and "weak" version of Communicative Language Teaching. The weak version of 'CLT' stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes. And the strong version of communicative teaching on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication. That means the former could be described as "learning to use" English and the latter entails "using English to learn it".

The major features of the communicative approach to Language Teaching can be pointed out as follows.

- (1) Meaning is paramount
- (2) Contextualization is a basic premise.
- (3) Dialogues center around communicative functions and they are not normally memorized
- (4) Effective communication is sought
- (5) Comprehensible pronunciation is sought
- (6) Language is created by the individual often through trial and error
- (7) Fluency in language is the primary goal
- (8) Students are expected to interact with other people either through group and pair or their writing.

The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes referred to as "communicative competence". Hymes coined this term in order to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky's theory of competence. For Chomsky, the focuses of the linguistic theory were to characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language. Hymes held that such a view of linguistic theory was sterile. Hymes' theory of communicative competence was a definition of what a speaker needs to know to be communicatively competent in a speech community.

Another linguistic theory of communication favored in CLT is Halliday's functional account of language use. In some influential books and papers, Halliday has elaborated a powerful theory of the function of language, which complements Hymes' view of communicative competence.

Another theorist frequently cited for his views on the communicative nature of language is H.G. Widdowson. On his book *Teaching Language as Communication*, Widdowson presented a view of the relationship between linguistic systems and their communicative values in texts and discourse. A more recent but related analysis of

communicative competence is found in Canale and Swan in which four dimensions of communicative competence are defined.

- (1) Grammatical Competence.  
It refers to what Chomsky calls linguistic competence. It is the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity.
- (2) Sociolinguistic Competence  
It refers to an understanding of the social context in which communication takes place.
- (3) Discourse Competence.  
It refers to an interpretation of individual message elements regarding their interconnectedness and of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse of text.
- (4) Strategic Competence.  
It refers to the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair and redirect communication.

And the nature of the syllabus has been central in Communicative Language Teaching. The first syllabus to be proposed was described as a notional syllabus which specified the semantic - grammatical categories and the categories of communicative function. But his notional syllabus was soon criticized by British applied linguists. There are at present several proposals and models for syllabus in CLT including task-based syllabus (Prabhu) functional syllabus (Wilkins), structural, functional and instrumental syllabus (Allen) etc.

Several roles are assigned for Teachers in Communicative Language Teaching. According to Breen and Candlin, the first role of the teacher is to facilitate the communication process in the class room. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. And the third role of the teacher is that of researcher and learner. Other roles assigned for teachers need analyst, counselor and event manager in Communicative Approach to Language Teaching.

Communicative Language Teaching is best considered as an approach rather than a method. It appeared at a time when British Language Teaching was ready for a paradigm shift. It appealed to those who sought a more humanistic approach to *teaching*.

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## **THE STRUGGLER AND SURVIVOR IN EVELYN WAUGH'S *DECLINE AND FALL, VILE BODIES AND A HANDFUL OF DUST***

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Evelyn Waugh began his career as a novelist with the publication of *Decline and Fall* in 1928. He was at a low point in his personal life. In *Decline and Fall* as well as the other early novels, he allows his secondary characters to take over the story from the protagonists. The secondary characters appear, disappear and reappear, and in the process, Waugh develops them fully while he allows the protagonists to be static and uninvolved as life swirls around them but causes little change in their attitudes. It is interesting that the secondary characters, who are usually malcontents and misfits, manage to come through all their troubles with little effort, while the protagonists fail in their ambitions. Waugh may have drawn his protagonists as reflections of himself, perhaps he saw himself as an antihero and drew pictures of failure, but when he looked at the people, he knew and associated with he saw them as successful and thus wrote successful, rounded parts drawn from life for the secondary characters.

The early novels of Evelyn Waugh examine various situations in the modern world in which he sees changes happening that are unpleasant. The themes are different, although closely related, in the three novels being considered. The themes are a lack of interest and concern by friends and family for those who have been hit by misfortune especially when the misfortune is not brought on by actions of the persons involved; he examines the indifference of Oxford dons, public officials, wives, and friends of victims.

In his first novel, *Decline and Fall*, Paul Pennyfeather, the protagonist, is done in by Sir Alastair Digby-Vaine-Trumington who is having the annual dinner of the Bollinger Club, a group of aristocratic young men, in his rooms at Oxford. It is Sir Alastair and his friends who remove Paul's trousers in the garden quad during a drunken playful mood, and Paul is dismissed from Oxford for indecent behavior. After Paul is dismissed, he takes a

position at Llanabba Castle as a school master. The owner and headmaster are Dr. Augustus Fagan, a con man who cheats Paul of part of his salary because he "can hardly pay one hundred and twenty pounds to any one who has been sent down for indecent behavior. Suppose that we fix your salary at ninety pounds a year, to begin with?" (236). Fagan's school is the second rate at best, and yet he has some wealthy aristocratic students.

The settings of Waugh's work reflected the aristocracy and one thing that never failed Evelyn Waugh was his love of the fine old houses he knew and visited and put into his stories. The houses were an anchor and usually, they stood firm in a changing world. At the school, Paul meets Edgar Grimes, who has been dismissed frequently in the past from other positions because he is a pederast and he often "lands in the soup."

Paul Pennyfeather is in love with Margot and for this reason goes to jail, accused of white slavery, when it is Margot who is guilty. She has "financial" interests in South

America which she euphemistically calls "places of entertainment" while in reality, they are houses of prostitution. While in prison he again meets Grimes and other characters from Llanabba Castle. Margot decides to get Paul out of prison by faking an emergency appendectomy. He is supposed to die on the operating table at the hospital owned and run by Dr. Augustus Fagan, the school master from Llanabba Castle. Around and around the characters go acting and interacting with each other again and again but Paul is unable to gain control of his life.

Paul manages to return to Oxford and resume his life there as if nothing had happened. In the closing scene of the book, it is again the night of the Bollinger Club dinner.

This time the dinner is being given in the rooms of Peter Beste-Chetwynde, Margot's son. Paul reads a bit and then goes to bed this time without mishap.

In *Vile Bodies*, Waugh does the same sort of weaving together of the characters' lives. Adam Fenwick-Symes, the protagonist, allows life to swirl around him and is not noticeably affected. Waugh has dropped Grimes from his cast of characters, but he reprises Sir Alastair and Margot in this story. While Paul was in prison, Margot married Lord Metroland, while professing to still love Paul and at the same time having an affair with Sir Alastair.

*Vile Bodies* is a dark comment on modern society as Waugh knew it. Although the characters are not fully described, he once again gives detailed descriptions of houses. There is the feeling that Waugh trusted the houses more than he did the people, and it was the people who destroyed the houses. The first is description of Shephard's Hotel, where Adam registers after his return from France. Adam has no money but he knows that Lottie Crump, the proprietress of Shephard's, will allow him to stay. Lottie is described as "a fine figure of a woman, singularly unscathed by any sort of misfortune and superbly oblivious of those changes in the social order which agitate the more observant grandes dames of her period" (40).

Adam Fenwick-Symes is engaged to marry Nina Blount, but when his manuscript is confiscated at the Customs office and his prospects ruined, Nina suggests that Adam go to see her father, Colonel Blount, who lives past Aylesbury, at Doubting Hall. Doubting Hall is a country house with a lofty Palladian facade (88). Adam does see Colonel Blount and does ask him for money to enable him and Nina to marry. The colonel agrees and gives Adam a check. Later, on closer examination, Nina discovers that her father has signed the check "Charlie Chaplin" (109).

*Vile Bodies* was started before and finished after Waugh's first wife betrayed him and asked for a divorce. This novel reflects decay and rottenness throughout. There is no light: no character comes to a good end through his own choice and effort. A semblance of order was imposed in *Decline and Fall* but in *Vile Bodies*, nothing is done except the ultimate ordering: war. James Carens says that "one positive alternative to social and personal disorder . . . is war" (1).

A continuing theme in all Waugh's novels was the attempt to order the chaotic world of the 1920s and 1930s. In *Vile Bodies*, Waugh solves Adam's problems by sending him off to war. At the end of the story, Adam has gone off and met his drunken major, now a general, who took his money at the beginning of the story and prevented his marriage to

Nina, "Nina, I don't think we shall be able to get married after all. . . I gave [my money] to . . . rather a drunk [major]" (55). At the end of the story Adam is "on a splintered tree stump on the biggest battlefield in the history of the world, [where] Adam sat down" (314), and as the drunken general and Chastity, a prostitute who has been in South America at one of Margot Metroland's "places of entertainment," prepare to make love, Adam "sank into sleep" (320).

Waugh speaks out again and again of people who should be leaders but who abdicate the responsibility of their lives. Although he cries against the lack of responsibility, Waugh makes no effort to allow the protagonists to grow and seek solutions to their problems perhaps because he is too immature and bitter to see the solution. Waugh manipulates and then abandons his characters; especially Adam Fenwick-Symes, to whom he has given no purpose or resolution. The reader feels as though he too has been abandoned. In *A Handful of Dust* Waugh abandons Tony Last, the protagonist. Unfortunately, Waugh sees no redemption in either the good or the bad, and he peoples his stories with unruly, immoral, amoral, and unpleasant characters as though he considered the times in which he lived incapable of producing admirable people.

*A Handful of Dust*, Evelyn Waugh's fourth novel, considered by some critics his most powerful, "depicts the collapse of the family" (Carens 15). *A Handful of Dust* is quite different from *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* in that the hero-victim, Tony Last, is concerned only with his son and his ancestral home, Lenton Abbey, while Paul and Adam are interested only in themselves. Although we do not know what Tony looks like, we do know more about his thought processes and his love for his home and his son. At one time Letton Abbey was a beautiful structure, but it was remodeled in the nineteenth century and its architectural significance was destroyed (15).

Tony's wife, Brenda, starts a chain of events that ruin Tony when she takes up with John Beaver, a social parasite; this infidelity and the death of their son, John Andrew, bring the marriage to an end. Tony goes off to Brazil with a friend, Dr. Messinger, in search of a fabled city. Dr. Messinger is killed and Tony is lost forever in Brazil, held prisoner by Mr. Todd, an illiterate person whose father had been a missionary. Tony Last ends his days reading Dickens to Mr. Todd. *A Handful of Dust* brings together Waugh's concern for the individual in a hostile society and for the society itself.

Slowly Waugh brings all the aspects of the modern world into focus for his readers. Still, he suggests no solution. As with his heroes-antiheroes, Waugh himself is only an observer; he is never involved in the chaos of life until after World War II. However, Waugh is beginning to see, as he shows in the development of Tony Last, that the answers he searches for are within himself and that they must be acted upon.

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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THROUGH GROUP ACTIVITIES

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## Abstract

*Communication in English has become essentially global in technology, market, education and research, media and many other fields of human activity, which makes acquisition of English language extremely important. But teaching English as the second language to Indian college students is one fold of the challenge to the tertiary level teachers whereas teaching the heterogeneous classroom is the other fold. Despite spending a good deal of time in teaching the students and enforcing practice in the traditional methods, the teacher does not get the desired results. Hence there is a dire need of making students interested in the acquisition of English language. The present paper attempts to provide certain interesting and effective group activities which can be practiced in the English classroom.*

**Keywords:** English, Group, Activities, Teacher, Students.

## Introduction

Teaching English to heterogeneous Indian students has been quite a challenging task for the teacher as the students come from widely diverse backgrounds. In recent years when the focus in language teaching has shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered, the best classroom lessons in English teaching are those in which learners are directly and actively involved in the process of communication with others. And if the activities are associated with their peers and fun-filled, the lessons learned are quite effective, involving high retention. This is why group activities are preferred in language teaching.

Adages like "More hands make for lighter work." "Two heads are better than one." "The more the merrier" speak of the potential of team work as more productive, creative, and motivated than individuals on their own.<sup>1</sup> Group activities can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world.<sup>2</sup> Positive group experiences, moreover, have been shown to contribute to student learning, retention and overall college success.<sup>3</sup>

Properly structured, group activities can reinforce skills that are relevant to both group and individual work. They help students to-

- Break complex tasks into parts and steps
- Plan and manage time
- Refine understanding through discussion and explanation
- Develop stronger communication skills.
- Pool knowledge and skills.

- Find effective peers to emulate.
- Students with different levels of intelligence and proficiency within a team could help one another.
- Students develop increased responsibility, self-direction and independence.
- Cooperative learning skills improve in all students.
- The emphasis laid on learning (that is on students) rather than on teaching (teacher)
- Emphasis laid on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- Students engaged in group work, or cooperative learning, show increased individual achievement compared to students working alone.
- Student group work enhances communication and other professional development skills.<sup>4</sup>

Hence some interesting group activities designed for college students have been discussed along with the methodology to be followed in adopting them.

1. **Dumb Charades:** Students love to play Dumb Charades. This is usually played using the titles of films. Here the students can be made to play this using idiom. One student from group 1 comes on to the stage and mimics the action indicating the idiom. The other groups should watch and try to guess the idiom. Whichever group comes to know the answer can raise their hands and then give the answer along with the meaning when the teacher permits. The group can be given points for each correct answer. For this activity the teacher should make certain preparations, like in the previous class, the teacher should have given the students information about idioms, their

uses and ask them to learn as many idioms as possible from various sources or give them a set of fifty or more idioms to study. By this activity, the students will learn the idioms and their meanings along with having fun with their classmates and moreover, the retention idioms can be heightened.

2. **Tenses in Paras:** This activity helps the students to understand the tenses and use them properly in their sentences. Here students are divided into groups and each group is given a paragraph each. All the sentences in the paragraphs should be either in past tense or in the present tense. If the group gets the para in the present tense, they should convert it to the past and the group getting para in the past should convert it to the present. After the stipulated time is over, one of the members in the group should be asked to read the para out, and rectifications if any should be made by the teacher. From this activity, students will have an exercise on how the tense should be consistent throughout the paragraph. Many students have the habit of alternating between the past and the present tense in their sentences and paras. The practice of this activity can bring them out of such a habit.

3. **Quiz on Vocabulary:** Everybody knows the importance of vocabulary. A good vocabulary makes communication clear and effective, whereas lack of vocabulary turns out to be a big handicap in communication. It is the foundation for comprehension. Acquiring an extensive vocabulary is one of the greatest challenges in learning a second language. As Wilkins says, "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed". A person may be judged by others based on his/her vocabulary.

However, students find learning the meanings of words uninteresting. To make the students enhance their vocabulary in an interesting and fun-filled way, quiz on vocabulary can be held. Here the teacher's preparation is very significant. He/ She needs to prepare a list of words with their meanings written as found in the dictionary. Here again the activity begins by making the groups. The questions will be in the form of meanings of words, the clues being the total number of letters in the word and specification of the first letter of the word. The students should utter out the correct word as the answer. The question should be read out to the whole class. If for example the first chance is given to the first group and the group gives the correct answer they can be given certain points. If they fail to answer, the question can be passed to the second group. If the second group answers it, they can

be given half of the points as a bonus. If they too are unable to answer, the question passes on to the next group and then the next and next. The time limit has to be fixed for the group when it is given the direct question; but for every passed question extra time to think need not to be given, as they will already have had the time- All the groups need to listen to the question carefully and start thinking the answer. The group with the highest points is to be declared as winners. Not only hard words but also some familiar but not very easy words are also to be included in this activity, to retain the interest of the students in the activity- so that they will feel the goal to be achievable and thereby their confidence will be increased.

4. **Picture Description:** This is one of the most enjoyable activities for college students. Here each group is given a drawing sheet, a set of crayons or sketch pens and a fable or a short moral story- with animals or birds and even human beings in it. The students are asked to read the story and represent the story in their drawing sheet, depending on their imagination. After that the students have to divide the story among themselves and give back their story-sheets to the teacher. Then with the aid of the drawing-which has to be displayed on the podium, the students have to narrate/ explain the story to their classmates/ the other groups. This activity not only improves the speaking skill of the students but also helps in bringing forth their imagination. Students interestedly participate and curiously look forward to their friends' presentations.

5. **Making Groups:** All these activities involve the procedure of making groups. Even this routine act can be made an interesting activity of learning. Instead of having their friends in their groups, students can be made to mingle with everybody in the class and develop friendship with others by having random groups. For this the teacher has to prepare as many chits as there are students, with names of parts of speech in them. For example, verbs like play, run, stand, consume, etc., Adjectives like brave, cautious, colorful, etc. and other parts of speech. One chit should contain one word. The number of words taken in each part of speech will correspond to the number of students the teacher wants in each group. The students are asked to pick a chit each and form groups according to the parts of speech, in a sense- all Nouns should be in a group, all adverbs in another group and so on. So this activity can be had when only eight or less number of groups are to be formed. When all the groups are formed, the teacher can ask each one to utter their words audibly.

With this activity, students will thoroughly understand the parts of speech. So even while forming the groups, no time is wasted as students will have learned one of the important concepts of English grammar.

The above-discussed activities encompass the development of the majority of the important communicative skills in students. These have been practiced by the researcher first hand in an actual classroom and have been found to be feasible and effective.

While the potential learning benefits of group work are significant, they can be effective only when designed, supervised, and assessed meticulously by the teacher. So in these activities, the teacher plays the pivotal role always on the toes, facilitating and helping students in these activities. The teacher has to provide the students with the rationale behind using team work so that the students understand the benefits of collaborative learning, give them clear and detailed instructions, set ground rules for the task, provide closure and reflect on the group work process.

## Conclusion

Small group teaching is a flexible tool that can be adapted according to the needs of the students. The present paper has discussed some innovative techniques based on the cooperative group methodology. As Brumfit says, Pair and group work among the students are encouraged to gain an insight into reader reaction.<sup>6</sup> These activities promote meaningful teamwork and deep collaboration on the part of the students and emphasize the role of the teacher as facilitator, negotiator, researcher and mentor.

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## POST COLONIAL PERSPECTIVES IN CHETAN BHAGAT'S THE THREE MISTAKES OF MY LIFE

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Post colonialism can also be understood through power relations between the native peoples and whites. The term is used, to cover all the culture affected by imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. It is true in the context of Bhagat's novel too. The whites, i.e., the Australian team steal the limelight wherever they go. They not only dominate the cricket scene but also have an aura around them as shown in the novel, at several places they are treated as superior by Indians. The three friends sneak into the stadium and, "the security guard relaxed as he saw us with someone white. We must be important enough after all" (Bhagat, 139). The three friends have more faith in the Australian team more for testing the talent of Ali. Ish says, "if Indian selectors were up to the job, we wouldn't lose so many matches to Fred "I had to make sure Ali gets tested by the best" (Bhagat, 143).

In placing the novel in the post colonial context, it is essential to keep in mind Frantz Fanon's "three stages" which the literature of the colonized passes through:

- First is a stage of assimilation, when the colonized, bewitched by the colonizers claim to cultural superiority, imitate their literature and grovel for acceptance as cultural equals.
- Second is the stage when disenchanted with integration into the culture of their contemptuous colonizers; they return to their old cultural roots.
- The third stage they fashion a new and genuinely national culture, shaped loyalty to their rediscovered national identity. (The Wretched of the Earth)

In this context, Bhagat has written The Three Mistakes of MY Life from nationalistic motives. He has raised certain national issues like communal riots, religious bias, misguiding the youth by politicians and patriotism. All is made the symbol of Nationalism. Ali's patriotism comes to light in his preference for India even at the temptation of comforts and luxuries in Australia. During conversation

with Mr.Cutler Ali asks. "If I make it to the team, who will I play for?"(Bhagat,177).The little boy is free from the grip of attraction to the country of the whites and is not in awe of the white men. He is surprised to hear Australia' and gives his logic," but I'm an Indian. I want to play for India. Not for anyone else" (Bhagat, 178). The spirit of India lives in the boy. He is patriotic to the core as he ends his encounter by saying, "I don't want to be Australian in my next life. Even if I have a hundred next lives, I want to be Indian in all of them" (Bhagat, 179).

The prologue of The Three Mistakes of My Life begins with Bhagat's opening of an e-mail account. Govind alias the businessman sends a suicide note to Bhagat via email. All this reveals that computers have become an inevitable part of the young generation and it is in tight grip of its stern masters i.e. the computers. Ambition is the quality of the colonizer. It was the ambition to rule which was instrumental in ruling India for more than a four hundred years by the East India Company. Govind too harbors intense ambitiousness. Having the qualities of a businessman he wishes to own a shop in a mall, "our shop has been doing good business but we can't grow unless we move to a new city location" ( Bhagt,25). He diversifies the business and runs a stationary shop as well as maths tuitions and cricket coaching simultaneously.

The three friends belong to the native intellect class whom Macaulay wanted to create among the Indians, "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (The Post Colonial Studies Reader, 430). Preference for branded wear is evident as Govind wears, "fake Reebok slippers" (Bhagat, 31). The three friends celebrate parties in the Western way by opening a bottle of beer. They address each other trendily as 'dude'. They have no inhibitions in using words like 'fuck' which are a taboo in the native Indian context.

The novel presents the contemporary political situation of India where the BJP and Congress are two

dominating political parties always at loggerheads. The three friends visit Parekhiji's residence at Bittu mama's invitation. The BJP gathering "looked like a Marriage party where only priests were invited. Most of them carried some form of accessories like a Trishul or a rudraksha or a holy book" (Bhagat, 41). Parekhiji, a hard core politician tries to lure the three friends in the BJP fold by narrating incidents of atrocities faced by poor Hindus. But the Macaulay brigade did not have an influential mind on seeing. Ali's father in the party conspicuous for his Muslim beard some party-men called him Ali Baba and shouted, "get lost, your traitor" (Bhagat, 154).

Mamaji lost his only son Dhiraj in the mass murder at Godhra and blamed the Muslim fundamentalists. Mamaji gathered support and delineated a plan of action to avenge Dhiraj's murder. According to Fanon, "..... the term the settlers uses when he mentions the natives are zoological terms... when the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms, he constantly refers to bestiality" (The Wretched of the Earth, 42). Here the settler can be a metaphor for the superior. Mamaji has become superior only using large size of readily available party workers. The inferior is used Muslim as in the novel they are shown in the minority and at this particular juncture, they are not prepared to fight back the Hindu fundamentals not only in number but also power. Chapter nineteen onwards in the Fanonian sense there is the hint towards 'animalizing' the inferior and the subordinate. Mamaji and his mob are not only intoxicated but also turn blind to humanity. Using abusive language he wants the three friends to handover the Muslim boy Ali. Powerful politicians like Parekhiji turn this thick-skinned and simply get away by saying, "so what can I do?" (Bhagat, 227).

Fanon points out, "there is a fact: white men consider themselves superior to Black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect..." (Black Skin, White Masks, 10). He describes the "assimilation phase" as "the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power" (The Post Colonial Studies Reader, 158). At the restaurant with the three friends enjoy NCR (number of cans required) jokes on girls. Michael asks Omi to eat more proteins to which Omi replies that he guzzles two liters of milk every day. A Fanonian reading can be applied to women characters i.e. Govind's mother and Vidya. Fanon writes, "face to face with this man who is 'different from himself', he needs to defend himself. In other words,

to personify the other The other will become the mainstay of his preoccupations and his desires" (Black Skin, White Masks, 170)

The native has no existence whatsoever unless she/he defends her/his presence by making the dominations other the "mainstay" of her/his "preoccupations" and "desires". Here the native is Govind's mother and the "other" her husband who left her to marry another woman. Since the husband was the 'mainstay of her preoccupations and desires' she spent months of crying with the neighbours and another year she consulted the astrologers perhaps with a hope to make the 'other' come back to her since she found it difficult to exist alone, "string of grand aunts came to live with her" (Bhagat, 9) by the time Govind was fifteen she had sold all her jewelry to make both ends meet. Here Govind's mother is victimized by two others i.e. the husband and the society as a woman in the Indian context has to play a role of subordination. Though the women have been domesticated and bound to servitude but lately there have been paradigm shifts. The new generation women have been taking bold steps. The role of women has become modern from traditional. Since Vidya transgressed the acceptable boundaries of friendship with Govind. She was kept; "under house arrest. Her dad slammed her mobile phone to pieces" (Bhagat, 251). Vidya suffers because she is a woman but this kind of suffering is not faced by Govind. Spivak says, "... the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female in even more deeply in shadow" (Post colonialism, 1446).

Vidya was sent to Bombay to do a PR course with the instruction not to speak to Govind again. The aim was to keep Vidya away from Govind for Fanon a Negro cannot afford to be bold because boldness is the virtue as a master Fanon says, "a feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of nonexistence. Sin is Negro as virtue is White" (Black Skin, a White Masks, 1939). The boldness on the part of the Negro/ Vidya threatens the presence of the dominant/ parents/ family/society.

Though dominance and power the superior inflict violence on the inferior Vidya was confined to her room and later sent out of Ahmedabad. Govind's not responding to her SMS's must have left her heartbroken. Vidya invites this kind of treatment for her display of boldness by committing something forbidden by the unmarried girl in India. Though India is no longer a colony but centuries of

colonization have left some imprints of colonialism evident even in the absence of the Imperial power. Reading Bhagat's *The Three Mistakes of My Life* against a postcolonial perspective is a fruitful exercise.

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## COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE AND KALIDASA.....

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### Abstract

*This paper focuses on the two great classical dramatists in the history of literature, Kalidasa and Shakespeare. Both were observed to have some similarities and difference in their style of writing. They broadly separated by their times, nationality and cultural heritage. One thing common between them is their portrayal of women characters in dramatic purpose and the philosophical view of life. They were considered as supreme creature of God in that way both writers framed their women character. In happiness, they celebrate festivity and in sufferings they shed tears.*

**Keywords:** Classical dramatist, literature, times, nationality, cultural heritage, women character, supreme creature, celebrate and sufferings.

### Introduction:

As we know Shakespeare is the father of English drama. Kalidasa was framed as Indian Shakespeare, who created his masterpiece of play, poem, Epic in Sanskrit. The famous dictum is that "Shakespeare is the Kalidasa of England and Kalidasa is the Shakespeare of India". All over England, praised Shakespeare as the great dramatist, poet and playwright. Similarly, Kalidasa also framed as the greatest epic creator in Indian literature. In reality, Kalidasa and Shakespeare were known for their theme of love that depicted in the historical plays and novels. Both Shakespeare and Kalidasa differ in centuries and their nationality, they were regarded in all times in all over the universe. Shakespeare counted on human's heart and life makes it real before the eyes of every universal audience. He brings up the love, war, destiny of life and moreover the philosophy of life into his play; it cannot be estimated by the study of a single play or even few.

This study analyzes Shakespeare's historical plays which depicted by portraying the real heroes of England with more patriotism and make an excellent handbook of England's history. His plays have length portraits the kings of England mainly it focuses on the Kingly weakness such as Henry VI, Richard II, and King John, then kingly strength such as Henry IV, Henry V, and Richard III.

Shakespeare had his limitations but he failed to follow traditional limits in his comedies and tragedies. He is

generously copied from Plutarch or other source and recreated in his own passion by the reflection of revenge in Hamlet, a theme of ambition in Macbeth and Julius Caesar, an emotion of jealousy in Othello. Many of Shakespeare women character are tend to showcase the manly attitude by dressing up in men's clothes like Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Rosalind in *As you like it* and Viola in *The Twelfth night*.

Regarding Kalidasa the works are the marvel, they are *Raghuvamsa* and *Kumarasambhavan* and the three plays are *Shakuntala*, *Malavikagimitra* and *Vikramorvasiyam*. Kalidasa's patriotism is as deep as Shakespeare. Kalidasa women characters are mostly framed with divine features. Kalidasa women characters like Gauri portrayed as the Goddess of a mountain, *Shakuntala* as earth-born Sita and also as the heavenly nymph but all reflect the earthly love and life by facing all miserable things of separation, hatred and loneliness.

Kalidasa's patriotism is as deep as Shakespeare. Kalidasa brings out the idea of the world that when man reaches his full ability, he realizes the dignity of life and worth of life in every form. His *Raghuvamsa* is half nature, half love and life; his *Kumarasambhava* is also something with half Godly and half love. His poem *Meghaduta* also pictures love and human emotion. Kalidasa features that bring forth all the female characters as a supreme woman that created from God's workshop. Kalidasa brings out a

deep interpretation of life that man who does good deeds and passions will brim over the moral laws of eternity, this whole idea inspires that whole universe.

Regarding his works, Kalidasa wrote three plays. Among them, *Abhijnanasakuntalam* is generally regarded as a masterpiece. It seems it was among the first Sanskrit works to be translated into English and has since been translated into many languages.

### Conclusion

Scholars further commend the accuracy of Kalidasa's literary allusions and his adept use of metaphor, noting that the author thus demonstrates his erudition in a wide variety of disciplines. Summarizing Kalidasa's achievement, Arthur W. Ryder wrote: "Poetical fluency is not rare; intellectual grasp is not very uncommon: but the combination has not been found perhaps more than a dozen times since the world began. Because he

possessed this harmonious combination, Kalidasa ranks not with Anacreon and Horace and Shelley, but with Sophocles, Vergil, and Milton." This paper concludes with a comparative study of Kalidasa and William Shakespeare are recognized as the greatest dramatist ranked their work as the world's precious wealth and stays immortal beyond ages.

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## DISSONANCE AND DESPAIR IN MARGARET LAURENCE'S *THE STONE ANGEL*

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### **Abstract**

*Canadian literature reflects the Canadian perspective on nature, frontier life and Canada's position in the world. After the world war, Margaret Laurence emerged as a short story writer, extended her range to writing novels. She had written five novels and won international acclaim. Laurence's *The Stone Angel* explores the intricate relationship between the husband and wife namely Brampton Shipley and Hagar Shipley. Hagar brought up in a cultured Presbyterian background marries Brampton, a man of unrefined and uncouth behavior against the wishes of her father Jason Curie. There is no mutual understanding between the couple. Lack of understanding between the couple results in dissonance and despair*

**Keywords:** *Frontier, intricate, Presbyterian unrefined, uncouth, dissonance, despair.*

### **Abbreviation – The stone Angel – T.S.A**

The novel *The Stone Angel* begins with the introduction of the protagonist Hagar Shipley, who in her late nineties recollects her entire past life in bits. She narrates an incident from her childhood that one day her father had brought a large and blind stone angel and erected it in the Manawaka cemetery to mark the death of his feeble wife. It was the biggest and expensive statue in Manawaka. As a child, she did not know why her father had brought this huge statue. She used to walk in the cemetery and admire the variety of multi-coloured flowers. She admires:

Summer and winter she viewed the town with sightless eyes, she was doubly blind, not only stone but unendowed with even a pretense of sight. Whoever carved her had left the eyeballs blank. It seemed strange to me that she should stand above the town, harking us all to heaven without knowing who we were at all. But I was too young to know her purpose... (T.S.A 3)

Jason Curie, Hagar's father advised her to concentrate on studies. She had two brothers Matt and Daniel. Jason Curie was a strict father; he used to whip his sons if they are not studying well. Jason insisted Matt that, he should serve in the store after school hours.

On the other hand, Daniel had poor health and he took leave quite often. In the mean time, she lost her mother, but her father did not marry again. In her childhood, Hagar went to South Wachakwa learned embroidery, French, menu planning and hair dressing and returned after two years. She was not granted permission to teach, for her father was scared that she would go to the

dances and be pawed by the farm boys. She obeyed her father and maintained accounts in their store. She never disobeyed her father.

A drastic change can be perceived in Hagar after her puberty. She becomes assertive in her behavior. She met Brampton Shipley by chance in Manawaka. When Auntie Doll accompanied her to a dance at the school, she danced with Brampton Shipley. She felt some change in her attitude. While she was dancing with Bram, he presses his groin to her thighs. She pushed him away out of sheer embarrassment; she again danced with him. Lottie Dreisser did not like Hagar dancing with Bram. Because he was uncouth, and she had seen him in the company of half-breed girls. Her father warned her that Bram was not the right choice. He informed her about his first marriage, and also about the age difference. She did not pay heed to the suggestions and advice given by the near and dear. She stood on her ground. She married Bram. Her wedding took place in the local church. No family members came to attend the function. Only Auntie Doll attended the function. A reception was arranged by Charlotte Tappen, hoping that her father would attend the function. To their disappointment, her father did not turn back.

Hagar was given a warm welcome by her in-laws family. Her husband presented her a cut-glass decanter with the silver top. After marriage her sexual life in characterized by pain, embarrassment and wonder. She was shocked when he forced her for sex during day time. Moreover, Bram provides a sharp contrast to Hagar. Bram is uncouth, unrefined and unsophisticated while Hagar is from an educated, refined, sophisticated milieu. When they

go out shopping, they happened to meet Charlotte on the way. He talked very rudely to Charlotte in the public place. She did not like this attitude. Bram spoke in a rude language to the shopkeeper and he fingered the female undergarments. Hagar observes:

On Simlow's Ladies' wear, the oiled floor boards smelled of dust and linseed, and the racks of hung garments were odorous with the sizing used in inexpensive cloth... I'd done my utmost to persuade Bram not to come with me, but he couldn't see what I was making such a fuss about. Mrs. McVitie was there, and we bowed and nodded to one another. Bram fingered female undergarments, and I, mortified, looked away. (T.S.A 71)

These two incidents wounded her and she took a decision not to go with him for shopping, and let him go alone for shopping.

She was very keen on cleanliness, does not like Brampton's dirty habit of blowing his nose. She was disgusted:

I remember a quarrel I had with Bram, once. Sometimes he used to blow his nose with his fingers, a not unskilled performance. He'd grasp the bridge between thumb and forefinger, lean over, snort hefty, and there it'd be, bubbling down the couch grass like snake spit, and he'd wipe his fingers on his overalls, just above the rump, the same spot always, as I saw when I did the week's wash. (T.S.A 79)

In spite of their oddities they are living together. The gap between the two became wider and wider as days passed on. Both had different opinions regarding the philosophy of love. Hagar believed in the poetry of love, Bram is a believer in the drab prose of functional sex. She had a fine aesthetic sensibility, Bram lacks it conspicuously as he is a hard-boiled realist. She wanted to decorate the house by hanging pictures like Rosa Bomber's The Horse Fair. But Bram does not encourage such activities. He was crazy about horses, Hagar does not care for horses since she is frightened by their muscularity and smelliness. According to her horses symbolizes high energy and sexual potency which is a symbolic representation of Bram himself. She found fault with him for investing money on horses.

Bram is a male-chauvinist. When he admitted his wife for delivery, he expressed his desire that he wanted a boy child, so that his dynasty would continue. He says:

"I'm sure to hope it's a boy," he said. "Why should you care if it's a boy?" I asked.

Bram looked at me as though he wondered how I could need to ask.

"It would be somebody to leave the place to." He said. I saw then with amazement that he wanted his dynasty no less than my father had." (100-101)

Bram's desire was fulfilled when she delivered a male child, but Hagar was not bothered about the gender. The child was named Marvin. When he grew, he started developing a protesting kind of behavior.

The clash of personality continued between Brampton and Hagar. Once Hagar knew from Marvin that Bram relieved himself near the steps of currier's store, she shouts at him:

"Goddamn it, he complained defensively. "It was late at night.

Hagar and no one were about."

"The steps of my father's store ... that was no accident. Who saw?"

"How in hell should I know who saw? I never did it for an audience. Shut up about it, Hagar, can't you? It was over and done with. I'm sorry. There, is that enough?" (T.S.A 115) This incident added more fuel, and the image of Bram was shattered beyond repair. Her entire marital is marked by unpleasant, marital incompatibility and contrast.

Mother's care and affection play a pivotal role in shaping one's personality. Hagar lost her mother at a young age and so she had not groomed into a matured woman. She became assertive and she was not able to adjust with Bram.

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## ABSURDISM IN THOMAS HARDY'S NOVEL "THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE"

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to bring the attitude of the modern man who always wants to lead a sophisticated life. According to this story, the protagonist prefers materialistic life and he wants his life to be the highest one without doing any hard work. God has created this cosmos with all needs. But the people, with their unsatisfied mind, longing to get more than their needs. In this novel, the main character Michael Henchard, is not a loyal husband, no morality, no faithfulness and no idealism. This is what the modern man prefers to live. They prefer to live their life happily. Their life is without purposefulness. Every human being should have goal setting in their life. The modern men are in need of material, fame, Pride and ego play a vital role in their life. Henchard, being a materialistic man, he lost his wife, his daughter, his manager who has been as friend to him later and at last the people of Casterbridge. There is no real affection prevails between the relationships of Henchard. He does not understand the real value of the relationships.*

*At last he came to realize his life and worthy of his relationships purely but no one is there to take over. As it has been said that, "A good relationship is when someone accepts your past, supports your present and encourages your future."*

**Keywords:** *sophisticated, cosmos, longing, morality.*

Absurdism is a type of Philosophy. It has its origin in the work of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard who chose to confront the crisis that humans face with the Absurd by developing his existentialist philosophy. But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Camus used the term in his works strongly and he was considered as the father of Absurdism. Camus believed that a human being could become happy by finding meaning in their relationship. Absurdity and meaningfulness do not go together. Camus claims that there is a fundamental conflict between what we want from the universe and what we find in the universe. It was more expressly developed by Albert Camus in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus."

An existentialist believes that a person's life is the sum of the life he has shaped for himself. At every moment, it is his own free will choosing how to act. He is responsible for his actions which limit future actions. Thus, he must create morality in the absence of any known predetermined absolute values. Even if God does exist, He does not reveal to men the meaning of their lives. Honesty with oneself is the most important value. Every decision must be weighed in light of all the consequences of that condition. With this one can say rightly,

**"Life is absurd, but we engage it"**

But modern man is not in that way. They lead their life in a miserable way by not knowing how to make their life happier. Every individual is responsible for his life whether to make happily or sadly. It's all left to their part. Here in this novel, the term absurdism is applied to the character Henchard who is the protagonist with aimless thought. He often talks of his misfortune. He does what he considers pleasure in his life. However, he loves his wife and his daughter, when the situation is somewhat different to him after taking of liquor. Henchard is considered as the modern man because he is an aimless person. He does not want to reach the maximum point in his life when his family is near to him. As in this materialistic world, he yearns without taking any effort in his life. The most notable quality of Henchard's character is his impulsiveness. He is a man of strong impulses. He is too impulsive in his likes and dislikes. Susan rightly says to him,

**"I have lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper."**

Henchard suffers primarily because of his impulsiveness. The whole mind is full of his foolish actions, hastily done and soon regretted. The first action of selling his wife is considered to be the extreme impulsive in his life. After selling his wife, aimlessly wandering and

searching for them in the very next morning. They could not find and confirm this incident by checking his packet. He has five guineas. So he realizes that he has done a great mistake. Immediately he moves to the church to take the oath that he never touches liquor for 21 years. This incident highlights that he suffers primarily because of his impulsiveness. Everyone should have faith in his life. Having a lack of faith in his life is another reason. Not only this, he appoints Farfrae as his manager because when the scene opens in Casterbridge with Susan and her daughter have come in search of Henchard, there they see Henchard as mayor. An official fair is going on because he has looked for a good manager to look after corn trade. But the discussion is going severely among the public and Henchard. At that time Farfrae on the way to his place, he stays there and hearing everything and voluntarily comes to solve the problem.

Without much thought, he appoints Farfrae as his manager after a long conversation. He does not accept Farfrae as what he does rightly and there arises ego and in a mental rashness, he scolds him and after he regrets that. At one place, his temper raises because unable to bear the things, he tries to kill Farfrae but nature saves him and everything ends in vain. Whenever Farfrae sets ideologically, he dislikes and acts against with his rude behavior and action. It shows his ignorant. He does not have his ignorant mind. As we say, fortune plays well for some time. In another way, one can accept that Henchard as an honest man because Abel, who is a labor always lazy in his works asks him to be punctual and honest in his duty. But he does not know how to treat Abel as the labor. Abel, with his irregular clothes, comes to his work. By seeing this Farfrae asks Abel to return and dressed in a proper way. This shows how Henchard is very ignorant and rude even to his friend, Farfrae.

In another case, we can see it in the treatment of Susan in his life treats her badly because of no works and he shows anger towards Susan and it seems he has fear how to lead his life in future without job. This makes him rude. Unable to overcome the loss of his business, he calls for Farfrae. He also accepts and come as not as like manager. Henchard also starts to treat him as like a friend. But very soon Farfrae is gone beyond Henchard, he is unable to bear it. He shows disrespect to Farfrae and does not get ideal ideas from him anymore. It is because of ego. Lucetta is the character who wants to marry Henchard by knowing that Henchard is a bachelor. Henchard only knows that he is not a bachelor. He meets

her when he was sick when he has gone there for some other formal purposes. She nursed him before the arrival of Susan; Henchard is ready to marry Lucetta. Immediately by seeing Susan, he withdraws the idea. He asks for all the letters which was written to her. Everything is over now. It can be in another case that he thinks of Elizabeth as his daughter, Henchard compels hers to change the name from Elizabeth Newson to Elizabeth Henchard. When he sees the letter from Susan after her death, he came to know that she is not her daughter that she is a daughter of Newson, a sailor, Susan reveals the matter that their daughter had already died when she was a baby of three months. This shows that he is ready to show disrespect and avoid any sort of relationship if they are not favorable to him.

Henchard is very much particular about his status that too after becoming Mayor. After of the arrival Susan, he is interested to see her but it should not be revealed to anyone. Being his wife, he does not want to tell publically. It is because of his past action is like that. When he left Weydon priors, he told to the old woman that if his wife comes and asks about him means he would be in Caster Bridge. But he is Mayor Post now, unable to tell that she belongs to Henchard. Farfrae is moving very fast in approaching the public. This is another fear in him. When he came to know that Elizabeth Jane has fallen in love with Farfrae, he rejects him. He is not ready to look after her daughter's wish. Because he dislikes Farfrae and so he tells that she should not be very close to him. Henchard is very quick in making decisions. When Farfrae solves the problem in his business, he quickly makes him as his friend. He tells his exact story to him without thinking. Even though Farfrae is a good man and trustworthy, he should tell this matter immediately. Farfrae, as like his good wisher, he takes it seriously and tries to console him. If that will be some other man means, it will be revealed to everyone. That is the difference between Henchard and Farfrae. Being a young man Henchard can learn something from Farfrae. As Mahatma Gandhi says,

**"THE GOOD MAN IS THE FRIEND OF ALL LIVING BEINGS"**

But Henchard is not like that of Farfrae. Farfrae easily identify that he does not like his love of Elizabeth. He cut his relationship before Henchard could write a letter to him. This is the genuine character of Farfrae. When Farfrae goes to Lucetta's house in search of Henchard in his absence, suddenly she falls in love with Farfrae and in turn Farfrae too. It also makes Henchard get angry. This happens only after the death of Susan. So Farfrae is over taking his life not only in his business but also in life too.

Finally, he wants to return all the love letters to Lucetta, he chooses job to return back the letters. Jopp is of the man who is looking after the time to take revenge on him. He finds this as his right time. He decides to spoil the name of Henchard and Lucetta. He arranges for the Skimmington-ride in the street of Lucetta. She sees and gets suicide. When Elizabeth came to know that farfrae is in love with Lucetta, she leaves that place and find Henchard's place as comfortable. She stays there. Henchard is happy because as a lonely figure he gets console in his life. But fate again plays the vital role in Henchard. The sailor, Newson arrives to Casterbridge in search of Elizabeth Jane. Henchard scolds him and sends him back by saying that Elizabeth has died. Newson goes off. This, in turn, Farfrae again comes to Jane and asks to accept for his love. Then both are united. Again Newson comes and asks for Jane by saying that she is alive. At last he finds out. Jane gets anger and again the storm appears in the life of Henchard. Nearly many times he is deceived. He does not want to live in Casterbridge anymore. When Jane learns that Newson is alive and that Henchard had spoken a lie, Jane begins to hate him. The marriage of Jane and Farfrae is approved by her father, Newson. Henchard leaves the place. When he learns about the marriage of Jane, he comes again to Casterbridge to offer blessings to her. He brings a goldfinch in a cage as a wedding gift. But she scolds him saying that he has deceived her. Henchard is broken. After some time she is greatly regretted her behavior towards Henchard. She realized that the caged bird is a marriage gift from him as a token of repentance.

At last, both of them set out in search of Henchard. They move to Egdon in search of him. Jane finds out Abel and she receives from him Henchard has passed away just half-an-hour before their arrival. He then explained the pitiable condition of Henchard before death. He also hands over a note to be given to Jane which is very touching. In that he wishes,

"None should remember him or mourn for him"

With this, one can know that he realizes his mistakes what he has done in his life. It is a touching testament. Elizabeth is deeply grieved in her heart. She requests farfrae to obey the will of Henchard. Thus the pathetic story of Henchard has come to an end.

Unhappiness is raised from making wrong decisions. When we are true to ourselves, we can lead a happy life. God has created to everyone their own life. We can do work by spending time. In modern world truth and motivation have given up. There is no time to show love and affection to the people. True joy lies in how we react to

life. We should create our environment. We should always surround people who understand you or make an effort to understand you. It is very difficult to find the place and remain happy when our mind is filled with negative approaches. We must develop positive habits and it will bring happiness in our life. When we overcome with the entire obstacle, we can be happy. Being a human being, we should make our life successful. We should be free from ego, ignorant, rude, lack of faith, jealous, selfish, disrespect others view, fear, very quick in trusting others. This will be apt to modern men. We cannot take life as per we wish there is principle to live. We have to follow. As there is a life quote,

**"LIFE IS 10% WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND 90% HOW YOU REACT TO IT"**

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## IDENTITY CRISIS IN CHITRA BANERJEE'S "THE MISTRESS OF SPICES"

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### Abstract

*Diaspora means dispersion of people from the established homeland. Indian diaspora through their literary contributions has greatly enriched English literature. One among those authors is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the famous contemporary Indian English writers. Her novels give an interpretation of women in their complex and genuine relationship. She seeks to portray the delicate woman placed in a critical situation. She gives a unique portrayal of Indian womanhood in Post Independence India. Her novels reveal women's quest for self. This novel attempts to highlight the trauma and situations of women protagonists and their struggle for identity. Her work epitomizes the personal problems of Indian Immigrant community, their transformation and bonds with the native land. Divakaruni's works explore various shades of immigrant feminine experience, such as alienation, isolation, uprootedness, nostalgia, racism, immigrant woman's double consciousness, connections to the homeland, identity crisis, cultural shock, struggle for individualism, and assimilation and adaption. In her novel, The Mistress of spices she adopts more complex system for portraying Diasporic identity.*

**Keywords:** Female identity, migration, immigrant experience.

In this novel, *The Mistress of Spices*, Tilottama, the protagonist, quest for her own Identity which becomes ensnarl in many layers of her own displace from many worlds, each of which brings her close to tragedy. The novel deals with the complex experience of immigration, but the quest for identity often deviates weight of overstatement, repetition and exaggeration. Tilo says-"who was I? I could not say. Already my name had faded in the rising island sun, like a star from a night that had passed away" (MS 33).

The novel follows the story of Tilo, a young woman and the owner of *SPICE BAZAAR*, who is mystically disguised as an old shrew living in Oakland, America where she is sent to fulfill her duty of healing the masses. Tilo is thrust into a new culture which she has to adopt and in which she has to survive along with the successful execution of her duty. Tilo is born into silence, a dark-skinned ugly unwanted by her parents. She has many wizards and names that reveal her multiple identities like a chameleon, Tilottama by naming herself gives vent to the rebellious streak in her and justifies her naming "I will be Tilottama, the essence of til, life-giver, restorer of health and hope.(MS 43). She keeps changing herself throughout the novel and thus makes clear that how complex is the problem of identity crisis that Indian try to adjust on the foreign land. She has learned several lessons in magic and uses of spices. The Old one has given a stern warning to Tilo, that she should never surrender her love to man. After choosing to be a mistress

of spices she should not use the magic power and power of spices for her own sake, but, to serve her customers who ever visit her store. She should not surrender her passion to a mortal man. If she did so, she would forego her control over not only magic power and spices but cluster her old and ugly body. Tilo was named as Nayantara which seems to be ironical. Her parents face her with heavy and fallen hopes because she is another girl child. She is named as a star of eye because she is blessed to see future with uncanny clarity which is unseen by others soon her fame her ability spreads whom she became Star of her pirate captain and Eye to her parents. Her fame spread across the sea which cannibalize and pirates learned of her. The attention of her parents diverts her to the superfluous income earned in the form of gifts which made her feel the discomfort of her own identity. Now her innermost desire of her is to free from the desire of her covetous parents fills her mind with contempt her wish is to be granted. She has been taken by the pirates bluster the village and take her with them like a sack to help and she was named as Bhagavati.

Tilo holds first position beyond all the struggles; she now became a pirate queen by overthrowing pirate captain and acquires a new identity. She leaves for the magical island about which she has listened from the snakes and which she and other women use talents for the cause of humanity. Tilo jumps into the sea for the search of an ancient island which is owned by Old Mother who trains

the women in the art of listening and controlling spices. Tilo was amongst those lucky ones who are accepted by the 'Old One'. The Old One not only trains the newcomer but also fixes their destination and assigns them a new identity. She can call them by their names. Divakaruni treats spices as characters in her novel as they listen and speak to Tilo. They act and react accordingly and make Tilo use and not to use their magical powers. One of the cruel tricks played on the mistresses is that no matter their age, they exist within the body of an aged woman. The Spices do this to prevent their mistresses from being tempted by bodily pleasures. In the course of novel, Tilo administers herbs and Spices to the customers who visit her shop- the troubled teenage boy fetching spices for his mother, the young woman whose father forbids her to marry outside her race. When Tilo thinks about Turmeric, Ahuja's wife comes into her store. Her name is Lalita but when Tilo wants to call her by her name, Lalita, She prefers to be called Ahuja's wife. She loves to do needle works but she is not allowed to do it by her husband. She has been longing for the child. Tilo administers turmeric to her with the words of healing whispered into it. Later, when she doesn't want to have a relationship with her husband, Tilo asks her to take the spice fennel to get mental strength. Tilo uses Spices to help others in difficulties, however when Tilo begins bending the spices to her own will, ignoring what they say she should prescribe, she discovers how quickly the spices can turn their magic against her. When she falls in love with Raven all the magical powers she had from the spices and herbs begin to decline and hollow her bones. Woman is a benevolent and helpful character who serves as a mistress to her immigrant customers. The other Indian immigrant characters, as well as Tilo's customers, are Ahuja's wife, Lalita, Jagjit, Geeta's grandfather and Haroun who have different problems in their lives. Their sufferings are solved by Tilo as a mistress by her magical spices. Haroun likes to become rich in America with the help of Tilo's spices. Kalojire likes to protect him from the evil eye. Tilo unites Haroun and his lover Hameeda by using Lotus Root Spices. Jagjit is an American school boy who knows very well the language of the people of Punjab. But he learns English words like idiot, and Asshole slowly. Jagjit means world conqueror and his school friends mock at him using the word turban. His mother scolds him for his mischievous activities like making his clothes untidy and his disgust for going to school. Tilo encourages him to be happy when he becomes her customer through his mother. Tilo provides him with the spice cinnamon, which will make friends and destroy the enemies. Lalita, Ahuja's wife, suffers because of her husband's domination. Tilo understands Lalita's longing for a child when she becomes Tilo's stable

customer of her shop. Lalita's problems are untangled by Tilo's spices such as fennel and makaradwaj. Lalita rebels against her husband Ahuja when the doctor's report confirms that he is not a man. She moves away from her husband as a revolutionary woman. Tilo's encouraging words and the power of her spices supports Lalita to find out solutions for her problems. Tilo uses her champak flowers and herbs Kantakari to rectify Geeta's mistakes. Tilo meets her and points out her correct and incorrect deeds. At last Tilo comes to know about Geeta's return to her home through Geeta's grandfather. Women cannot come out from the traditional culture. Geeta's grandfather as a regular customer to Tilo's store complains about Geeta's behavior. Geeta's grandfather, who is Bengali lives in America is unable to bear with Geeta's American way of living. Geeta's love affair with a white man Juan Cordero, a Hispanic and her plan to elope with him surprise her grandfather. The family becomes a battle-field where modernity clashes with tradition and Indian culture clashes with American culture. Geeta follows modernity. The women writers in this novel have moved away from traditional immortal, self-sacrificing women towards that of women in conflict in search of identity. The Mistress of Spices is a tremendous tale of self-revelation of the protagonist Tilo's selfless service in her life. Tilo's dilemma is an allegory for the dilemma of the immigrant who is pulled between the charm of the past and the call of the present. The novel concludes with a strange but significant title of which is Maya. She asks Raven to help her find a new name as her Tilo life is over. He names her Maya. It is Tilo's third name. Maya means illusion, spell, enchantment, the power that keeps this imperfect world going day after day. She finds her identity of marrying Raven and abandons the practice of spices. "this seeming body I took on in Shampati's fire when I vowed to become a Mistress is not Mine" (MS 5)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni dealt with themes of identity seeking through her characters. Her novels deal sensitively with struggles of Women and their psychological conflicts. In *Mistress of Spices*, She adopts a more complex strategy for portraying Diasporic identity.

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## THE ROLE OF THE SEA IN J.M.SYNGE'S "RIDERS TO THE SEA" AND T.S.PILLAI'S "CHEMMEEN"

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### Abstract

*The present paper sensitively compares the role of the sea in the life of the inhabitants in the following works of Synge and T.S.Pillai. In both these works "Riders to the Sea" and "Chemmeen", the sea plays a vital role and it acts as a giver and taker of life. The sea is a creator and the destroyer of life. Both these works belong to different genres, settings, cultures, etc. but the role of the sea is the same. In both works, the life of the inhabitants is dominated by orthodox beliefs and social taboos. The rising discontentment and revolt among younger ones is an integral part of the works. The writers portray the poor fishermen with their miserable plight and helplessness in improving their lot. They do not have any exposure to the external world and they continue to live in their closed society. The depiction of society with its people and their life style is convincing and natural but both works has its own tragic endings.*

**Keywords:** inhabitants, orthodox, taboos, discontentment

### Introduction

The one-act play "Riders to the Sea" takes place in one of the Aran Islands which lie off the west-coast of Ireland. The scene of the play is set in a cottage situated not far from the sea-shore. Likewise, the novel "Chemmeen" has its setting in the coastal areas of Kerala with tall palm trees and the locale throbs with all types of activities.

### Analysis

The story of the play revolves around the family of Maurya who has lost her husband and her sons to the sea. Her most recent loss has been her son Michael whose body has not yet been recovered. Cathleen and Nora, her two daughters, are concerned for her losses as much as for their sorrow and are afraid to face the finality of Michael's death. When Bartley, the last remaining son of Maurya, is preparing to undertake a journey to stop him and tells: **"If it was a hundred horses or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only."**Maurya warns Bartley to postpone the journey because the weather is bad.

In the same way, the novel "Chemmeen," revolves around the love relationship between Karuthamma and a Muslim boy Pareekutti, trader by profession. Here, the novelist makes extensive use of powerful symbols and allusions like the sea, the moon, beaches, flowers, etc. He presents his characters face to face with the hostile

elements of nature where man is helpless and weak. Moreover, the awful presence of the Goddess Katalamma reigns over the faith of the fishing community.

In both works, the leading characters like Maurya and Karuthamma is a round character who possesses an extraordinary character. Both of them have the qualities of sympathy and understanding which bring them close to the readers. Both know the problems of their environment. Both of their presence in the story keeps the pages warm and they attain the status of a tragic characters. Both realize that fighting against the fate is of no use, and it is an open revolt for their pivotal figure in the narrative of "Riders to the Sea" and "Chemmeen".

In the one-act play, the readers can find a clash between the human will and the merciless sea. It deals with the tension between Maurya and Bartley, Maurya and Cathleen and all are rooted in the sea. The main theme deals with the conflict between the sea and man. The sea is cruel and powerful and the fishermen of Aran Islands are its riders. The sea around the Aran Islands was rough and the boats of the fishermen were weak and so they were easily overturned. Every storm in the sea brought about a death in one house or the other. The young men went to the sea not because they were brave but to win bread for their families. The people calmly submitted themselves to their cruel fate and carried on their work, generation after generation.

It is the sea that shapes the destinies of the people. It directs and molds the lives of the people. It is roaring

outside for its toll of human lives. The people of the island described in the play depend on the sea for all their needs. The sea is all powerful and before it, man is very puny and he loses in the contest and suffers passively. Though the sea causes disasters to man, he never gives up his fight. He is not discouraged. The fight goes on from generation to generation. The man displays his inner strength in his conflict with the sea. He fights to the last heroically.

In the novel "Chemmeen", the fishermen who are ever wedded to the sea. The sea is a perennial source of food for them. It has a sacred presence and every sailor and fishermen must have a bath in the morning before going to the sea. People believe that the prayers of their chaste wives on the seashore can make their safe return possible from the sea, from the violent and cruel heart of the sea. The sea has been personified as a Goddess like Wordsworth's "Stern daughter of God" in "Ode on Duty" or as in Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" which is both the creator and the destroyer. The sea influences the life of the main characters. Their very existence depends upon the sea. They are born near the sea, grow up on its sand and finally become one with the sand. The changing moods of the sea affect the lives of the characters and the sea serves as a symbol the unrelenting fate.

## Conclusion

In both works, the writers portray the struggle and frustration of the fishing community which is highly realistic. Both writers provide an in-depth study of human nature and life. Both present human relationship in their real and true colors. In this sense, the tension and struggle between head and heart in the lives of the character are quite evident. The works deal with the tragedy of the fishing community on a grand scale.

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## FROM AMMU TO AMMA-FIGHT TO THE TOP IN A MAN'S WORLD- DR J JAYALALITHA

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### Abstract

*Success of a woman in politics is always attributed to the support that she gathers from a male, be it her Father or from a Dynasty. To a certain extent, it may be the patriarchal thought that makes a man uncomfortable to compete with a woman. Physical differences in this present world are not at all a reason for discrimination. It is in this context, the word Feminism gathers much importance, and it denotes nothing more than the political, economic and social equality of gender.*

*History gives us a notion that a woman could be successful in political life only with the continued support of a Male or a Dynasty. Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Khalida Zia, Chandrika Kumaratunga are some of the names which go to confirm this thought. It is in this context we find that the life of Jayalalitha rests on a different footing cutting through the settled thoughts of patriarchy. Her journey of life overcoming every obstacles to reach heights in a testosterone filled the political arena to the point wherein the people called her AMMA with much reverence unsettling the gender principles is what is tried to be brought out by this presentation.*

### Introduction

A much-debated word of this century 'Feminism' – A Common man's idea of feminism in a patriarchal society relates to the threat to male dominance, and is considered to be against the guiding principles of existence as defined and followed in a society of patriarchy. It is often misinterpreted as a threat to the settled fabric of a relationship between a man and a women, and to a certain extent considered as a threat to the institution of marriage coupled with the myth of ending up in raising a generation of woman who defies the subservience towards the male counterpart which may all lead to chaos in relationship eventually leading to disharmony and discontent within the family and in effect to the society. This is the notion of a Common man when the word 'Feminism' is brought in for a debate. It is very interesting to check the literal meaning of 'Feminism' within the ambit of rights of a human being. In this context 'Feminism' denotes nothing more than 'political, economic, and social equality of sexes. Physical differences can never be a constraint in deciding the capabilities of sexes, and this is the sole point at which the question of equality of sexes gains strength.

There is a popular notion that a woman without the support of a man cannot reach heights. It is in this perspective the life and journey of J. Jayalalitha is worth an area of study. If we take a few politically successful women of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can easily find that they have succeeded in politics in the Indian sub-

continent to a certain extent only due to the backing of a dynasty. Few names are Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, (Pakistan) Khalida Zia (Bangladesh), Chandrika Kumaratunga (Sri Lanka). All these personalities were either part of a political dynasty, or had the support of members of their family who have headed some political parties in their respective States.

When a woman out of her sheer will, conviction and hard work wins over the hearts of millions of people out from scratch, and that too with the tag of a mistress, to the stature of 'Amma' to millions of Tamils all over the world, it is nothing but her absolute determination in overcoming all obstacles before her, paving her way to heights in a Testosterone filled political arena reaching heights by becoming the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, and that too at the young age of 44. The Life of Jayalalitha travels against the common notion of the public that a woman could be successful in political life only with the continued 'support' of a male, be it her father or to a certain extent her husband. This thought gains much weight considering the stories of successful women political leaders. It is a belief and true to a certain extent that, without the support of their father, or the family they could not succeed in the political sphere of Life. Indira Gandhi is a perfect example of this effect.

## The Early Days

The early days of Jayalalitha, i.e. her childhood, we find that she loses her father Jayaram when she was just about two years old. After the death of her father, her mother Vedavalli who was known as Veda returned to her father's home at Bangalore during 1950. A young widow returning to her parents with two small kids (Jayalalitha and her brother Jayakumar called by the petnames Ammu and Pappu) was the only option left to her. Jayalalitha's grandfather Rengaswamy Iyengar had a modest job at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. Apart from Jayalalitha's mother Veda, Rengaswamy Iyengar had two other daughters namely Ambuja and Padma and a son named Srinivasan. Jayalalitha's mother who was eager to provide for her children, took up a Job at the Income Tax Office so that she could reduce the burden of her father. Being a typical Orthodox Brahmin family, the film field was a forbidden career for the females. Jayalalitha's mother was a beautiful young woman, and her looks were apt for the tinsel world which made the Kannada Film Director/ Producer Kemparaj Urs who spotted her and was struck by her beauty to request to her father for permission to cast her in a movie to be produced by him. The furious father mercilessly sent him away. Jayalalitha's mother's sister Ambuja was considered to be rebel, as she took up the job of an Air hostess against the will of her father, who declared that his daughter was dead. Ambuja moved to Chennai and there she took to acting in films and set up her house at Chennai. Ambuja invited Jayalalitha's mother Vedavalli to move to Chennai so that her children could go to a better school. This offer from Ambuja was considered by Vedavalli as an irresistible one, and thus she moved to Chennai with her children. This, in fact, can be termed as a turning point in Vedavalli's life. Destiny led Vedavalli to take up acting as a career, and from thereon, she turned to be a busy star and she was renamed as Sandhya. Jayalalitha was going through a turbulent period of her childhood, as the mother due to her busy schedule in films was not able to take care of the children and due to the same, she sent them back to Bangalore to her parents. Jayalalitha was admitted to Bishop Cotton School Bangalore where she continued for four years. When things were so, her Aunt Padma who was taking care of Jayalalitha and her brother got married and moved away. Thus the children were again brought back to Chennai. Young Jayalalitha was Jubilant to be back with her mother. By this time Vedavalli @ Sandhya, Jayalalitha's mother had reached heights in her acting career leaving little time

to spend with her children. Young Jaya's longing for the company of her mother never left her. She was enrolled to Church Park Convent in Chennai. Young Jayalalitha was a bright student and was teachers favorite. After school, she longed for her mother's presence and waiting for the mother became a habit to her. She started disliking the film Industry for this reason. Even though Jayalalitha's mother never considered a film career for her daughter, she put her into classical dance, and she blossomed into a good dancer even though she was not to take up dancing seriously. During 1960, for her debut dance performance, being the daughter of a film star, some film dignitaries turned up to see her performance including leading actors, and producers. *"Shivaji Ganeshan the most talented actor of that time presided over the function. He praised Jayalalitha's performance and said she was as lovely as a golden statue. 'I wish that she blossoms into a very popular film star. Jayalalitha and Sandhya were happy with his words but did not take them seriously. Both were determined that Jayalalitha should not join the film world. Nor could Shivaji have imagined that this chit of a girl with 'ladoo cheeks would one day act with him as his heroine.* (P. 10, 11 – Jayalalitha's Journey from movie star to political queen – Amma)

## Life in the Tinsel World

Like it is said that fate and destiny cannot be predicted, even though young Jayalalitha was keen to have her college education, she had already plunged into the world of Cinema. By this time she got herself busy with films and even though she got admission in Stella Maris, she got out of the college the very first day, as she realized that it was not possible for her to take up both studies and to act together. Within no time she rose to stardom and all the controversies attached to stardom also followed. Her statement that she grave to 'film news' (film magazine) that she was a Tamilian angered the Kannadigas since she belonged to Mandiam Iyengar community hailing from Karnataka. This boiled into a controversy between the Tamils and the Kannadigas. Her heroine role opposite to M.G Ramachandran (MGR) in Aayirathil Oruvan, astonished MGR to see a school girl to be his co-star, and her subsequent on-screen chemistry with MGR led to off-screen relationship with him. MGR was in his early fifties and Jayalalitha in her teens. At that point in time, there was even a saying in the film Industry that there was a need to protect MGR from an 'evil' called Jayalalitha. Jayalalitha was just 23 when her mother

passed away. She was left alone and orphaned at the tender age of 23. The presence of MGR and his concern for her well being touched her deeply. MGR stepped in to fill the void in her life. MGR openly demonstrated that he had a soft corner for Jayalalitha. Even though antipathy grew from certain quarters of the political and film world over the relationship between MGR and Jayalalitha, *"She was not flirtatious or pushy in her behavior towards MGR or any producer. She was very disciplined and maintained her dignity"* (Page 24 – Jayalalitha's Journey from Movie star to political Queen Amma). *The relationship between MGR and Jayalalitha "appear too convoluted for any straight forward analysis. She had said in an interview when asked if she fell in love with him, 'I think everyone who met him fell in love with him. He was a charismatic figure"* (Page 154 -MGR A Life – R. Kannan). The 1960s and 1970s saw some successful films with Jayalalitha playing lead with MGR. The pair acted in 28 films, all of them were box office hits from 1965 to 1973.

### The Political Sphere

Even though Jayalalitha had an illustrious film career, it was not a career that she had with a full heart opted for. This brewing thought in her grew bounds after the death of her mother at a very young age. Life in the film Industry gave her glamour but under the wings of her mother she could not build up simple life skills. She once conceded that she found very over burdened with basic life skills since everything was taken care of by her mother. She disclosed that she didn't know anything about running a house, didn't know to operate a bank account, or to write a cheque, didn't know the number of servants they had or about their salaries, or her pay in cinema. She found herself to be vulnerable. She could find that her vulnerable position was taken advantage of, but she was strong enough to learn everything the hard way. This strength in her stood as the foundation to fight against all odds to reach the heights in her political career. Jayalalitha, in fact, had no godfather who pushed her to the top level of Tamil Nadu Politics, nor was she considered as a successor to her mentor MGR. The growth of MGR as the top political leader of Tamil Nadu had its base of his charming roles as a hero in Tamil Cinema. His political growth had its direct links to the roles played by him in cinema. Even though Jayalalitha's political career had its birth due to her companionship with MGR, it was probably her boldness, defiant attitude and her strong mind in giving her best at whatever she did took her to the heights of

political life. During 1982 she Joined AIADMK, and by 1984 she was elected as a member of Rajya Sabha. Jayalalitha always had a priority for women empowerment. It is quite interesting to note that her first speech in Rajya Sabha was on women titled 'Pennin Perumai' (Greatness of Women). Her political growth was not at all received well within the party dominated by men. MGR's illness was capitalized by her opponents in the party to sideline Jayalalitha. But this did not prevent her from bouncing back from setbacks. In an interview given to Ms. Simi Garewal, she clarifies that the greatest political battle she fought and won was after MGR passed away. In the interview she clarifies with equal charm and poise thus *"As long as MGR was there, he was the leader and I had to just follow his instructions. After his death, I had to fend for myself. I was left alone and he didn't smoothen the way for me to become his successor. Not like what Mrs. Indira Gandhi did for Rajiv Gandhi. She groomed him and paved the way so that he could take over smoothly as her successor. Now, if you look at all the woman leaders who have made it to the top in Asia, they were all either daughters, wives or widows of former prime ministers or presidents; because if you are a wife so much respect is automatically given to you, people talk about you, refer to you with respect. But, such wasn't the case for me. Though Mr. MGR introduced me to the politics, certainly didn't smoothen the way for me. He didn't make anything easy for me. I had to fight and struggle my way up. Every inch of the way."* (P. 47 and 48 – Jayalalitha, A Tale of Two Births – Bina Biswas).

It is absolutely a formidable task to grow against all odds from the tagline of a mistress of MGR as she was then considered. From this tag of a mistress of MGR, her growth in politics was phenomenal. Jayalalitha as a seasoned politician gathered more respect than many of the Dravidian male politicians. The worst scornful abuse meted out to her in life was her banishment from the funeral procession of MGR. She was hit and pushed out from the procession, was not allowed to place a wreath on MGR's body, and she had to go back home injured physically and mentally. She had to face so much vilification and slander. She probably reached the dead end in her life and career as her mentor had finally gone and was left to take nasty verbal abuse from different quarters. She always had an inner strength embedded in her which helped her to rise like a phoenix bird from every setback. Her repertoire of over one hundred films as a leading actor helped her enormously as she was already a

household name in Tamil Nadu before she joined politics. From the initial days of her political career, her growth to the stature of Amma was remarkable. She had her ups and downs in her political career, but by the latter part of her tenure as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, she turned out to be a renowned figure to the Tamil people all over the world.

Jayalalitha was always committed to the women community of Tamil Nadu, her projects catered to the women of Tamil Nadu. She framed a 13- point action plan for women including an announcement of series of steps to check and tackle cases of sexual crimes against women. The Jayalalitha government was the first to introduce police stations operated by women. India's first company of female police commandos was set up in Tamil Nadu in her time. She also introduced thirty percent reservation for women in all police jobs and established as many as fifty-seven all women police stations. Her projects always had a feminist touch and major concerns were given for empowerment of women. Her victory over the masses would have made many a leaders envious. She had a vision and it was to ensure Tamil Nadu become India's most prosperous and progressive state with no poverty, and where its people enjoy all the basic services of modern society and live in a harmonious engagement with the environment and with the rest of the world.

## Conclusion

From Ammu to Amma; the most revered of political figures in the history of Tamil Nadu, rising from the tag of a mistress to the stature of Amma, overcoming all the obstacles in her political career, overpowering almost all her male political opponents, securing the warmth of the people of Tamil Nadu to call her Amma with her sheer commitment and concern for the people; from facing disgusting outbursts from her political opponents acquiring the image immune to all criticism, and her growth to a larger than life image without any political legacy attached to her by cutting through the prevalence of patriarchy by upholding dignity and integrity was quite unparalleled. Her life is an inspiration to many a woman to fight and succeed in life and for creating an equal space for women in all walks of life be it Profession, Politics, Arts, or Literature and culture. Jayalalitha has shown her strength in being a woman. She never considered herself as weak or conceded to the thought that women were unequal to man. As it is said by Mahatma Gandhi *"To call woman the*

*weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then women are immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be - If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?"*

**(To the woman of India (Young India, Oct – 4, 1930/ - Mahatma Gandhi)**

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## MENTAL TRAUMA AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN *THAT LONG SILENCE AND THE BINDING VINE*

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### Abstract

Shashi Deshpande writes about women's role under different banners of motherhood, wifehood and daughterhood as prescribed by the patriarchal society. A woman is never considered an individual who has her own identity. The non-recognition of their identity, gender discrimination, psychological suppression and sexual oppression are some of the many factors that eventually develop a state of mental trauma in women which they silently suffer from the widespread awareness about women's education, more and more women have started to assert their identity in all sphere of life.

The quest for identity is the recurrent issue raised by Shashi Deshpande in her novels. She writes about the conflict between tradition and modernity. A woman's desire, efforts and failures in traditional Indian society are modal points of her novel. Modern women novelists, around the world, have presented the fair sense aspiring for the quest for their identity. Though, Indian women are most starved as far as their identity is concerned. They, in reality, face stress, insult and injuries in matters of security, sexual harassment and gender discrimination. She often keeps the exploitation matters within herself, for fear of 'public disgrace'. But, life is always in state of flux. Things have changed a lot with the advent of feminist movement all across the world and will become better in the future. Feminist movement has brought forth the idea of liberating women who have eventually started fighting against anthropocentric biased norms.

**Keywords:** Non-recognition, Identity, Discrimination, patriarchy

The institution of marriage in India provides husband a superior position and the wife is relegated to position of housekeeper even if she is working. Sometimes this unequal treatment sows the seed of psychological distress and makes women mentally unhappy. Mental trauma can spring from anything that negates or crushes the identity of a person. It can be rape, molestation, child abuse or even non-recognition. Exclusion is the root cause of such kind of situation. Marriage is one such sphere where women keep on living with a person even if she is unhappy without uttering a single word, for social stigma is attached to a forlorn woman.

Jaya in *That Long Silence* is the daughter of an unconventional family, brought up differently. Her marriage with traditional Mohan leads to the clash of expectations. The tag of the wife starts irking Jaya. When Jaya repulsed with the odour of oil asks Mohan to cook during her pregnancy, he tries to laugh it off and Jaya responds in a bad temper. Mohan shocked at her display of anger says:

"How could you? I never thought my wife could say such things to me You're my wife[...]"

She decides to submissively be only Mohan's life shedding off her individuality. She feels that there lay "if not happiness, at least consciousness of, doing, right

freedom from guilt". Jaya's prolonged adjustments and compromises create a gulf of silence between Mohan and her. But continuous suppression and self-abnegation make her neurotic at the end of the novel. Sumitra Kukreti aptly explains traumatically condition that "neuroses is caused by bottled up feelings because when people repress their feelings, they repress their memories and traumatic experiences." Jaya did exactly same by making herself silent about her feelings, likes and identity.

Mohan's mother faces severe mental trauma when she is expected to bear her sixth child. Going through the drudgery of household chores, she becomes neurotic and tries to kill the child by beating her abdomen, and she has no control over her body. The pleasure of her husband makes her bear child after child making her weak and vulnerable. But this time she tries to get it aborted and dies. But no one has empathy towards her pain and trauma. Surprisingly, her silent sufferings are covered up under the guise of her wrong act of abortion. She just becomes a commodity at the hands of her husband and dies a painful death. A man and a woman's perception is extremely different, for man does not feel the psychological stress of a woman. Mohan and Jaya have the different outlook on her mother's life as "He[Mohan] saw strength in

the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair" Mohan's mother identity is mercilessly crushed by her husband through sexual act leading her to the pitiable condition.

Urmi, lecturer in a college, in *The Binding Vine* marries Kishore against her parents' wishes since the beginning she feels a distance in their relationship as "he looked trapped" on their wedding night. Kishore is an archetypal Indian husband who flings in her life only for a month in a year. Her ordeal with lonely life becomes more difficult after her daughter Anu's death. Urmi copes with the pain of a dead daughter alone, as Kishore goes back to his normal life on ship in the sea. But Urmi introspects her childhood memories to escape the traumatic loss in her life.

Coping with the loss of her daughter, Urmi stumbles over the diaries of Mira her dead mother-in-law. She senses suffocation of Mira like a "message tapped on the wall by the prisoner in the next cell." Mira's and scrambled personal accounts reflect her disgust at forced sexual activity. She stands as a classic example of the multitude of unfortunate women who are forced into loveless marriage. Her fear of marriage and the right it grants to a man over a woman's body find expression in her poems. Her refusal to love making doesn't affect him as she writes:

"I have learned to say 'no' at last, but it makes no difference no difference at all."

Shashi Deshpande criticizes the tradition that dictates that the husband has right to satisfy his biological needs irrespective of wife's willingness. A woman's body is her property and she should have autonomy over her body. As a man has the right to express his desires and uses her for his pleasure a woman should also learn to take her own decisions.

The untold experience of Mira's life revealed in her poems disturbs Urmi who identifies Mira's story with that of Kalpana, a young and attractive girl who becomes the victim of her uncle Prabhakar's lust, Prabhakar's wife Sulu is trapped in an unhappy marriage, but doesn't dare share trauma of her life with anyone. He refuses to touch her because of white spots on her body and desires for Kaplana. The so-called security of marriage makes Sulu compromise with the situation and agrees to get Kalpana married to her husband, When Kalpana rejects his offer of marriage, Prabhakar is not deterred and brutally rapes her. Ironically, Kalpana hints at her mental agony by her actions, but goes unnoticed by her mother as tantrums of a young girl.

John Stuart Mill argues that contemporary women are little better off than slaves and predicts new avenues of freedom and opportunity. Sarah Grimke feels "human rights are not based on sex, colour, capacity or condition..... only despots will deny woman that supreme sovereignty over her own person and conduct which law concedes to man" Grimke and Mills' views were contrary to the notions prevalent in the society then. But, a structure of marriage remains unchallenged and unquestioned till date. Sadly things have not much changed in countries like India, and women are struggling to assert their individuality and overcome their silent sufferings. She can't revolt in an organized way like other 'have-nots'. Modern Indian women have strong affinity for tradition but a stronger quest for identity.

The quest for identity is an integral part of Shashi Deshpande's novels. Woman is presented as subordinate in family and needs someone to support her, be it her father, brother or husband. Jaya soon after getting married to Mohan changes from voracious woman to a soft smiling, placid, motherly woman. Over the years, in her seventeen year marriage, she shapes herself so much according to his (Mohan) desires that in the end she is left with no identity of her own goes her promising career of a writer goes into jeopardy when Mohan funds exhibiting their story as "To Mohan, I had been no writer, only an exhibitionist." Afraid of offending Mohan Jaya starts writing under pseudonym Seeta. Her writing lacks the intensity of expression which troubles her. Kamat analyses her stories objectively, tells that she is negating herself by sticking to wrong sentimental notions. "Women are the victims." She as 'Seeta' slid herself into non-recognition of real Jaya as she felt:

"That column, yes, it had made me known. My profile silhouetted in stark black that accompanies each article frightened me each time I say it. It was like seeing someone masquerading the woman who wrote that column."

In an endeavour to make her own identity she loses it and makes herself feel happy as Mohan's wife and Rati and Rahul's mother.

Jaya, stranded by Mohan in Dadar flat becomes hysterical and identifies herself with mentally challenged Kusum who is also deserted by her husband. When unable to bear Mohan's accusation, She breaks her silence and points out that her writing career did not bloom because of him. She revolts and breaks into hysterical laughter and Mohan leaves her alone at Dadar flat.

Renaming the new bride is quite common in India. It shows how a woman loses her identity after marriage. Urmila in *The Binding Vine* comes to know from her dead mother-in-law Mira's diaries. Like Jaya in *That Long Silence*, Mira too resents the new name given to her at the marriage which is a direct attack on her identity. He displays Chauvinist attitude towards women when dismisses Mira's poem by saying that she gave birth to children is her poetry, restrict to that. While Venu is admired and sung everywhere, Mira's talent is nipped in the bud. Mira's interaction with the astrologer makes it evident that her identity is no more her identity, it is the shadow of her family.

Urmila realizes that every woman whether illiterate-Sulu, Shakutai or educated Mira, Akka or Vanaa, all face a situation of fractured identity after marriage. Their identity is engulfed by the identity of the family and on the other hand, Kalpana keen on making her identity is brutally raped. Deshpande opposes the culture in which female desires, dreams and identity are crushed by fundamental patriarchs.

Helen Cixous while analyzing man-made binaries questions "where is she?" in her essay 'Sorties' proposes that binaries are spread in all metaphors of representation. All masculine metaphors indicate activeness. Binaries have been used to systematize the discourse. But, binary works only when we use language and it ends when language ends. For instance, display of anger closes not need language, it reflects in eyes. Thus no binary needed. So binary system is a problem of logo centric approach to language. The 'Family Tree' episode in *That Long silence* reflects this non-existence of woman's individuality in the eyes of patriarch. Helen Cixous puts forth it perfectly:

"Every time the question comes up; when we examine kinship structures; Whenever a family model is brought into play; in fact as soon as the ontological question is raised; as soon as you ask yourself what is meant by the question 'What is it?'; as soon as there is will to say something A will: desire, authority, you examine that, for and you are led right back- to the father. you can even fail to notice that there's no place at all for women in operation!"

Hierarchy is a concept which is observed in all spheres of life, politics business or society Indian societal norms don't place a woman in the hierarchy of family. In *That Long silence*, Ramukaka prepares a family tree in which he places all the male members of the family from great great grandfather to the little boys of the family not

giving place to even single woman of the family. When it comes to representation of family, It is only men blotting out women altogether. Jaya who is born and brought up there excitedly looks for her place but finds no place for her. On asking, irritatingly Ramukaka explains:

: How can you be here? You don't belong to this family? You're married, you're now part of Mohan's family. You have no place here."

A woman's contribution, love and sacrifice is not duly recognized, for she is not considered a family member leaving Jaya for her being married to Mohan, even Kakis and Jaya's Ai is not given place in the family tree. The identity of a woman is crushed into pieces like a broken mirror as this is not acknowledging even their existence. Our society merges identity of a wife into her husband who represents them everywhere. She only has to be behind him submissively like a shadow.

All the female characters in *The Binding Vine* and *That Long silence* show some virtues which are thought to be feminine like patience, endurance, adaptability, silence, sympathy and docility. Jaya is always docile and innocent before Mohan as a wife is expected to be. Urmila also realizes that Mira, Sulu, Vanaa and Inni have also suppressed themselves in the guise of their virtues. What seems to be the basis of a happy and stable relationship becomes cause of their colonization, marginalization, inferiorization and commoditization. They become commodities and non-salaried maintenance workers for their husbands who use them for maintaining house, children and their sexual gratification. Their contributions are taken for granted and their jobs are not acknowledged. They are marginalized and inferiorized in the sense that their wishes, desires and thoughts are viewed secondary to that of the 'man' of the house. Jaya and Urmila self-realize in the end that they need to be more vocal and do not let other crush their identity, but within the family parameters. So post modern women need to be more calculated and patient. Situation should be handled with dexterity and care so that the purpose is solved without making much chaos.

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## THE SPEAKING TREE OF PANCHATANTRA

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### Abstract

Does tree really speak? In that case, the tree of Panchatantra does, as it narrates tales in a tale. Everyone loves to listen to stories, for it conveys information, knowledge and emotion. Children are no exception; Stories are their favorites, be it Indian comic books on Tenali Rama, Akbar Birbal or Spiderman and Superman in English. One of the oldest collection of Fables Panchatantra was composed by Vishnu Sharma into an entertaining five-part work to communicate the essence of diplomacy, relationships, politics and administration. The five discourses — titled "The Loss of Friends," "The winning of friends," "Of Crows and Owls," "Loss of Gains" and "Imprudence" — became the Panchatantra, meaning the five (Pancha) treatises (tantra). It was originally written in Sanskrit in 3rd Century BCE and later on translated into many languages which also includes the English one known as 'The Moral Philosophy of Doni', published in 1570. The present paper will be focused on the relevance of Children's Literature and the significance of story telling in the one's life. It is a herculean task to make people understand and accept realities of life in prosaic words or action. The story telling delivered through interesting and effective ways invoke distinct layers of feelings and responses among readers. In the present digital age where humans are absorbed into the sea of complex mechanisms, Panchatantra could be a light means to make lives more meaningful and happier.

**Keywords:** Children, Wisdom, Panchatantra, Friends, Life.

### Introductions

The word 'Story' brings a smile on a dull face, enlightens a group of bored students and infuses excitement and enthusiasm within any human being (of course with a heart !). Story telling is an act of engrossing, involving and experiencing something new during the course of its narration. Listeners are even more interested to lend their ears, mind, and heart to those precious moments where they will be discovering, living and learning new vistas of life. Children are very fond of listening stories. Stories narrated by their Grand parents, parents and even teachers in classes make them happy. It is a pleasure they derive from a created world of human emotions. Today, it is rare to see children enjoying the process of reading or listening stories. The intrusion of technology has completely influenced their lives and made them prone to be dependent on a virtual world for their entertainment and knowledge. The atmosphere where they are growing and live in, leaves an impact on their learning which is seen and felt in their social interactions. The role of Children's Literature becomes very vital in shaping the minds and offering insights into life. The existence of Children's Literature can be traced to centuries ago even before the concept of published books existed. Thousands of years ago, when Vishnu Sharma penned some beautiful

fables The Loss of Friends or Mirabella, The Winning of Friends or Mitrasamprapti, Of Crows and Owls or Kakolookiyam, The Loss of Gains or Labdhapranasha and Ill-Considered Action or Aprikshitakaraka.— it became the Panchatantra, meaning the five (Pancha) treatises (tantra). This collection of Fables was originally written in Sanskrit in 3rd Century BCE and later on translated into many languages.

Origin Of Panchatantra: Going into the context of how it all started, There was a ruler named Amarasakti from Mahilaropyam, a state in Tamil Nadu. His three sons were the cause of endless worries because of their disinterestedness and attitude towards life. He called for a meeting with all his ministers asking them to give a solution for this problem. They suggested the name of Vishnu Sharman, a renowned scholar to the king. He was called by him immediately, and the king requested him to transform his sons into great scholars. He offered in return the lordship of 100 villages to Vishnu Sharman. The Scholar replied "Oh, king, listen to my pledge. A hundred villages do not tempt me to vend learning. Count six months from today. If I do not make your children great scholars, you can ask me to change my name." Such was the confidence and trust this Scholar had in his learning. He took all three sons to the monastery and taught them

the five strategies (Panchatantra). As promised, within six months he completed his task successfully. From then on, it became popular all over the world and was considered as a prescription or a guide to solve the problems of life.

The first strategy: "Loss of Friends" (Mitrabedha)- It's a dialogue between two jackals named Karnataka and Damanaka. Long ago, there lived a merchant who thought money is the greatest possession in life. He sets out on an auspicious day to Madhura in search of markets for his goods. On the way, his one bullock Sanjeevaka collapsed. He left him in the jungle asking his servants to look after him. They too left him immediately and informed their master about Sanjeevaka's death. As God willing, he was still alive and gradually regained his strength with time. There was a lion in that jungle named Pingalaka, who got scared after he heard the frightening sound of the bullock. Sensing the predicament of Lion, the two jackals who were the sons of two dismissed ministers by the King Lion were discussing about it. "Why should we poke our nose into affairs that are not our concern? Haven't you heard the story of the monkey which pulled out the wedge from the log," asked Karnataka. Then, he started telling the story of a 'Monkey and the Wedge'. A merchant was building the temple. During the break some monkeys landed at the site and began playing. One monkey saw a partly sawed log of wood and a wedge fixed in it. Out of his curiosity he started tugging the wedge furiously. The wedge came off and the monkey unable to get his legs out of the wood died. Therefore he advised not to interfere in other matters, be it a king. But Damanaka retorted, "Food is not the center of our life. ...There are hundred ways of collecting food. What matters is a life full of learning, courage and wealth. If living somehow is the goal, even the crow lives long eating leftovers." What matters is the attitude whether you want to help someone in crisis or be a mute spectator. You cannot blame the situation or give excuse for each and everything that you cannot do. Damanaka decided to help the king. Karnataka leaves him. The friendship broke.

The King was scared of the sounds he heard, at this, Damanaka told him the story of 'The Jackal and the Drum' where a hungry Jackal in search of food heard some drums sound. Thinking that some humans are playing it, he got terrified. But then, after a while he told himself, "I must not run away like that. Let me find out what really the sounds are and who is making them because whether it is fear or happiness one must know its cause. Such a person will never regret his actions. So, let me first look for the source

of these noises." How true these lines are...Without even knowing the reason, humans are prone to decide actions. It is significant to know the truth hiding behind the curtains. The King allowed Damanaka to go and find out the reason for those sounds. After he left, the King was apprehensive about his decision as he did not have any trust on the son (Damanaka) of a dismissed minister. Finally, he wins the trust of the King by talking to Bullock and bringing him to the King.

One story leads to another. In 'Loss of Friends' the writer has penned 30 stories one after the other to describe, delineate and discuss different colours of life. Without preaching moral values directly, he did it in an interesting manner through the medium of stories. Finally this first book ends with Damanaka re-appointed as the minister by the King. If there is no trust and understanding in a friendship, that is not being friends at all.

The second strategy "The Winning of Friends" or Mitrasmprapti, starts with a verse by Vishnu Sharma, "Even without the wherewithal, Learned men and intellectuals, Achieve what they want like, The crow, the rat, the deer, and the turtle."

It's a story of crows and doves, how they all got caught in a net spread by a hunter. They all go to a rat, who was the friend of King of Doves. As he saw, "the rat set out to free Chitraviva first. But the king of doves pleaded with him to first liberate his friends. They are all dedicated to my service and have left their families behind to come with me. I have to repay that debt," he said.

"Whatever man does for whatever reasons, in whatever manner and wherever in his last birth. He reaps the consequences for the same reasons, in the same manner and in the same place." These are the words of true management wisdom which is applicable and to be implemented by the administrators and employers, to put in contemporary scenario. The mutual understanding and a sense of trust among them is a vital one to sustain and long healthy relationship. Through this story the writer has conveyed this beautiful message of cooperation and support.

It again leads to few stories like 'The Crow rat discourse' and 'Meeting a New Friend' emphasizing the fact of true Friendship which is based on Love, Understanding and support to each other irrespective of their differences of opinions. A true friend a gem to find, and if you have one, do not lose it.

The third strategy "Of Crows and Owls" or Kakolookiyam begins with a verse, "

Trust not even a close friend, Who earlier was your enemy. This is the story of how the crows burnt the home of a trusting pack of owls."

In Mahilaropya, there was a huge banyan tree, which was the home for all the crows. An evil Owl 'Arimardana' on account of the previous enmity killed every night any crow he sighted outside the tree. Slowly, the owl king managed to kill all crows that could be seen outside the tree. The King of the crows, Meghavarna called for a meeting with ministers to find a solution.

Some said " Never accept Peace with an enemy, who is not just for, he will break his word and stab you in the back". It depends on the situations, perceptions and experiences of different people. *Meghavarna turned to the wisest and senior most among his counsels, Sthirajeevi, and asked him for his advice. He suggested to send spies and gather information. Then again it leads to few stories like "Elephants and Hares" and "The Cunning mediator" and finally he won over his enemies. Then, the king of crows said, "What you have said is correct. Great men do not give up what they have begun even in the face of obstacles. Cowards, afraid of failure, do not venture at all. There are some that begin a task and give it up when there is a problem. But courageous people do not give up whatever dangers they face." The learned have said, "It is dangerous to leave A fire un extinguished, A debt unredeemed An enemy uncrushed and A disease untreated." The never give up attitude ensures success despite all the odds and resistance. To go where many do not even think of going will give a greater output of results. To come out of your comfort zone and shifting into the learning one will make all the difference. There should be no option to quit whatever it takes. Never succumb to defeat in adverse circumstances as there is a light at the end of every tunnel.*

The fourth strategy " Loss of Gains" or Labdhapranasha starts with a verse :

"He overcomes all problems, Who does not lose his cool Even in the face of adversity, Like the monkey in the water."

Once upon a time there lived a monkey named Raktamukha on a tree(Blackberry loaded with fruits) near the coast. One day, a crocodile named Karalamukha was loitering in the sand out of water, came and saw the monkey. They became friends. Crocodile wife asked him to get the heart of the monkey. He tried to convince his wife but of no avail. He invited monkey for the dinner and asked him to sit on his back to carry him to their home.

Thinking that the monkey was his prisoner now, he said, "My wife wanted me to create trust in you first and persuade you to accept our invitation and then kill you so that we may have the good fortune of feasting on your heart." With great presence of mind, the monkey said "My heart is safely stored in the burrow of the tree. What is the use of your taking me home without my heart? Let us go back. On reaching the shore, The monkey immediately leapt to the top of the blackberry tree and ridiculed him for being so ungrateful.

"There is no true happiness in, What you get without effort. Even an old bullock survives, On food that comes his way."With this lesson, the story ends here. Why everyone look for the grades and position, but not appreciate the efforts put forth in reaching the goal. The journey is more important than the destination.

The fifth and the Last strategy III -Considered Actions" or *Aprikshitakaraka*. The story is about Manibhadra who lost all his wealth and made him sad and suicidal. In his dream a Jain monk appeared in his dream and said, "O merchant, don't give in to self-pity. I am Padmanidhi, the treasure collected by your ancestors. Tomorrow morning when I will visit you in this guise, you will hit my head with a stick, and I will turn into gold."Next day when the same thing happened in reality, he thought of killing all the monks. He requested all to come and give him blessings. They accepted the invite and were brutally killed by him. He was finally impaled by the judge for his cruel deed and obnoxious desire.

The author Vishnu Sharman narrated few more tales like 'The four learned fools' and 'The Musical Donkey' and ended Panchatantra stressing on the importance of values and ethics in our lives. Being ambitious is not wrong but compromising one's morality is nowhere acceptable. After that, the guilt will never allow a peaceful sleep. Stories create a sense of wonder and imparts knowledge through the medium of entertainment. Whether it is cultural acceptance or the sense of tolerance, the fabric of tales woven together delight and teach. It is imperative to promote the experience of story telling to enable people to empathise with unfamiliar situations. The formative years of any child are the most crucial one, the bond that they share with their near and dear ones or their initial learning experience. The joy of reading and listening stories in this highly addictive digitalized world is a soothing and rejuvenating exercise for children to understand the significance of life portrayed in various colours of emotions. It helps in developing emotional intelligence,

fosters personality and social skills. For every individual it is pivotal to dive in children's literature and imbibe positivity, cultivate acceptance and tolerance. The Speaking tree of Panchatantra embroidered with tales in a tale delivers optimism, innocence, knowledge and wisdom to be cherished, shared and valued.

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## THE PREDICAMENT OF WOMEN IN THE NOVELS OF SHOBHA DE

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### Abstract

Shobha De as a writer tries to mirror or portray her feminist while portraying women in her novels. A broader evaluation of her work reveals her protest against the good old image of women who can 'live the way she wants to and do things the way she wants to. Women in her novels are represented as sexually liberated and free thinkers who have been termed as "New Woman" These so called new mothers. All her heroines, be it Karuna, Aparna, Mikki, Alisha or Asha Rani are rebellious modern Indian women who challenge the orthodoxy of social taboos. They are different from the sexually ignorant Indian woman who is quite contradictory to most Indian male writers who feel that sex is as unpleasant subjection to man's desire – necessary in order to have offspring, Shobha De's women challenge this traditional set up in the society. Her women are far more assertive, domineering and bold in comparison to men. They are not submissive and guilty of their affairs.

**Keywords:** Women, emancipation, culture, male domination subjugation victimized.

### Introduction

Secondary status in a male – dominated Indian society, that is conservative. The central theme, therefore, is the emergence of "New woman" in the fast-changing social milieu. Shobha De's novels are a slice of urban life. In her novels, she realistically presents an intimate side of an urban woman's life and also reveals her plight in the present day society. It is a fact that woman is victimized and subjugated by the male community everywhere. She has been the subordinate sex and has to conform to male standards. In most of her novels, Shobha De has focused on the marginalization of women in Indian society. She draws our attention to women's exploitation, discrimination, and commodification. The women are treated with the double standard. Subjugation and marginalization are the vital factors. In their lives. They are never regarded as autonomous beings.

### Women In Shobha De's Novels

Karuna, the protagonist of *Socialite Evenings*, is the perfect example of the misery of women in India. She suffers due to the callous and non-responsive attitude of her husband. Her husband treats her as a mere object subjected to his will as a result there is a complete loss of her identity. Similarly, Anjali, a young socialite, also suffers much because of her incompatible marriage and her husband's oppressive attitude. Here, in presenting the picture of subordination and marginalization of Indian

women, Shobha De's attack is not against the individuals. It is against the system that favors men and causes women's subjugation and marginalization. In *Starry Nights* Shobha De has projected the shattering of human values in this glittering world of Mumbai cinema through the realistic portrayal of Aasha Rani, Geetha Devi, Malini and Rita. The other important aspect which Shobha De highlights in this and other novels is a woman's role in the oppression and suffering of her fellow woman. In our society, women ill-treat and exploit women instead of showing love, respect, and understanding of their own sex.

Sujata, in *Sultry Days* (1994) is a prostitute, who does what her mind says. This gives her pleasure. Life is defined on her own her own terms. When Asha Rani, in *Starry Nights* (1991) the famous heroine of Bollywood decides to quit films all of a sudden when she is at the peak of her career just to live with a fellow co star, Akshay Arora, her mother tries to dissuade her from doing it. Then she argues in this way in "Money, money, money. That's all you think of. Well, I'm fed up being your money machine. I've done enough for everybody you, Sudha and others now I want to live for myself (106) Asha Rani designs herself a code of conduct for herself which is free from the prescribed gender rules and sexual constraints. This shows clearly that women in Shobha De's novels can't always be taken for granted that they will be the dutiful and self-sacrificing daughter to their parents. They will certainly revolt when their self-interest is at stake. They

may face hurdles, but they are smart enough to ignore them and break these hurdles very skillfully and tactfully and emerge out of it comfortably. The novelist has portrayed her women characters in such a way that the readers get a clear picture of her intentions. She has tried her best to expose the normal and spiritual break down of the society which she thinks is in a helpless state. Therefore she has understood the human psyche which has made her take a thorough look at the age old customs which bars a woman from doing certain things which she likes to do but is unable to because of the rigid bonds she is bounded with. Women in upper class society have no concern about the public. The concept of morality arising out of love for the same person is considered to be outdated. The women in Shobha De's novels believe in the pleasure of enjoying life with pre-marital affairs and extra-marital affairs and breaking the age-old traditions.

As a matter of fact, Shobha De brings out the universal psychological truth that the woman is the enemy of the woman. In sisters Mikki Hiralal is oppressed, subjugated and exploited by Binny Malhotra, a true representative of patriarchal system.

The novel *Strange Obsession* revolves around the lesbian relationship between Meenakshi Iyengar called 'Minx' and Amrita, the model from Delhi.

This novel deals more with how one woman subjugates the other woman than the subjugation of women by men; Sultry Days has a male protagonist, God who says to Nisha that "one bitch is as good as another" (252). His attitude towards girls is – "use them and leave them". Such attitude of men towards women clearly shows the miserable plight and marginalization of women in our society. In Snapshots, the women turn into the useful plaything for men in patriarchal society. The ruling ideology that favors men prompts these women to fall prey to the designs of men. All the men presented in the novel are tyrants whereas the women-Aparna, Rashmi, Swati and Noor are all victims of male tyranny. Finally, the novel second Thoughts is a sad tale of Maya, an oppressed wife. She suffers from marital disharmony because her husband Ranjan considers woman as a mere object. Though an engineer, Maya is not allowed to take up even a part-time job, instead, her husband, again and again, reminds her of 'tradition'. Is it due to Ranjan's traditional attitude and feeling of superiority, Maya feels herself trapped in a neglected and meaningless life.

## Conclusion

But whatever Shobha's views may be true in the context of an urban area and in high profile life but it is unusual in the rural area and the middle-class families. It may be true that she has depicted the feelings of urban women authentically and open mindedly, the subject on which Indian woman does not dare even to speak. It's a matter of controlling our instinct to some extent. Yes, in some cases we heard that women leave her husband if she found him not manly. But leaving with husband and keeping the extramarital relationship is not allowed in majoring of classes and against our culture. Yes, she can leave her husband on that basis and remarry. It is justified. She is an idol of sacrifice after all, but by doing so, she can make a balance between two. Satisfying her natural instincts and remain sacred and maintain her real womanhood.

As we have to maintain our culture and in that case also again it is the responsibility of women just as family and maintaining its values is her responsibility. India is different from the European country in case of its culture. Maintaining this age-old and everlasting culture of sanctity of marriage, Shobha's solution to the emancipation of woman does not reconcile with Indian Culture.

Being a woman, De is more interested in the predicaments of women. She presents the vital reality and makes us aware of the miseries of women and injustices done to them by their counterparts in the patriarchal society. However, it is an important fact that though De's novels are crowded with female characters, the analysis of the novels reveals her focus is only on the women protagonists, and the other secondary characters are simply mentioned. Furthermore, her novels move around only the metropolitan women whereas rural women do not find the place in her novels. They are totally ignored. Shobha De, restricts her characters to the urban area, ignoring the life of ordinary, illiterate and rural Indian Women.

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## WOMEN AND THE QUESTION OF SPACE IN ACHEBE'S *NO LONGER AT EASE*

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### Abstract

Women in literature have been indulging in both physical and psychological battles to establish a 'space' for their own since times immemorial. They are seen in male texts as stereotypes of a passive good woman or a whore. This paper is an attempt to trace the in-between 'real' woman who is neither passive nor a seductress. The predicament of the women in African society is worse about their self-representation and self-assertion. The African patriarchal system and the colonial ethos have contributed a lot to the marginalization of African women in the political, social and economic sphere of life.

Moreover, the taboos associated with the womenfolk add to their pathetic situation. The tendency of a woman to move towards the center owes a lot to her education and profession. From the traditional role of a wife or a mother in charge of the domestic chores of the household, women strive to create a space for herself in the public arena too. It is the purpose of this paper to trace the social and political location of these women and depict their journey from the periphery of society towards the center. Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* casts certain women who attempt to establish a space of their own, but whose efforts are condoned by the patriarchal structure which constitutes the male protagonist and the male author.

**Keywords:** African women, space, transition, self-representation, women's education, taboos

### Introduction

The woman has been the "most discussed animal" in the universe, says Virginia Woolf. (13) The transformation of a woman from an 'animal' to a human requires a certain agenda, though abstract. This transformation necessitates a search for 'space' to define herself as a complete human being with an identity of her own. When Udumukwu Onyemaechi says about the position of women that women have been transformed "from victims of a society regulated by patriarchal norms and values to independent, politically conscious and self-assertive women" (1), he has omitted the women who serve as the changing group. Characters are simply creations of the male writer, but sometimes the creations themselves overpower the writer that it becomes necessary for the writer to do away with his creation. This is what happens to the changing women in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960). However, these women succeed in locating a space of their own in the course of the novel. Certain women in the novel have come out in the open onto the public sphere and are trying to assert themselves as individuals, thus initiating a movement from the frill towards the center, from the unexplored region to the realm of visibility. According to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, man evolved from apes. Such an evolution did not occur in the blink of a second, but it took millions of years. Achebe's women too,

are evolving gradually from the invisible status through a blurred image to a clear and visible arena as one reads his novels chronologically, from *Things Fall Apart* (1958) to *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

### Findings and Results: Women No Longer At Ease

*No Longer at Ease* is the story of Obi, who is caught up in a situational conflict between the welfare of the individual and that of the community. Meanwhile, another sub-plot runs throughout the novel — that of Obi's relationship with his mother and his relation with Clara. An analysis of the sub-plot reveals Clara as the woman who is on the brink of the transitional stage. Despite being an *out* (an outcaste), she possesses a strong self-tendency to move towards the public sphere of the so-called man's world. She works as a nurse, thus financially stable and moves out of the domestic circle of the 'hearth' and the 'home'. The strength of character can also be ascribed to Obi's mother who exercises emotional and psychological control over her son. ". . . if you [marry Clara] while I am alive, you will have my blood on your head, because I shall kill myself." (123) Obi was "terrified." A Christian convert, Hannah had stopped telling folk stories to her children and adopted the responsibilities of a catechist's wife. Her strong control over Obi prevents the latter from any kind of independent emotional mobility. Therefore, her

erasure through death was mandatory for Obi's story to move on. This indicates a kind of disagreement, on the part of a male author, of a woman's dominance over her son, a male.

*No Longer at Ease* portrays Clara as a "woman in transition" (24), as Merun Nasser puts it, — a woman who is assertive, independent, educated, but who happens to be an *osu*, which limits her independence and assertiveness. Though Achebe endows her with the job of a nurse, financially stable by herself, Clara's role is belittled when she is betrayed by her fiancé and undergoes the abortion without any retaliation. Instead of letting her fight for her individuality, she is made to succumb to the male virility and the social taboos. She disappears from the novel in a blurred manner, without affecting the flow of the story.

Earlier in traditional African society, women did not have open access to formal education in comparison to the menfolk. They were taught to be good wives and mothers and manage the daily domestic chores of the household. For women, one step towards the field of education is a door to their revelation as individuals with a voice of their own. Education and economic independence are keys to a woman's assertion of her identity and realization of self. Virginia Woolf and Mary Wollstonecraft have always upheld education of women and advocated for women's economic independence. Buchi Emecheta opines that apart from financial autonomy if a woman is educated, that guarantees an educated generation that follows her:

I want very much to further the education of women in Africa because I know that education helps women. It helps them to read, and it helps them to rear a generation. It is true that if one educates a woman, one educates a community, whereas if one educates a man, one educates a man. (553)

Access to education and economic independence owing to a secure job outside of the home, are significant tools for the liberation of women. In the words of A.A. Jekayinfa,

Education brings benefits to the educated in the forms of access to information and more economic and political influence. Education can make women gain more authority in the home and greater control over resources as a prelude to having more say in the family decision. Education is required for skills acquisition and consequently to increase the competitiveness of women.

Low education therefore generally limits the upward mobility of Nigerian women. (n.pag.)

Women in *No Longer at Ease* are seen to be preparing themselves to come out of their cocoon of the private world, tearing off their old husk of the traditional passive woman into the realm of the public atmosphere where her visibility is perceived.

With the onset of modernity, the characters are divided into two types — the traditional character and the urban character. *No Longer at Ease* is filled with such characters. In the novel, Clara represents the urban character who is "an individualist and whose actions derive largely from an unrestrained personal response to the social and economic factors which impinge on [her] consciousness." Obi's mother, Hannah Okonkwo is the traditional woman "whose actions derive largely from the collectively defined modes of behavior within the particular traditional community." (Obiechina 117) Her refusal to accept Clara as her daughter-in-law owing to the latter's status as an *osu* defines her rooted attitude of a traditional Igbo woman towards such social taboos. Emmanuel Obiechina defines an *out* as "an outcast of society, an abominable human who cannot have normal intercourse with non-*osu* and who has no political or civic rights." (84) He further says that an *osu* inherits all the disabilities that belong to the status in spite of his [or her] intrinsic personal qualities. In *Thing Fall Apart*, an *osu* is defined as

A person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart — a taboo forever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born. He was, in fact, an outcast, living in a special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went, he carried with him the mark of his forbidden caste --- long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An *osu* could not attend an assembly of the free-born, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died, he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest. (111,112)

They cannot take part in the regular rites of Ibo society. Obi's mother could not accept the fact of Obi marrying an *osu* at any cost.

Obi's father was not free from the gender-based patriarchal societal norms, where sons were much preferred to daughters. The full name of Obi as Abigail — 'the mind, at last, is at rest' indicates the father's ultimate mental repose after his wife bore him four daughters before Obi. Conversion to Christianity prevented him from practicing polygamy. In naming his fourth daughter as

Nwanyidinma (which means, a girl is also good), the 'goodness' of a woman is taken into consideration though unwillingly. "He had called his fourth daughter Nwanyidinma . . . But his voice did not carry conviction." (NLE 6)

Clara's character and the character of Obi's mother are contradictory in that the former represents modernity and the latter symbolizes tradition and conventionality. Clara has left behind the social taboos and transgressed the restrictions imposed upon women as domestic workers visible and audible only in the private arena. As a nurse trained from abroad, she establishes her 'place' in the patriarchal society and is moreover seen as a stronger person than the protagonist of the novel, Obi Okonkwo when she helps him in times of need, whether financially, emotionally or even sexually. Her willingness to undergo the abortion and the silent separation from her lover Obi without any complaint depicts her as someone who was strong enough to break the barriers of women invisibility in the social arena but later succumbed to the male virility around her. Obi's mother, who was supposed to tell stories to her children as traditional mothers do, is seen as exercising her full control over Obi which the latter finds it hard to defy. Thus, we observe a shift not only in the position of the women from the 'private' to the 'public,' but also a shift in the tradition where oral storytelling and polygamy are no more practiced. Obi is weak as compared to Clara as the former cannot even carry out responsibilities impinged on him by his community, family and his beloved Clara when she becomes pregnant. He does not stand by Clara in such a critical situation, but rather compels her to undergo the abortion. Hence, Clara takes the bold initiative to break off her engagement with Obi as she can still manage to do without him by her education and her profession as a nurse. Obi, on the other hand, fails to stand on his own and hence, his downfall. An assessment of Obi's life shows his arrogance and pride which led to his downfall. All his supposed masculine principles come to nothing. The death of Obi's mother and the disappearance of Clara are the two mandatory events for Obi to survive in the novel as the protagonist, or else the women would overpower him. In addition to such strong female characters, certain women like Miss Mark and the girl friends of Joseph and Christopher are drawn negatively. Flora Nwapa has criticized Achebe for focusing on the "physical, prurient, negative nature of women," thus creating Miss Mark as someone who "does not hesitate to

put her sex appeal to work to attain desired objectives." (528)

Woman as a mere sexual object is an unavoidable concept in the history of time. They are seldom given priority as the Subject but as the Object, the Other. In the history of literature, women characters as the protagonists suffer tremendously in the hands of the writer and the public, for instance, *Moll Flanders* by Robinson Crusoe and Thomas Hardy's women protagonists as Tess and Bathsheba. Strong, assertive and rebellious women are suppressed by the patriarchal norms as seen in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, or either does not exist at all in reality. *No Longer at Ease* is also based on this conflict between suppression and assertion on behalf of the women characters.

### Interpretation and Conclusion

A reading of Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* provides a background of the colonial and post-colonial environment of the Igboland. Of the many legacies left behind by colonialism, Western education is one which has enabled Africans to reach out to the world. The woman in the concerned novel Clara gets access to this legacy and is financially stable, a nurse by profession. If it had not been for her boy-friend Obi, she would have easily overshadowed him in character and rose above him as the stronger one. The tradition built on patriarchal notions and taboos that undermine the growth of a woman as an individual curb the development of women like Clara. She is a 'woman in transition,' as described before, in a 'society in transition' from a conventional one, where patriarchal codes are the ultimate measurement rod for a woman's character and nature, to a modern Christian environment, where there are relaxations and leniencies in the so-called codes and conventions. The latter environment has been favorable for women like Clara to assert and develop as individuals.

Even in writing, there runs politics in pen. It is the aim of this paper to bring out the women from the clutches of the politics in writing and give them the space they deserve, and this has been achieved through the character of Clara. In spite of the flickering position of the women, their voices have become audible, and their visibility has been perceived. This indicates that women are in the transitional stage, prepared to transform themselves from a passive subjugated woman to a woman of strength and self-assertion, though not completely.

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## QUEST OF WOMEN IDENTITY IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THAT LONG SILENCE*

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### Abstract

*The paper is an attempt to examine the feminist perspective and quest of women identity in Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence. Her novels present a sensitive and realistic portrayal of an Indian woman in family and society. This novel she won Sahitya academy award in 1990. Her theme deals with the struggle of a woman in the male-dominated society and her crisis for self-identity. This novel portrays the patriarchal culture superiority relationship between Jaya and her husband, Mohan. Jaya is compelled to be silent, surrender herself and accept the male dominating society or family. Jaya decided to keep silence even though she gets support from kamat and believes that patience and optimistic thinking*

**Keyword:** Sensitivity, struggle, patriarchal, culture, patience, optimism.

### Introduction

Shashi Deshpande is one of the popular women writers in India. Deshpande is known for her novels *That Long Silence*, and *The Dark Holds No Terror*. These two novels are considered to be the most successful because it has been translated into many languages. Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with women belonging to Indian middle-class women who suffer to search her identity as a mother and wife. Deshpande's novels present a social world of relationship. She was born in 1938 in Dharwad district in Karnataka. She is one among the popular women writers. She did her education from Bombay and Bangalore in Education and Law. She also pursued a course in Journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan in Bombay, and she has also worked as a journalist for Onlooker, a popular magazine. She has also written about four books for children, some short stories and nine novels. Her essays are published in a volume entitled *Writing from the Margin and Other Essays*. She is the recipient of the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *That Long Silence* in 1990 and in 2009 she was awarded the Padma Shri.

The feminist movement has taken place for women rights for their equality and equal opportunities. Gender bias and discrimination should not be there in the society

and family. *That Long Silence* is considered as a unique novel of Shashi Deshpande which portrays the pathetic condition of a typical Indian women wife Jaya. The protagonist Jaya is an intelligent woman with graduation in English, and she is a writer. Immediately after her graduation, she got married, Mohan. None of the attributes did provide her as respectable women in her husband's eyes. Mohan's mother and his sister were more submissive to the father. Likewise, Mohan wants his wife to be submissive towards him.

In the male-dominated society women has depended on men either as father, husband and son. Jaya has mostly heard the word that men are the sheltering tree. The author depicts the image of marriage institution and relations in India. Jaya first wants to love her husband, and she decides to give herself to him. But, in reciprocal Mohan wants Jaya only for sexual life. She has no freedom to express her desire for love to her husband. Jaya a creative writer and active women is a great loss to the society. She acts like a typical Indian housewife who has changed her name as Suhasini just for her husband, Mohan.

Jaya wants to be pleasing to her husband by taking care of their children Rati and Rahul. She was submissive even when he corrupts. Mohan and his family move from

church gate bungalow to Dadar flat she was very quiet and unhesitant. In this particular scene, Jaya is compared to Sita of Ramayana where she moves with her husband Rama for exile. Jaya starts to write some little humorous piece of work, but it didn't get popularized because it contains strong emotions. She has included the sufferings of women in the family unconsciously. The only thing mattered Mohan is readers might think that these characters may be Jaya and Mohan. Jaya wrote her works in a column entitled "Sita."

Jaya and Mohan leading the life of 'a pair of bullocks yoked together' Jaya was submissive and pretending to be happy because of the word man is the sheltering tree without violence and vulnerability, with full of love and protection. She faces a traumatic situation. Her works were appreciated by the neighbor Kamat. He motivates Jaya to be brave and be aware of women rights. At the moment of encouragement, Jaya recalls her father as he motivates her in each step of her life. Jaya overcomes her desire to safeguard her marital life with Mohan. In sudden Kamat dies and Jaya feels for him because he is the one who recognise her talents.

In the anxiety of performing the role of perfect wife and good mother, she has lost her identity. Mohan easily takes up the role of provider, protector, and custodian without understanding the reality behind the silence of Jaya. Mohan and Jaya get separated for some issues between them. Jaya hears the death of her son Rahul who went on a trip with his friends. No one is there to console her later she started to live with Mohan with continuous

silence. During the time of separation, she recognised herself and started to search her identity in the family and society. The shadow lurked between Mohan and Jaya of seventeen years got disappeared.

### Conclusion

Thus the novel attempts to portray the sufferings and deprivations of women in general by presenting various characters as stereotyped representatives of traditional womanhood. The strength of the novel lies in its bold analysis of the realities about the Indian womanhood. The novel seems to advocate that woman should be assertive and keep Individuality and take her own decisions about her life and future. The intricacies of a woman's life within the family and outside can only be solved by herself when she learns to evaluate her worth and becomes conscious of herself as an individual.

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