

An Online, Peer Reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal



EISSN 2456-5571



BODHI

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN
HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE**

VOLUME 8 | SPECIAL ISSUE 5

FEBRUARY 2024 | E-ISSN: 2456-5571

Special Issue on
**CONTEMPORARY CONTEMPLATIONS IN
LITERATURE, CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

Special Issue Editors

Dr. K. KALAIARASI | Dr. S. BALAKRISHNAN



BODHI

International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science

An Online, Peer Reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

Vol. 8

Special Issue 5

February 2024

E-ISSN: 2456-5571



**CENTRE FOR RESOURCE, RESEARCH &
PUBLICATION SERVICES (CRRPS)**

www.crrps.in | www.bodhijournals.com

BIJRHAS

The **BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science** (E-ISSN: 2456-5571) is online, peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal, which is powered & published by **Center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS)** India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of humanities, arts and science.

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

Dr. S. Balakrishnan

Publisher and Managing Editor

bodhijournal@gmail.com

www.bodhijournals.com

09944212131



BODHI INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE

An Online, peer reviewed, refereed and quarterly Journal with Impact Factor

www.bodhijournals.com, bodhijournal@gmail.com, 7540077733

4/27, Achampathu, Madurai-625019, Tamil Nadu, India

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORS

Editors

Dr. K. Kalaiarasi

Assistant Professor of English

Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil

Dr. S. Balakrishnan

Publisher

Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science
Madurai

About Bodhi

The BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science (E-ISSN:2456-5571) is open access, peer reviewed, referred and quarterly journal, which is powered & published by center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS) India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the field of humanities, arts and science.

Subjects for Papers

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Call for Papers

The journal invites balanced mix of theoretical or empirical, conceptual papers to publish including research articles, case studies, review papers, comparative studies, dissertation chapters, reports of projects in progress, analytical and simulation models, technical notes, and book reviews, leading academicians, business peoples, corporate sectors, researcher scholars and students from academic institutions, research organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), corporate sectors, civil societies, industries, and others from India and abroad.

Submission of Manuscript

1. Submit your article by email to **bodhijournal@gmail.com**
2. The manuscripts/papers should be research based or related, original and comprise of previously unpublished material and must be presented following scientific methodology.
3. Authors must send an abstract of the paper not exceeding 250 words, all manuscripts must be in font style of Times New Roman, size: 12, line spacing: double spaced and submitted only in MS Word 2003/ 2007 version.
4. All manuscripts should follow the MLA or APA style manual. The full paper must not exceed 3000 words, including tables and references.
5. The manuscript should be well-organized to have Title page, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Literature Survey, Problem Definition, Material & Methods, Findings & Results, Interpretation & Discussion, Conclusion and References.
6. All quoted, reproduced material should clearly be referenced.
7. Tables and figures should appear in the document near / after where they are referenced in the text.
8. All contents should be original – authors' own words, ideas, findings and arguments.

9. Tables and figures should appear in the document near / after where they are referenced in the text. All figures and tables must have an intelligible caption in relation to the text.
10. Photographs must be sharp, and exhibit good contrast.
11. Correct and complete referencing of quoted and reproduced material is the obligation of the author. In the text, references should be inserted in parentheses in full.
12. If author uses a reference from an out-source, author should cite relevant source giving credit to the original author/contributor.

Review of Article / Manuscript

1. The manuscript will be numbered and sent to the review committee for review-report.
2. The author will be intimidated of the review and the process will take a maximum period of 15 – 20 days.

Ethical Policy

1. Authors are advised to adhere to the ethics of publication of his/her article to be considered for publication.
2. Acknowledgement of the original ideas, borrowed from other sources is imperative.
3. The authors of original research work (previously unpublished / under process for the publication elsewhere) should be an accurate submission of the work carried out, provide the rationale of the significance of the research work in context with previous works, and should contain sufficient details to allow others for further research.
4. It will be the wholesome responsibility of the authors for such lapses if any on legal bindings and against ethical code of publication or communication media.

Plagiarism Alert & Disclaimer

1. The publisher & editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts.
2. All submissions should be original and must have a “statement of declaration” assuring their research paper as an original and fresh work and it has not been published anywhere else.
3. It will be authors / sole responsibility for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.
4. Contributors are advised to be aware about Plagiarism and ensure their paper is beyond plagiarism as per UGC norms.

Publication Policy & Peer-review Process

Peer review exists to ensure that journals publish article which is of benefit to entire research community. Peer reviewers' comments and recommendations are an essential guide to inform the editor's decision on a manuscript that revisions and improvement. They are part of the publication process and actually help raise the quality of the manuscript. It also helps the readers to trust the research integrity of the article.

1. The Editor-in-Chief will primarily examine each manuscript.
2. The editor-in- Chief will advise the authors about the acceptance of the manuscript by email.
3. The manuscript will be evaluated on parameters of originality, practical importance, subject relevance, scientific level and contribution to the current academic scenario.
4. If the manuscript is accepted following publication policies.

5. Accepted manuscript will be forwarded to the double-blind peer review process. Such that the journal does not disclose the identity of the reviewer(s) to the author(s) and does not disclose the identity of the author(s) to the reviewer(s).
6. The review committee is not responsible for stripping of any information during panel review as the original author is not known to the committee.
7. Manuscript/paper will be published only when the article is 'commended for publication' from the review committee/editorial board.
8. If necessary the copy-editing work will be done by the members of the Editorial Board.
9. The review process may take minimum 20 working days.
10. In case of acceptance of the manuscript and commended for publication favorably, the manuscript will be published in online mode of time. If paper/article/manuscript is not commended for publication, the rejected manuscripts shall not be returned.

Copyright Notice

Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent to the Publisher. The Editors reserve the right to edit or otherwise alter all contributions, but authors will receive proofs for approval before publication.

Copyrights for articles published in Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science are retained by the authors, with first publication rights granted to the journal. The journal/publisher is not responsible for subsequent uses of the work. It is the author's responsibility to bring any infringement action if so desired by the author.

Indexed & Open Access

The journal will be indexed as per database norms. The Indexing will provide the manuscript to achieve its purpose of being accessible to worldwide readers. Easy accessible will increase as manuscript's and journal's reputation. It will be a source of the quality information in respective areas/studies.

Privacy Statement

We may collect the contact details from authors like names, designation with Institutional address, email addresses, postal address, phone numbers and other information to understand needs and provide with a better service that are entered in this journal site and will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal.

Frequency of Publication of the Journal

BODHI is a quarterly journal, will be published in January, April, July and October on respective Years.

Review and Evaluation Committee

Quarterly review committee meeting will be convened by the editor-in-chief. Authors are expected to submit their manuscript before 20 working days of the publication of the respective month. The journal will be published regularly as per Journal publication policy.

Article Submission

Authors are kindly advised to send manuscripts along with registration & copyright forms. (Duly filled-in Registration form is mandatory with the paper for acceptance) Soft copy of the papers should be mailed to **bodhijournal@gmail.com**

Conference Proceedings

Bodhi will be published as special issues for the national / international conference and seminars volumes. The group of papers also will be published in Bodhi journal.



PIONEER KUMARASWAMY COLLEGE

(Reaccredited with B⁺⁺ Grade by NAAC)

NAGERCOIL



Dr. N. INDIRA, M.Com., M.Phil., M.Ed., MBA., Ph.D.,

Principal

Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil

Greetings from Pioneer Kumaraswamy College!

As the Principal of this prestigious institution, I am extremely happy and honoured to write this note of appreciation. First of all, I appreciate the Department of English & Research Centre for organizing this International Conference in collaboration with Bodhi International Journal that served as the catalyst for this special issue on “**Contemporary Contemplations in Literature, Culture and Society**”.

It is with great pleasure and gratitude I extend a warm greeting to **Dr. E. Panneer Selvam**, Convenor, **Dr. K. Kalaiarasi**, Organizing Secretary and all the Organizing Committee Members of this conference for their dedication, vision and tireless efforts in bringing together the students, scholars and faculty members from diverse backgrounds to explore the interaction of literature, culture and society.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Bodhi International Journal and their unwavering support throughout the process of compiling this volume.



N. Indira



PIONEER KUMARASWAMY COLLEGE

(Reaccredited with B⁺⁺ Grade by NAAC)

NAGERCOIL

FOREWORD



Dr. E. PANNEER SELVAM, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,

Head & Associate Professor

Department of English, Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil

The Department of English & Research Centre is proud and delighted to be a part of the learning journey in the International Conference on “**Contemporary Contemplations in Literature, Culture and Society**” in collaboration with Bodhi International Journal.

I appreciate the meticulous efforts done by **Dr. S. Balakrishnan**, Publisher & Managing Editor, Bodhi International Journal & **Dr. K. Kalaiarasi**, Organizing Secretary and Editor, which has resulted in an anthology of the peer-reviewed articles that throws light into the universal truth and themes.

It is my hope that this journal will serve as a testament to the power of collaboration, intellectual exchange and inquiry in advancing our understanding of the world around us.

EDITORIAL NOTE

“In literature, we find the keys to unlock the mysteries of humanity, the echoes of our past and the visions of our future”- Amit Roy

“Contemporary Contemplations in Literature, Culture and Society” explores the dynamic synthesis between written expression, social norms and cultural evolution in today’s world. Through critical analysis and scholarly discourse, this exploration sheds light on the profound influence of literature on our understanding of contemporary issues and the human experience at large. In this context, this issue of Bodhi International Journal carries articles on various thrust areas, which are the outcome of researches conducted by the contributors.

Our heartfelt gratitude to **Thiru. P. Kumaraswamy**, President & Secretary, Pioneer Kumaraswamy College and **Tmt. Latha Kumaraswamy**, College Committee Member, for their commitment in promoting academic excellence and advancing knowledge.

We are very thankful to **Dr. N. Indira**, Principal and **Dr. E. Panneer Selvam**, Head, Department of English, for their gracious consent to compile these articles into a journal volume.

We duly acknowledge all **the Scholars & Faculty Members**, whose scholarly contribution have made this issue possible.

Editors

ABOUT THE EDITORS



Dr. K. Kalaiarasi is an Assistant Professor of English at Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil. She has put in 4 years of teaching experience in school level and 8 years of experience in collegiate level. She has presented many papers in International and National conferences, published many articles in reputed books and journals, authored a book "Effectiveness of Multimedia Approach in Teaching English Poetry", edited a journal volume and a book. She is a speaker in All India Radio, Nagercoil. She is a member of LSS (Literary Scholars Society, Tanjore). The area of her specialization are Post-Colonial Studies, English Language Teaching, Soft Skills & Communication Skills, Asian-American Literature, Diasporic Literature etc.



Dr. S. Balakrishnan is the Publisher & Managing Editor of Roots & Bodhi peer-reviewed Journals and published more than ten thousand articles, since 2014. He has 6 years of teaching experience in collegiate level. In addition to the journals, he is also the Publisher & Editor of L Ordines Nuovo Publication that published more than 400 Books, since its inception in 2016. He has the credit of convening and organizing more than 70 Conferences and Seminars in India and abroad.

BODHI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE
An Online, Peer-reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

Vol. 8

Special Issue 5

February 2024

E-ISSN: 2456-5571

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

Disclaimer

Contributors are advised to be strict in academic ethics with respect to acknowledgment of the original ideas borrowed from others. The Publisher & Editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts. All submissions should be original and must be accompanied by a declaration stating your research paper as an original work and has not been published anywhere else. It will be the sole responsibility of the authors for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.

Communication

Papers/Enquiries should be mailed to Journalroots4u@gmail.com

CONTENTS

S. No	Titles	Page No.
1	Contemporary Contemplations in Literature, Culture and Society Dr. J. S. Rohan Savarimuttu	01
2	Sense of Fulfilment through Domesticity in the Female Characters in Select Novels of R. K. Narayan Dr. Sameena Iqbal & Dr. Zakiya Ansari	05
3	Unveiling Gender Narratives: A Comparative Study of Feminism in the Fictional Realms of Anita Desai and Mulk Raj Anand Aruna Kumar Patro , Dr. ESS Narayana Trimurthy & Dr. Rabindra Kumar Pradhan	10
4	Representation of Surpanakha in <i>Purushottamayana</i> : A Feminist Revisionist Reading Iramma V. H & Dr. Shobha M	17
5	<i>White Teeth</i> as Hysterical Realism – A Study Seema P. Karabasannavar	21
6	Heros and Villains: A Study of Underdogs in Korean Webtoon <i>Dice</i> Rashmi Naik	26
7	Constructing Cleanliness: A Study of Select Advertisements on Sanitation Products Dr. Neethu Varghese	32

8	Intersecting Struggles: Applying Intersectionality Theory to Explore Caste-Violence in Imayam's <i>The Begetter</i> Dr. U. Thanesh	37	18	The Violence of Economic Hierarchy in Imayam's <i>Beast of Burden</i> P. V. Narasimmarao & Dr. U. Thanesh	79
9	From Internal Conflict to Identity Formation: A Psychological Approach to Shyam Selvadurai's <i>Funny Boy</i> Dr. V. Sumitha & A. Alfiya	42	19	David Davidar's <i>The House of Blue Mangoes</i> as a Postcolonial Narrative R. Mizpah & Dr. S. Prabahar	83
10	Embracing Diversity: Manobi's Journey Through Trauma and Triumph in <i>A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi</i> Dr. K. Deepshikha & Mr. A. Parthipan	46	20	<i>Nights at the Circus</i> by Angela Carter: A Feministic Exploration Keya Sara Geevarghese	85
11	An Exploration of Monomyth: A Theoretical Framework of J. K. Rowling's <i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i> Dr. Anju Frank & A. U. Aarthi	51	21	A Psychological Thriller Novel Exploring Freudian Psychoanalysis and the Dark Secrets of the Unconscious Mind in Gillian Flynn's <i>Gone Girl</i> M. Kanimozhi	88
12	Photograph As the Medium of Paranormal Presage in the Movie <i>Shutter</i> and Stephen King's Novella <i>The Sun Dog</i> Ms. D. Adrin Sanchia Jason & Dr. F. Suji Brindha Theodore	55	22	Destructive Present - A Critical Reading of Maya. C. Popa's "Letter to Noah's Wife" A. Jehilin Reshatha	91
13	Repression and Resilience in Emma Donoghue's <i>The Wonder</i> M. Iswarya & Dr. S. Ambika	60	23	An Overview: An Intersection of Gender, Marginalization and Postcolonialism in Arundhati Roy's, <i>The God of Small Things</i> Ms. S. Jayalakshmi	95
14	Representation of Female Masculinity in Octavia Butler's <i>Wild Seed</i> S. Lavanya & Dr. V. Sangeetha	63	24	Recollection and Hidden Injustice : A Psychological Study in Kazuo Ishiguro's Novel <i>Never Let Me Go</i> J. S. Harani	100
15	Spirituality and Self Discovery in Paulo Coelho's <i>Aleph</i> K. P. Sreelekshmi & Dr. S. Sreelatha	68	25	Magical Adventure in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's <i>The Conch Bearer</i> N. Ashwin Shyam	103
16	Marital Conflicts and Identity Crisis in Sudha Murthy's <i>Gently Falls The Bakula</i> D. Uma Maheswari & Dr. B. Rajesh	72			
17	Portrayal of Darkness in Literature: A Diachronic Study S. Kejapriya & Dr. S. Prabahar	75			

CONTEMPORARY CONTEMPLATIONS IN LITERATURE, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Dr. J. S. ROHAN SAVARIMUTTU

*Head, Department of Information Technology & Senior Lecturer in English
Department of Languages and Communication Studies
Faculty of Communication and Business Studies
Trincomalee Campus of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka*

When the invitation lay for a talk on ‘Contemporary Contemplations’ with a focus on literature, culture, and society which is as broad as or even much more broader than the main theme ‘Contemporary Contemplations’, I was reminded of my father Late. Rev. Jacob Savaraimuttu who was not only a scholar in Theology but also in the fields of Anthropology and Sociology, a social worker and social activist, an alumni of the most famous Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, who having gone through a book entitled *Traditions & Encounters: A Global perspective On The Past* by Jerry H. Bentley and Herbert F. Ziegler, that I chanced to possess, exclaimed in 2015 that his long doubt since his days at Leuven just got solved. He had been taught that archaeologists had discovered the skeleton of a woman who was about 25 to 30 years of age with probably a weight of about 25 kilograms who died 3.5 million years ago, where scholars refer to this woman’s skeleton as AL 288-1, but she was the world’s best-known prehistoric individual under the name Lucy. And Rev. Jacob Savarimuttu (Late), had a doubt for a very long time since his days at Leuven, on how archaeologists came to a conclusion that the name of the prehistoric individual was Lucy since it is a modern name and very much British in nature. But here is where the book highlighted the amalgamation between the past and the present, between the past and popular culture by mentioning:

Throughout the evening of 30 November 1974, a tape player in an Ethiopian desert blared the Beatles’ song “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” at top volume. The site was an archaeological camp at Hadar, a remote spot about 160

kilometers (100 miles) northeast of Addis Ababa. The music helped fuel a spirited celebration: earlier in the day, archaeologists had discovered the skeleton of a woman who died 3.5 million years ago. Scholars refer to this woman’s skeleton as AL 288-1, but the woman herself has become by far the world’s best-known prehistoric individual under the name Lucy (7).¹

And I was reminded of T. S. Eliot who in his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*² where he stresses the importance of the past to understand the present so as to foresee the future. Therefore, a contemplation that is contemporary should involve the understanding of the past, since contemporary is an extension of the past. For example, in order to understand the discourse of Jacques Derrida, a good understanding of many philosophers starting from Plato to the present is essential, not only a good but a correct understanding is very essential since Jacques Derrida claims that he is talking of the same positive aspect that has been dealt by Martin Heidegger as ‘Abbau’ and ‘Destruction’ (Savarimuttu 78-85)³ and only a misunderstanding of Jacques Derrida has set in a misunderstanding that the concepts of Derrida is

¹ Bentley, Jerry H and Jerbert F. Ziegler. *Traditions & Encounters: A Global Perspective On The Past*. Boston: Mc Graw Hill, 2000.

² Eliot, T. S. ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’. *English Critical Texts*. 1962. By D. J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera. New Delhi: OUP, 1975.

³ Savarimuttu, J. S. Rohan. *A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Chennai: New Century Book House, 2016.

purely of a destructive notion of criticism, deploying an almost nihilistic critique of all institutions, hierarchies, and values. Therefore, a life-furthering understanding of the past that is of inclusive nature is essential to understand or contemplate the present.

After having read Ken Wilber's *A Theory of Everything*,⁴ one begins to understand that a life-furthering inclusiveness is becoming a challenge now a days. But these things are not new since such themes have already been dealt in movies such as *Gods Must Be Crazy*.⁵ However, what is new is the annihilatic trends in the recent endeavors amongst intellectuals and corporate sectors where human beings are being pushed to the brim of extinction. For example, theories of Posthumanists who believe that the earth will be a better place without human race, or individuals like Julia Kristeva who see childbearing as a key form of transgressive experience may be voices of dissent. But one has to answer the question -to dissent at what cost?-In another sense the same ends are achieved through LGBTQ+ where the same idea of annihilation is taken beyond all boundaries. The recent developments and greater push in the field of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, has to be given a second thought of whether they are posthumanistic trends that are curtailed under the guise of development, like war that is used to annihilate 'the Other' under the guise of protecting democracy and freedom. We know that all wars are fought in the name of saving democracy, but in reality if the pages of history are carefully turned, the opposite i.e, hidden agendas is brought out. When the case is so, even the present trends that are set-in by the literati in understanding and interpreting Minority Literatures deploy a negative-dissent that is in a sense not very different from the posthumanistic aims. I may not openly name such trends since it might hurt the ego of many present here but the fact is that when Minority Literatures are

not understood from a positive-dissent point of view, the destruction in the name of emancipation is much greater in the long run than the suppression and oppression and violence shown towards the minority groups. Since, the old suppressive systems are destroyed or questioned and they are not replaced by better ones, leaving a vacuum where the system that sets-in as new will be far worse than the already destroyed or questioned suppressive system.

Even though most of our today's endeavors may look very modern due to the use of modern sophistications in life, one should remember that these are built on the foundations of negativity such as fear, anxiety, and insecurity. For example, the movie *Jaws* exhibits that fear psychosis of individuals can be made collective where it can be traded for something else.

The recent trends in South Asian academia in the field of deciphering a text or context does employ the theories of modern cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek, but in doing so, we should ask ourselves a question of whether we are simply employing the findings or arguments of Slavoj Žižek or are we trying to grasp the predecessors of Slavoj Žižek and try to understand on why Slavoj Žižek differs in his interpretation from his predecessors. At this juncture, it is worthy to note that the South Asian academia has accepted Slavoj Žižek with much reluctance, but still has not been awakened from its traditional slumber of sticking on to well-defined or well-cut tools for research. The trends set in by Slavoj Žižek, to venture into combining many fields of study or many walks of life, i.e., of being more eclectic with inclusivity as per the chosen text's lending should be encouraged. In fact, even when we deal with texts belonging to minority, we tend to cloth it into the majoritarian outlook by evading the texts that are in the languages of the minorities and tend to stress texts that are either written in English or that have been translated into English. In addition to employing the multifaceted way of analysis, the South Asian academia is yet to employ René Girard into its cannon. The deciphering of 'violence' by René Girard through his foresight into the texts of

⁴ Wilber, Ken. *A Theory of Everything*. Colorado: Shambhala, 2000.

⁵ Uys, Jamie, dir. *Gods Must Be Crazy*. 20th Century Studios, Sony Pictures, 1980. Film.

the past is a Copernican revolution that has to be employed in order to understand and interpret the violence projected by the texts chosen for study.

At this juncture in our history, it has been pronounced that we are almost at the dusk of our existence due to the global situation which is primarily an economic Armageddon that will lead into many other downfalls jeopardizing global capitalism with motives such as One World government and etc, i.e., replacing the American system with a new system, where European Union is a silent player that hopes to win the next global world order. The four horsemen projected in the Book of Revelations are the dark projections into the coming apocalypse which will be the worldwide imbalance in the economic system, ecological crisis, biogenetic revolution, and the exploding social divisions and ruptures. This is going to be the end of many isms including capitalism, which may seem like the end of the world to many, but how will it be possible for the South Asian societies to face up to this end times? We in Sri Lanka are almost undergoing or crossing the first two stages in the economic Armageddon, such as 1) ideological denial and 2) explosions of anger and attempts at bargaining. We are yet to be led into the other two stages such as 3) depression and 4) withdrawal. But still we hope that we will be able to revert back not on par with the olden days that now seems like the golden days of the bygone era, but to a space that will be conducive for life-furthering activities.

Life always has a meaning only when viewed from its closure i.e., the beginning and the continuance of life will always attain its meaning only in its closure. In this sense, since these are the beginnings of the end times, i.e., the apocalypse, this is the best of all times to see the past in order to validate humanities search and thirst since the beginning of times.

We the English literary fellows have corrupted not only understanding but also thinking due to the process of dividing and naming eras through our History of English Literature books and lessons where the naming of an era is beyond any

justification will be a glimpse that humanities endeavours to understand its history was not an inclusive one but rather based on the exclusive mode. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to turn towards another field for enlightenment with regard to the naming of eras. Jürgen Habermas⁶ categorically names the eras as The Dark Age, The Stone Age, The Era of Metallurgy, The Metaphysical Era, The Era of Thermodynamics, The Era of Information Technology (since 1858 to 2000), and now since 2000 we have stepped into The Post Metaphysical Era. Therefore, if one takes a closer look into the human developments, it can be noted that almost a full circle has been achieved and humanity is in the brink to leap into yet another dark age, in a sense it can be termed so since the future has not yet been revealed to us where it is still unknown which is symbolized by 'dark'. At this juncture, through emphasizing a negative-dissent (which is done unconsciously) in understanding and interpreting the literatures of the minorities, we are unconsciously setting-in the platform or paving the way for exploding social divisions and ruptures which is the last stage in the apocalypse, where the third stage i.e., biogenetic revolution is taken care by the sciences under various banners starting from fields such as Biotechnology, Genetic Engineering, Genome Sciences, and Artificial Intelligence. Since the end will define the beginning, the literati should be double cautious in their outlook so as not to pave a way for normalizing the above mentioned fourth stage at this end times.

It has to be noted that the collapse in the cultural aspect is a world wide phenomenon for examples the Belgian 'Punk' cult or the American 'hippie cult' which has also sidetracked into 'Hare Krishna Cult' amongst the Northerners in the past has taken the main stage prompting the second decadence (where the first one took place in the beginning of the Victorian Age) is a danger since due to its promotions by mass media and social platforms, the normalization of decadence as an accepted norm is

⁶ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Future of Human Nature*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.

the vital danger since conscience is being deschooled systematically than in the past.

Therefore, even though the future looks with much prospects for a very few who belong to the elite and the powerful fractions, the future is bleak for the majority who belong to the proletariat. Therefore, in today's contemplations there is a promotion towards the Litter Traditions and Multiple Narratives where the texts, contexts, and textures of meanings projected by the minority communities or individuals through their oral or written narratives are taking the center stage. Even there is a recent

twist in the political arena where the African leaders have started to voice their voices against the supremacy of the Northern worlds demanding equality without any dictation terms. They have started to demand equal terms and conditions with regard to trade and resource management with the French President is a pivotal example. Thus, the leaning towards equality and justice for all which started with the French Revolution is catching up universally cutting across many walks of life such as literature, culture, politics, economy, trade, resource management, and society.

SENSE OF FULFILMENT THROUGH DOMESTICITY IN THE FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SELECT NOVELS OF R. K. NARAYAN

Dr. SAMEENA IQBAL

Assistant Professor

*School of Humanities & Social Science Manipal Academy of Higher Education
Dubai, UAE*

Dr. ZAKIYA ANSARI

Assistant Professor

*School of Humanities & Social Science Manipal Academy of Higher Education
Dubai, UAE*

Abstract

A woman is the symbol of affection, sacrifice, love, and domestic concord. The psychology of men when compared with women, shows that man is externally dominative, but internally insecure. On the contrary, a woman is externally subordinate, but internally bold and determined. However, women are oppressed by conventions and social norms. Consequently, their behaviour is restricted, and their self-image is fettered by the supposed sophistication and subordination in marriage. A study of the female characters in the selected novels of R. K. Narayan reveals the psychology of Indian women in general through the systematic investigation of mental phenomena through consciousness, behaviour, and adjustment to the environment. Most women characters in R. K. Narayan's novels are the projection of the stereotyped Indian woman. R. K. Narayan's Malgudi women are generally subservient, god-fearing, yet ideal. The Malgudi women like Swami's mother and grandmother in Swami and Friends; Jagan's wife and mother in The Vendor of Sweets; Raju's mother in The Guide; the aunt in The Painter of Signs; and Susila in The English Teacher are all women whose actions satisfy the demands of moral behaviour. These women generally looked at as doormats of the house are the emotionally and spiritually superior queens. These are unquestionably conventional women who seek fulfilment from domesticity, experience, familial love, and culture consciousness, with no other other ambition or desire. Their sense of fulfilment stems from this kind of domesticity.

Keywords: *R. K. Narayan's Novels, Stereotyped, Malgudi Women, Subservient, Conventional, Ideal, Doormats, Emotionally, Spiritually, Superior Queens, Seek, Sense of Fulfilment, Domesticity.*

A woman is the epitome of affection, sacrifice, love, and domestic concord. She is the pillar that serves a dual function as an ornament and embodiment of a family. Frank S. Davidson in his views on women says: "Only women are capable of experiencing and understanding the true nature of fulfillment in love – but not all women." (109). Many Indian novels in the post-colonial Indian literature depicted women as uneducated, ignorant, submissive, duteous, and acquiescent. The ideal woman was always a symbol of sacrifice, docility, and a god-fearing nature. Women are elevated and worshipped in Hindu mythology as goddesses of power, strength, prosperity, creation, and destruction. However, due to the shift in the cultural attitude, these very women as

housewives in domestic life are oppressed under subservience and domesticity.

R. K. Narayan, one of the pioneers of early Indian Literature in English portrayed the social context and everyday life of South Indian culture and society in his novels. His novels delineated Malgudi women as homey wives and portrayed women as the backbone of the family with their self-actualization and self-realization realized through a sense of fulfillment in domesticity. The misconception that housewives are victims of oppression and servitude with no sense of achievement or self-image is delusional. R. K. Narayan's novels redress the fallacy of domestic women as non-achievers and adulates the role of women in domesticity. Their life

revolves around their family welfare and housekeeping, and dependence on their men. Their only concern is to keep their men happy. R. K. Narayan projects them at first as if they are dominated by men and are ignorant and unconcerned about society and social welfare. Nevertheless, this is only an illusion, as men are merely puppets in the hands of women. D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke, in her reflection on women's life says:

...Environment is a principal determinant of the condition of the women's lives, and yet applauding passivity and denouncing mere ornamentation of the body. (10)

The study attempts to examine the female characters in R.K. Narayan's novels by applying Valerie Tiberius's theory of value-fulfilment which states that "our lives go well to the extent that we pursue, and fulfill or realize, our appropriate values. In short, we live well when we succeed in terms of what matters to us emotionally, reflectively, and over the long term"(3). The study probes into the psyche of the homey Malgudi women such as Swami's mother and grandmother in *Swami and Friends*; Raju's mother in *The Guide*; the aunt in *The Painter of Signs*; and Susila in *The English Teacher*.

Though these women are depicted as the typically subdued, unschooled and deferential housewives, R.K.Narayan venerates them as the queens of the house with their sense of fulfilment through domiciliary life, familial love, and culture consciousness. These conventional women had no great aspirations or desires. Their filial service and actions satisfied their psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs. Despite restricted behaviour and fettered self-image by the supposed sophistication and subordination in marriage and by social norms they outshine in their domestic realm.

Fulfilment is not only a feeling of happiness and satisfaction but also the completion of something, like the fulfillment of a promise. Fulfilment comprises of psychological, emotional, and existential aspects that contribute to a rich and meaningful life. R. K. Narayan's Malgudi women attain this fulfilment by playing the roles of a

domestic wife, mother, aunt, sister, grandmother, and a friend of the protagonists in the novels. The study of the female characters in the select novels of R. K. Narayan focuses on fulfilment of women by the systematic investigation of phenomena through psychological consciousness, emotional behaviour, and existential aspects of adjustment to the social and cultural environment.

Considering the psychological consciousness of the female characters in the novels like the grandmother in *Swami and Friends*, the mother in *The Guide*, and the aunt in *The Painter of Signs*, we observe that they are symbolic of maturity, age, and experience. R. K. Narayan has devoted a chapter for the granny titled 'Swami's Grandmother'. Narayan has portrayed granny as a lively character stepping down to the level of a little boy when he narrates a story.

The grandmother in *Swami and Friends* has lived her life to the fullest contrary to Swami's innocence and freshness. She is a confidante, true friend, home companion, storyteller, and guide to Swami. Her calm demeanor and discernability in dealing with her grandson are remarkable. Her combination of positive emotions, engagement in meaningful activities and conversations, and positive relationships lead to a profound sense of fulfilment. The following passage illustrates the same.

'Granny, are you asleep?' Swaminathan asked at the end of the story.

'No, dear, I am listening.'

'About two tigers on Rajam,' said granny.

Swaminathan became indignant... 'I know why you are so indifferent. You hate Rajam.'

'No, no, he is a lovely little boy,' granny said with conviction, though she had never seen Rajam. Swaminathan was pleased.

Next moment a new doubt assailed him. 'Granny, probably you don't believe the tiger incident.'

'Oh, I believe every word of it,' granny said soothingly. (*Swami and Friends* 23)

Similarly, the dependant female characters like the aunt in *The Painter of Signs* and the mother in

The Guide represent the old, orthodox, and venerable women. Both try their best in showing the right path to their men who do not heed to their advice and end in failure. These dependants leave their home when their ethics are to be compromised. These conventional old ladies of Malgudi are unable to understand the modern and unconventional intricacies of love.

Raju's mother in *The Guide*, a caring widowed mother brings up her son single-handedly. Her phenomenological consciousness of the changing world and refusal to accept it makes her shun her only son who is involved in an illicit relationship. Though she is uneducated and lacking in worldly knowledge, she is mature enough to warn Raju off Rosie. Raju's mother criticizes Rosie as: "She is a real snake woman, I tell you. I never liked her from the first day you mentioned her" (*The Guide* 54). Her compassion for Rosie, whose husband had deserted her turns into hatred and tries to evict Rosie on discovering Raju's involvement with Rosie. Her efforts end in vain, and she proudly leaves her own homewith a sense of fulfilment that she has not compromised with her principles and moral values. R. K. Narayan signifies women who are subservient eventually emerge as unbending pillars of beliefs and morals in many a household.

The aunt character in *The Painter of Signs* is the replica of the old ladies of Malgudi. The house bound aunt's only purpose in life is to care for and tend to her nephew's needs. Her sense of fulfillment is through Raman, her reminiscences of her life, and prayer and devotion to God. She is unable to understand Raman's living together with Daisy—a runaway woman whose caste, parentage and history are unknown. In the end, although she does not concede to his wishes, she is mature enough to respect an individual's decision and leaves him at his own disposal. Her sense of fulfilment culminates with her going on a yatra.

Consciousness and emotion are attributes of mankind. Emotion involves functional aspects like response and conscious aspects like feelings whereas consciousness comprises of levels like wakefulness and contentment. Consciousness and emotions are

thus interconnected. R. K. Narayan's female characters like Swami's mother in *Swami and Friends* and Krishna's wife, Susila in *The English Teacher* are embodiment of emotional and behavioral consciousness. They are the images of ideal and perfect housewives whose emotions like shame, guilt, embarrassment, and pride revolve around their family members. The essence of Swami's mother and Susila lies in the thrills, pangs, and in the satisfaction that they derive in running a well-ordered household. These traits of Susila make her husband Krishna fall in love with her. Krishna proudly admits the fact that his wife is a perfectionist, unsparing and violent when met with slovenliness" (*The English Teacher* 29).

Wives were always looked upon as heir-producers and dowry-bringers but R. K. Narayan's Susila is an accomplished housekeeper, a perfect, but ruthless accountant in whose hands a hundred rupees seemed to do the work of two hundred rupees. She is an excellent financier who saves money to encounter all essentialities, and a source of inspiration to her husband when struggling with writer's block. She is a loving companion and an affectionate friend to her husband, when she listens eagerly to all the things her husband tells her. She is an academician when she takes sides with her husband in his discussions. She hates everyone he hates, and respects anyone he respects. Susila's mother-in-law expresses her view on Susila as a modest but not obstinate girl.

Her discipline and perfection make her a typical Indian housewife and a caring mother, in her insistence on her child to be kept clean and well groomed. Ian Mackean says: "She initiates the most unpredictable event of all, her psychic communication with her husband from beyond death" (22). For instance, even in her fatal illness and after her death as a guiding spirit through psychic communication, she directs him to self-development. The words of the mediator about the dead Susila in her occult meeting are:

The lady wants to say that she is deeply devoted to her husband and child and the family as ever. She watches over them and prays for their

welfare', reveals her to be a devoted wife and mother, though dead (*The English Teacher* 116).

Susila, after her death, attains spiritual form in the novel. From a mere housewife, she is transcended to the world of the dead. Equally, at the end of the novel phrases like 'the golden glow' and 'the new light', with reference to the 'still jasmine scented Susila' are reflections of her purity of spirit. It is she who shows the dawn to her husband by paving room for his self-realization and self-development. S. N. Radhika Lakshmi says: "Susila's spirit infuses into the almost suicidal Krishna the strength and courage to face the harsh realities of life." (4) Probing into the psyche of the Malgudi women, one understands the fact that they are what they seem to be. They do not wear any mask to hide their real identity.

R. K. Narayan's novels reiterate the prevalence of male dominance in the Indian household. And his Malgudian women prove themselves to be redeemers, and upholders of tradition and rituals within their homes offering calm and security to the uprooted and confused men around them.

In a world where customs and rituals are closing their hold, but where the pursuit of individual happiness is not yet a culturally respectable endeavor, marriage still offers the most bracing kind of personal fulfillment to many women. In addition, marriage restricts women from experiencing freedom through repression and manipulation.

The women characters in the novels of Narayan seem to enjoy domesticity and confinement while realizing their aspirations and needs. Narayan's Malgudi women are similar to W.B. Yeats' description of women in his lines "On Woman":

May God be praised for woman?
That gives up all her mind,
A man may find in no man.
A friendship of her kind
That covers all he has brought.
As with her flesh and bone,
Nor quarrels with a thought.
Because it is not her own. (124)

These lines of Yeats aptly reinforce the concept that women find fulfillment from serving their

Families also portrayed by Narayan in his selected novels. R. K. Narayan's women are home-loving birds and their ambitions and aspirations center around the well-being of the members of their family.

R. K. Narayan not only portrays the perfect Malgudian woman, but also the imperfect woman who lacks the sense of fulfilment and becomes a destructive force. For example, the schoolmaster's wife in *The English Teacher* is the projection of a careless wife who neither cares for her husband, nor for her children. She is untidy, ill-mannered, and uncultured enough to always grit her teeth in anger. She underestimates her husband's idea of starting a school. Only when the news of her husband's disappearance, does she realize her error and seeks his forgiveness, which ends in vain. She is in contrast with Krishna's wife, Susila, in house keeping. S. N. Radhika Lakshmi, the eminent critic, calls her 'a termagant wife' who does not allow her children to study in her husband's school and brings them up in a wild and barbaric manner.

Savitri in the novel *The Dark Room* runs away from home and her tyrannical husband. She does not know how to handle her husband and just puts up with him and his atrocities. Her endurance reaches its brink and breaks up when her husband shows liking towards a modern girl in his office. She finally tries to drown herself discontented with her life but is saved by a low-caste couple. However, her cowardice sends her back to her husband because of her impatience with the querulous priest. Pankaj Mishra speaks on her cowardice as: "Class as much as caste and gender is a prison here, and we leave her in it, desolate, "haunted" by the man's "shining hungry face" (2).

It is true that many women try to revolt against male domination but ultimately, they get defeated in their efforts to establish their identity. Their inability at domesticity results in discontentment and finally disrupts them.

According to the value-fulfillment theory, well-being, or a 'good' human life, is achieved when you pursue and actualize, realize, or fulfill your

values over time. Most people value things like family, friendships, meaningful work, skill development, and leisure activities. To the Malgudi women, family and God are the valuable things and serving them caters to their sense of fulfilment and helps them achieve self-actualization, self-realization, and self-image.

References

1. Davidson, Frank. S. "Martin Boyd's Women: Issues of Fulfillment", *Common Wealth and American Women's Discourse: Essays in Criticism*. ed A.L. McLeod, New Delhi: Sterling Publishing Private Limited, 1996, p.109.
2. Goontelilleke, D.C.R.A. "Reflections of Women's Discourse", *Common Wealth and American Women's Discourse: Essays in Criticism*. A.L. McLeod New Delhi: Sterling Publishing Private Limited, 1996, p.10.
3. Tiberius, Valerie. "The Value Fulfillment Theory of Well-Being", *Well-Being as Value Fulfillment: How We Can Help Each Other to Live Well*, Oxford, 22 Nov. 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198809494.003.0002>, accessed 19 Jan. 2024.
4. Narayan, R. K. *Swami and Friends*. Mysore: Indian Thought Publications, 1944. p.23.
4. Narayan, R. K. *The Guide*, Chennai: Indian Thought Publications, 1958, p.154.
5. Narayan, R. K. *The English Teacher*. Madras: Indian Thought Publications, 1994, p.29.
6. McKean, Ian. "What about our own roots?", *Essays on Various Aspects of English Literature* Jan. 2001, London School of Journalism. March 2003. <www.english-Literature.org/essays/44k>
7. Narayan, R.K. *The English Teacher*. Op.cit., p.116.
8. Ibid., p.130.
9. Lakshmi, S. N. Radhika. "From Predictability to Unpredictability" *Essayson Various Aspects of English Literature*. Jan. 2001, London School of Journalism. March 2003 <www.englishliterature.org/essays/~44k>.
10. Yeats, W. B. "On Woman", *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats*. London: Macmillan, 1961, p.164.
11. Mishra, Pankaj. "The Great Narayan", *Journal of South Indian Literature. The New York Review of Books*. Feb. 2001, 3 March 2003. p.2. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14016>.

UNVEILING GENDER NARRATIVES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FEMINISM IN THE FICTIONAL REALMS OF ANITA DESAI AND MULK RAJ ANAND

Mr. ARUNA KUMAR PATRO

*Research Scholar
G.I.E.T. University, Gunupur, Odisha*

Dr. ESS NARAYANA TRIMURTHY

*Associate Professor, Department of English (BSH)
G.I.E.T. University, Gunupur, Odisha*

Dr. RABINDRA KUMAR PRADHAN

*Assistant Professor, Department of English (Stage-III)
S.C.S. Autonomous College, Puri, Odisha*

Abstract

This paper undertakes a comprehensive exploration of gender studies within the fictional landscapes crafted by two stalwarts of Indian literature, Anita Desai and Mulk Raj Anand. Delving into their diverse narratives, the study seeks to unravel the nuanced portrayals of gender roles, identity, and the socio-cultural underpinnings that shape the experiences of male and female characters alike. This paper embarks on a comparative journey, delving into the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies within their respective fictions. Both authors, although distinct in style and thematic focus, share a common ground in their profound reflections on societal norms and the complex dynamics between the sexes. Anita Desai's works, such as "Clear Light of Day" and "Cry, The Peacock," present a canvas where female characters navigate the intricate web of societal expectations, examining the conflicts between tradition and individual agency. Desai's narratives often unveil the psychological complexities of her female protagonists, offering a poignant exploration of the challenges posed by patriarchal structures. In contrast, Mulk Raj Anand's literary oeuvre, encompassing classics like "Untouchable" and "Two Leaves and a Bud," extends the discourse to the broader spectrum of gender dynamics. Anand's narratives transcend the confines of traditional gender roles, incorporating a socio-economic lens that magnifies the intersectionality of gender and class struggles. The objective of the paper is to critically analyze the ways in which Desai and Anand contribute to the discourse on gender studies, shedding light on their distinctive approaches, thematic focuses, and the socio-cultural landscapes they depict.

Keywords: Identity, Gender Narratives, Conflicts, Patriarchal Structure, Gender Dynamics.

Introduction

Anita Desai is an acclaimed Indian novelist and short story writer known for her insightful explorations of the complexities of human relationships and the clash between tradition and modernity. Born in Mussoorie, India, Desai grew up in a multilingual and culturally rich environment, which significantly influenced her later works. Desai's literary career took off with the publication of her debut novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), followed by *Voices in the City* (1965) and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*

(1975). However, it was with *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and *In Custody* (1984) that she gained international recognition, earning her nominations for the Booker Prize. Her writing often reflects the changing social fabric of post-colonial India, examining themes such as family dynamics, societal expectations, and the impact of modernization on traditional values. Her intricate narratives delve into the interior lives of her characters, portraying their struggles and aspirations.

Anita Desai has received numerous awards for

her contributions to literature, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honors. She has been associated with prestigious institutions like MIT and Smith College, further establishing herself as a respected voice in the global literary landscape. Desai's profound storytelling and exploration of human psychology have left an indelible mark on contemporary Indian literature. Mulk Raj Anand was a prominent Indian writer, social activist, and one of the pioneers of Indian English literature. Born in Peshawar, British India (now in Pakistan), Anand belonged to a prosperous family. He studied in India and England, earning a degree in Philosophy from the University of London. Anand's literary career commenced with the publication of his debut novel, *Untouchable* (1935), which explored the harsh realities of untouchability in Indian society. This work marked the beginning of his engagement with social issues and his commitment to advocating for social justice through literature. Anand's storytelling prowess and compassionate portrayal of marginalized characters garnered international acclaim.

Throughout his prolific career, Anand authored numerous novels, short stories, and essays that delved into the intricacies of caste, poverty, and the human condition. Some of his notable works include *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), and *The Private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953). His literary contributions were not confined to fiction; he also wrote extensively on art, culture, and philosophy. Apart from his literary pursuits, Mulk Raj Anand actively participated in India's independence movement and was associated with various social and political causes. His writing played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of modern Indian literature, and his legacy endures as a testament to the power of literature in addressing societal inequities. Mulk Raj Anand's impact on the literary and social landscape of India remains significant, solidifying his place as a literary luminary.

Before delving directly into the study of selected novels of Anita Desai and Mulk Raj Anand, a short analysis on feminism, the key principles of feminism

and the feminist movements is imperative. The roots of feminism can be traced back through centuries, emerging in response to the historical subjugation and marginalization of women. Early feminist movements gained momentum during the suffrage era in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where women fought for the right to vote. The struggle for political representation marked a foundational moment, shaping the trajectory of feminist activism. Feminism is founded on several key principles, including gender equality, dismantling patriarchal structures, and challenging ingrained societal norms. At its essence, feminism advocates for the acknowledgment and rectification of gender-based injustices, recognizing that the struggles faced by women are often deeply rooted in systemic and cultural biases. Feminist movements have been instrumental in driving legislative and policy changes globally. Advocacy for women's suffrage, reproductive rights, and legal reforms to address gender-based violence are just a few examples of feminist initiatives that have shaped the legal landscape.

Feminism delves into the realm of cultural critique, challenging traditional gender roles and representations perpetuated in media, literature, and popular culture. The movement questions harmful stereotypes and works to redefine societal expectations surrounding femininity and masculinity. By reshaping cultural narratives, feminists aim to create a more inclusive and equitable society. Economic empowerment is a fundamental aspect of feminist goals. Addressing issues such as the gender pay gap, workplace discrimination, and unequal access to economic opportunities, feminists advocate for structural changes within economic systems to ensure fair representation and remuneration for women. Feminism has evolved into a global movement, with activists working to address the unique challenges faced by women in different cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts. Issues such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and access to education are central to international feminist efforts, highlighting the interconnectedness of women's struggles worldwide.

Feminism has had a profound impact on literature, influencing the way gender roles, power dynamics, and the female experience are portrayed. Literary works reflecting feminist perspectives often challenge societal norms, question traditional gender roles, and explore the complexities of women's lives. Feminist literature often reimagines female characters beyond traditional stereotypes. Authors strive to create multidimensional, complex women with agency, aspirations, and flaws. By doing so, they challenge preconceived notions about women's roles in society. Feminist literature delves into a wide range of women's issues, including reproductive rights, gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, and the complexities of identity. By addressing these topics, authors contribute to broader conversations about gender equality and social justice. Feminist literature frequently explores narratives of empowerment, showcasing women who overcome adversity and assert their autonomy. These narratives inspire readers and contribute to the broader cultural shift towards recognizing women's strength, resilience, and capacity for self-determination. Feminist literature seeks to deconstruct and challenge gender stereotypes that limit women. By portraying characters who defy conventional expectations, authors contribute to dismantling harmful assumptions about women's roles, abilities, and aspirations. Many feminist works serve as voices of resistance, challenging oppressive systems and advocating for social change. Literature becomes a powerful tool for expressing dissent, fostering awareness, and mobilizing readers to engage in activism. Feminism has influenced the evolution of literary genres, from early feminist literature to contemporary feminist science fiction and speculative fiction. These genres provide imaginative spaces to explore alternative realities and envision societies free from gender-based inequalities. The rise of autobiographical narratives in feminist literature allows women to share their personal stories and experiences. Memoirs and autobiographies become powerful tools for women to reclaim their narratives, challenge stereotypes, and contribute to a collective understanding of diverse female experiences.

Prof. K.R.S. Iyenger says: *Cry The Peacock* scores because Maya is at once the center and circumference in this world. Her insanity-rather she is sane, historical or insane-fills the whole book and gives it form as well as life” (K. R. S Iyengar, 16). Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* intricately explores the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies, offering a nuanced examination of the complex interplay between societal expectations, personal identity, and the constraints imposed by traditional gender roles. Through the lens of the protagonist Maya, Desai delves into the psychological and emotional landscapes of a woman navigating the restrictive norms of a patriarchal society. True picture of women is given by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, “Beat them, starve them, how you like them, they will sit and look with animal eyes and never raise a head to defend themselves...” (Ruth Prawar, 97).

Maya's character serves as the focal point for unraveling the psychological struggles imposed by societal expectations. Trapped in a stifling marriage, she grapples with the suffocating pressure to conform to conventional gender roles. Desai's exploration of Maya's internal turmoil sheds light on the impact of societal norms on women's mental and emotional well-being. The novel scrutinizes the institution of marriage as a social construct, particularly its implications for women. Maya's marriage becomes a microcosm of the larger societal expectations placed upon women to conform to traditional roles. Desai critiques the limitations and power dynamics inherent in such unions, contributing to a broader discourse on the intersection of marriage and gender. Desai delves into the repression of female sexuality within the societal norms of the time. Maya's exploration of her own desires and the societal repercussions of her emotional and sexual needs illuminate the restrictive attitudes towards women's autonomy and the consequences of defying established norms.

The novel navigates the complexities of motherhood and its impact on a woman's identity. Maya's experiences as a mother are entwined with societal expectations, creating a tension between

personal fulfillment and the roles imposed upon her. Desai explores how motherhood can be both a source of fulfillment and a source of constraint for women. Maya's sense of isolation and alienation underscores the novel's exploration of gender dynamics. The societal constraints placed on her contribute to her emotional isolation, highlighting the profound impact of gender roles on personal relationships. Desai crafts a narrative that resonates with the broader theme of women navigating societal expectations in solitude. Prof. K. R. S. Iyengar says: *Cry The Peacock* scores because Maya is at once the center and circumference in this world. Her insanity-rather she is sane, historical or insane-fills the whole book and gives it form as well as life" (K. R. S Iyengar, 16). Meena Belliappa asserts that it is "a remarkable attempt to fuse fantasy with perpetual experience" (Meena Belliappa, 25).

Maya's descent into a world of fantasy and escapism becomes a metaphor for the consequences of stifling gender norms. Her mental unraveling reflects the toll of societal expectations on women's mental health. Maya is a victim of emotional as well as physical depression. She says: "... He did not give another thought to me, to either soft willing body or the lonely waiting mind that waited near the bed..."(9). Desai skillfully uses Maya's psychological journey to explore the repercussions of a society that limits women's agency. The peacock, a recurring motif in the novel, serves as a powerful symbol. In Indian culture, the peacock is associated with beauty and immortality, but it also symbolizes unpredictability and pride. Maya's identification with the peacock becomes a metaphor for her desire for freedom and her unwillingness to conform to societal expectations, adding a layer of complexity to the gender narrative. Maya's revolt against the social order is an aesthetic revolt-the revolt of sensibility against the logic of the so called normality that seeks to colonise desire through a network of institutional mechanisms: "...All order is gone out of my life, all formality, there is no plan, no peace nothing to keep me with the pattern of familiar, everything living and doing..."(195).

Cry, The Peacock can be seen as a feminist

critique of traditional gender norms. Kate Millett shows the dichotomy of femininity as a cultural bias. Sex is biological and gender is social imposition. She asserts that patriarchal authority has given women a minority status that inflicts on her a "self-hatred and self rejection, a contempt both herself and for her fellows, (Millett, 55).

Desai questions the stifling constraints placed on women by societal expectations and critiques the patriarchal structures that limit women's choices and autonomy. Through Maya's story, Desai engages in a broader dialogue about the need to dismantle oppressive gender norms. Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* intricately weaves a narrative that delves into the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies, offering a nuanced exploration of familial relationships, societal expectations, and the evolving roles of women in post-colonial India. Through the lens of the Das family, Desai unveils the complexities of gender dynamics, juxtaposing tradition and modernity. At the heart of the novel lies the intricate web of family dynamics, where gender roles are deeply ingrained. Desai presents the Das family as a microcosm of the broader societal expectations imposed on women. Bim, the protagonist, embodies the struggles of a woman attempting to reconcile personal aspirations with familial obligations, reflecting the tension between tradition and modernity.

The relationship between Bim and her sisters becomes a lens through which Desai explores feminine identity. Bim's responsibilities as the eldest sister shape her identity, highlighting the societal expectations placed on women to fulfil caregiving roles. The sibling dynamics become a metaphor for the complexities of women's relationships and the negotiations required to navigate societal norms. The novel juxtaposes traditional values with the changing landscape of post-colonial India. Bim represents a clash between tradition and modernity, aspiring for intellectual pursuits and independence in a society still rooted in conservative expectations for women. Desai captures the tension between old and new

norms, offering a commentary on the evolving roles of women in a changing India.

Desai navigates the theme of repression and liberation within the context of gender. Bim's internal struggles, shaped by societal expectations, represent the repressive forces that limit women's autonomy. However, the novel also portrays moments of liberation, where Bim seeks intellectual pursuits and self-discovery, challenging traditional gender constraints. The exploration of marital relationships becomes a crucial aspect of gender studies in the novel. Desai depicts the varied experiences of the Das sisters within the institution of marriage, showcasing the ways in which marital expectations can both constrain and liberate women. The differing trajectories of the sisters' marriages underscore the complex negotiations of autonomy within familial structures.

Desai subtly explores the theme of female friendship and solidarity. Bim's relationship with her friend Mira represents a supportive bond that transcends societal expectations. Through their friendship, Desai highlights the importance of female companionship as a source of strength and understanding in the face of societal pressures. The novel also engages with the effects of aging on gender dynamics. Bim's reflections on her past and her evolving relationships with her sisters underscore the changing roles and expectations of women as they age. Desai nuances the portrayal of women, moving beyond the limitations of youth to explore the complexities of identity in later stages of life. Desai weaves intergenerational perspectives into the narrative, providing glimpses into the lives of Bim's aunts and the choices they made. This aspect contributes to the broader gender discourse by illustrating how societal expectations and choices evolve across generations, shaping the experiences of women in different eras.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud* intricately weaves a narrative that offers profound insights into the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies. Set against the backdrop of the exploitation faced by tea plantation workers in colonial India, the novella explores the intersectionality of gender, class,

and power dynamics, unravelling the intricate tapestry of oppression that women experience. The novella vividly portrays the harsh realities faced by women labourers in the tea plantations. In the colonial context, women were not only subject to the oppressive labour conditions but were also victims of gender-based exploitation. Anand exposes the dual oppression faced by women, drawing attention to how colonial structures intersected with patriarchal norms, intensifying the exploitation of female workers.

The economic disparities within the plantation system are intrinsically linked to gender roles. Women, as a marginalized labour force, faced not only economic exploitation but also a reinforcement of traditional gender roles. Anand depicts the stringent norms dictating women's lives, emphasizing how economic structures perpetuated and exacerbated gender inequalities. The vulnerability of women within the plantation system is heightened by the prevalent sexual exploitation. Anand brings attention to the pervasive abuse of power, where male supervisors leverage their authority to exploit female workers. This dimension of gender studies sheds light on how structures of power intersect with gender, leading to the systematic victimization of women.

The portrayal of the female characters, particularly the protagonist, highlights the burdens of motherhood within oppressive conditions. Anand explores the sacrifices women make for their families, emphasizing the complex interplay of maternal responsibilities, societal expectations, and the struggle for survival. This aspect adds a nuanced layer to the gender narrative, depicting the multifaceted nature of women's experiences. Despite their marginalization, the women in *Two Leaves and a Bud* are not mere victims. Anand subtly emphasizes the strength and resilience of women who forge connections and resist exploitation. The concept of solidarity becomes integral to the gender discourse, showcasing how collective efforts can become a potent tool for challenging oppressive structures.

The novella underscores the transformative

power of education for women. Anand introduces the character of Rupa, who, through education, breaks free from the traditional roles imposed on women. This narrative arc aligns with feminist discourse on education as a means of empowerment, allowing women to challenge societal norms and assert their agency. The intersectionality of gender, class, and colonial oppression is a central theme in the novella. By exploring how these aspects intersect and compound the struggles of women, Anand contributes to a broader discourse on social justice. *Two Leaves and a Bud* becomes a lens through which readers can critically examine the interconnected nature of various systems of oppression.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* masterfully explores the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies, unravelling the intricate intersectionality of caste, class, and gender in colonial India. The novel centres around Bakha, an *untouchable* protagonist, shedding light on the oppressive realities faced by marginalized communities and, specifically, the gender dynamics within. M. K. Naik remarks, *Untouchable*, Anand's fictional genius sprang up fully armed like Pallas Athene from the head of Jove. Never again was he to write novel in which content and form were so perfectly fused, a triumph of creativity achieving the maximum of effect with minimum of means. The novel delves into the oppressive caste system, portraying how it intersects with gender to magnify the marginalization of Dalit women. Anand exposes the layered discrimination faced by women like Bakha's sister Sohini, who not only grapple with untouchability but also navigate the restrictive norms imposed on their gender.

Anand doesn't shy away from portraying patriarchy within Dalit communities, challenging the notion that oppression is solely external. The novel depicts instances of gender-based violence, control, and the enforcement of traditional gender roles within the marginalized community, adding complexity to the gender discourse. Sohini's character becomes a focal point for understanding the gendered experiences of Dalit women. Her clandestine attempts to find moments of autonomy, such as bathing in the river,

illustrate the limited agency available to her. Anand skillfully weaves Sohini's narrative into the broader fabric of gender oppression, emphasizing the intersectionality of her struggles.

The vulnerability of Dalit women to sexual exploitation is a stark theme in the novel. Bakha's encounter with a higher-caste woman and Sohini's harrowing experience exemplify how the intersection of caste and gender magnifies the vulnerability of Dalit women to sexual violence, shedding light on the power dynamics at play. *Untouchable* scrutinizes the rigid adherence to traditional gender roles within the Dalit community. Anand critiques how societal expectations limit women's agency, reinforcing stereotypical roles of subservience and domesticity. This aspect of the narrative contributes to the broader discourse on the interplay between caste and patriarchal norms.

While the focus is on Sohini's struggles, Bakha's character undergoes a transformation in his understanding of gender dynamics. Through his experiences and interactions, the novel explores Bakha's evolving awareness of the challenges faced by Dalit women. This narrative arc serves as a vehicle for Anand to examine how men within marginalized communities can contribute to dismantling oppressive gender norms. *Untouchable* serves as a powerful commentary on intersectionality, illustrating how caste, class, and gender intersect to compound the oppression faced by Dalit women. Anand's narrative becomes a lens through which readers can critically engage with the interconnected nature of various systems of discrimination, contributing to a broader discourse on social justice.

Conclusion

Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* offers a rich and layered exploration of gender studies through the lens of Maya's experiences. The novel delves into the psychological, emotional, and societal dimensions of a woman's life, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in navigating traditional gender roles. Desai's narrative becomes a poignant reflection on the individual and societal consequences of confining women to

predetermined roles, urging readers to critically examine and challenge established norms. Desai's *Clear Light of Day* offers a rich tapestry of gender studies, skilfully unravelling the complexities of familial relationships and societal expectations. Through Bim's journey and the dynamics of the Das family, Desai navigates the tensions between tradition and modernity, providing readers with a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of gender roles in post-colonial India. The novel serves as a compelling exploration of women's identities, relationships, and aspirations in a changing social landscape.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud* serves as a rich tapestry through which the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies are explored. The novella delves into the complexities of women's lives within the colonial context, unravelling the intricate threads of exploitation, resilience, and solidarity. By intertwining the personal narratives of female characters with broader social structures, Anand creates a narrative that resonates with the nuanced realities of gendered experiences within oppressive systems. Anand's *Untouchable* also meticulously explores the multifaceted dimensions of gender studies within the context of caste oppression. The novel, while focused on the Dalit experience, extends its examination to the gendered experiences within marginalized communities, offering a nuanced portrayal of the intersectionality of discrimination. Through characters like Sohini and Bakha, Anand navigates the complexities of gender dynamics, contributing to a rich and critical understanding of the intersecting forces that shape the lives of marginalized individuals in colonial India.

References

1. Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. Wishart Books, 1935.
2. Anand, Mulk Raj. *Two Leaves and a Bud*. Lawrence & Wishart, 1937. "Anita Desai."

3. Belliappa, Meena. Anita Desai: A Study of Her Fiction. India, Writers Workshop, 1971. Desai, Anita. *Clear Light of Day*, London: William Heinemann, 1980.
4. Desai, Anita. *Cry, the Peacock*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 2006. Print.
5. Giri, Pankaj. "Book Review – Clear Light of Day by Anita Desai." *Pankaj Giri-An Author by Chance*, Wordpress, 29 Aug. 2022, pankajgiri.author.wordpress.com/2022/08/29/book-review-clear-light-of-day-by-anita-desai/.
6. Iyengar, K. R.S. *Indian Writing in English*. India, Sterling Publishers, 1984.
7. Jhabwala, Ruth Praver. *Silence Exile and Cunning*, New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1983.
8. Kumar, Radha. *The History of Doing*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998. Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. London, Rupert Hart, 1968.
9. Mulk Raj Anand. *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 2 Dec. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mulk_Raj_Anand.
10. Naik, M.K. Mulk Raj Anand, *Indian Literature* Vol.6, No-3/4, July-December 1973, Sahitya Akademi.
11. Ray, Raka. *Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India*. University of Minnesota Press; Minneapolis, MN. 1999.
12. Sen, Amartya. "The Many Faces of Gender Inequality." *The New Republic*, September 17, 2001.
13. Sethi, Sunil. "Book Review: Clear Light of Day by Anita Desai." *India Today*, 11 Dec. 2014, www.indiatoday.in/magazine/society-and-the-arts/books/story/19801215-book-review-clear-light-of-day-by-anita-desai-773628-2013-11-30.

REPRESENTATION OF SURPANAKHA IN *PURUSHOTTAMAYANA*: A FEMINIST REVISIONIST READING

IRAMMA V. H

*Assistant Professor and Ph.D. Scholar, Department of English
Bangalore University, Karnataka*

Dr. SHOBHA M

*Research Supervisor, Professor, Department of English
Bangalore University, Karnataka*

Abstract

The contemporary writers rewrite, revisit, and reimagine epics with different religious, regional, political, social, and ideological standpoints. They subvert the androcentric and patriarchal ideology, thereby, challenging the mainstream version of the epics. Writers such as Kavita Kane, Devdutt Patnaik, Anand Neelakantan, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Volga, and others have reinterpreted the major episodes/characters of the Ramayana to question the oppressive patriarchal ideology. The present paper attempts a feminist revisionist reading of the character of Surpanakha in the recent Kannada novel, Purushottamayana by Purushottam Das Heggade published in March 2023. The novel reconstructs Surpanakha's character through new, creatively imagined dimensions of her personality and subjectivity. Heggade focuses on the points of confusion and discomfort in the Rama story and opens up new possibilities of re-imagining and restructuring the major episodes and characters to argue for women's empowerment and restoration of their rightful position in contemporary history.

Keywords: *Mythology, Patriarchy, Feminist Revisioning, Subjectivity, Agency.*

Introduction

The contemporary developments in feminism and cultural studies propose new approaches to the study of epics. When writers rewrite, revisit, and reimagine epics, they do so with different religious, regional, political, social, and ideological standpoints. Modern writers subvert the androcentric and patriarchal ideology, thereby, challenging the mainstream version of the epics. They deconstruct stories and shift the focus on marginalized characters of the epics. Writers such as Kavita Kane, Devdutt Patnaik, Anand Neelakantan, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Volga, and others have reinterpreted the major episodes/characters of the *Ramayana* to question the oppressive patriarchal ideology. The present paper attempts a feminist revisionist reading of the character of Surpanakha in the recent Kannada novel, *Purushottamayana* by Purushottam Das Heggade published in March 2023. The novel reconstructs Surpanakha's character through new, creatively

imagined dimensions of her personality and subjectivity.

Materials and Methods

The paper engages with a detailed textual analysis of the novel, and interprets the character of Surpanakha through the feminist revisionist theoretical framework provided by writers such as Angela Carter, Alicia Ostriker, Adrienne Rich, and others.

Alicia Ostriker, in "The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking" examines the larger poetic structures and establishes the idea of revisionist mythmaking in women's poetry to redefine the identity of women and culture. She points to how myths construct the image of women along the binaries angel/monster, good/evil, etc. Feminist writers, however, deconstruct established myths to reconstruct the subjectivity of women characters. Ostriker defines the revisionist approach as "the figure or tale will be appropriated for altered ends, the old vessel filled with new wine,

initially satisfying the thirst of the individual poet but ultimately making cultural change possible” (72). Further, she argues that the new narratives are not just corrections to the existing ones, but representations of women’s individuality, their experience and retrieving images of “what women have collectively and historically suffered” (73). She observes that revisionist writers interrogate prejudiced constructions of women and the social and literary conventions supporting them. Also, these writers create female-female relationships strengthen the position of women.

Bhagya Shree Nadamala, in “The Politics of Subversion, Power and Deviance: Sita, Surpanakha and Kaikeyi in Select Feminist Re-Visioning of *Ramayana*”, brings together the views of Adrienne Rich, S Wadhwa, and T Madhulika on feminist revisionist narratives. She argues that “the silence, the misrepresentation or the negative representation’ of the female characters in the mythological canon has gone through extensive scrutiny. These narratives also examine the ‘tyrannical, subjugating and subordinating co-ordinates (gender, class, race colour)’ in the canonical epics and counter them with dissenting voices from the periphery” (Nadamala).

Interpretation and Discussion

In *Purushottamayana*, Heggade offers a new perspective to the stereotypical characterization of Surpanakha as a synonym for all that is evil and immoral. He subverts the standard depiction of Surpanakha as a woman of wanton desires; instead, he portrays Surpanakha as the most beautiful woman and a devout wife. Surpanakha is renamed as ‘Surpanasika’ in this text because of her beautiful and straight nose. The author, in what may seem like a shocking connection, describes that Surpanakha resembles Sita in her beauty. After she has lost her husband in the war between Ravana and Kalakeyas, she settles in Janasthana with her two-year-old son, Shambukumara. Two episodes are chosen for analysis that demonstrate feminist revisionist agendas—the mutilation of Surpanakha in

Aranyakhanda and the meeting of Seetha and Surpanakha in Uttarakhanda.

Heggade reconstructs the episode of Surpanakha’s mutilation from a radical perspective. Unlike the standard versions of the *Ramayana*, in which Surpanakha instantly falls in love with Rama, Heggade portrays her as an innocent victim of patriarchy. She is not a woman of loose morals who wanders aimlessly in the forest, but is a princess, who is protected by guardians. Instead of portraying Surpanakha as a sexually explicit woman, Heggade introduces a new element in the narrative in which Vaishravana or Kubera (Surpanakha’s step brother) and Indra manipulate Surpanakha for a second marriage and prompt her to approach Rama and Lakshmana for the same. When, Surpanakha hesitates considering racial, gender, class, and ideological differences between Rama and herself, Vishravana convinces her by giving the examples of Dasharatha, who married Sumitra, a daughter of Keshiraja, a Shudra and the practice of polygamy in other instances. Interestingly, Vaishravana forces a promise from Surpanakha that she will cut off her nose, if she is unable to persuade Rama or Lakshmana. The promise of self-mutilation reflects misogyny, male arrogance and cunningness. Vishravana’s plan is to instigate Ravana and spark off a battle between Rama and Ravana, so that he can usurp the kingdom of Lanka. This background to the mutilation not only provides the motif but also exposes Vishravana’s (patriarchy’s) objectification of women’s body and exploitation of their psychological impulses.

Heggade deviates from the demonic mage of Surpanakha, and portrays her as beautiful as Seetha. It is his attempt to transpose the divine aspect of Seetha’s beauty to Surpanakha, not just physically but also emotionally. When Surpanakha approaches Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana, they are startled to see how identical the two women are. Surpanakha tries to persuade Rama as per Vaishravana’s advice, which reveals her naivety about men’s ways and her trust in Vaishravana.

Heggade garners readers' sympathy towards Surpanakha by exposing the sadist mindset of a typical male in both Rama and Lakshmana. They play with her emotions and make fun of her marriage proposal by sending her back and forth between themselves. The writer gives expression to Surpanakha's helplessness and frustration when she reveals her promise to Vaishravana. Instead of being sensible and sensitive towards her plight, Rama orders Lakshmana to cut off the tip of her nose. Moreover, he defends his act that by disfiguring Surpanakha mildly, he has helped her to fulfill her promise made to Vaishravana. Heggade demystifies Rama's stature and image by revealing his male chauvinistic attitude and arrogance.

Along with elevating Surpanakha's position in the mutilation episode, Heggade introduces another interesting reversal of character in Sita. Sita is not a submissive wife and a passive spectator, as in mainstream narratives she dislikes Rama and Lakshmana ridiculing Surpanakha's proposal. Sita has a strong voice in the narrative, as she rebukes Lakshmana that a man does not have any right to harm beautiful things in nature. Thus, the mutilation scene is recast as in indictment of patriarchy and upholding of women's integrity and strength of character.

The author gives expression to one of the goals of feminist revisionist writings, that is, to project and promote women's solidarity. The episode in Uttarakanda, where Surpanakha meets Sita in Valmiki's Ashram, is strategically placed in the narrative to showcase female bonding and friendship as essential to women's empowerment. Heggade introduces a new character called Ayomukhi, a rakshasa woman, who is also mutilated by Rama in the forest. Thus, mutilation is interpreted as a severe punishment for women who do not submit themselves to male supremacy. A meaningful, and a mutually gratifying bond is created among the three women—Sita, Surpanakha, and Ayomukhi in this part of the novel that enables the writer to offer a powerful critique of patriarchy. Surpanakha is portrayed as a mature woman who finds beauty in

nature and supports women who are humiliated or ill-treated by men. She transforms herself into an empowered woman and a strong woman who has successfully faced all the sufferings in her life. She describes herself as 'a warrior and a yogini'. Thus, Surpanakha's character evolves as a woman of love, care, honor, and sincerity through the trials and tribulations in her life. As Adrienne Rich says, in "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision", "Re-vision—the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction—is for us more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" (18). Heggade's novel is a feminist revisionist take on characters from the *Ramayana*, as the narrative critiques patriarchal structures and gives agency to those women in epics who have meekly subjected themselves to the atrocities of male domination.

Heggade expands the character of Seetha along with Surpanakha. For instance, Seetha is considerate towards indigenous people and criticizes Rama for oppressing them in the forest. She sympathizes with Pramila, Shambukha's wife, and his mother Surpanakha. A new concept, 'Pramila Rajya', (kingdom of women) to counter the concept of Rama rajya is introduced in the novel to propose an equal sharing of power between men and women. Surpanakha shares her grief with Sita over Rama's unfair killing of her son Shambuka, and her decision to leave Janasthan and continue her life in Lanka with Kumbinashi. She wants to renounce political power and lead a Vanaprastha (monk's) life. The decision of Surpanakha and Pramila to become monks perplexes Sita. Sita advises Surpanakha to establish the kingdom of Pramila (women) and rule Janasthana as their capital. She suggests that women can be empowered and free. The queens of 'PramilaRajya' become 'Pramile, like the king of Mithila is named as Janakaraja. She refers to queens from indigenous groups such as Tara of Kishkinda and Anala of Lanka who rule efficiently and encourages Surpanakha. Sita is given agency in the novel as she advocates empowerment of women in educational, political, administrative, and military

sectors, thereby challenging patriarchal dominance. She opposes the cruelty and violence of men through wars, and propagates peaceful handling of disputes between the states. With the guidance and support of Sita, Surpanakha establishes “Pramila Rajya”, and appoints her daughter-in-law Pramila as the queen of Janasthana.

True to the revisionist desire of the narrative, Sita and Surpanakha are individuated; they succeed in transforming the prejudices and restrictions against women to herald a new chapter for women. Female bonding is presented as the need of the hour to counter the oppressive force of patriarchy. Sita also critiques women who subject themselves to the dictates of patriarchy propagated through *Manusmriti*. Pramilarajya is a crusade against historically constructed, marginalized status of women, while Ramarajya is criticized as supporting and entrenching Varnashrama Dharma.

Conclusion

Purushottamayana reconstructs the characters of Surpanakha and Sita by subverting their depiction in

mainstream narratives of the *Ramayana*. Heggade focuses on the points of confusion and discomfort in the Rama story and opens up new possibilities of re-imagining and restructuring the major episodes and characters to argue for women’s empowerment and restoration of their rightful position in contemporary history.

References

1. Heggade, Purushottham Das. *Purushottamayana*. Vamshi Publications, 2023.
2. Nadamala, Bhagya Shree. “The Politics of Subversion, Power and Deviance: Sita, Surpanakha and Kaikeyi in Select Feminist Re-Visioning of *Ramayana*.” *Journal of Positive School of Psychology*, 2022.
3. Ostriker, Alicia. “The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking.” *The University of Chicago Press*, 2013. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3173482.
4. Rich, Adrienne. “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision (1971).” *College English*, vol. 34, no. 1, Oct. 1972, pp. 18–30, *National Council of Teachers of English* JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/375215.

WHITE TEETH AS HYSTERICAL REALISM – A STUDY

SEEMA P. KARABASANNAVAR

Ph.D. Research Scholar

KSAW College, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the work of contemporary British novelist, essayist and short story writer Zadie Smith with special regard to her first and most acclaimed novel, White Teeth considering the definition and characters of 'Hysterical realism' in general and also considering James Wood definitions and his criticism in particular, who coined the term 'Hysterical realism'. Beginning with the meaning, definition, its origin and characters of hysterical realism a brief discussion is made about forefathers this genre and their works. An attempt is made to trace the characters of hysterical realism in the novel White Teeth by analyzing and explaining why it is included in the emblem of the hysterical realist novel. And also Smith's response to Wood's criticism is also discussed.

Keywords: *White Teeth, Hysterical Realism, James Wood, Zadie Smith, Charles Dickens, Realism, Contemporary Novels, Big, Ambitious.*

Introduction

Zadie Smith is one of the most acclaimed young, contemporary British novelist, essayist and short story writers of 20th century. She is born on 25th December 1975 in Northwest London and brought up in Willesden to Jamaican mother Yvonne Belly and British father Harvey Smith. She became sensation in the literary world with the publication of her first novel, *White Teeth*. She is specially known for her treatment of race, religion, identity, her strange characters and witty dialogues. She is the professor of creative writings in English. Her first novel, *White Teeth* received many criticisms across worldwide. A famous critic James Wood grouped this under the category of 'Hysterical Realism'; a new literary genre emerged during 20th century. Here an attempt is made to analyze *White Teeth* as a novel of Hysterical Realism by tracing the characteristics of Hysterical Realism.

Plot

Plot of the novel revolves around two wartime friends of different race, religion and ethnicity. One is Englishman Alfred Archie Jones and the other is Bangladeshi Muslim Samad Miah Iqbal and their families in London. Novel begins on January 1st, 1975 with suicidal attempt of an Englishman, Archie Jones. Recently he is divorced by his Italian wife

after 30 years of marriage. But he is accidentally saved by a neighborhood butcher. Archie had a habit of flipping a coin to take decisions in the life. He flips the coin and decides to re-live his life and joins a New Year Party nearby him. There he meets a nineteen years old Jamaican girl Clara Bowden. Clara was also in grief of losing his boyfriend Ryan Topps. Attracted to each other Archie and Clara starts loving each other and gets married. They both have a child called Irie. Another family that we find in the novel is Samad Iqbal, a Bengali Muslim who gets married to Alsana Begam of same community. They both have twin child called Millat and Magid. After their service in military, they found low level employment. Archie in Paper folding, Samad in West End Curry House. Archie and Samad meet again in London. Clara and Alsana also become good friends and these families' lives in Willesden, London. Their children grow up together in multicultural and multiracial London.

Samad was very much fond of his root, culture, heritage and his family background. He was obsessed with the story of his great Grandfather Mangal Pandey, a Indian soldier fought in Indian Rebellion of 1857. Samad had very bad experience as a soldier and their treatment in military by British army Officers. He with Archie had encountered Dr.Marc

Pierre Perret, a Nazi collaborator. He compares his actions with the action of Mangal Pandey. Samad feels guilt for his own inability to follow his Islamic culture when he accidentally begins an affair with his kids school music teacher Poppy Burt Jones. Ashamed by his act and in the fear of seductive foreign culture he decides to send his son Magid to Bangladesh to restore his culture and connection of his family. Another twin Millat become rebellious, womanizer, fundamentalist and joins KEVIN, a fundamentalist Muslim brotherhood based in London. Another family we found in the novel is Joshua's family. Joshua is classmate of Millat and Irie. His father Marcus who was a Genetical Engineer was working on "Future Mouse Project". Magid who has become atheist, joins Marcus in his project. Millat hates his brother's intellectualism and atheism and become frigid and Icy. Irie, on her attempt to convince them, she is seduced by both Millat and Magid one after the other at same time. On the day of announcement of future mouse project, Millat brings gun to shoot project director Dr. Sick. Archie recognizes Dr. Sick as Dr. Marc Pierre Perret, a Nazi collaborator whom he once had saved during Second World War, saves again by Millat's bullet and future mouse escapes from the cage.

White Teeth as a Novel of Hysterical Realism: A Study

Cambridge dictionary defines, the term 'Hysterical' as 'unable to control your feelings or behavior because you are extremely frightened, excited and angry'. In simple terms 'realism' denotes the 'accurate, detailed, simple depiction of things that are true to life'. So, hysterical realism means, 'depiction of real life situation, once experiences or anything with extreme excitement'.

Hysterical realism is a newly emerged literary genre. It responds to the constantly changing requirements of the modern reader by playing with the principle of literary realism. It is a kind of writing style in which author attempts to talk about real social phenomenon with comic and strange characters, an odd plot and complicated prose. It is

characterized by strong contrast between complicated absurd prose, plotting, or characterization on one hand and careful, detailed investigation of real, specific social phenomenon on the other. Critics consider that these writings fail to achieve basic task of representing human being. They focus more on building thick plots and transmitting information than creating dynamic characters.

Hysterical realism which is also known as 'Recherche Postmodernism' is the term coined by English critic 'James Wood' in 2000 in his essay for the New Republic titled "Human, All Too Inhuman" for the long, complex, social novels. He grouped most of the contemporary British and American literature under this category. He points out some of such kind of writers like Don DeLillo (*Under World*) and Thomas Pynchon (*Gravity's Rainbow*). They are the fore fathers of this genre and it is continued in the works of David Foster Wallace (*Infinite Jest*). Some colored writers like Zadie Smith (*White Teeth*) and Salman Rushdie (*The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, *Midnight Children*). Wood points out that the novel *Underworld* is the darkest of all these books which carries with in it a number of characters and plots, fine prose on page after page which might never have an end. Wood says, "... another thousand or two thousand pages might be added" (Wood). He criticizes it as an attempt to turn fiction into social theory. According to Wood, such novels are characterized by excess of storytelling, complex plots and subplots, false meaning and hiding facts. He says that these novels are lifeless. He calls them as novels of immense self-consciousness. Hysterical realism is different from magical realism; it is next stop of magical realism. It is characterized by fear of silence.

White Teeth is big, ambitious and also most critically acclaimed novel of contemporary young British novelist Zadie Smith. It is considered as Zadie's masterpiece. She started writing this book when she was learning English literature at king's college Cambridge. It got published in 2000. She became popular worldwide and received many awards after its publication. She has been recognized as the 'Voice of new England'. Being a daughter of

mixed race child and born and brought up at Willesdon, a multicultural, multiracial society in London she includes many elements in her novel. *White Teeth* discusses of many things like class, race, gender inequality, family, friendship and cultural identity, postcolonial subjectivity among its South Asian and Caribbean characters in the colonizing metropolis and so many things.

James Wood while analyzing this novel grouped it under the category of Hysterical Realism in his essay "Human all Too Inhuman" where he discusses main features of this genre as, formal complexity, continuing at length, narrative and linguistic eccentricity, conceptual interconnection and shift in emphasis from "humans" to ideas and information. As Wood opines information has become a new characters and human feeling is absent. Stories and sub stories sprout on every page. Energy of these books lies in storytelling. Hysterical realism is different from magical realism. Magical realism is amalgamation of real and magical elements. Magical Realism combines elements of fantasy with realism. Hysterical realism is not completely away from realism, but conventions of realism are exhausted and overworked. In this objection are made at the moral level.

When we read the novel *White Teeth*, we find many characteristics of this genre called Hysterical realism. Let us discuss about them in brief.

White Teeth is very big and bulky book of 541 pages. It is written in four chapters with the names of the characters as the titles like, 1) Archie 1974, 1945, 2) Samad 1984, 1857, 3) Irie 1990, 1907, 4) Magid, Millat, and 5) Marcus 1992, 1999. Each parts is divided into five sub chapters. There are many stories and sub stories we find in the novel. It covers both past and present of the characters as we can notice in the title of the chapters with specific years with lots of information about important situation, movement, race, religion, and one's experiences and so on. Each character has its own story to tell. Past plays major role throughout the novel. Smith begins her novel with lines of Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest* 'What's past is

prologue'. We can notice it in the sub chapters of the novel like 'The Root Canal of Alfred Archibald Jones' and 'The Root Canal of Samad Miah Iqbal', 'The Root canal of Mangal Pandey', 'The Root canal of Hortense Bowden'. With this we can also find history of many continents like Italy, London, Indian, and Jamaican, and history World War II, Indian rebellion of 1857 and so on.

It is packed with content, ambitious in its scope, stretching out forward and backward in its time, across the continents, through generations, through different religions and political groups. Novels begin with New Year day and Archie's attempt to suicide. In its explanation of Archie's suicidal attempt we find many stories and sub stories of his life like Archie's first marriage with a beautiful Italian woman and her madness, families and traditions, cultural history of Italy, his divorce from her. Then again from sub story (his past) we find shift to main story (to his present) that is, his meeting with Clara Bowden, a Jamaican at New Year Party, his second marriage with Clara Bowden, here we come across Clara's past story that her earlier relationship with Ryan Topps (Clara's Boyfriend), his death in an accident. The racial problems she faces after she gets pregnant in white dominated London society, problems of mixed race marriages and so many things in one chapter.

With each character we find lot of information about the country, its people and its history and cultural heritage. In Samad's character we encounter Indian history, cultural heritage and ethnicity. Samad's participation in World War II, and his brave achievements which gets link back to history of his fore father Mangal Pandey, a famous warrior at Sepoy Mutiny. Samad struggles a lot in adjusting and raising his son in, and following his root culture, ethnicity, and tradition in London as an immigrant. Character of Irie Jones introduces us Jamaican history, along with London history, like this each every main and small characters have their own stories to tell. Stories and sub stories develop on every page. In the novel especially in middle section where things happen in both present and the past

makes it abundant. It is this magnitude, this largeness make it novel of hysterical realism. Wood opines that her writing is overflowing; there is random shift on themes because of huge paragraph with long story.

In the novel we find great quantity of underdeveloped characters and their interconnection in web like story. Characterization is the weakest element of this novel. Smith sketches every character with their own story, their past, and their manners so they are more certain and dull. Archie's character is dull and unimaginative. Though he is world war veteran but unable to faces the challenges of life and tries to commit suicide. He was after coin flipping habit to take major and minor decisions in life. Change is the main factor in the novel. Change in time, place, even in characters. They change their opinions and their minds and also countries. This leads to lacking in character development. We find it in the characters like Millat, Magid, and Irie and their development as a child and as adult. At the beginning Archie and Clara's characters seems central ones but later they are put down and didn't picked up again with the same care to the reader attention.

Alsna, a young wife of much older husband Samad, woman of Muslim community looks as a main character but her character did not developed properly. She is not allowed to tell her story properly. Samad character is well handled one. With his character development one can understand him and his psychology deeply. Many characters had drastic change at of heart and head. Magid who is sent to Bangladesh to retain his culture become atheist and take interest in science and joins with Marcus to help him in his future mouse project. Millat become fundamentalist, terrorist and joins KEVIN, Joshua who was loyal son of his scientist father Marcus joins animal right group called FATE. Irie becomes pregnant without knowing which twin is the father of her child. But, she doesn't worry about it because she knew that some secrets are permanent. Time, root, past won't matter as they are too torturous for her. Irie once who was very curious to know about her past has now has changed her mind.

Novels of this genre are extremely centripetal. The different stories all interwoven double and triple on themselves. Characters always find connections and links throughout the novel. Archie's and Clara's meeting after their separation from their partners, Archie's rescue by an unknown butcher, Archie and Samad meeting after long gap of world war friendship, Alsana and Clara's meeting, they both get pregnant at same time, Millat and Iries meeting with Joshua's family, so many incidents we find across the novel. We find all the characters together at the end of the novel. Almost all the characters of different religious and racial groups to attend the press conference called by a scientist Marcus to announce the successful cloning of mouse. Another notable connection that we find here is Archie and Samad meeting with Dr. Fazil, a Nazi whom Archie had saved once in war hiding from Samad. Wood points out smith's words said in one of her interview that she searches for 'ideas and themes that I can tie together-problem solving from other places and worlds'. He continues and says that smith is trying to solve the problems of modern London by binding every minute thing she can find. In the novels of this genre we find an enforcing connection that is finally theoretical rather than human. In life it is impossible experience such deep rooted integrity.

Information has only become character in this kind of big and contemporary novels. *White Teeth* overflows with quantity, over the length of the book only stories will develop but not characters. Now a days it has become a tradition to read such big novels of 500-700 pages without making complete sense of it or without experiencing anything sublime or beautiful. No one wants to reread such kind of books. Only thing that we get out of it is information.

Commenting on Smiths novel white teeth he gives hysterical summary of the novel as;

"Zadie Smith Novel features, among other things: a terrorist Islamic group based in north London with a silly acronym (Kevin), an animal-rights group called fate, a Jewish scientist who is genetically engineering engineering a mouse, a woman born during an earthquake in Kingston,

Jamaica, in 1907; a group of Jehovah's witness who think that the world is ending on December 31, 1992; and twins, one in Bangladesh and one in London, who both break their noses at about the same time." (Wood)

Though we find many things that are against law of physics, law of nature, books lacks in moral seriousness but details are convincing, funny and moving. Being a frustrated writer, she has a natural comic gift. Smith is the follower of Dickens and his writings. As Dickens is a greatest writer ever to write in English, he is followed by many new and young talented writers. As Wood points out,

"One obvious reason for the popularity of Dickens among contemporary novelists is that his way of creating and propelling theatrically alive characters offers an easy model for writers unable, or willing, to create characters who are fully human" (Wood).

This might be the reason for Smith's underdeveloped characters in *White Teeth* and also other novels which included in this genre.

To Wood's criticism Smith published a response in *The Guardian*. She politely and boldly supported the critic with her classic response as, 'a painfully accurate term for overblown, absurd prose'. She accepts him for including her novel *White Teeth* in the genre of hysterical Realism. She says it is quite natural for her style of writing. She sees through the past, present and future of her novels which lead her to brilliant essays on novels. As an outcome, she wrote a couple of essays entitled "Two Paths for the Novel" and "In Defence of Fiction". But she doesn't agree for his critique on other mentioned novelists of this genre that all have head and no heart. She says, fiction shouldn't be division of head and heart but it is useful employment of both. Hysterical realism tries to tell the readers how world works rather than how somebody felt about something. In an interview Smith has said that she ties different ideas and themes together from other places and worlds to solve the problem. It is not writers job to tell

personal feeling about something but to tell how world works.

Conclusion

To conclude, in his essay Wood categorized the novel *White Teeth* under the genre of hysterical realism mainly because it is big, ambitious novel. In its attempt to giving information, we find random shift on themes, plots and huge paragraphs with long stories and sub stories. In *White Teeth* we find vast variety of major and minor characters from different background, race. But because of theirs changing minds and manners we cannot find proper development of characters. Wood coined the term as a derogatory to describe some types of contemporary novels that turned fiction into social theory, that attempt to speak about life in totalizing way. These all characters may include the novel *White Teeth* under the category of hysterical realism. But, one can't undermine potentiality of the novel under these particular characters. When we read the novel white teeth, we find her sensibility as a creative writer. She gives the picture of multicultural London society in its present, past, future condition. She has become voice of immigrants, their struggle for identity. Not every reader feels the same about the novels wood has defined. It is up to the readers to decide. Smith's arguments in reaction to wood's criticism shows new path towards new model of narrative and helps the readers to think differently than offering the filtered copy of reality.

References

1. Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth*. London, Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Book 2000.
2. Wood, James. "Human All Too Inhuman" New Republic, July 24, 2000.
3. Smith, Zadie. "This is How it Feels to Me" The Guardian, Sat 13 October 2001.
4. <https://simple.Wikipedia.org/wiki/ZadieSmith>.
5. <https://simple.Wikipedia.org/Wiki/HystericalRealism>.

HEROS AND VILLAINS: A STUDY OF UNDERDOGS IN KOREAN WEBTOON *DICE*

RASHMI NAIK

Research Scholar

Bangalore University, Bengaluru

Abstract

This study delves into the dynamic portrayal of underdog characters within the Korean webtoon “Dice”. Through a qualitative analysis of the narrative structure, character development, and thematic elements, the research explores the dichotomy between heroes and villains as depicted in the series. Specifically, it examines the transformation of protagonists like Dongtae from marginalized individuals to empowered figures, juxtaposed against antagonists like X who embody themes of unchecked ambition and moral decay. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the thematic richness and socio-cultural significance of Korean webtoon storytelling.

Keywords: *Dice; Webtoon; Underdog; Heros and Villains.*

Introduction

Manhwa refers to graphic novels/comics that originate in South Korea and are written by South Koreans. It is similar to the Japanese Manga and the Chinese Manhua. “The terms seem identical but differs in its pronunciation and in the way the story is being told and, in its illustration”. (Chie, 2014 and Paberz, 2020). Korean manhwa’s come in various genre Some of the genres specific to the Asian graphic novels are Mecha, Slice of Life, Harem, Shonen-Ai and Yuri apart from genres such as action, adventure, comedy, crime, detective, drama, horror, fantasy, military, mystery, romance supernatural thriller and so on.

In the recent years, Manhwa has gained popularity outside South Korean with the coming of online platforms (The Korea Society) such as Naver, Daum, LINE, and Kakao Page. These Korean comics/manhwas and webtoons have grown rapidly in Korea over the past two decades (Jeong, 2020) wherein the production increased from 163 to 1,817 between 2010 and 2016 to 5,892 by July 2017. “The webtoon industry has seen an unprecedented growth with the coming in of digital media” (Salkowitz, 2021).

Comics predominantly emerge from subcultural communities in diverse nations, but their fundamental nature surpasses cultural confines. In their influential essay, “How to Read Donald Duck”

(1975), Dorfman and Mattelart assert that Disney comics function as a tool for advancing American cultural imperialism. They go on to argue that these comics not only dominate local cultural industries but also imprint their influence on the lifestyles and ideologies of those who engage with them. Likewise, these Korean manhwas are deeply embedded in the fabric of Korean society. They portray a specific portion of the realities unfolding in everyday life, whether it’s the various manifestations of bullying in schools and workplaces, discrimination based on social and financial standing, or the mental distress and harassment experienced by ordinary individuals.

Manhwa has its roots dating back to the early 20th century, specifically in the 1930s and 1940s. “During its initial stages, it heavily drew inspiration from the Japanese style” (Desi). A notable example reflecting this influence is the manhwa series, *The Breaker*, which gained popularity in South Korea due to its compelling storyline and visual representation. Authored by Jeon Geuk-jin and illustrated by Park Jin-hwan using the pen name Kamaro, the first season of *The Breaker* was serialized from 2007 to 2010. During this period, the format followed traditional panels, read from left to right and top to bottom, typically presented in monochromatic black and white. The second season, titled *The Breaker: New Waves*, continued its publication from 2010 to

2015. Although it maintained the monochromatic style, it introduced a change where readers could scroll down to follow the story. This period coincided with the rise of webtoons, marking a shift in the way manhwa was consumed, with mobile phones becoming a common platform for reading, surpassing traditional printed books. The evolution continued with the third season, *The Breaker: Eternal Force*, which commenced in 2022. In contrast to its predecessors, this season adopted a coloured panel and presented the story in a scroll format. Consequently, the distinction between a pure manhwa style and other forms of comics produced in South Korea became challenging, as the medium had embraced various formats and styles over time (Chie, 2014) as all the comics produced from South Korea can be termed as Manhwa.

At the core, manhwa serves as a widely embraced form of visual literature that offers an escape from reality and in alleviating boredom. Readers often turn to these publications as a source of entertainment and diversion from mundane routines. The captivating narratives, diverse genres, and engaging artwork found in manhwa contribute to its popularity, providing readers with a means of immersive storytelling that offers a break from everyday life (Illustrating Asia). Among the various genres, one that stands out is the one with underdog narrative. Heroes are supposed to be competent and honourable individuals who encounter hardships on their journey toward achieving goals and attaining a higher status. Through confronting challenges, these heroic figures exhibit enormous willpower, leading to eventual success. And overcoming these difficulties is often what makes a hero well liked (Cialdini et al., 1976).

The underdog is seen as a subset of heroes, as they face formidable and seemingly insurmountable challenges (Vandello, et al, 2007). Underdogs do not necessarily possess higher moral standards than their opponents. Apart from the evident power imbalance, underdog entities typically find themselves in competition with top dogs who, fundamentally, share similarities with them, as opposed to battling internal

conflicts, deities, or systemic structures (Goldschmied & Vandello, 2012).

This paper looks at one popular manhwa *DICE: The Cube That Changes Everything*. Apart from the chosen one, there are other manhwas with similar underdog plots such as *Solo Levelling*, *Girls of the Wild* and *Moonlight Sculptor* to name a few. However, the focus in the *DICE*, lies in exploring the experiences of individuals, particularly four characters who have been subjected to bullying. This paper delves into the narratives of these individuals, aiming to examine and understand their diverse stories and perspectives.

Material & Methods

The materials selected for this paper encompass manhwas that have not only gained considerable popularity within their home country but have also garnered recognition abroad. Within these manhwas, the central focus lies on underdog characters who emerge as heroes and villains within their narratives. These manhwas are readily available on platforms such as Naver and Daum, as well as dedicated webtoon websites as it is an object of digital culture (Alolika). They can be easily accessed and enjoyed by readers worldwide. This paper will undertake a thematic analysis of the said manhwa, delving into the narratives surrounding the concept of the underdog. Through this examination, it aims to explore the portrayal of underdog characters, their challenges, triumphs, and the broader themes surrounding their journey within these narratives.

The Text

This paper analysis the webtoon, *DICE: The Cube That Changes Everything* authored by Yun Hyun-seok, where the Korean Version ran from May 18, 2013 - July 18, 2021 and the English version from July 1, 2014 - November 2, 2021. The main protagonist of this webtoon series is Dongtae, who embodies characteristics of weakness, fearfulness, and timidity that affect every aspect of his life. At the start of the narrative, he is consistently placed at the bottom of social hierarchies, facing ridicule and

exclusion. His challenges go beyond physical limitations, encompassing emotional and psychological struggles as well as his own insecurities. Despite these vulnerabilities, Dongtae embarks on journeys of self-discovery, gradually overcoming obstacles to find strength and redemption within the storylines. A comparison of his transformation from before to after is provided for reference.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

(The images are courtesy of m.webtoos.com/en/)

Before acquiring DICE, Dongtae appeared short, scrawny, and wore a perpetually sad expression, with freckles and prominent dark circles under his eyes, he embodied the archetype of a “wimp,” making him an easy target for bullies (Fig 1). He even served as a

convenient scapegoat for others. The Fig 2 shows Dongtae being bullied. However, everything changed after he gained a DICE. As a Dicer, Dongtae prioritized enhancing his physical attributes. Therefore, he transformed into a tall, handsome, and athletic young man, exhibiting remarkable dexterity and agility (Fig 3). His freckles disappeared and becomes a recognizable character in the series. This transition marked a pivotal moment, signalling the start of a new chapter in Dongtae’s life.

Findings and Interpretation

Bullying is a pervasive phenomenon within Korean society, not uncommon in various spheres of life. It can occur within the domestic environment, perpetrated by parents or relatives, and also manifests in educational institutions through interactions with classmates or what are commonly referred to as “Yankee/ Thugs” kids. Additionally, bullying extends its reach into the professional realm, where individuals may face harassment and mistreatment from their superiors in the workplace.

In “Dice,” individuals occupying the lower echelons of the social hierarchy are often targeted by the affluent and those associated with local goons. Dongtae, the protagonist, becomes a victim of bullying primarily due to his appearance. He becomes a bread shuttler⁷. This reflects a harsh reality mirrored in the real world, where individuals are frequently judged based on their outward appearance. Dongtae’s struggles with his physical appearance in the manhwa add depth to his character, making his insecurities all the more palpable and emphasizing the urgency for a transformation. Despite facing ridicule and discrimination, Dongtae’s inherent kindness shines through as he extends help to Mio, another classmate ostracized for her weight. Despite her remarkable intellect, Mio’s physical attributes overshadow her intelligence, a poignant commentary on the societal emphasis placed on

⁷ As the term “shuttle” implies a vehicle's function of shuttling or transporting goods from one place to another, a bread shuttle, shuttles food for the bullies.

appearance over merit. Her peers frequently taunted her with the derogatory nickname “P.G.P,” which stood for “The Pig with Glasses and Pimples.” Additionally, she endured the cruel moniker of an “Orc Scholar” from her classmates (*Dice*, Chapter 39).



Figure 4

(The images are courtesy of m.webtoos.com/en/)

Another character, Byeongcheol, undergoes a significant shift in dynamics within the storyline of “*Dice*”. Initially, Byeongcheol, who was once friends with Dongtae, distanced himself from their friendship, largely avoiding association with Dongtae as he observed from the sidelines while Dongtae faced bullying. Byeongcheol adopted a strategy of lying low, perhaps due to being sporadically targeted by bullies himself. However, when Dongtae experiences a sudden surge in popularity and no longer can be bullied by his peers, leaving Byeongcheol vulnerable as the new primary target for bullying. This reversal highlights the transient nature of social dynamics and the precarious position of individuals within such systems, where shifts in power and popularity can drastically alter one’s position within the social hierarchy.

What stands out is the perspectives among the three individuals involved. Dongtae, notably, adopts a forgiving attitude towards his bullies. He takes on significant risks, potentially endangering the secrecy of his transformation, and even putting his romantic feelings for Mio and the physical appearance he worked so hard to attain on the line. In a display of remarkable selflessness, Dongtae willingly gambles everything, including his own desires and personal gains, to intervene and alter the potential outcome of the game. This further underscores his character’s

growth and the depth of his compassion and sense of responsibility towards others. In the final chapters of the series, Dongtae makes a monumental decision to sacrifice the final dice, effectively relinquishing his newfound powers and reverting the circumstances to how they were before he became a Dicer. In doing so, he effectively steals the future of X, the primary antagonist of the narrative. This act symbolizes Dongtae’s ultimate commitment to rectifying the consequences of his actions and undoing the chaos wrought by the Dicers’ powers. Byeongcheol, in contrast, undergoes a stark transformation, evolving into a bully himself and ultimately resorting physical altercations with the very individual who had inflicted the most torment upon him. Consequently, Byeongcheol’s unchecked ambition to pursue ultimate freedom from X, by the power offered by Dice results in his death.

One of the most intriguing perspectives in the narrative belongs to Mio. Unlike Dongtae’s selfless style or Byeongcheol’s road into bullying, Mio maintains a distinct viewpoint. She doesn’t necessarily align with Dongtae’s selfless actions or endorse Byeongcheol’s path of retaliation. However, when her own interests are threatened or compromised, Mio exhibits a willingness to diverge from Dongtae’s ideals, even if it means going against him. In the last chapter, it is revealed that Mio’s desire for a lean body is fulfilled. And, Mio, exhibits bullying behaviour within her own limitations. Unlike the previous chapters, this challenges the perception of her as a victim or bystander as when given the means and ability to do so, she does resort to bullying.

But the biggest bully of them all is X. He is a bully, who wields power and influence within the narrative to exert control over others. Through manipulative tactics and intimidation, X imposes his will upon those around him, often targeting individuals perceived as weaker or vulnerable. His actions reflect a pattern of harassment and exploitation, underscoring his role as a dominant figure capable of instilling fear and subjugation among the Dicers. X emerges as a central antagonist in the series, serving as the primary supplier of both

Dice and quests. Operating as a Game Master, he wields significant control over the game's dynamics, determining quest content, distribution, and the application of rules. Despite his position of power, X's backstory reveals a troubled upbringing characterized by poverty and abuse. Raised in a slum without a mother, he endured relentless physical violence at the hands of his alcoholic father, experiencing bullying within his own home. Now in possession of the Final Die, X derives pleasure from observing the conflict and chaos among humans, demonstrating a disturbing enjoyment in their suffering. He manipulates situations to incite violence among Dicers, exploiting bystanders' injuries as a means to win more Dice, further perpetuating the cycle of aggression and exploitation.

Conclusion

As noted by Goethals and Allison (2012), webtoons offer a vivid and less intricate form of art compared to other mediums like literature. This simplicity allows for a heightened sense of realism, particularly in depicting the facial expressions of characters, conveying emotions ranging from loathing to despair or hate. The prevalence of Triumph of the Underdog narratives in webtoons reflects a collective fantasy of overcoming adversity and redressing imbalances (Fischhoff, 1998). This theme resonates strongly with audiences, as evidenced by the abundance of films, novels, mangas, and webtoons that explore similar narratives. The journey of the underdog protagonist, starting from a position of weakness and gradually evolving into a heroic figure, is a common trope. Bartlett's (1932) assertion that memory is reconstructive rather than photographic suggests that as the protagonist grows and evolves over time, so too does the audience's investment in their journey, creating a dynamic and engaging narrative experience.

The narrative effectively highlights the pitfalls of unrestrained ambition and the corrosive nature of vengeance, particularly through the character of Byeongcheol. Byeongcheol's descent into darkness serves as a cautionary tale, illustrating the consequences of losing one's moral compass in

pursuit of personal gain or retribution. In contrast, Dongtae emerges as a superior hero figure due to his steadfast commitment to remaining within his moral boundaries and resisting the temptation to succumb to his desires. Despite facing numerous challenges and drawbacks, Dongtae consistently prioritizes helping others especially Eunjoo, over his own interests, showcasing a resilience and integrity that sets him apart from other characters in the narrative. This portrayal reinforces the importance of ethical conduct and the inherent strength found in maintaining one's principles, even in the face of adversity. The narrative serves as a poignant reminder of the complexity inherent in human psychology. It highlights the capacity for individuals to simultaneously embody traits of victimhood and aggressiveness. Characters like Mio exemplify this multifaceted nature, as they navigate the dynamics of power and vulnerability within the story. Mio's transformation from victim to aggressor showcases the nuanced interplay between internal motivations and external circumstances. Ultimately, X's downfall culminates in the loss of everything he had gained, effectively resetting him to his starting point. Despite his formidable power and control over the game, his twisted logic, his actions result in the loss of the final die. In the end, his longing for companionship is overshadowed by the destructive path he has chosen, highlighting the tragic irony of his fate. Dongtae becomes the underdog hero and X, the villain. The dynamic between Dongtae and X also forms the central conflict of the narrative, culminating in a battle between good and evil, with Dongtae ultimately prevailing as the hero who triumphs against all odds.

References

1. Alolika. "Scrolling Down the Webtoon Lane." *Seoulbeats*, 5 Nov. 2014, seoulbeats.com/2014/11/scrolling-webtoon-lane.
2. Bartlett, F. C. 'Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology'. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, Wiley, June 1933, pp. 187–192

3. Candraningrum, Diah Ayu, and Hanipa Yansari. "Branded Webtoon, the Rise of the Digital Comic Industry in South Korea". *Asian Journal of Communication*, vol. 34, no. 1, Nov. 2023, pp. 129–33.
4. Chie, Yamanaka. "Manhwa in Korea: (Re-) Nationalizing Comics Culture". *Manga's Cultural Crossroads*, edited by Berndt, Jaqueline, and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer. Routledge, 2014.
5. Cialdini, R. B., Borden, R. J., Thorne, A., Walker, M. R., Freeman, S., & Sloan, L. R. Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34(3), 1976, 366-375.
6. Dorfman, Ariel, and Armand Mattelart. *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. I.G. Editions, 1975.
7. Fischhoff, S. (1998). Favorite film choices: Influences of the beholder and the beheld. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 3(4), 1-19. Retrieved from <http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/sfischho/movie3.html>
8. Goethals, George R and Scott T. Allison. "Making heroes: The construction of courage, competence and virtue." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 46 (2012): 183-235.
9. Goldschmied, N. P., & Vandello, J. A. (2012). The future is bright: The underdog label, availability, and optimism. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 34(1), 34-43. doi:10.1080/01973533.2011.637726
10. *Illustrating Asia*. United States, University of Hawaii Press, 2001.
11. Jaqueline Berndt., editor. *Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Towards Scholarship on a Global Scale*. Kyoto Seika University, 2009.
12. Jeong, Jae-hyeon. "Webtoons Go Viral? The Globalization Processes of Korean Digital Comics." *Korea Journal*, vol. 60, no. 1, spring 2020, pp. 71–99. doi: 10.25024/kj.2020.60.1.71
13. Kalen, Elizabeth. *Mostly Manga: A Genre Guide to Popular Manga, Manhwa, Manhua, and Anime*. Libraries Unlimited, 2012.
14. Lent, John A. "South Korean Manhwa's Long and Strong Association with Transnationalism." *Springer eBooks*, 2022, pp. 93–116.
15. Monarch, Desi. "The Rise of Manhwa: Understanding the Popularity of Korean Comics." *Medium*, 20 Jan. 2023, [desimonarch.medium.com/the-rise-of-manhwa-understanding-the-popularity-of-korean-comics-c10e339c2130](https://medium.com/the-rise-of-manhwa-understanding-the-popularity-of-korean-comics-c10e339c2130).
16. O'Keeffe, Ciarán. The Underdog Effect. *The Psychologist*, 2019. 32. Pp. 44-47.
17. Paberz, Chloé. "Communities of Craftsmen: Reflections on Japanese Manga from South Korean Manhwa." *Mechademia*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2020, pp. 6-23, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/23/article/761073/summary>. Accessed 18 Jan. 2024.
18. Salkowitz, Rob. "Webtoon CEO Sees Massive Growth and New Opportunities in U.S. Market." *Forbes*, 2 Nov. 2021,
19. Stromberg, Joseph. "The Science of Why We Love to Root for Underdogs." *Vox*, 20 Mar. 2015, www.vox.com/2015/3/20/8260445/underdogs-psychology.
20. The Korea Society. "New Narratives in Korea: Manhwa with Creators of 'Banned Book Club.'" *YouTube*, 3 Aug. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID_-8PDZJos.
21. Vandello, J. A., Goldschmied, N. P., & Richards, D. A. The appeal of the underdog. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(12), 2007,1603-1616. doi:10.1177/0146167207307488
22. Vandello, Joseph A et al. "The appeal of the underdog." *Personality & social psychology bulletin* vol. 33,12 (2007): 1603-16. doi:10.1177/0146167207307488
23. Wong, Wendy Siuyi. "Globalizing Manga: From Japan to Hong Kong and Beyond." *Mechademia*, vol. 1, 2006, p. 23-45. www.forbes.com/sites/robsalkowitz/2021/11/02/webtoon-ceo-sees-massive-growth-and-new-opportunities-in-us-market/?sh=5853798e7707.

CONSTRUCTING CLEANLINESS: A STUDY OF SELECT ADVERTISEMENTS ON SANITATION PRODUCTS

Dr. NEETHU VARGHESE

*Assistant Professor, Department of English
BCM College, Kottayam, Kerala*

Abstract

The paper offers a nuanced examination of the interconnectedness between cleanliness rhetoric in advertising, the intricacies of individual corporeality and the dynamics within domestic realms. It illuminates the pervasive influence wielded by advertising in shaping societal perceptions. Central to its discourse is the multifaceted nature of biopolitical regulation inherent in discussions surrounding cleanliness. Moreover, the paper delves into the representation of gender dynamics, elucidating the prevalence of traditional paradigms wherein the maintenance of domestic cleanliness is predominantly ascribed to women. Conversely, male roles are often relegated to more inconspicuous spheres, thus perpetuating established gender dichotomies. The paper unveils the subtle yet profound ways in which advertising discourse operates as a mechanism for societal discipline, subtly reinforcing prevailing norms and power structures. It underscores the imperative of critically engaging with the messages propagated through advertisements, as they not only reflect but actively shape cultural norms and values. In doing so, the paper advocates for a heightened awareness of the intricate interplay between advertising, gender dynamics, and societal constructs, inviting readers to interrogate the underlying power dynamics inherent in seemingly innocuous cleanliness narratives.

Keywords: Foucault, Biopower, Biopolitics, Cleanliness Discourse, Gender Roles.

The concept of biopolitics, originating from the seminal insights of Michel Foucault, “whose function is to ensure, maintain, and multiply life, to put this life in order” (Foucault 138), represents a paradigm shift in our understanding of the intersections between politics and biology. It transcends traditional political discourse, offering a lens through which to analyse the governance of populations and the regulation of life processes. Foucault's conceptualization of power elucidates its nuanced operation as a multiplicity of forces inherent within individuals' bodies, manifesting across dual levels. Operating as a system of regulation and control, power permeates societal institutions, orchestrating processes of normalization, structuration, and subordination to cultivate individuals into productive members of society. Indeed, as Foucault articulates, “biopower was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism” (Foucault 140-141), underscoring its pivotal role in shaping socio-economic structures.

The study of power relations and biopolitical manoeuvring finds a rich soil in the domain of media representations. These depictions entail a purposeful and conscious process of selection and exclusion, far from being merely reflections of reality. As a result, they create and maintain particular narratives and ideologies, reshaping people's views of reality to serve the interests and prevailing power structures. As a result, media representations become important places to study how power structures and biopolitical interventions function in modern society. Advertising is a powerful representational medium that has a big impact on the modern world. In his insightful statement, Danesi states that “advertisers are interpreters of our dreams... their weapons: fear, ambition, illness, pride, selfishness, desire, ignorance” (Danesi 178). This demonstrates how advertising has a diverse impact and how it can influence customer behaviour by appealing to different aspects of human experience and emotion.

Jean Baudrillard argues that commercials are essential in creating a virtual world that blurs the lines between reality and simulation. In his groundbreaking book “The Consumer Society:

Myths and Structures," Baudrillard makes the claim that "meaning is circulated through advertising, not goods. "The question is not whether advertising creates or targets reality," according to Baudrillard (p. 22). This viewpoint emphasises how commercials have the ability to change people's perceptions of reality and their own preferences.

Within the advertisements, a coherent narrative on cleanliness emerges, and is disseminated using persuasive strategies. These commercials gradually discipline people into following certain cleanliness practices and hygiene habits; this is a representation of the power relationships that underlie biopolitics. As Foucault contends, "The politics of health...can be approached only if one takes into account the problem of power and the problem of knowledge" (Foucault 172). In this instance, Foucault highlights the interplay between practices, knowledge, and power in relation to hygiene and health, emphasising the intrinsic biopolitical elements at work. In his analysis of the persuasive techniques used in advertisements, Jib Fowles states, "The appeal to fear of illness...is perhaps the strongest single pressure behind advertising" (Fowles 236).

Television advertisements are pertinent sources for investigating the representation of somatic space, as they offer vivid portrayals of bodily experiences. For example, consider an advertisement for a household cleaning spray. In the commercial, the actor uses the product on to various surfaces and converts dirty places to pristine and clear surfaces. Through this visual narrative, the advertisement not only points out at the efficiency of the product but also propounds that one should know how to have control on our environment and the necessity to maintain clean surroundings. In the context of sanitation product advertisements, the representation of individuals effortlessly maintaining cleanliness reflects the normalization and discipline of bodily practices that conform to prevailing cleanliness standards. Additionally, these commercials frequently use persuasive strategies to appeal to viewers' demands for social approval, hygiene, and cleanliness. Advertisers stimulate customer demand

and uphold social norms about cleanliness by portraying sanitation items as necessary instruments for obtaining physical purity and social approval.

Themes of empowerment, inclusivity, and social responsibility are skilfully incorporated into commercials to connect their products with modern social movements and ideas, appealing to the changing values and aspirations of consumers. For example, a commercial of a toothpaste brand's may feature a group of individuals confidently showcasing their smiles, accompanied by slogans advocating for self-expression and authenticity. This phenomenon is consistent with sociologist Anthony Giddens' view that consumer culture serves as a forum for the expression of one's identity and self (Giddens 75). Oral hygiene brands use these ads to connect with larger cultural discourses about empowerment and social change in addition to trying to improve their market appeal.

In the advertisements for sanitary napkins, a prevailing trend emerges wherein the promotion of these products hinges on the notion of liberation for women during menstruation. Nevertheless, this marketing strategy often involves the ostracization of the biological process of menstruation, perpetuating a sense of shame around it. For instance, the narrative of freedom and mobility associated with sanitary napkins is reinforced by the frequent depictions of women participating in sports or dancing, presumably unrestricted by their menstrual periods. This discourse serves to normalize the use of sanitary napkins while stigmatizing the natural bodily process of menstruation.

In the context of feminist discourse, this phenomenon raises significant questions on the commodification of feminist ideals. By focusing on societal taboos and insecurities surrounding menstruation, advertisements not only perpetuate stereotypes but also reduce and undermine the potential for genuine social change. Furthermore, the act of purchasing these products emphasises the logic that equates individual consumption with political engagement, and hence results in diverting attention from structural inequalities and systemic injustices.

Thus, while the advertising culture of sanitary napkins may foreground feminist principles, its commodification of feminism serves to reinforce existing power dynamics and perpetuate consumerist ideologies.

In the advertisements of deodorants and perfumes, the utilization of sexual appeal as a recurring trope is pervasive. These advertisements most often use fear tactics and threatens with the potential deterioration of their lives or social ostracization if they fail to adhere to the prescribed discourses surrounding hygiene. According to Foucault, biopower operates through mechanisms of surveillance, classification, and regulation, shaping individuals' behaviour and subjectivities in accordance with societal norms and expectations (Foucault 145). In the context of advertising for deodorants and perfumes, the foregrounding of shame can be viewed as ways to discipline and regulate bodies and thereby compelling individuals to adhere to specific standards of hygiene to avoid social exclusion or stigmatization. Erving Goffman's concept of "stigma" brings forth much insights into the dynamics at play in these advertisements. According to Goffman, stigma arises from the discrediting of individuals or groups based on perceived deviations from societal norms or expectations (Goffman 25). In the context of deodorant and perfume advertisements, the threat of social ostracization works as a form of stigmatization, forcing individuals to follow the standard hygiene practices to avoid them being labelled as socially undesirable and unhygienic. Moreover, these commercials' medicalization of body odours mirrors larger conversations about cleanliness and health. Advertisers perpetuate concerns about hygiene and cleanliness by reinforcing the idea that certain body processes are essentially problematic or pathological. This is done by presenting bodily odours as medical issues that need to be resolved through the use of deodorants and fragrances.

Advertisements for domestic hygiene goods frequently reinforce gender stereotypes by creating

idealised images of hygienic practices and placing societal pressure on women to follow the cleanliness standards set by the media (Butler 45). These commercials often reinforce traditional gender norms and expectations within the home by portraying domestic cleanliness as solely the domain of women. Even in light of the changing roles that women play in modern society, these commercials continue to propagate antique ideals and expectations, especially with regard to domestic duties. As Judith Butler argues, "gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original" (Butler 45). This perspective emphasises on the performative nature of gender roles, wherein people are compelled to conform to societal norms and expectations through repeated acts of imitation. Betty Friedan and bell hooks have documented the ways in which advertisements perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce traditional notions of femininity and domesticity (Friedan 17; Hooks 82). By portraying women as the primary caretakers of domestic hygiene, these advertisements not only marginalize women's roles but also perpetuate unequal power dynamics.

The commercial sector is crucial to the institutionalisation of motherhood; this is especially true of the ads for cleaning supplies. These commercials frequently portray motherhood as something akin to a quasi-medical figure, responsible for the family's overall wellbeing. This representation not only perpetuates stereotypical ideas of gender roles, but it also gives mothers a sense of accountability that extends outside the home. As sociologist Sylvia Walby notes, "advertising constructs, circulates and reinforces gendered representations" (Walby 87). In this context, cleanliness product advertisements perpetuate the image of mothers as primary caregivers and guardians of family health, thereby consolidating their societal role and influence. Also, these advertisements very often employ persuasive techniques that appeal to maternal instincts and aspirations for familial well-being. For instance, a commercial for a household disinfectant may depict a mother diligently sanitizing surfaces to protect her

family from germs, accompanied by slogans emphasizing the importance of a clean and hygienic home environment for overall family health. This narrative not only positions mothers as proactive agents of health and cleanliness but also underscores the societal expectation for women to fulfil caregiving roles within the household.

In advertisements, the portrayal of males often revolves around overseeing cleanliness activities carried out by women, thus reinforcing the assumption that women are primarily responsible for domestic cleanliness. This gendered division of labour is evident in narratives that position women as the primary caretakers of household hygiene, while men assume roles of supervision or occasional assistance. As sociologist Michael Messner argues, "advertising is a primary cultural site where gendered representations are constructed and reproduced" (Messner 63). This phenomenon perpetuates traditional gender roles and expectations, relegating women to the sphere of domestic duties while men are portrayed as external observers or occasional participants. Additionally, advertisements for diapers often emphasize the weight of child health on mothers, further reinforcing the notion of maternal responsibility for childcare. This serves to further solidify the idea that mothers are responsible for providing childcare. This narrative is based on cultural norms that see mothers as the primary caretakers and those in charge of ensuring that their kids are happy. As a result, mothers are frequently shown as the primary carers in nappy ads, with fathers taking on supporting or secondary roles. These commercials not only depict gendered labour divisions within the home, but they also help to normalise and maintain them.

As sociologist Zygmunt Bauman contends, "advertising is the process of making real what is not real" (Bauman 34). This statement highlights the role of the media in constructing and spreading societal ideals and aspirations, including those related to cleanliness and hygiene. Moreover, recent developments in consumer culture, such as the rise of influencer marketing and social media advertising,

have further augmented the impact of sanitation product advertisements. This has further intensified the pressure on individuals to conform to societal standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality sheds light on the ways in which advertisements create hyperreal simulations of cleanliness, blurring the boundaries between reality and illusion (Baudrillard 55). In this context, sanitation product advertisements not only reflect societal norms and expectations but also actively shape and reinforce them.

Personal care product advertisements, such as those for skincare, haircare, and cosmetics, are important in creating and maintaining certain narratives and ideas about standards of cleanliness and beauty. These commercials frequently feature idealised pictures of people using particular goods to achieve perfect skin, lustrous hair, and faultless grooming. Advertisers instil a sense of aspiration and desire in customers by depicting these values as attainable through consumerism, hence influencing their behaviour and purchase decisions.

Furthermore, by endorsing particular beauty standards that conform to prevailing society norms, these advertisements frequently serve to uphold the interests and power structures that already exist. Advertisements for skincare goods, for instance, could favour fair skin tones over darker skin tones, marginalising those with darker skin tones and upholding Eurocentric beauty standards. Similarly, straight or smooth haircuts may be promoted in haircare product commercials, marginalising natural hair textures and promoting Western beauty standards. Moreover, these commercials often use persuasive strategies to play on consumers' fears and aspirations for bettering themselves. Advertisers create a sense of urgency and necessity by presenting cleanliness and beauty as reachable through the usage of particular products, motivating people to purchase these items in pursuit of society ideals of acceptance.

Media representations, hence emerges as crucial sites for the analysis of power dynamics and biopolitical interventions within contemporary

society. These representations not only shape perceptions of reality but also influence individual behaviours and societal norms, contributing to the maintenance of existing power structures and interest. As noted by Stuart Hall, "Representation is... at once a mode of symbolic production and a mode of signification or meaning" (Hall 57), The complex web of biopolitical regulation that underlies discussions of cleanliness is at the heart of its discourse. In addition to reflecting society norms, these commercials actively influences both individual behaviour and societal consciousness.

As feminist scholar Simone de Beauvoir aptly states, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir 267). The gendered division of labour not only reinforces societal expectations but also contributes to the normalization of gender roles within the household.

Furthermore, the advertising discourse operates as a mechanism for societal discipline, subtly reinforcing prevailing norms and power structures. As Michel Foucault posits, "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (Foucault 93). It underscores the imperative of critically engaging with the messages propagated through advertisements, as they not only reflect but actively shape cultural norms and values.

References

1. Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. SAGE Publications Ltd, 1998.
2. Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.
3. Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press, 2000.
4. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1999.
5. Danesi, Marcel. *Of Cigarettes, High Heels, and Other Interesting Things: An Introduction to Semiotics*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
6. de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Vintage Books, 2011.
7. Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Vintage Books, 1994.
8. Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, 1995.
9. Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Vintage Books, 1978.
10. Fowles, Jib. *Advertising and Popular Culture*. SAGE Publications, 2012.
11. Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1963.
12. Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford University Press, 1990.
13. Goffman, Erving. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice-Hall, 1963.
14. Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage Publications, 1997.
15. hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. South End Press, 1984.
16. Messner, Michael A. *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports*. University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
17. Walby, Sylvia. *The Future of Feminism*. Polity Press, 2011.

INTERSECTING STRUGGLES: APPLYING INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY TO EXPLORE CASTE-VIOLENCE IN IMAYAM'S *THE BEGETTER*

Dr. U. THANESH

*Associate Professor, Department of English
Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Mylapore, Chennai*

Abstract

The novella The Begetter by Iyayam picturizes the sad tale of a father who sacrifices his life to save his daughter. Bhakkiyam, the daughter of Pazhani is empowered with education and decides to choose her life partner. This decision of hers is looked down upon by the entire village. Tamil society presented in the novella regards women as the custodians of social and cultural values. Bhakkiyam who looks beyond caste and other discriminations is ordered by the panchayat to be killed. Pazhani and the members of his family do not have the means to question the authoritative panchayat and hence decide to follow the diktat of honour-killing. The research paper attempts to examine the novella through the lens of Kimberle Crenshaw's Intersectionality Theory. Intersectionality Theory provides the readers with a feminist analytical framework to understand how various aspects of a person's identity like caste and gender result in unique forms of oppression, disadvantage, and discrimination.

Keywords: Intersectionality, Honour-Killing, Gender, Caste, Panchayat.

Introduction

Iyayam, a Tamil writer is popularly known for his novels like KoveruKazhuthaigal, Arumugam, and Chedal. His well-known story collections are Manbaram, Video Mariamman, and KolaiChaeval. *The Begetter* is a novella translated into English by Gita Subramanian. The novella elaborately discusses the harsh realities of discrimination and social injustice that Dalits undergo in the contemporary society. Iyayam received critical acclaim for his writings because of his objective views on the caste-based discrimination that impacts individuals and communities in his work. As a powerful social commentary, the novella raises questions to "achieve silent introspection, and not agitation" (xiv). The novella in the words of the writer is "not a story authored by me – it is a story written by society itself" (xix). Moreover, the characters of the novella "do not fit into the moral and ethical constructs of Tamil society or Indian Society. They are subjects of ridicule, insults, and humiliation" (xvi).

Intersectionality Theory

Kimberle Crenshaw who coined the term Intersectionality in the year 1989, identifies factors such as gender, caste, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, disability, and physical appearance that influence one's social and political identity. In the seminal work *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*, Crenshaw comments, "My focus on the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how social world is constructed". The Intersectionality Theory attributes discrimination and privilege existing in society to the above-listed factors. The theory further propounds that the interlocking systems of power affect those who are the most marginalized in society. Women characters of *The Begetter* are oppressed based on their sex, caste, gender, class, religion, disability, and physical appearance. They are not only subdued by men but also oppressed by women who share the same status in the society. The multiple forms of discrimination meted out to women make them victims of many social evils like physical assault,

verbal abuse, sexual exploitation, rape, and honour-killing. Imayam in the introduction to the novella remarks, “Why have all the so-called morals, be it caste, religious, social, or even traditional and cultural values, and honour been woven only around the idea of the woman?” (xvii). The constituents of Intersectional Theory when applied to the novella providereadersbetter understanding of the text. Important elements of the theory taken for study are as follows.

Social Categories of Oppression

The novella begins with the sentence “On family deity I swear” highlighting the control that religion has over the protagonist Pazhani. Extinguishing camphor and promising, belief in omen and carrying the burden of sin in rebirth, a ritual of jumping across the dhoti are the other instances that show how social norms oppress the characters. Bhakkiyam’s decision to have a life partner of her choice is regarded as a violation of social norms. Pazhani and his wife instead of finding fault with society, regard astrology and horoscope as responsible for their daughter going ‘the wrong way’. Pazhani also believes in fate and feels that fate cannot be reverted. The beliefs in Peyi (Ghost) and the malevolent planet also oppress the characters mentally. In utter despair, Samiyammal, the mother proclaims that there was no God in the ‘really vengeful village’.

Just because Bhakkiyam was in love with a boy from lowercaste she had to undergo social oppression. She was beaten by the villagers and left for dead twice. Her hair was chopped and she was called ‘a shameless cow’. She is held responsible for her “caste losing its honour in society” Her lover Periyasamy, a Sub Inspector too was not spared. He was considered a Dalit first and was hence beaten four times, his house was set on fire, his goats and cows were freed, and his sugarcane field was set on fire. He was also fined five times by the ‘Caste Panchayat’, which serves as a ‘custodian of social and cultural values’. The villagers even plan to torch the entire street where he resides. The novella also presents several instances where women are abused

by men physically, sexually, and verbally. Mother-in-law’s hatred for her daughter-in-law, abusing women when she does not beget a child, and possessing superstitious thoughts serve to oppress women socially and culturally.

Interlocking Systems of Oppression

According to Kimberle Crenshaw, interlocking systems refer to the ways in which different social categories such as gender, class, race, sexuality, and others intersect and combine to shape an individual’s experience. Villagers tease Pazhani by questioning his gender when they remark, “You would have been a man if you had killed her as soon as you found out”. Thulasi comments that women ridiculing Pazhani had made her son hang his head in shame. Pazhani feels that his daughter Bhakkiyam had cut off his nose and is thereby responsible for taking away his dignity and the right to live. The interlocking systems of oppression make Samiyammal feel sorry for the act of Bhakkiyam falling in love with a ‘low-caste fellow’. The vainglorious villagers would not mind not having any loin cloth to wear but are proud and unwilling to give up the caste pride.

The socio-political realities of Tamil Nadu are presented when all the villagers are ruthless in their thoughts on killing Bhakkiyam. They declare “Our caste’s honour should remain intact... The females of other villages should also learn from this”(13). The pride of caste is also deeply rooted in women’s minds. This is evident when a young woman with a baby on her hip shouts, “You should pour pesticide down her throat and lock her in a room”(2). Samiyammal, the mother says, “Bring me a bottle of Polidol. I will turn her into ashes without anyone seeing what happened... I will chop her to pieces”(3). Violence seething in the minds of mothers shows the penetration of caste pride in the soft and loving mothers. The burden of bringing up a lame daughter Selvarani is also subtly discussed. Bhakkiyam pleads with her parents to let her live at least to serve her physically challenged sister. This instance highlights how society ignores the safety, needs, and concerns of the disabled.

Power Dynamics and Privilege

Power dynamics refer to the ways in which power is exercised by people and maintained within a social structure. On the other hand, privilege refers to the benefits and rights that people enjoy based on their social identity. Durai, a politician is found to exercise his power over the ignorant masses and instigates Pazhani to kill his daughter. He assures him of support and legal protection after the gruesome act and provides him with the knowledge on how he should carry out the grievous deed. He says, "There will be no case or anything. Even if there is, I'll take care of it" (2). He further justifies honour-killing when he says, "Are we doing this for ourselves? The thousand men gathered here have to be able to carry themselves with dignity. That's why" (3). He indirectly puts pressure on Pazhani in the name of dignity. The villagers believe that even a Sub Inspector of Police does not get the privilege of marrying a 'higher-caste girl'.

Men exercise their physical power over a hapless Chitravalli in Paalur. Twenty to thirty men gang rape the pregnant Chitravalli and make her die of shame because of her inter-caste marriage. Sexual violence is perpetrated even on Bhakkiyam when men display inappropriate behaviour. These instances show how men use different strategies to tame women and make them subservient to social rules. Villagers are prepared to give the due rites to the dead body of a virgin but are not broad-minded enough to let the girl Bhakkiyam live her desired life.

Lived Experiences and Subjectivity

Lived experiences and subjectivity describe aspects of human perception, understanding, and existence. In the novella perceptions related to caste are varied. The writer uses the terms 'Dalit Colony' and 'Village Street'. The former represents the residential area of 'low-caste' and the latter refers to the premises of the dominant community. Similarly, in the novella, we find caste panchayat meetings that are akin to the male-dominated Khap Panchayats of Northern India. The caste panchayats take the sole responsibility of

'preserving caste purity through murder'. The meetings are conducted in such a manner that people exhibit their hatred for the other caste and spew venom on those desirous of mingling with other communities. The discourses that transpire in such meetings promote honour-killing and other means to safeguard the purity of caste.

An old lady basically from Koravankuppam proudly declares in a caste panchayat that their village was better at making hasty decisions related to honour-killings. Samiyammal and Pazhani are made by the caste panchayat to accept that they would poison their daughter Bhakkiyam. Nallur's incident related to the love affair between Geetha and Ravi is also discussed. The inter-caste love affair between Geetha and Ravi turned out into a communal conflict between two villages and finally, the caste panchayat made the two parents agree to honour-killing by pouring poison into their ears. The caste lawyers were able to get the cold-blooded murder case dismissed in the court as the entire village was united in their stand.

According to Bavadharini (2021), "Structural violence operates on the social, political, and economic structures" established in the village. People discuss the Mutlur incident where a house was torched with all the inmates to ensure the purity of caste. The existence of Caste panchayat proves Dr. B.R. Ambedkar right when he says, "It is a pity that Caste even today has its defenders". The defenders of caste are unwilling to let an educated girl make her own decisions and do not let her and her parents live with dignity. Pazhanibegets Bhakkiyam only after visiting the Annamalai temple at Tiruvannamalai. He gives his daughter a unique name differing from the usual names of village Goddesses like Kathayi, Manjayi, Mookayi. The novella conveys an indirect message that it is futile to be different and unique in a society consisting of close-minded and reactionary people.

Social Justice and Activism

Social justice and activism refer to the intentional and organized effort to establish a fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and rights within a society. Pazhani feels that education alone can provide social justice to his daughter and hence makes her pursue B.Sc in a remote town. Even towards the end of the novella, he wants her to pursue higher studies, become a teacher, and save her future. Thulasi laments about the lack of social justice and disparity when she says that society has different rules for men and women. She fumes, "If a man does something, it is onething, but if a woman does it, it is different" (42). She gives examples of how a man in Vadapathi lived with a low-caste woman and had children. Even women of her caste were secretly having affairs with men of lower caste. However, society victimized her granddaughter for selecting a man of her choice. This makes Thulasi feel that there is no justice or dharma in her village. Samiyammal too finds discrimination when her society accepts the taboo marriage between the children of two brothers considered Taboo as in the case of Mani and Malliga. The same society in the name of caste disapproved of Bhakkiyam's love with Periyasami.

Pazhani wants to assert his freedom from the jaws of society when he prefers to live without worrying about honour and pride. He wants his wife and his daughters to be deaf to the world from then on to live independently. Pazhani gives Bhakkiyam sixty thousand rupees, all the jewels of his wife and Selvarani, and finally makes her promise him that she will not die. Pazhani believes that his daughter would get social justice away from his village. Imayam in the novella has recorded enough discourses on social justice. Vandikkaran House Pazhani as a begetter consumes poison and dies. However, he ensures that he does not commit the heinous crime of honour- killing

Conclusion

Dr. B.R Ambedkar in his *Annihilation of Caste* says "Caste System is a negative thing. It merely prohibits

persons belonging to different Castes from intermarrying. It is not a positive method of selecting which two among a given Caste should marry". The novella presents the modern Tamil society with a negative thing like the caste system. Readers familiar with the Divya-Illavarasan tragic love story of 2013 would vouch for the existence of such evils in our society. The constituent elements from the Intersectional theory like Social Categories of Oppression, Interlocking Systems of Oppression, Power Dynamics and Privilege, Lived Experiences and Subjectivity, and, Social Justice and Activism provide deeper interpretations into the social maladies presented in the novella. The literary work serves as a wake-up call for all the readers against the practice of preserving caste purity through murder. The novella also aims to create a just society in which "ascending sense of reverence and descending sense of contempt is dissolved into the creation of a compassionate society" (2014). The research paper thus presents the grim realities of caste discrimination and its associated evils like caste pride, violence against women, and honour-killing prevalent in the contemporary Tamil Society through the lens of Intersectionality theory.

References

1. Bavadharini, P. "Structural and Cultural Violence in Imayam's Novel 'Pethavan the Begetter'." *International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology*, Vol. 7, no. 12, 202`, p.72. IJIRT, ISSN: 2349-6002.
2. Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review*, vol.43, no. 6, July 1991, pp.1241-1299.
3. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches Vol. 1 First Edition by Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra: 14 April, 1979 Re-printed by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation: January, 2014 ISBN (Set): 978-93-5109-064-9
4. Imayam. *The Begetter*, India, Oxford University Press, 2015.
5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intersectionality>

6. <https://literaryoracle.com/literary-oracle-vol-i-2014/>.
7. https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/tamil-writer-imayam-s-bestseller-pethavan-now-in-english-115061000356_1.html
8. <http://thegloballycurious.blogspot.com/2015/12/pethavan-begetter-by-imayam-translated.html>
9. https://www.google.com/search?q=intersectionality+theory&oq=intersectionality+theory&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBCDY2NjZqMGo3qAIAAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.

FROM INTERNAL CONFLICT TO IDENTITY FORMATION: A PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO SHYAM SELVADURAI'S *FUNNY BOY*

Dr. V. SUMITHA

Assistant Professor

Women's Christian College, Nageroil, Tamil Nadu

A. ALFIYA

III B.A. English Literature

Women's Christian College, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

The exploration of the internal conflict inherits in navigating self identity. Shyam Selvadurai's Funny Boy elucidates the complex interplay between individual agency and the force of tradition, politics, and power that shapes the lives of its character and the society. Through the protagonist Arjie's introspective journey, Selvadurai explores themes of self-discovery, cultural tradition, and personal authenticity. Arjie struggles with profound internal conflict as he navigates the complexities of his identity and desires in the midst of social expectations and political turmoil in Sri Lanka. As Arjie confronts his homosexuality in a conservative society, he faces internal battles between familial tasks and personal freedom, tradition and modernity, and the fear of rejection versus the longing for acceptance. Selvadurai's poignant portrayal of Arjie's internal struggles serves as a powerful lens reconciling individual identity with social norms, making Funny Boy a compelling exploration of internal conflict and the quest for self-realization. Arjie's journey not only addresses personal struggles but also sheds light on broader issues of identity, belonging, and the impact of social norms on individual lives. Thus Selvadurai delves the psyche of humans to maintain their identities and agency in the face of adversity.

Keywords: *Internal Conflict, Self-Discovery, Homosexuality, Modernity, Identity.*

Internal conflict is a complex and intricate aspect of human experience, which occurs within an individual's mind, heart and soul. It clearly shows as a battle between competing thoughts, emotions or various values, treating a dynamic landscape of inner confusion. This conflict can arise from various sources, including moral dilemmas and unresolved traumas of psychological complexity. When faced with choices that challenge one's deeply held values, a person may find themselves torn between doing what they believe is right and stop fighting against external pressures or tensions. This type of conflict leads to internal conflict, as individuals struggle with the result of their decisions on their moral compass and self identity.

Freud's underscores the psychological significance of internal conflict and its potential

impact on an individual's mental and well being. He states, "Unexpressed emotions will never die. They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways" (101). He elucidates the importance of addressing internal conflicts and emotions rather than suppressing or ignoring them. Conflicting desires within oneself can also give rise to internal conflict. These desires may involve opposing needs or wants, such as desire for personal freedom with need for stability and security. It can provide internal tension, forcing individuals to prioritize and make difficult choices that impact overall well being. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* traces the internal conflict of mankind through the character Sonia Marmeladov,

Love every leaf, every ray of light. Love the animals, love the plants, love each separate thing. If you love each thing, you will perceive the mystery of

God in all; and when once you perceive this, you will thenceforward grow every day to a fuller understanding of it: 'until you come at last to love the whole world with a love that will then be all-embracing and universal'. (304)

Dostoevsky suggests that by embracing love for all things, one can not only find peace and understanding but also solution to all internal struggles. Thus the journey of resolution leads to personal growth, a deeper understanding of oneself and the potential for more internal landscape.

Internal conflict is thus fundamental in literature as it helps for character development and plot progression. It refers to the psychological struggle within a character, where opposing desires, beliefs, or emotions create a dilemma or turmoil within the character. This conflict is deeply personal and often invisible to others, manifesting as inner dialogue, doubt, or turmoil. It allows readers to empathize with characters as they navigate their inner struggles and confront the choices that define their journey. This conflict can also cause emotional turmoil, indecision, and soul-searching as the character fights with their values, aspirations, and responsibilities. It often leads to character development, self-discovery, and a deeper understanding of one's own motivations and desires. Joseph Campbell, a well known American author who is known for his exploration of internal conflict states, "The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek" (77). Campbell suggests the greatest rewards in life often lie beyond our fear and inner struggles. 'Cave' symbolizes the unknown aspects of ourselves we may fear to confront.

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai's portrays the internal conflict that shapes the journey of the protagonist Arjie. Arjie faces lot of inner struggles and is torn between who he is and what society expects of him. He tries to navigate his identity between social expectations and personal authenticity. Set in the backdrop of a traditional Sri Lankan society, Arjie has faced personal struggles with his identity and sexuality, marked by ethnic and cultural divisions. His internal conflicts are deeply connected with social expectations and cultural

norms. He navigates the complexities of his identity in a society life with prejudice. At the heart of Arjie's internal conflict lies his struggle to reconcile his true self with the expectations imposed upon him by family, culture, and society. From a young age, he is exposed to the strict traditions and expectations of his Tamil community. In rich family, there is a planned path that Arjie is expected to follow. Freud discusses, "The price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt" (58). It highlights the perspective on internal conflict between the individual's pursuit of happiness and the constraints imposed by social norms and moral standards. This social pressure creates the first layer of internal conflict as Arjie challenges the planned roles set by his culture. Thus Arjie challenges the expectations imposed on him by society and Tamil community.

Funny Boy also explores how gender expectations of masculinity lead way for the complexity of human identity. The protagonist Arjie struggles to find acceptance and belonging within his own community while embracing his true self. Arjie deals with his own feelings as he understands his sexuality in society with strict norms. His internal conflict increases as he struggles with the fear of being rejected by his family and community. He experiences an internal conflict regarding his gender identity and social expectations of masculinity like his affinity for playing bride-bride with his female cousins instead of engaging in more masculine activities like sports or rough play. Arjie says, "I looked at myself in the mirror. I looked like a girl" (8). He is torn between his own desires and the social expectations of masculinity. Arjie further says, "I felt trapped between what I wanted and what I was supposed to want" (63). The novel thus reflects his struggle to reconcile his appearance with the traditional gender roles enforced by his family and society. Arjie attraction for 'girlie' activities and his close relationships with female relatives, lead to internal conflicts of understanding gender. E. M. Forester expresses a similar internal conflict. In *Maurice*, he struggles with social condemnation of

his desires. Maurice shows, “He dreaded the first meeting, not knowing what it might lead to. What would happen if they kisses? Nothing he had been taught led to kissing” (181). Like Arjie, Maurice faces internal conflict as he struggles to reconcile his desires with expectations of society about having same sex relationship. He explores the struggles of an individual who does not conform to societal norms, “I longed to belong, to be accepted for who I truly was” (174). Arjie eventually confronts the internal conflict of self-acceptance and empowerment and accepts his sexual identity, “I began to understand that my difference was my strength, that what set me apart was also what gave me power” (112). Selvadurai thus explores the universal struggle of personal desires of humans to reconcile with cultural norms.

Funny Boy further navigates the internal conflict of being traditional and modern. The tension between tradition and modernity adds layer to his character, and he struggles with the desire for a progressive life while being anchored in traditional expectations. He struggles with the tension between preserving cultural heritage and embracing personal freedom in his relationships, choices, and aspirants. He faces many tribulations particularly when his feelings challenge social prejudices. His exploration of love and friendship goes against established norms, and he must navigate the internal conflict that arises from the tension between genuine emotions and the discriminatory attitudes prevalent in his community. It highlights, the challenges he faces in expressing his feeling within the confines of social expectations and family pressures. Northrop Frye depicts that “The central myths of the community are symbols of divine interaction with the human and as such they embody the collective experience of the race, including those moments when the god within us seems to work against the aims and desires of the ego” (186). Frye illustrates the internal struggles within individuals and society, where “god within us” represents desires and conflicts may oppose the conscious aims and desires of ego. The internal conflict of Arjie thus surrounds his family loyalty

and personal independence, but within the cultural context in Sri Lanka, it takes universal dimensions. The portrayal of Arjie’s attempt to balance family expectations with his quest for autonomy adds depth to the narrative. It reflects that he navigates the gap between his true self and person what he presents to the world.

Funny Boy also reflects the inner turmoil of personal connections with the political landscape. The novel intensifies the complexities of ethnic identity, torn between his Tamil heritage and the prevailing political and social confusion. It can be interpreted politically as a clash between individual identity and social expectations imposed by his conservative Tamil family within the context of ethnic and political tensions in Sri Lankan community. His internal conflict serves a microcosm of the larger social tensions and power struggles that define Sri Lanka’s socio-political landscape, illustrating in personal and political ways. Arjie struggles with his Tamil identity in the nation divided along ethnic lines. Being a Tamil in a Sri Lanka, he witnesses the escalating tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities. The novel thus fuses the internal battle between how he faces his own cultural identity with the influence of western culture, “I was torn between the traditions of my culture and the allure of the west” (85). His internal conflict reflects the ethnic identity to make sense of his place in a country experiencing social and political upheaval.

The complexities of identity formation in the face of social norms and cultural expectations lead way for empowerment. The interplay between thoughts and emotions becomes crucial in shaping one’s internal face. The exploration of the internal conflict inherits in navigating personal identity within the context of broader social expectations and political realities. Lacanopines, “The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitation from insufficiency to anticipation” (75). This line encapsulates that the internal conflict experienced by individuals navigate the process of self identification and the construction of the identity. Through Arjie’s journey,

the novel illuminates the complex interplay between individual agency and the force of tradition, politics, and power that shapes the lives of its character and the society. Arjie's journey not only addresses personal struggles but also sheds light on broader issues of identity, belonging, and the impact of social norms on individual lives. *Funny Boy* thus portrays the impact of social and political contexts on personal identity and relationships. Thus Selvadurai delves the psyche of humans to maintain their identities and agency in the face of adversity.

References

1. Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New World Library, 2008.
2. Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Translated by Richard Pevear Larissa Volokhonsky, Vintage Classics, 1993.
3. Forester, E. M. *Maurice*. Vintage, 2005.
4. Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its disconnects*. Translated by James Strachey, W.W.Norton & Company, 1961.
5. Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Translated by James Strachey, Basic Books, 2010.
6. Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four essays*. Princeton University press, 1957.
7. Lacan, Jacques. *The Mirror Stage as formative of the I function as revealed in Psychoanalytic experience*. *Ecrits: A selection*, Translated by Alan Sheridan, W. W. Norton & Company, 1977, pp. 1-7.
8. Selvadurai, Shyam. *Funny Boy*. Vintage Canada, 1994.

EMBRACING DIVERSITY: MANOBI'S JOURNEY THROUGH TRAUMA AND TRIUMPH IN A GIFT OF GODDESS LAKSHMI

Dr. K. DEEPSHIKHA

Assistant Professor, Research Centre in English
VHNSN College (Autonomous), Virudhunagar

Mr. A. PARTHIPAN

Assistant Professor, Research Centre in English
VHNSN College (Autonomous), Virudhunagar

Abstract

In "Embracing Diversity: Manobi's Journey Through Trauma and Triumph in 'A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi'," the story of Manobi's resilience unfolds, offering a poignant narrative of overcoming societal marginalization and personal struggles. Born into a society bound by rigid gender norms, Manobi, a transgender individual, faces relentless challenges and discrimination. Through her candid biography, "A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi", Manobi sheds light on the profound trauma endured by transgender individuals and their families in a society rife with prejudice. Despite the adversities she faces, Manobi emerges as a beacon of hope, transcending her traumatic experiences to achieve unprecedented success as India's first transgender principal. This abstract explores the transformative journey depicted in Manobi's narrative, emphasizing the importance of acceptance and understanding in fostering a more inclusive society.

Keywords: Diversity, Resilience, Transgender, Societal Marginalization, Personal Struggles, Trauma, Triumph, Acceptance, Inclusivity, Societal Prejudice.

Manobi Bandyopadhyay entered the world on September 23, 1964, under the name Somnath Bandyopadhyay. Assigned male at birth, she later underwent Sex Reassignment Surgery to align her physical appearance with her true gender identity as a woman. Her groundbreaking achievements include becoming India's inaugural third-gender (transgender) Principal at Krishnanagar Women's College in West Bengal's Nadia district on June 9, 2015. In 1995, she spearheaded the launch of Abomanob, the first Bengali magazine catering to transgender individuals. Additionally, she boasts authorship of two notable books: "Ontohin Ontorin Prositovortika" (Endless Bondage), a bestselling work, and "Third Gender in Bengali Literature". This paper focuses on the biography of Manobi Bandyopadhyay titled "A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi," penned by journalist Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey. Regarded as a candid portrayal of India's inaugural Transgender Principal, the biography delves into Manobi's journey from her birth as Somnath to her transformation into Manobi, documenting the challenges she faced and her

unwavering commitment to academic pursuits despite adversities. Central to Manobi's transformation were profound internal and external traumas. Internally, she grappled with psychological turmoil stemming from gender identity confusion, while externally, she confronted societal barriers to acceptance and inclusion. This paper seeks to explore the traumatic aspects of Manobi's journey toward womanhood within the context of Trauma Studies, a field of literary criticism that gained prominence in the 1990s.

Michelle Balaev attributes the burgeoning interest in Trauma Studies to seminal works such as Cathy Caruth's "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History" and Kali Tal's "Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma." Andermahr further elaborates that the emergence of Trauma Studies in the early 1990s sought to provide an ethical framework for understanding and representing human suffering in its various cultural and artistic forms. Initially rooted in psychoanalytical concepts championed by figures

like Freud and Lacan, early trauma theory characterized trauma as an ineffable force that inflicted irreversible damage on the psyche, rendering it unspeakable and unrepresentable. However, as Balaev observes, the trajectory of trauma theory underwent significant evolution, particularly within literary criticism, where scholars began redefining trauma and expanding its conceptual boundaries to encompass semiotic, rhetorical, and social dimensions. This evolution sparked contentious debates challenging the traditional notion of trauma as inherently unspeakable or unrepresentable. Instead, scholars argued for a more nuanced understanding of trauma as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that elicits diverse responses and values in both literature and society. In "Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory," Balaev discusses how scholars contributed to this reevaluation, underscoring the need to reconsider prevailing assumptions about trauma's nature and representation.

Authors here consider multiple meanings of trauma that may be found within and between the spheres of personal and public worlds, thus provides views of both the individual and society, rather than consolidating the experience of trauma into a singular silent ghost. (5)

Consequently, scholars' evolving perspective on literary trauma theory has engendered a new set of critical methodologies that emphasize the significance of specific social dynamics and cultural contexts in understanding traumatic experiences. This paper aims to delve into the traumatic experiences faced by Manobi, which stem from the societal and cultural stigmatization surrounding her third-gender or transgender identity.

The concept of trauma encompasses a broad spectrum of distressing experiences that have the potential to induce disordered feelings or behaviors, leading to a state of psychological or emotional injury. Trauma, as defined by Heidarizadeh, can be understood as both the occurrence of a stressor or blow and the resulting state or condition that arises from such an event. This multifaceted phenomenon

encompasses a range of emotional and psychological responses to traumatic events, whether they are singular occurrences or ongoing sources of distress.

Traumatic events can arise from various sources, including natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and tsunamis, as well as man-made occurrences like war, accidents, betrayal, and instances of sexual abuse. Regardless of their origin, these events have a profound impact on individuals, often eliciting intense emotional and psychological reactions that reverberate long after the event has occurred. The memory of a traumatic event can become all-consuming, leading to a preoccupation with the incident and its aftermath.

The effects of trauma extend beyond the realm of mental health, exerting significant influence on an individual's physical and emotional well-being. Trauma can disrupt one's sense of safety and security, impair cognitive functioning, and contribute to the development of various mental health conditions, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. Additionally, trauma may manifest in physical symptoms, including somatic complaints, sleep disturbances, and chronic pain.

In the context of societal attitudes towards individuals of the third gender or transgender identity, trauma takes on a particularly poignant dimension. Discrimination, marginalization, and social stigma directed towards transgender individuals can contribute to profound feelings of alienation, rejection, and psychological distress. This paper seeks to explore the traumatic effects of societal attitudes and behaviors on individuals who identify as transgender or belong to the third gender, shedding light on the complex interplay between social dynamics and mental health outcomes.

Transgender is nature's creation just like male and female. However, transgenders are never treated that way but are treated as an aberration to the society. "Transgender is often used as an umbrella term to signify individuals who defy rigid, binary gender constructions and who express a breaking of

culturally prevalent stereotypical gender roles” (Ramya, Cauveri 33).

In contemporary society, gender is often viewed through a binary lens, dichotomized into male and female categories. Feminist perspectives challenge this binary understanding, asserting that gender is a social construct shaped by patriarchal norms and expectations. These norms dictate specific roles, behaviors, and attire for each gender, reinforcing traditional gender binaries and perpetuating inequality. When individuals who identify as transgender challenge these prescribed gender roles and express themselves in a manner inconsistent with their assigned sex at birth, they are often stigmatized as deviating from societal norms and labeled as unnatural or abnormal. Such individuals may even be dehumanized, referred to as ‘sub-humans’ due to their perceived deviation from societal expectations of gender.

Gender identity, an individual's internal sense of their own gender, plays a significant role in shaping one's identity and self-perception. It encompasses a spectrum of identities beyond the traditional male and female categories, including non-binary and genderqueer identities. For transgender individuals like Manobi, the process of realizing and affirming their gender identity can be fraught with psychological challenges and societal scrutiny. Manobi, who was assigned male at birth as Somanath, recounts her journey of self-discovery as a ‘metamorphosis’, beginning with childhood experiences of longing to emulate her sisters by wearing their clothing and experimenting with makeup. Initially met with amusement by her family, Manobi's gender non-conforming behavior soon elicited discomfort and resistance as she grew older.

Despite finding solace in being perceived as a girl by others, Manobi's experiences of teasing and rejection at school highlighted the pervasive societal rejection of her gender expression. These early experiences of rejection and alienation contributed to Manobi's growing disillusionment with her assigned sex, leading to a profound sense of discomfort with her own body. By the age of eight, Manobi recalls

feeling a deep aversion to her male anatomy, yearning instead for the physical characteristics associated with femininity.

As she entered adolescence, Manobi's gender dysphoria intensified, prompting her to seek refuge in wearing her sister's clothing as a means of affirming her gender identity in private. However, the revelation of her gender identity to her family and peers elicited shock and disapproval, further exacerbating her feelings of isolation and marginalization. These formative experiences of rejection and internalized shame underscore the pervasive impact of societal norms and expectations on transgender individuals' mental and emotional well-being.

When confronted by her mother about bringing shame to the family, Manobi asserted her identity, pleading, "But Ma, I am a woman... don't you believe that? Can I not dress up better than any of you? Let me be a girl, Ma..." (10). Despite receiving compliments for her graceful dancing, Manobi yearned to express her true identity, lamenting, "I was not trying to be a girl, I was actually one!" (14). Enduring the anguish of being misgendered, Manobi found solace in academic excellence, supported by her parents who prioritized her scholarship over societal expectations. Recognizing that academic success was her pathway to acceptance, Manobi persevered, achieving top marks in every exam and ultimately ascending to the prestigious role of India's first Transgender Principal through sheer merit. Throughout her journey, Manobi grappled with an ongoing inner struggle to comprehend her sexuality.

I was very confused; my life seemed like a never-ending maze - each time I arrived at the same bend. Who was I? Why was my body different from my soul or was I mistaking my identity? Why was I born this way? Was it some past karma for which I was being made to pay so dearly? What could I do to escape this trap? (Bandyopadhyay 31).

There were times in my life when I doubted myself and the path I took. In such instances, my mind would go into a state of flux and the turmoil

would sear me from within. Am I really a woman trapped in a male body or are these just delirious thoughts? Why is it that the whole world thinks of me as man who is nothing more than a sissy . . . I felt like tearing away and escaping from the man's body in which I was born (Bandyopadhyay 109).

Manobi endured significant trauma while grappling with her sexuality, striving to establish her sexual identity as her life's primary goal (Bandyopadhyay 56). This internal struggle is common among transgender individuals, often accompanied by intense emotional turmoil. Additionally, transgender individuals face external trauma stemming from societal marginalization and discrimination, perpetuating transphobia and alienation (Ramya, Cauveri 33). Historically, transgender individuals were respected in Indian society, with their presence evident in myths and folklore, where they were revered for their perceived powerful blessings and curses. However, the advent of colonialism marginalized transgender individuals, pushing them to the fringes of society.

"... the colonization brought a different attitude towards the transgenders. They were begun to be treated indifferently and the constant ridiculing of their physique and habits led to a psychological trauma. Casually the society passes various abusive remarks and even the family criticizes them. The current status of transgender in India is pathetic"

(Subapriya 60).

Manobi encountered significant trauma due to society's indifference, yet she was fortunate to receive unwavering support from her parents. While they may not have actively encouraged her choices, they never disowned her and remained by her side during her times of need. However, this support came at a cost, as they too experienced considerable pain and trauma. Reflecting on her mother's passing in March 2011, Manobi expressed profound sadness. . . . every time I remember how my poor mother suffered all her life, pinning for the safety of her youngest child. She loved me when I was her son and continued to love me even when I became her

daughter. She didn't have the courage to stand up against the world and take up my cause, but I knew that in her quiet, meek way she was always with me, never questioning my choice and silently suffering it (179).

The criticism and discrimination inflicted not only Manobi but also her parents, subjecting them to significant trauma. They endured relentless blame and condemnation from their neighbors, with the world attributing fault to them for their daughter's perceived "wayward behavior." Both her mother and father faced insults and ostracization wherever they went with Manobi. One poignant incident occurred when her father accompanied her to Vivekananda Satavarshiki College in Jhargram, intending to provide support on her first day as a lecturer. However, the experience turned sour as they encountered ridicule and mockery from students and faculty alike. Subsequently, when Manobi rented a place in Kalpataru Bhavan in Jhargram, she faced harassment from a fellow tenant, who later resorted to harassing her parents by calling them late at night. He asked him whether his youngest child was male or female . . . sometimes my mother picked up and was forced to listen to his abusive language . . . she tried her best to shield my father from these calls, lest he fell ill. I can imagine the torture that my poor parents underwent (Bandyopadhyay 140).

Manobi found herself embroiled in a fierce legal battle when the tenant and his brother-in-law accused her of sexual harassment, prompting her to file counter cases against them. They attempted to tarnish her reputation by portraying her as a sex maniac and leveling accusations of deceit against her. Numerous stories about her circulated in newspapers, and she expresses gratitude to the reporters who shed light on her struggle for justice, equality, and the right to live. However, the ordeal took a heavier toll on her parents, who were deeply shocked by the situation. Learning about her Sex Reassignment Surgery only added to their distress, as they faced threatening calls, abusive letters, and harassment from strangers, who would ring their doorbell at night and vanish, leaving them terrified. Thus, alongside Manobi, her

parents and family endured significant trauma due to society's marginalization and persecution.

A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi chronicles the remarkable journey of Manobi, a transgender individual, as she navigates the complex and often hostile landscape of Indian society. Dedicated to those who derided her as subhuman and subjected her to ridicule, the book offers readers a comprehensive glimpse into the challenges faced by transgender individuals and their families in a society marked by prejudice. Despite enduring profound trauma, both personally and through her parents, Manobi emerges victorious—a testament to her resilience and determination. She views her biography as a means to foster greater understanding of individuals like herself within society. It serves as a poignant reminder of the diversity inherent in humanity and underscores the importance of acceptance and compassion toward transgender individuals, sparing them further trauma.

References

1. Andermahr, S. "Decolonizing Trauma Studies: Trauma and Postcolonialism" --- Introduction. *Humanities* 2015, 4, pp. 500-505.
2. Balaev, Michelle. "Literary Trauma Theory Reconsidered." *Contemporary Approaches in Literary Trauma Theory*. Ed. Michelle Balaev. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
3. Bandyopadhyay, Manobi. Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey. *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi: A Candid Biography of India's First Transgender Principal*. India: Penguin Books. 2017.
4. Ramya, S., Cauveri, B. "Living Smile Vidya's Traumatic Experiences – an Overview." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 10, Ver. IX (Oct. 2014), pp. 32-37.
5. Subapriya, K. "Unveiling the Crisis of Transgender in India: A Study of Living Smile Vidya's Autobiography." *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL)*. Volume 3, Issue 1, pp. 59-64.

AN EXPLORATION OF MONOMYTH: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF J. K. ROWLING'S *HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS*

Dr. ANJU FRANK

*Guest Lecturer, Department of English (S.F)
Women's Christian College, Nagercoil*

A. U. AARTHI

*I M.A. English, Department of English (S.F)
Women's Christian College, Nagercoil*

Abstract

This paper analyses the theoretical study of Harry Potter's adventures journey in J.K.Rowling's novel Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets through the work of the American theorist, Joseph Campbell's 'The Adventure of the Hero framework'. J.K.Rowling's protagonist, Harry Potter, enroots on a mythical quest filled with trials, allies, and supernatural foes. Following Campbell's theoretical essence, this study further traces Harry encounters various stages and huddles in order to attain his destiny, from the call of adventure to the return with the extract. Throughout the narration, Harry encounters archetypal figures such as the 'Mentor', the 'Threshold Guardians', and the 'Shadow', each plays a crucial role in shaping their character and advancing the plot. The challenges that Harry face, including the discovery of the Chamber of Secrets, the basilisk's menace, and the revelation of Tom Riddle's identity, in between which Harry has his own existential crisis, mirroring the universal themes of self-discovery, courage, and conscientiousness. Ultimately, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the narrative structure and symbolic significance of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets showcasing how Campbell's archetypal framework enriches our appreciation of Rowling's adept storytelling.

Keywords: Journey, Adventure, Stages, Magic, Slytherin, Witchcraft and Wizardry, Fantasy, Elf.

J.K.Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is one of the best narratives in the domain of contemporary literature, which has got the capability to have the readers imagination in captivity and transcend their generational boundaries. As the plot happens in the enthralled setting of the Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry, delineating life and growth of the boy, whose life was under the wrath of one of the most powerful evil wizard. His journey is enriched, with magic, friendship, and the timeless battle between good and evil. The *Harry Potter's* saga holds deep in it a narrative structure that is deeply rooted with myth and fantasy, which is a structure interpreted by the influential work of Joseph Campbell. Campbell's exploration of the monomyth, provides a framework through which we can analyze and appreciate Harry's journey from a

young orphan boy, in a non-magical world pulled into a world of magic, where he goes on to become a feared yet respected wizard, where he faces his ultimate test of courage.

In this paper, the study is done to hunt through the analytical details of Harry's journey within the framework of Campbell's Hero's journey. This paper will provide with the intertwining of one of the books of Rowling's masterpiece *The Harry Potter's* saga and Campbell's idea of monomyth, illuminating the transformative magic that lies at the heart of *Harry Potter's* unwavering legacy.

A children's book that would be 're-read into adulthood' and highlighted its "strong plots, engaging characters, excellent jokes and a moral message which flows naturally from the story". Deborah Loudon, *The Times*.

The novel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* begins with Harry's summer vacation back in the Dursley's, gets imprisoned with Dobby (the house elf) creating a chaos and is rescued by Ron, Harry's Best friend. "As soon as Harry was in the car and had slammed the door shut, Ron yelled, 'you're your foot down, Fred!' And the car shot suddenly towards the moon. Harry couldn't believe it-he was free", (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, 28-29).

Harry shops for his school amenities, meets Lucius Malfoy, a follower of the dark Lord, Voldemort. Harry, then faces a hurdle when he finds that he and Ron are unable to enter the platform, both of them end up losing the train. Thus they opted to take the flying car to reach Hogwarts. Harry begins to hear eerie voices, "It was a voice, a voice to chill the bone-marrow, a voice of breathe-taking, ice-cold venom. Come... come to me...let me rip you...let me tear you...let me kill you..." (126). Soon they witness tremendous disastrous happening in Hogwarts, starting with Filch's cat being petrified.

Draco is doubted considering his pride on mudblood and later falls on Harry when he speaks Parsletongue (snake language) "because being able to talk to snakes was what Salazar Slytherin was famous for" (207). Harry, Ron and Hermione, out of curiosity wants to solve the mystery and find the culprit of all the happenings.

Harry finds a diary in the broken toilet. Through this diary Harry meets Tom Riddle, a boy who once had accused Hagrid of opening the chamber of secrets back then. In the meanwhile Hermione gets petrified. Harry and Ron go to Hagrid's house to seek answers, but Cornelius Fudge, the minister of magic and Lucius Malfoy, who have come there to remove Hagrid and Dumbledore from their respective position in the Hogwarts, arrived prior to them. As Hagrid is led away, he informs, whoever seeks answers must follow the trail of spiders. Several days after Ron and Harry sneak into the forbidden forest, following the spiders where they get to know the truth that it was never Hagrid who opened the chambers years ago. After a few days, Harry and Ron find a piece of paper with a description of a basilisk on the frozen hands of

Hermione, "This is it. This is the answer. The monster in the chamber's a Basilisk- a giant serpent!"(307). Before they come to the conclusions, they are informed by the teachers that another girl has been taken in to the chambers, who turns out to be Ginny Weasley, Ron's younger sister.

Ron, Harry, and Lockhart slide down a secret passage in Myrtle's bathroom to underground tunnels. When Lockhart accidentally curses himself, Ron stays back to help him. Harry enters the chamber to find Ginny laying still and the presence of Tom. Tom reveals himself to be the younger version of Lord Voldemort, who bewitched Ginny through his diary, "TOM MORVOLO RIDDLE. Then he waved the wand once, and the letters of his name rearranged themselves: I AM LORD VOLDEMORT" (331). Harry with the help of Fawkes, Dumbledore's pet phoenix, kills the basilisk (mythical snake) and manages to poison Riddle's diary using the basilisk's fang, also erasing Tom's memory of himself. Ginny wakes up, along with the ones, who were petrified. Harry explains his adventures to Dumbledore. Lucius Malfoy storms into his office with his house elf, Dobby. Harry also ends up freeing Dobby by tricking Lucius into giving Dobby a sock. The narrator portrays the scene as, "Dobby has got a sock," said Dobby in disbelief. 'Master threw it, and Dobby caught it, and Dobby-Dobby is free'(357). After a long battle, peace is retained at Hogwarts, students leave for their summer vacation.

Dated back to 1871, with the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor, the study of hero myth has been proposed quite a few times again by the psychoanalyst Otto Rank and amateur anthropologist Lord Raglan, it eventually got popularized by Joseph Campbell. Campbell's 'The Hero's Journey' framework, also known as 'monomyth', is a narrative structure that outlines the archetypal journey of a hero in mythology, folklore and literature. It was introduced by Campbell in his work, "The Hero with a Thousand Faces". The Hero's Journey, consists of several stages that the hero undergoes throughout their journey, including the call of adventure, refusal of the call, crossing the threshold, trials and challenges, meeting mentors and

allies, facing the ordeal, and ultimately returning transformed with newfound wisdom or treasure. The hero embarks on a quest, faces trials and tribulations, encounters allies, and adversaries and ultimately undergoes a transformation, emerging stronger than before. Through the hero's journey, Campbell explores themes of self-discovery, growth, and the quest for meaning and purpose in life.

To analyze *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* within Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey framework, the study focuses on key events and character developments that align with the stages of the hero's journey. Here's a break-down of how well the novel fits into Campbell's framework.

Campbell calls the first stage of journey as the 'Call to Adventure'. In the novel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Harry can be seen receiving mysterious warnings about the reopening of the chamber of secrets and the danger it poses to the Hogwarts students. Starting with, Dobby, the house elf's visit to Harry and his warning to him about the dangers awaiting at Hogwarts. Dobby states, "even if he does have to shut his ears in the oven door later...Harry Potter must not go back to Hogwarts" (16). These incidents set the stage for Harry's journey into the unknown as he seeks to uncover the truth behind the chamber's secrets. The second stage, is the 'Refusal of the Call'. Harry not being skeptical of Dobby's warnings, can be considered under the second stage. The theorist, Campbell in his framework has given that, "for those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero's journey is with a protective figure", (*The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 63) which he calls the third stage 'the supernatural aid'. As, there are incidents which represent the refusal of call stage, there is no need of the third stage in the novel.

The fourth stage according to Campbell's framework is, 'Crossing of the First Threshold', where the hero crosses the threshold between the ordinary world and the magical world, beginning his Hero's journey and will encounter trials, challenges, and transformation. Harry crosses the threshold with returning to Hogwarts, from the human world for his second year, knowing that he will be facing new

challenges and mysteries, marks the beginning of Harry's Hero's journey in the novel. "The Chamber of Secrets has been opened, enemies of the heir, beware" (146). The fifth stage in Campbell's hero's journey framework, the 'Belly of the whale', that represents a metaphorical descent into the unknown. Harry entering into the depths of the Chamber of secrets, where he faces his fears, coming out more refined, can be taken as the part which contributes to the fifth stage of the hero's journey.

'The Roads of Trials', the next stage, Harry, intrigued starts investigating the mystery of the 'Chamber of Secrets' and faces various trials, and starts getting suspected by his peer, of him being the heir of Slytherin, when he involuntarily speaks in parselmouth (snake language), and Salazar Slytherin was another of the very wizards who spoke in the language of the snakes. "I just told Justin to hide up in our dormitory. I mean to say, if Potter's marked him down as his next victim, it's best he keeps a low profile for a while" (209). The petrification of students, making the polyjuice potion, and confronting the fear of being implicated in the attacks are few of the trials and challenges he faces in his journey of finding out about the 'Chamber of Secrets'. The next two stages, 'The Meeting with the Goddess' and 'Woman as the Temptress', cannot be applied as Harry is a mere twelve year old boy.

'Atonement with the Father/Abyss', the ninth stage, of Campbell's hero's journey, where the hero would have to face the father figure. Harry is so confused with his own identity. He himself doubts whether he is the heir. He comes to face this thought of his when he is made to visit Professor Dumbledore's office, where he finds the sorting hat. "You have been wondering whether I put you in the right house" (218). When Dumbledore, confides in Harry, "Hagrid! Said Dumbledore loudly. I do not think Harry attacked those people." (220). He gains his confidence to resume his journey, moving towards the climax. The next stage, 'Apotheosis', where, a greater understanding is achieved.

Now armed with all of his collected knowledge the hero is resolved and now very ready for the most difficult part of his journey. With Hermione's

petrification, Harry and Ron's want to solve the mystery reaches its peak. The boys get more information from the piece of paper that is clutched in the frozen hand of Hermione, through which they get to know about the Basilisk. They understand the whole mystery, when they see the word 'pipes' written, through which the basilisk moves and Harry also understands why he hears the strange voice, "That's why I've been hearing that voice all over the place, and nobody else has heard it. It's because I understand Parseltongue..." (307). He was the only one with the ability.

The next stage, namely 'The Ultimate Boon', where the hero achieves the goal of his quest. Harry finds the chamber of secrets. Now that the journey had lead Harry to his desire destination, Harry is to solve his mystery and the crimes happening. Harry moves ahead even if he has to face it alone. He also meets Riddle who reveals himself to be Lord Voldemort, summons the basilisk to attack Harry. Harry is helpless, but is true to his own choices and is loyal to Dumbledore, which brings him the phoenix, the pet of professor Dumbledore, Harry kills the Basilisk and with its fangs he destroys the diary of Tom, who has used Ginny with his diary to commit all the happenings. Thus along with his diary, Tom the younger version of Voldemort is also destroyed. "Riddle was writhing and twisting, screaming and flailing and then...He had gone." (340).

'The Chamber of Secrets', not a place of any pleasure or happiness to Harry, having no need for the next stage, the 'Refusal to Return'. 'The Magic flight' and 'Rescue from Without' stages, where the hero is in need of help to bring himself out, to his world, however was necessary for Harry to be back at the halls of Hogwarts from the secret chamber. Phoenix comes to Harry's aid and the others in flying out of chamber of secrets. To Harry, Hogwarts was his true home, that is the place where he belongs to. Thus when it was time for him to go back to the world without magic, to the place, where he has to put up with the tortures from the Dursleys, is when he faces the next two stages of Campbell's hero's journey, 'The crossing of the Return Threshold' and 'Master of the two Worlds', in which Campbell states, "the returning hero, to complete his adventure

must survive the impact of the world", The Hero With a thousand Faces, (201). True essence of this stage is to imply what he has learnt through his journey in his life. Harry very much learns, that no matter what ones origin is, become the person who they truly want to become and the choices that they make in their life. "It's our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." (352). Finally, leading the hero to the last stage in his journey, 'Freedom to live'. Harry, who had finished his journey for the book, now has acquired his freedom live, with more insightful knowledge and experiences.

As conclusion, Harry Potter's journey has closely followed most of the stages of Campbell's Hero's Journey. From call of adventure, with the opening up of the 'Chamber of secrets', to his ultimate confrontation with the younger version of the Dark Lord, Voldemort himself, even after being through a lot trials and challenges, Harry completes his journey for the book and triumphs successfully, which typically mirrors the archetypal hero's path. With the help of his mentor professor Dumbledore and assistance from his friends, Hermione and Ron, Harry not just emerges victorious, but also confronts his fears, demonstrates his powerful courage and finally finds himself in the journey.

References

1. Campbell Joseph, "The Hero With a Thousand Faces", Commemorative edition, Princeton University Press, 2004.
2. Campbell Joseph, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey#Campbell's_seventeen_stages
3. Manaiza José Ángel, Joseph Campbell's "17 Stages of The Hero's Journey", Huffpost, June 22, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/joseph-campbells-17-stages-of-the-heros-journey_b_576a55e1e4b0869377fb619d
4. Rowling J.K, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, Bloomsbury, 2002.
5. Rowling J.K, "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Potter_and_the_Chamber_of_Secrets

PHOTOGRAPH AS THE MEDIUM OF PARANORMAL PRESAGE IN THE MOVIE *SHUTTER* AND STEPHEN KING'S NOVELLA *THE SUN DOG*

Ms. D. ADRIN SANCHIA JASON

*Ph.D. Scholar (Full-Time), PG and Research Department of English
Government Arts College, Trichy
(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)*

Dr. F. SUJI BRINDHA THEODORE

*Associate Professor, PG and Research Department of English
Government Arts College, Trichy
(Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Trichy)*

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to compare the impact of photographs on the lives of the characters in the movie Shutter and Stephen King's novella The Sun Dog. Photographs serve as the media for communication between paranormal entities and humans. While the fifteen-year-old Kevin Delavan in The Sun Dog is tormented by a hungry dog that gets closer and closer with every snap of his Polaroid Sun 660 camera to rip him apart after an escape from the two-dimensional Polaroid world, the young couple Jane and Ben Shaw in Shutter are haunted by a bloodthirsty ghost of a dead woman named Megumi who seeks revenge for misdeeds of the past. The stories attest to the undeniable power of photography and warn against consequences when misused. The unerasable impact of the thoughtlessly captured photos afflicts its characters and irrevocably alters the course of their lives. The photographs, here, can be heralded as the creator of chaos, preserver of life and destroyer of menace in both the works for the trouble that starts brewing with photos gets resolved only with photos.

Keywords: Polaroids, Cameras, Photographs, Possession, Revenge, Murder, Catatonia.

Introduction

Shutter is an American supernatural horror movie written by Luke Dawson, directed by Masayuki Ochiai and distributed by 20th Century Fox. It stars actors like Joshua Jackson, Rachael Taylor, and Megumi Okina in the lead roles. It is a 2008 remake of the original Thai movie also named *Shutter* (2004). The plot revolves around a newlywed couple Ben and Jane Shaw who move to Tokyo, Japan from New York enticed by a promising job opportunity for Ben in photography. They get involved in a car accident in the wilderness and this leads Jane to falsely believe that she has caused the death of a young girl Megumi Tanaka. Megumi's spirit then manages to gain their attention through strange blurs in many of Ben's photographs. Jane's curiosity and unrest take her on a trip to the psychic to decipher the blurs which she learns are the manifestations of the intense emotions of the spirit. As the plot progresses, Megumi leads Jane to more photos which

helps Jane understand that Megumi had been Ben's clingy ex-girlfriend who had been sexually abused by Ben's friends Adam and Bruno while Ben himself had been remorselessly photographing the incident. Megumi commits suicide shortly after the incident and after her death, her spirit seeks the lives of her violators by driving them to kill themselves. Jane is grateful for Megumi's warning against Ben's indifference and leaves him to his fate. Ben renders himself catatonic after a desperate attempt to electrocute himself to free himself of Megumi's possession. But even in the mental institution he is placed in, Megumi is found irremovably latched onto his back.

The Sun Dog is a novella written by the "King of Horror" Stephen King. It was published in a collection titled *Four Past Midnight* along with three other novellas namely *The Langoliers*, *Secret Window*, *Secret Garden* and *The Library Policeman* in 1990. It was awarded the Bram Stoker Award in

the year of its publication. The novella *The Sun Dog* is regarded as “the collection’s simplest, most distinctive delicious black comedy” (Rubins). It is a coming-of-age narrative that unravels the life of the fifteen-year-old Kevin Delevan in Castle Rock, Maine who receives a possessed Sun 660 Polaroid camera from his parents for his birthday. Kevin’s camera repeatedly produces photos of a malevolent black dog regardless of what is in front of the lens. The dog appears to get closer and hungrier with every click as if to pounce upon the one behind the camera when released from its Polaroid incarceration. Kevin takes the camera to the elderly owner of a junk store Reginald Merrill to fix it. But on understanding that the camera involves the paranormal, Kevin wants to destroy the camera. But Merrill, blinded by the lust to make money by selling the camera to paranormal enthusiasts, cheats Kevin by swapping his bedevilled Sun 660 for a normal one when he smashes it with a sledgehammer. As Merrill continues to snap photos, the camera takes complete control of his actions. A series of nightmares unsettle Kevin and he soon realises that it is too late to save Merrill. The camera kills the old man, and the dog within gets ready to break free from the Polaroid world when Kevin quickly snaps a photo from another Sun 660 to contain the angry beast within it.

The word ‘photography’ is derived from the Greek roots ‘phōtós’ meaning ‘light’ and ‘graphé’ meaning “representation through lines or drawing”. It is the process of recording light to create images electronically or chemically using a light-sensitive photographic film. The plots of the horror movie *Shutter* and the supernatural horror novella *The Sun Dog* are influenced and impacted by photographs in unique ways. The photographic medium helps in theseamless knitting together of theelements of horror withthe mundanelives of its characters. “The painter constructs, the photographer discloses” (Sontag). The stories allow room for the photos to disclose more than just what the camera captures and the revelations are dark and call for immediate action.

Camera Vs. Photos

In the movie *Shutter*, the cameras used by Ben Shaw throughout the narration pale in comparison to the

impact of the photos they produce. Though a variety of digital cameras are involved as the plot progresses, ranging from disposable ones to professional ones, the significance lies in the photos, regardless of the device. But Kevin Delevan’s Polaroid Sun 660 camera in Stephen King’s *The Sun Dog* is pivotal to set the ball rolling and the notoriety of the device and its possession by some entity inexplicably evil, bear unparalleled significance. Just like other Sun 660 cameras, Kevin’s camera is asonar-based autofocus instant camera which makes use of the self-developing polaroid film to produce a print developed chemically shortly after the picture is captured. But the photos thatcome out printed seem to be more than just a harmless practical joke to Kevin, though his parents think otherwise. “It’s a practical joke,” his father said. “It must be. The thing to do is just exchange the damned thing and forget about it” (King 667).

The Curious Reception of The Manifestation

“Curiosity will conquer fear even more than bravery will” are the words of the Irish novelist James Stephens. Both Jane Shaw and Kevin Delevan follow the lead and decipher the message communicated through their respective photos because of their curiosity. As imperfections are always more striking and intriguing, the recurring blurs or white smudges distorting Jane in the photos from the couple’s honeymoon in Tokyo find a way to disturb Jane’s peace. Though Ben tries to reassure Jane that a faulty camera or reflection or a bad frame is to be blamed for the corrupted images, Jane is not convinced. It piquesher interest enough to investigate further when most of Ben’s photos for his client also display white blurs and almost cost him his job. Also, the spirit of the girl Megumi whom she assumes to have run over in a previous accident makes frequent appearances and this stimulates her toconnect the dots and believe that Megumi is the one responsible for the undue distortion of the images. In Kevin’s adventure, the “undramatic flatness” (680) of the recurring images which feature a large black dog on a side walking front of an untended white picket fence about to be

photographed by a person with a camera is pointed out by his parents in an attempt to quell his curiosity. But his sister's words, "I think it's a supernatural camera...I think it's a Manifestation" (669), linger a lot longer in his mind and compel him to seek help to understand the bizarre camera that wreaked havoc on his fifteenth birthday.

Turbulence and Aid

The mindscape of Jane in *Shutter* and Kevin in *The Sun Dog* is turbulent till they find an external agent or helper who can add to their existing understanding of the paranormal they involuntarily encounter. Kevin is unable to undo the impact of the photos "As with the man on the moon you can't unsee once you've seen it...you couldn't *unfeel* certain feelings" (672). The fact that the camera in question is "his" and that his parents would not be able to interfere with his decision of whether he wants to keep it, destroy it or exchange it for a new camera, excites the fifteen-year-old. His world becomes centred around the camera and the thrill of the prospect of the paranormal takes over and overshadows all that is rational, real and safe. To further his understanding, he unwittingly walks into the portals of an eccentric, wealthy and unscrupulous old man named Reginald "Pop" Merrill who is the owner of a junk shop in Kevin's town Castle Rock in Maine. Similarly, Jane, intrigued by the recent turn of events, continues clicking photos using her digital camera during her exploration of Tokyo and the smudges fuel her to consult with Ben's assistant Seiko Nakamura. Seiko identifies the persistent smudges on Jane's photos to be because of some spiritual entity and takes Jane for a consultation with her ex-boyfriend Ritsuo who works for a magazine that focuses primarily on spirit photography which is a type of photography that aims at capturing images of ghosts and other spiritual entities. In addition to the significant thinning out of the barriers of distance and time, spirit photography works to uncover the limitless possibilities of new technologies to break the barrier between the living and the dead (Kirpalov).

Breakthrough: The Determiner of the Direction

A breakthrough in Jane and Kevin's understanding of the paranormal entity begins with their interaction with the experts who help them without any delay. Merrill in *The Sun Dog* is quick to decode the intentions of the boy, "I don't think you brought that camera in to be *fixed*...I think you brought it in to ask me if I knew what it's up to" (679). When Kevin follows Merrill's instructions and provides a total of fifty-eight Polaroid photos, the old man gets them made into a very brief movie that shows that the dog is not still. It is "*a three-dimensional dog in a two-dimensional world*" (723) that keeps moving and starts to break into a snarl. On further examination of the frame, Kevin notices the dog sporting a string tie which is a gift from his aunt for his recent birthday. This helps him to infer that the dog is after him and is not about to give up pursuit. "Now, every time someone took a picture of it, the dog would get closer...Until it burst through" (725).

In *Shutter*, Ritsuo leads Jen to a room that showcases several spirit photos and opines that spirits appear in photos when they attempt to communicate with somebody and suggests visiting a local medium, Murase to help interpret the message from the spirit in her photos. Though her discussion with Murase lacks fruition because of Ben's interruption, it becomes obvious to Jane that the woman is trying to convey a message and starts to work on decoding it meticulously. Her deliberation introduces her to the undisclosed past of her new husband Ben Shaw. The blurs on Ben's photo point out to the 17th floor of an office building and it is where Jane finds a photo of Megumi photographed by Ben which leads to a confrontation with Ben about his previous romantic relationship with her.

The Deception and False Relief

The protagonists Kevin Delevan and Jane Shaw are victims of deception in their respective stories and this decelerates their efforts to overpower the paranormal entities. "Something we were with holding made us weak until we found it was ourselves," says the renowned American poet Robert Frost in *The Gift*

Outright. Ben Shaw stubbornly denies access to his past with Megumi, especially the part where she is raped by his friends in a shortsighted attempt to force her obsessive presence out of Ben's life while Ben is vacantly photographing the heartless deed. But Jane is deceived when she assumes that Ben has filled in on everything that happened between the ex-couple. She continues to be protective of Ben and tries to save him from Megumi's spirit while being unaware of Megumi's sincere endeavour to warn her about the kind of man Ben is. She and Ben are relieved after the cremation of Megumi's mortal remains, concluding that it would put her spirit to rest and they head back to their apartment in New York. But Jane's relief is short-lived.

Similarly, in *The Sun Dog*, Kevin is made to believe that he had thoroughly demolished his camera using a sledgehammer but Merrill swaps the vile camera for an ordinary Sun 660 intending to sell Kevin's camera to paranormal enthusiasts to make a hefty profit. "But to put a thing like this on a block and smash it to smithereens? That was crazy" (737). Merrill even goes the extra mile to burn the pictures of the dog to convince the little boy that he has nothing to worry about. As expected, Kevin breathes a sigh of relief, believing that the camera, now shattered to pieces would no longer be his burden to carry. But it does not remain that way for long.

The Paranormal Puppeteer

The Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke says, "The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse." With the deception and with holding of information sending Jane and Kevin off track, the unhindered power of the paranormal grows exponentially. Ben's friends Adam and Bruno in *Shutter* and Reginald Merrill in *The Sun Dog* are reduced to puppets on strings, completely controlled by the malevolent entity. Adam and Bruno are driven to their deaths by the spirit of Megumi. Adam is a photographer like Ben and when he is working with a model, smudges appear around his camera and they turn into Megumi's silhouette. After this, the viewfinder of his camera suddenly explodes destroying Adam's eye and eventually costing him his life.

Megumi captures Bruno in a kind of trance and causes him to cut photos into small pieces and then damage his fingers with a small blade. He is still in a trance when Jane and Ben come to rescue him and he is mentally driven by the spirit to rush past them and jump out of the window to his death.

Reginald Merrill, who now possesses Kevin's Sun 660 is made to live in a hallucinatory state by the entity trapped in the Polaroid. The dog in the photos takes over Merrill's actions and induces him to continue clicking pictures against his will. When he tries to get out of it and destroy the camera, he is made to smash a German cuckoo clock in his shop instead. The entranced Merrill is then made to buy films to feed the Sun 660 instead of tobacco to smoke. "It was not pipe-tobacco he asked for (although that was what he would remember *asking* for). He asked for film. Polaroid film" (783). He finds himself involuntarily snapping photos that almost get the snarling feral canine to break out of its Polaroid prison.

Photograph: The Creator, Preserver & Destroyer

Photographs can be heralded as the creator of chaos, preserver of life and destroyer of menace in *Shutter* and *The Sun Dog*. The trouble that starts brewing with photos ends with photos. Ben Shaw's malice and indifference to the violation of Megumi documented through photos gather momentum with time and come to an end when Jane is alerted to a series of photos after their return from Japan. These photos were captured by the couple's disposable camera in their New York apartment soon after their wedding and they display Megumi in the background. This helps Jane understand Megumi had been haunting them even before they could move to Japan and that Megumi's troubled spirit had absolutely nothing to do with her. She traces Megumi in the photos and figures out that she is pointing to Ben's camera from Japan and checks the photos stored in the memory card which brings to light Megumi's sexual abuse. "Photographs are a way of imprisoning reality...One can't possess reality; one can possess images--one can't possess the present but one can possess the past" (Sontag). Jane

perceives Megumi's haunting as her efforts to warn her against Ben's true nature and she takes the opportunity to relieve herself from her marriage with Ben. This liberates her from both Ben and Megumi's spirit all at once. She is free to rebuild her life and live without fear.

In *The Sun Dog*, Kevin Delavan's otherwise bland life gets exciting and dangerous with his birthday gift the Polaroid Sun 660. It not only plagues his mind and ruins his peace but also introduces him to the menacing presence of Reginald Merrill. The photos build their bond and also destroy it with the annihilation of Merrill. At the end of Kevin's terrifying adventure, he is freed from the ravenous dog, his camera Sun 660 and Merrill's catch on him. Kevin rushes to Merrill's store to prevent the dog from getting out but finds that the camera in a strenuous effort to birth the dog out endures its plastic casing melting and spreading across Merrill's neck and this kills him in the process. Then the photo of the roaring dog itself begins to expand to allow the release of the dog to pounce at Kevin. When the dog finally rises and is a step away from Kevin, he looks into the dog's eye, clicks a photo using a new Sun 660 and contains the dog once again within the two-dimensional black-and-white polaroid world. "Say *cheese*.... And triggered the Polaroid." (827)

Conclusion

The stories attest to the undeniable power of photography and warn against consequences when misused. The unerasable impact of the thoughtlessly captured photos continues to afflict its characters even after the resolution of the crisis. In the movie, Ben renders himself catatonic after a desperate attempt to electrocute himself to be freed of Megumi's possession. And even in the mental institution he is placed in, she is found irremovably latched onto his back. And when Kevin in Stephen

King's *The Sun Dog* uses the word processor in the WordStar 70 PC, which he receives for his seventeenth birthday, two years after his traumatising experience with the Sun 660, he gets a message, "The dog is loose again. It is not sleeping. It is not lazy. It is coming for you, Kevin...It's very hungry. And it's VERY angry" (832). Photos have the potential to be useful, trouble some or sometimes both. "All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, and mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt." (Sontag). Whether photographs serve as a medium for paranormal interaction or not, freezing a moment in time comes with its risks and care ought to be taken before triggering the camera for its next picture.

References

1. King, Stephen. *Four Past Midnight*. Hodder And Stoughton, 1991.
2. Kirpalov, Anastasiia S. "What is Spirit Photography: Fraud or Phenomenon?" *The Collector*, 2 Jun. 2023, <https://www.thecollector.com/what-is-ghost-spirit-photography/>, Accessed 18 Jan. 2024.
3. Navarro, Hector. "Shutter (2008) Explained: An Average Movie-Goer's Review." *Average Movie Reviews*, <https://averagemoviereviews.com/shutter-2008-explained/>, Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.
4. Rubins, Josh. "Four Past Midnight." *Entertainment Weekly*, 21 Sept. 1990, <https://ew.com/article/1990/09/21/four-past-midnight/>, Accessed 15 Jan. 2024.
5. "Shutter Plot." *IMDb*, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0482599/plotsummary/>, Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.
6. Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Penguin Books, 2008.

REPRESSION AND RESILIENCE IN EMMA DONOGHUE'S *THE WONDER*

M. ISWARYA

Ph.D. Research Scholar

S. T. Hindu College, Nagercoil

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

Dr. S. AMBIKA

Assistant Professor

S. T. Hindu College, Nagercoil

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

Abstract

The paper entitled "Repression and Resilience in Emma Donoghue's The Wonder" elucidates psychological impediments that channelize and bring prominent changes in the course of individuals lives. It highlights the play of anxiety and the subsequent repressive defenses individuals tends to employ when they are exposed to unanticipated ambience. Humans innate ability to endure, adapt and develop are depicted through the protagonist, who appears to be fragile, suspicious and baffled along with her transformations after resilience.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Repression, Conflict, Fasting, Emotions, Defense, Guilt.*

Repression and Resilience in Emma Donoghue's *The Wonder*

Emma Donoghue, the Irish- born Canadian writer always find an opportunity to voice her strong views in favour of women's liberation. She is greatly influenced by the issues in society and she becomes the voice of women who are affected. She depicts the issues of women in her writings with much attention. Though she writes about the issues faced by women in and around Ireland and Canada respectively, her writings become universal since the sufferings, psychological conflict she depicted in her works are universal.

The Wonder by Donoghue predominantly talks about the aftermath of incest along with the impact of anorexia mirabilis. The author declares that, she "was inspired by almost 50 cases of "so called Fasting Girls" between the 16th and 20th centuries,... (*The New York Times*) and the creation of Anna is the result of her own research on fasting girls. The protagonists Lib and Anna are exposed to peculiar situations which triggers their roller coaster of emotions. Lib and Anna tend to use certain defenses

including repression to have control over their pathetic situation. Repression is a coping strategy for psychological discomfort that aims to keep the human mental apparatus stable. Jerome L. Singer in *Repression and Dissociation* book's preface states that "Repression has therefore often been called the "Queen of the defenses," the most general form of avoidance of conscious representation of frightening memories, wishes, or fantasies or of the unwanted emotions. The specific formation, intellectualization, or sublimation all serves to repress thought or affect".

Repression is predominantly associated with anxiety. People have the tendency to repress their negative feelings emerges from anxiety. In the book *Theories of Personality* repression is defined as a basic and often used defense mechanism and "an involuntary removal of something from conscious awareness" (Schultz & Schultz 49). Repression is a wading off process and it happens when a person unconsciously tends to push his thoughts and negative emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, guilt and frustration out of conscious mind in an effort to forget them. These negative feelings makes anxiety

much more disturbing and by repressing them a person experiences relief at least for a brief period of time.

In *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* Freud identifies three kinds of anxiety. They are reality anxiety, neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety. Reality anxiety arises from external danger perception, whereas neurotic anxiety arises from instinctual danger perception. Moral anxiety arises from a well-developed super-ego feeling guilty for actions or thoughts that contradicts their moral standards. In *The Wonder*, Lib is baffled ever since she comes to the O'Donnell's house. She is surprised at the actions of Rosaleen O'Donnell. Lib is curious to know why Anna's mother does not show any regret for her child's fasting. Lib believes "A woman's worst pain was to have nothing to give her baby. Or to see the tiny mouth turn away from what she offered" (62) and she concludes that either Rosaleen is convinced of divine intervention in her child's life, or she is also aware of the hoax and also the part of the hoax.

Reality anxiety propels Lib to find the truth behind the hoax the O'Donnell family plays. Lib checks every seam of the girl's dress and petticoat to find any hidden food. But she does not get "Not a crumb" (43). Lib understands the befalling danger soon after she seen the article of Byrne, the journalist. Though she is angry at the description of the events in a funny and logical way. She comprehends the genuine challenges she is going to face and she is aware of the consequences of fasting if the presumed hoax is not actually a hoax. Her hatred and anxiety is described as, "Had the fellow no heart? Anna was a child in trouble, not a joke for the summertime entertainment of newspaper reader" (185).

Lib's awareness on the impending danger associated with Anna's fasting thereby provokes reality anxiety. It is seen when she tries to make Sister Michael understand the situation of Anna as, "If by any chance there's been some subterfuge going on in this house over past months, our surveillance must have put an end to it, beginning on Monday. So there's a very real possibility that you

and I are the ones preventing Anna from getting nourishment now" (187). Lib starts to worry about the welfare of Anna. Anna's rapid deterioration in health and her bodily changes enhances her anxiety.

Lib's reality anxiety triggers the constant fight between Lib and Rosaleen O'Donnell. She thinks Rosaleen as a counterpart in her journey in O'Donnell's household. Though Lib is not the biological mother of Anna she has a motherly concern towards the girl which often brings forth a rift between both of them. Rosaleen O'Donnell tries to prove her superiority over Lib by projecting her authority. In contrast to this, Lib also never fails to proclaim her own rights as a private nurse appointed by the committee. Rosaleen O'Donnell considers her daughter's fasting as something appreciable, and she considers it as a credit to her family. She is happy to project her daughter as a heavenly creature. "We can't explain it, but our little girl is thriving by special providence of the Almighty. Sure are't all things possible to him?" (31). Lib's tension about Anna is the result of her own feelings and emotions that she has repressed after her child's death.

The rigorous effort extended by Lib to save Anna appears to be fragile. Her identification of Anna with her dead child indulges herself unconsciously to find a positive solution. Since her unattainable goal to save Anna through her family and the committee end in vain, she takes the responsibility of protecting the girl along with Byrne. As Freud opines, "... the repression is effectively established ... in the obsessional neurosis by means of substitution (displacement along certain associated channels)" (qtd in Madison 18). Lib's obsession over her lost child is responsible for the rescue of Anna from her impending death. To protect Anna, "Lib went to the bedroom, and scooped her up. Not heavy at all. (She thought of her own baby, that minute heft in her arms, as light as a loaf of bread)" (328). Though Lib is unable to bring back her dead child, she has got an opportunity to save Anna who reminds her of her own baby. She saves Anna from

death by implementing her practical knowledge along with the help of Byrne. Though she struggles throughout her journey she endures and evolve as a powerful individual.

Donoghue's characters are exposed to traumatic event in their life and tend to show abnormalities in their behaviour. The behavioural changes in the characters are the result of repressed negative emotional experiences which have been heaped up in the unconscious. Though her characters undergoes severe psychological turmoil they use different defenses depending on the situations to manage their anxiety provoking feelings and stress inducing stimuli. As noted in the preface of *Handbook of the Psychology of Self Forgiveness*, "Emotions like guilt and shame can help us navigate life, if they are meaningfully interpreted as motivators to reconcile with those affected by our behaviour and to facilitate social belonging" (Woodyatt, et al vii). Lib makes use of Anna's negative feelings to bring drastic changes in both of them and they become a family. Though the protagonists of Donoghue suffer, they

become resilient figures noted for their strong will and determination.

References

1. Donoghue, Emma. *The Wonder*. Picador, 2016.
2. King, Stephen. "Stephen King's Reviews Emma Donoghue's Latest Novel." *The New York Times*, Sept 27, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/books/review/stephen-king-emma-donoghue-the-wonder.html#:~:text=In%20an%20author's%20note%2C%20Donoghue,f>
3. Madison, Peter. *Freud's Concept of Repression and Defense, Its Theoretical and Observational Language*. University of Minnesota, 1961.
4. Schultz, Duane. P, and Sydney Ellen Schultz. *Theories of Personality*. Cengage, 2017.
5. Singer, Jerome. L, editor. *Repression and Dissociation*. The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
6. Woodyatt, Lydia, et al, editors. *Handbook of the Psychology of Self Forgiveness*. Springer, 2017.

REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE MASCULINITY IN OCTAVIA BUTLER'S *WILD SEED*

S. LAVANYA

*Assistant Professor of English
Sri Sarada College for Women, Salem, Tamil Nadu*

Dr. V. SANGEETHA

*Professor and Head, Department of English
Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu*

Abstract

*Science fiction is the perfect platform to talk about the Other. All the exceptions against the rules, the norms can be projected as the Other in science fiction. Though the very term science fiction is a paradox, there is verisimilitude in each of the science fictional stories with an interesting novum. Some of the examples of novums are extraterrestrial beings, robots, space travel, time travel, environmental crisis, etc. The novums make the readers realize the similarity between the plot and the real world. Octavia Butler is one such writer who contrived such novums and characters that are allegories of the real world. Butler's *Wild Seed* was published in 1980; it is a part of the *Patternist Series* consisting of five novels. According to the internal chronology, *Wild Seed* is the first novel in the series. It is the origin story of the patternists world. Anyanwu is one of the protagonists of the novel. She is an immortal, a shape-shifter and a healer. Butler has raised some important questions regarding humanity and gender through Anyanwu. Her power as shape shifter enables Anyanwu to cross the threshold of gender and sexuality. Though her counterpart Doro is also equally powerful, Anyanwu seems to be the most powerful because of her abilities. Butler critiques the concept of heteronormativity, sexuality and gender through Anyanwu. The aim of this paper is to analyse the character of Anyanwu through the prism of Judith Halberstam's *Female Masculinity*.*

Keywords: *Octavia Butler, Wild Seed, Female Masculinity.*

Masculinity Studies have been explored in the field of academia since 1970s. It has garnered much attention with the development of the Cultural Studies. It was only a little later with the discourse on gender performativity and queerness, female masculinity came into light. Judith Halberstam was one of the most prominent critics of female masculinity. She defines female masculinity as follows: "...conceptualizing masculinity without men" (2). This is what precisely the concept of female masculinity. The very term masculinity is associated only with men mostly and this itself is a construction that demands to be changed. And when a girl is found to be with the qualities associated with men, she is criticized as tomboyish. "...most obvious forms of female masculinity (such as tomboyism and butchness..." (Halberstam 41). And when this continues, the conflict is extended towards adulthood

and identity. Then there comes the real problem which is often neglected by everyone. The mere refusal to address about tomboyishness shows that masculinity is and can be perceived only in men.

Judith Butler has talked about this in her gender theory concentrating on performativity and socially constructed concept of gender. Any woman acting out against the conventions of traditional feminism is supposed to be queer; then the labelling begins. And then there is also a process of becoming when it comes to gender. Critics like Eve Sedgwick have also talked about this quality of females exhibiting masculinity. Female masculinity is criticised even in the current era.

Science fiction often plays with the threshold of sex, gender, class and race in particular. Many science fiction writers use the platform to talk about the themes of humanity, otherness, differences,

intolerances that exist in the real world. Black science fiction writers such as Samuel Delany, Octavia Estelle Butler, Steven Barnes have laid the foundation where science fiction is used to talk about Afrocentricity. Many writers such as Nalo Hopkinson, NK Jemisin, Sheree Thomas have followed suit and created a very distinct space for Black science fiction.

Octavia Estelle Butler was the third point of origin of Afrofuturism. She created powerful black characters in her literary oeuvre that stand as a testimony of Afrocentricity. Her oeuvre consists of three novel series, two standalone novels and one short story collection. She bagged all the coveted literary prizes, awards and grants in the field of science and speculative fiction. The present paper deals about the novel *Wild Seed* (1980) which tells the story of two immortals and it is the origin story of Butler's famed *Patternist* Series. This paper seeks to analyse the character of Anyanwu through the lens of Judith Halberstam's Female Masculinity theory.

Halberstam uses the concept of Tomboy to show how labeling a girl begins even at a young age. She then goes on to describe the problems faced by ambiguous gender. "Ambiguous gender, when and where it does appear, is inevitably transformed into deviance, thirdness, or a blurred version of either male or female" (Halberstam 20). The very system of gender is flawed since even now there is no proper acknowledgment of third gender, queer genders. Marjorie Garber also addresses the same issue by talking about transsexuals and transvestites where they do not get confined to the binary gender system. Normally women tend to face this problem more. Added to this is their race which also plays an intersectional role. Black women are doubly oppressed in terms of race and gender. Butler's *Wild Seed* talks about all these issues in a relatable way.

Octavia Estelle Butler (1947-2006) was an American science fiction writer and received multiple prestigious awards in the field of science and speculative fiction. Her novel *Wild Seed* (1980) garnered much attention upon its publication for the female protagonist Anyanwu. Anyanwu is the

strongest female character of Octavia Butler's oeuvre. Though Anyanwu is termed as a posthuman, she is incredibly feminine throughout the novel. She exhibits traits of masculinity when necessary. Butler has projected Anyanwu as the strongest being in the novel – she is an immortal, a shape-shifter who could change into any form – bird, animal, another human – and a healer of all.

Anyanwu is in a constant power struggle and a love-hate relationship with Doro, the male protagonist of the novel. Doro is also an immortal who has transmigrating power and telepathic skills. Though Doro could take her life any moment, as he is a spirit, he does not intend to kill her; at the least not till her husband Isaac dies. But he knows that Anyanwu is a very rare wild seed (rare blood line) and more powerful than him in many ways.

Anyanwu never told Doro that she could jump all but the widest of the rivers they had to cross. She thought at first that he might guess because he had seen the strength of her hands. Her legs and thighs were just as powerful. But not used to taking her strength as she did about her abilities, granted. He never guessed, never asked what she could do (Butler 32).

For most part of the novel, Anyanwu is described as the strongest being than Doro.

Anyanwu has chosen to stay in the male form for most part of her life. She firmly believes that this will lessen her problems. And she goes on deceiving others because she does not want to attract any attention towards herself. "In fact, she could have made herself as large as any man, but she chose to let her smallness go on deceiving people. Most often, it put strangers at their ease because she seemed harmless. Also, it caused would-be attackers to underestimate her" (Butler 12). The real problem comes only when Doro realises that Anyanwu would be hard to control. Anyanwu never believed in slavery and when she finds herself in such a situation, she immediately frees herself with her powers. Doro really believes that once she gets pregnant, then she would be easy to control. "But once she was isolated in America with an infant to

care for, she would learn submissiveness” (Butler 29). Anyanwu joins Doro only to see her dream come true – to have immortal children and to live in a place where people like her are seen as humans and not as threats.

Another instance when Isaac criticizes Anyanwu’s femininity. Anyanwu is used to being naked in her native village with a single piece of cloth to cover her. But she has to learn to wear clothes in civilization. Isaac gets her clothes and jewellery and remarks: “You’ll get used to it. Now you can be a real lady” (Butler 110). This is another attack on her femininity. Though Anyanwu is offended, she chooses to adapt to her new surroundings.

. . . linking of Black women and animals is evident in nineteenth-century scientific literature. The equation of women, Blacks, and animals is revealed in the following description of an African woman published in an 1878 anthropology text: She had a way of pouting her lips exactly like what we have observed in the orangutan. Her movements had something abrupt and fantastical about them, reminding one of those of the ape. Her ear was like that of many apes. . . . These are animal characters. I have never seen a human head more like an ape than that of this woman. (Collins 140)

Butler skillfully tackles this criticism while presenting the character of Anyanwu. She presents Anyanwu as a shape-shifter who can change into any form – animals, birds, humans, etc. Anyanwu is fearsome in her animal form. Most of the kills in the novel happens when she takes animal form in particular. Python, leopard, dolphin, eagle and werewolf are some of the forms that she morphs into when she senses danger.

Anyanwu escapes to Louisiana after Isaac’s death. She knows that without Isaac, her survival chances are very less with Doro. She changes her form again into animals and birds alternatively and escapes Doro. She has learnt the hard way that Doro cannot track her down in nonhuman forms. When Doro finally finds her after two centuries, she is living as an old man in Louisiana plantation with her own family around her. “The old man had lived in

Avoyelles Parish in the state of Louisiana for years, his neighbours told Doro. He had married daughters, but no sons. His wife was long dead and he lived alone on his plantation with his slaves – a number of whom were reputed to be his children” (Butler 215). In order to maintain her family, she also changes into werewolf form often to scare her threats.

African sexuality has been the center of the debates whenever hetero and homo sexualities are discussed. Generally black women are stereotyped and are projected in the negative light. Patricia Hill Collins rightly observes:

First, *African* or *Black* sexuality becomes constructed as an abnormal or pathologized heterosexuality. Long-standing ideas concerning the excessive sexual appetite of people of African descent conjured up in White imaginations generate gender-specific controlling images of the Black male rapist and the Black female jezebel, and they also rely on myths of Black hypersexuality. . . . Within assumptions of normalized heterosexuality, *homosexuality* emerges as a second important category of “deviant” sexuality. (Collins 129)

Heterosexuality is considered to be the norm. But Butler portrays Anyanwu as a homosexual too in all majesty; she also portrays the love that exists between Anywanu and Denice. Anyanwu has always been against unnatural matings in the past; that is before meeting Doro. After meeting Doro, she is ready to experiment further, to expand her horizons; and this is what she does. She does mate with dolphins in her dolphin form; she marries Denice, another woman.

Butler again criticizes heterosexuality with Anyanwu’s sexual choices. She marries Denice when she is in Edward Warrick form. “She was only sixteen when I married her. If I hadn’t married her, I think she would have been put in an asylum eventually. People spoke about her in the way you just said my name” (Butler 230). Denice is also another outcast like Anyanwu during her initial days. Denice could see the people’s past just by touching them. Denice’s parents are convinced with Edward Warrick being rich and young, and get their daughter

married to him. This is another typical instance of heteronormativity.

The next most important thing Butler throws light on is Anyanwu's ability to conceive child of her own choices. Even in male form, she can make Denice pregnant with girl children.

"I told her I could give her children who were not related to me at all if she wished. Her fear made me angry even though I knew the situation was not her fault" (Butler 233). If Anyanwu copies another man's shape, then she could give sons of that man. Butler is quite prophetic that if a woman wishes to conceive, she really does not need a man to be physically present with her. This is then again, a critique of heterosexuality and the masculine power over women.

Collins also talks about absent fathers and families headed by female figures in many works. She gives many real examples for her case too. Butler's Anyanwu is the head of her family. She needs no man to act as the head, take care of the family at all. Instead she becomes the core. Even when staying with Isaac and Doro, she assumes charge automatically without waiting for their assistance. Doro has a grudge over her on this since she is the caretaker of all his people. None waits for Doro when Anyanwu is there for them. Her role as a healer, a mother is of prominent importance. "No one in any of Doro's settlements was as good at helping people through transition as Anyanwu. Her body could absorb the physical punishment of restraining a violent, usually very strong person" (Butler 162).

Anyanwu is the bread-winner of her family in the Louisiana plantation. Here Butler again comments on heteronormativity, makes a Black woman as the head of the family, as the responsible one.

That was especially important here, where there were no slaves, where people were paid for their work and supplied with decent housing and good food. It cost more to keep people decently. If Anyanwu had not been a good manager, she would have had to return to the sea much more often for the wearisome task of finding and robbing sunken

vessels, the carrying away gold and precious stones – usually within her own body. (Butler 255)

Finally, an agreement is reached by Doro and Anyanwu. "She would welcome him now, in whichever body he wore. She would have her men, and if she chose, her women – husbands, wives, lovers" (Butler 279). Anyanwu has reached that stage where she no longer shies of her masculine nature and she embraces it completely. Halberstam talks about this in particular. A woman who is ready to embrace her opposite gender role is one who gets to be labelled as queer. Queer studies deals about the concept of female masculinity in detail. "Female masculinity within queer sexual discourse allows for the disruption of even flows between gender and anatomy, sexuality and identity, sexual practice and performativity" (Halberstam 139).

Butler mainly breaks the stereotypes of black women through Anyanwu in *Wild Seed*. "...stereotypical conceptions of black women as less feminine..." (Halberstam 29). Halberstam voices out the same. When a white woman is queer, she gets a different treatment than a black woman who embraces queerness. Similarly the stereotypes attached to a black woman are great in number. They are sexualized in general. The case of Sarah Bartmann, who was regarded as 'the Hottentot Venus,' is not easy to forget. She was displayed as an exhibit in various public gatherings in Paris because of her elongated genitals. The Nineteenth century Europe was fixated on the idea of hypersexuality of the Africans in particular.

From the mummies, jezebels, and breeder women of slavery to the smiling Aunt Jemimas on pancake mix boxes, ubiquitous Black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of contemporary popular culture, negative stereotypes applied to African-American women have been fundamental to Black women's oppression. (Collins 5)

The same will not be the treatment for a white woman in all honesty. Butler just shows the discrepancy that exist in the real world where the factors such as race, class, gender, sexual

orientations collide and contribute to oppression of those who are different.

Gayle Rubin's work *Thinking Sex* talks about the hierarchy in sexual orientations. Heterosexuality is always placed at the top and all other sexual behaviours and choices are at the bottom still. Halberstam details about all the terminologies involved in sexual choices of women who exhibit their female masculinity. Of these, 'lesbian masculinity' is observed in many women with masculinity traits. "For the moment, however, I use the term "lesbian masculinity" to refer to women who perform their masculinity within what are recognizably lesbian relations" (Halberstam 120). This queer subject is called by many terms by many literary theorists. For instance, Rosi Braidotti terms this queer subject as nomads, Neil Badmington terms this queer subject as posthuman, Donna Haraway terms this as cyborg, Gloria Anzaldua calls this subject without boundaries as mestiza identity.

Butler through Anyanwu throws light on the flawed concept of binary system in gender. If a girl exhibits characteristic features that are typical to a

guy, then she is seen and treated different. If a woman who has sexual choices that are not expected of her, then she gets treated different. Female masculinity precisely talks about these – masculinity without men. Butler strongly advocates that one should think out of the binary system in order to understand that sex, gender, performance are all highly personal and subjective. It would be a welcome change to encourage a woman with female masculinity for a better progressive society. Thus Butler through the lens of Afrocentricity advocates for women with stronger female masculinity.

References

1. Butler, Octavia Estelle. *Wild Seed*. Warner Books, 2001.
2. Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Routledge, 2000.
3. Garber, Marjorie. *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. Routledge, 1992.
4. Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Duke UP, 1998.

SPIRITUALITY AND SELF DISCOVERY IN PAULO COELHO'S *ALEPH*

K. P. SREELEKSHMI

Full -Time Research Scholar, Department of English

Sree Ayyappa College for Women, Chunkankadai

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundananar University Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli

Dr. S. SREELATHA

Assistant Professor and Research Guide, Department of English

Sree Ayyappa College for Women, Chunkankadai

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundananar University Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli

Abstract

Paulo Coelho, the Brazilian lyricist and novelist, is one of the most influential currently living authors. He is known for his philosophical and spiritual undertones in his novels. The novel Aleph is semi autobiographical, as the writer himself admits, "These are my whole experiences, meaning everything that is real". The novel published in 2011, is the outcome of the journey he undertakes through the Trans-Siberian railway. Even though he is a spiritual man, he faces a crisis in his belief, which also questions his faith in his long search for wisdom and understanding of universe. His spiritual master advised him to undertake a journey to rediscover himself. From this Trans-Siberian railway, he undertakes another journey of self discovery which gives him an account of his past life. The novel Aleph is a blend of Paulo Coelho's spiritual and practical wisdom. The present study analyses the spirituality and Self discovery of Paulo Coelho.

Keywords: Spirituality, Self Discovery, Philosophy, Universe, Wisdom, Religion, Journey.

Today in this modern world, there exists different traditions and diverse philosophical views. The religious practices vary according to the taste of different sect of people. Religion plays an important role in the spiritual elevation of life. Every religious sects have their own way of religious activities and rituals. Despite the religious difference, any religious activity or ritual which gives importance to recalling of mind, praising of good qualities, acceptance of one's faults and sins and spiritual desire is self purifying and self elevating. Faith in religion when backed by reason and discretion is right and spiritually beneficial. Even though every human wish to achieve spiritual progress only those who possess the ability and aim for non attachment can achieve spiritual progress, which is covered with the veils of karma. The narrator himself says "spiritual growth doesn't always arrive hand-in-hand with wisdom" (214). When does one's spiritual life begin? One of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna said, "it begins when we are in nirvikalpa samadhi, that is when we are in super conscious state". When we say we are

leading a spiritual life it is actually our psychological life or mental life" (33).

In Paulo Coelho's novel, *Aleph*, spirituality is portrayed as a journey of self discovery and inner transformation. Spirituality is the quality involving deep feeling and beliefs of a religious nature giving less importance to the physical aspects of life. The transpersonal experience in the novel, *Aleph*, symbolizes the connection of a broader spiritual reality by having a deeper understanding of oneself and the unknown. Through this semi auto biographical novel, *Aleph*, Paulo helps his readers to experience his own inner struggles, quest for self discovery and to encounter with spiritual insights and also narrates the experience he encounters with various people and culture. Paulo Coelho's *Aleph*, begins with the question raised by the narrator himself, "what I am I doing here, trying to make my way in a spiritual tradition whose roots are in the remote past, far from the challenges of the present moment?"(1).

A spiritual teacher does not prescribe disciplinary practices beyond aspirant's capacity. But he properly and firmly inspire his disciple to walk on the path of purification. Paulo Coelho first met his spiritual master "J" in Amsterdam in 1982. Under him he has learned and unlearned to live hundreds of times. Even though his apprenticeship in magic is twenty-two years old, his search for wisdom, peace of mind, and an awareness of realities become pointless now. Despite his doubts about his faith in religion, he was certain in his belief that there exists a spiritual parallel Universe that impinges on the world in which humans live. To him, "sacred books, revelations, guides, manuals, ceremonies" (5), which have less lasting effect seem absurd. He learns that performing absurd rituals will get one in touch with something deep in their soul, the oldest part, the point closest to the origin of everything. He describes "Anyone who Knows God Cannot Describe Him. Anyone Who Can Describe God Does Not Know Him". (121). He says "Praying, Meditating and helping a neighbour still did not satisfy the connection between god and myself."

The novel revolves around the main character, who is the writer, Paulo Coelho himself, embarks on a physical train journey starting from Vladivostok to Moscow. He crosses 9288 kilometers in fifteen days and travelled through seven different time zones. The physical journey of Paulo Coelho serves as the metaphor for the inner spiritual journey of self-discovery. In this long trip to his soul, he encountered various reincarnations and reconnected with the women whom he loved and betrayed five hundred years ago. What makes Paulo Coelho's journey towards the Trans-Siberian railway was a conversation he had with his spiritual master "J", about his inability to connect with his spiritual side. Since he left his country to London, he was a sort of different person who feels calm and happy in his journey. The mission of Paulo Coelho in the present life is to reconquer the kingdom which has been corrupted by routine. In order to regain his energy, busy in his activities, he has to leave to return to the present as his master says, "You're not here anymore. You've got to leave in order to return to

the present" (9). One of Paulo Coelho's many motives in this Trans-Siberian trip is to travel back into the past to find what lies underground to his roots. Paulo Coelho's spiritual master says, past and future only exist in our mind. He redefines Karma as "It's what you do in the present that will redeem the past and thereby change the future" (9).

The novel has many mystical experiences and spiritual elements. Paulo Coelho was asked to travel in space and in time to ask forgiveness from the people he had harmed to attain the possibility of redemption. As the world is being created and destroyed, it is easy to find people who lived in the past. The narrator remembers about the ring of fire exercise which one individual does unconsciously by entering one's remote or recent past. Less advisable, entering into this state provides two opportunities either by carrying off into an unwelcome place or bringing past problems into the present. He himself says, "any return to the past with no knowledge of the process can have dramatic and disastrous consequences" (300). There is a saying included that in the second before our death, every human can understand the real reason for their own existence. There was a conversation in The Mahabharata between Yaksha and Yudhistira, where Yaksha questions about the most important fact in this world. The answer given by Yudhistira is, "in the face of death as none believes he will die".

Paulo Coelho has also experienced déjà vu moment which is "more than just that fleeting moment of surprise, instantly forgotten because we never bother with things that make no sense. It shows that time doesn't pass. It's a leap into something we have already experienced and that is being repeated" (39, 40). Freud complains the unconscious phantasies, which is responsible for the explanation of déjà vu are generally rejected by psychologists. He says déjà vu "is a set of phenomena, an illusion in which we seek to accept something as belonging to our ego". The collective unconscious, a concept introduced by Swiss Psychiatrist, refers to the part of the unconscious mind shared by all human beings containing universal experience, symbols and memories.

Religious beliefs, meditation and those practices that explore the inner self can manifest spirituality. On the course of the train journey, when Hilal finished sharing her life experiences “with a complete group of perfect strangers”, (58), the ambassador’s wife, one among the group of people advises her about the influence of meditation in one’s life. She says:

Each morning when your mind is still empty, devote a little time to the Divine. The air contains a cosmic force for which every culture has a different name, but that doesn’t matter. The important thing is to do what I ‘m telling you now. Inhale deeply and ask for all the blessings in the air to enter your body and fill every cell. Then exhale slowly, projecting happiness and peace around you.”(58).

Hilal is aware of some powerful “information field”, which controls and guides her to the right chord when she feels unsure about something. Tatiana, whom Hilal and the narrator met on their train journey, is an engineer by profession. But she discovered herself before standing on a blank canvas that every brushstroke is like a visual meditation, a journey that transcends to a state of happiness that failed to find in her work which she hopes never to lose. Tatiana was also capable of transmuting that energy into something sacred.

Paulo Coelho, being an ardent follower of Christianity, often visits churches. Before setting out to anywhere, he seeks the blessings of his Goddess. Before setting out to London for a book signing section, he visited a chapel, Barbazan- Debat. He prayed the God, Our Lady, to guide him in his career and life. When the train stops at Ekaterinburg in Russia he was happy to find an orthodox church, Cathedral of Blood. The inside of the church appears to be a small museum, where the last Tsar of the Russian Empire was executed. Believing that ghosts of the dead are really with the present people, Boris Yelstin who was then the president of Russia demolished the old house and build a church.

The main element in *Aleph* itself helps the protagonists to understand the interconnectedness of universe and the existence of humans. In order to attain the stage of self realization one must know to

acknowledge and embrace conscious and unconscious self. Human beings and the universe are closely interconnected even when people fail to recognize and accept it. The Aleph experience underwent by the narrator itself is an evidence of the interconnection between universe and human beings. Aleph is described as a point, “the point at which everything is in the same place at the same time” (79). The narrator has first experienced Aleph in 1982 in the Dachau Concentration camp in Germany which happened completely by chance. He says, “I had a sense that very important things were appearing before his eyes, but I couldn’t understand any of them ” (102). And this happens to the narrator and Hilal.

In magical tradition, Aleph present itself in two ways, one is as a point in universe that contains all other points, present and past, large and small. This small Aleph normally happens by chance when the person and the place of Aleph correctly come together. When two or more people happens to find themselves in small Aleph with a strong affinity there occurs the great Aleph. Their positive and negative energies compete with each other to provoke a chain reaction. Like the small Aleph which happens by chance, the great Aleph also happens by chance to whom destiny has chosen for a specific mission.

Entering into the Aleph helps the narrator to know more about Hilal. “The Aleph had revealed to me a little about the woman standing before me. I can’t remember every detail of our joint story but I know that she and I have met before”. By entering into that state Paulo realizes that Hilal is one of the eight women he had tortured and burned to death and he remembers the words of one of the women “love will conquer hatred and those who are burned today will be exalted” (295). “I only hope she never learns in what circumstances that meeting took place. At this precise moment, she is enfolding me In the energy of love, as she may have done in the past” (114).

He says the common truth that revenge makes human beings equal to one another and human

beings express their wisdom and intelligence by the quality of forgiving. He admits that he must be punished since he deserves that punishment, "for I am the guiltiest of all, the one who washed his hands of them when just one word could have changed everything"(274). According to Hilal, as victims always considered to be culprits, she decided to punish herself. As a result, she always sought, suffering, conflict and despair in her relationships. Hilal says that "you abandoned me when I most needed you. I died because of you and have returned now to haunt you" (253). Eventhough she was condemned to death for her love, she was forced to sacrifice her life, she was ready to forgive him. She felt humiliated and betrayed but she says, "I 'm not interested in what our relationship was in the past life. We're here in the present" (231). The prayer of forgiveness used by Hilal in Novosibirsk is the one that is practiced by other people. According to her, she wants to free her from a religion that perpetuated horrors in the past, to be away from churches, priests and sacraments. She wants " music and the silent contemplation of nature are quite enough for me"(223).

Paulo Coelho believes, "we need a new incarnation in order to finish something that was left incomplete"(106). All the people with whom people had problems in the past kept on reappearing in their life which the mystics called Wheel of Time. She reasons out her existence thus, "while you were setting out in search of your kingdom, I was beginning to find myself, until at a certain point on the journey, I couldn't go any further"(259). Now in the present stage, Hilal, a strong adaptive obsessive woman, plays violin and she is the Spalla in orchestra who is responsible to make sure that all other instruments are in tune. In the novel *Aleph* Paulo Coelho is the character who is bound to self realization. A self doesn't amount too much, but no self is an island, each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than before.

Universe, the vast body contains all the solutions and the problems. Death is a door into another dimensions. While sleeping every night people shift from one plane to another plane. Paulo Coelho says. "Love always triumphs over what we call death. That's why there's no need to grieve for our loved

ones, because they continue to be loved and remain by our side. It's hard for us to accept that. If you don't believe in, then there's no point my trying to explain"(127).

This novel *Aleph* is about one's encounter with fears and shortcomings, the search for love and forgiveness and the courage to confront the inevitable challenges of life. Having undergone a high crisis of faith, Paulo Coelho seeks a path of spiritual renewal and growth by travelling 9288 kilometers. He utilizes this journey to find his past, the lady whom he met five hundred years before, on a voyage between time and space, to find opportunity to rewrite his own destiny. Passing and crossing over the fears, hurdles, regrets and unresolved emotions, Paulo Coelho undergoes a process of self discovery. As he travels and encounters various people and situations in his life, he gain insight into his own character and nature of existence. The moments and incidents in the novel where Paulo reflect on the nature of love and forgiveness contribute to the spiritual insights of the novel. The relationship Paulo and Hilal had and the hatred they had contribute the main element. He embarks on a physical and spiritual transformative journeyreaching a point called Aleph. The various church he visits and the omnipresent Hilal, whom he met in the course of his journey strengthen his spiritual side.

References

1. Coelho Paulo , *Aleph*, Collins Publishers 2011, United Kingdom.
2. *The Vedanta Kesari*, Vol III issue 1, Monthly, Jan 2024 ISSN 0042-2983. A spiritual English monthly of the Ramakrishna order since 1914.
3. Lyotard Jean Francis, *The Post Modern Condition Post Identity*- T. Ravichndran RBSA Publishers, ISBN 817611-377-8. 11 2007, Jaipur.
4. *Jaina Philosophy and Religion*, Translated by Nagin. J.Shah 1stPub. Delhi 1978
5. Freud Sugmund, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Penguin Books, 1977.

MARITAL CONFLICTS AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN SUDHA MURTHY'S *GENTLY FALLS THE BAKULA*

D. UMA MAHESWARI

*Research Scholar, Department of Translation
Tamil University, Thanjavur*

Dr. B. RAJESH

*Associate Professor, Department of Translation
Tamil University, Thanjavur*

Abstract

This paper attempts to bring the marital conflicts and identity crisis of Sudha Murthy's "Gently Falls the Bakula". Let us explore the way she handles towards the end, comprehending her inner self. The suppression that many women particularly Indian traditional people usually undergo due to the social and domestic conditioning of women from their birth till death. This social conditioning of the society affects the stability, creating lot of chaos in their life and they seem to understand only when they can't tolerate further more. This paper brings to light the psychic experience that the Shrimati underwent and how she explores her inner self. Sudha Murthy's Shrimati is a well-educated, intelligent woman committed to everyday responsibilities with rare competence right from her childhood. This paper deals with the psychological insight probing into the inner psychic mind of Shrimati after her marriage with Shrikanth and after prolonged subjugation, she finds her way towards self-appraisal leading to identify her own life in a different perspective.

Keywords: Marital Conflicts, Identity Crisis, Subjugation, Suppression, Self-Appraisal.

Introduction

Sudha Murthy is a living Postmodern Indian prolific women writer cum educator. She is the chairperson of the Infosys foundation. She has excelled in writing in three languages such as Kannada, Marathi and English. She is been praised for her philanthropic contributions. She is the recipient of the prestigious PadmaShri award. She has made the most meaningful contribution in the field of fiction with the simple word choice narration enhancing the pleasure of reading. Sudha Murthy focuses on family relationships, particularly the relationship between husband and wife, their battle struggles along with the issues related to financial stability and the tactics they attempt to move on in their life. The most significant aspect to be examined is the point in which her women character Shrimati explores a new perspective to compete with the current situation to lead a successful life. Thus Sudha Murthy practically explores the basic state of women psyche that is more prevalent now.

Sudha Murthy's Shrimati at the beginning did not show a marked possibility to protest, later after a prolonged disowning or neglect lead to assert her and to find a place of her own. She brings forth the problems faced by the women of current era with extreme concern along with their social and emotional responsibilities. This present paper highlights the cognitive issues of Shrimati's marriage life bottled-up and towards the end she gains her full stamina to lead her life of her choice without breaking the marital bond between her and Shrikanth. Let us examine Sudha Murthy's Shrimati, the protagonist in "Gently falls the bakula". It is her first novel depicting the traditional period ranging from 1980's to 90's. This is still prevailing in our current scenario of modernity.

Bakula Tree –A Symbolic Representation

Fading of love in their love marriage is a symbolic representation of the falling of the bakula flowers which are fragrant. Likewise Shrimati's fragrant love

life has also started to fade its love giving her the secondary position and the first place being occupied by the carrier achievement that is reaching the pinnacle of Shrikanth's IT profession. Shrimati's contributed much of her time to her husband's betterment thereby she whole heartedly sacrificed her personal desire. Her love life started to lose its beauty slowly as that of the falling of bakula flowers that's near their bedroom spreading its exotic fragrance.

Class Topper - Shrimati

Sudha Murthy vibrantly describes Shrimati as a tall slim, long haired wheatish complexion with clear features. She wore a fragrant bakula flower in her long hair that extends below her knees. She was the topper of the class she won the competition

"Ms. Shrimati Deshpande was a slim, tall girl with the wheatish complexion and good clear features. She had unusually long hair that reached below her knees. She always wore a string of bakula flowers in her hair Shrimati was one of the bright student of the class. So when the teacher finally announced her name as the winner of the competition, her class mates were not surprised. They broke in to loud applause. The shy Shrimati was happy but embarrassed." (4)

Thus undoubtedly Shrimati is depicted as the cream of the class excelling in her studies in her academic career. At one point of time she self-examines and understands that she has fallen prey to her marital life and its conflict circumstances. Later, she self-evaluated her not to fall in the doldrums of marriage where love, appreciation, mutual care, need and concern are missing. Shrimati's story is an uphill battle to become self-sufficient, resilient and consistent to her own inner resources. She plans to build a career of her own and agrees to go abroad to pursue her profession effectively handling her identity crisis finally.

Marital Conflicts

Shrimati faced lots of conflicts in her love marriage life where her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law made offensive comments resulting her to depressed feeling. When Shrimati has issues in child rearing

her mother-in-law points out that she is more barren, meaning that she is incapable in the child related issues. It sounds as if she is unfit to become a mother. Sudha Murthy precisely points out the plight of the so-called intelligent educated women still bound firmly by the restrictions of tradition and society norms.

According to Sudha Murthy marriage is,

"It is natural for any two human beings to differ. A husband and wife are no exception. In fact, if they didn't differ, then there probably was something wrong with marriage" (144).

Shrimati's marriage conflicts include difference of opinions between them, quarrelling with each other for trivial things. Her attitude towards life is totally different from the Srikanth's purpose of life. He wants to reach the pinnacle of IT sector and highly devoted for power position whereas Shrimati was craving for a good companion whom she once loved very much.

"Shrimati had questioned his basic purpose of life. She showed that she did not believe in what she considered essential in life" (144).

Full credit of Srikanth's success is due to the contribution and sacrifices of his intelligent, supportive and unambitious wife. She didn't even voice out her desire and her ambition in life. After marriage she kept on focusing on the betterment of her husband's career and her being in the backdrop that seems unnoticed by him.

"to achieve that kind of success, one required a supportive, intelligent but docile and unambitious wife. Intelligent women are normally ambitious" (142).

Characters like Shrimati are rarest of the rare, when a person is intelligent and competent enough she will not rely on others or simply go with flow for what all things her partner demands leading to the loss of self-identity. The societal pressure is designed in such away they forget their existence and keep on working for their family members consistently. Sudha Murthy says that,

"someone like Shrimati, who never ever demanded anything from her husband, was rare" (142).

Harish a colleague, thought that if Shrikant was married to a person like Prabha instead of intelligent Shrimati, Prabha will not extend her support for sure. When suppose Shrikant married an executive like Rekha, both would be deserted in no time.

Identity Crisis

Shrimati's mind set of being student again made her think of it several time. Professor Collins invitation and Dorothy's care along with her inner passion to pursue learning ignites a spark in her mind. It's a real eye opener, a true self-analysis and a perfect time to overcome the identity crisis and act like an individual without shadowing her husband. "She felt life has opened a new door for her. This time, she making a decision with her head, not with her heart" (155).

For Shrimati the real wealth is knowledge. She had made up her mind to enroll herself in Ph.D. neither for material benefits nor for the act of entertainment. She is much worried of her husband, mother in law, mother and grandmother. She struggles hard to convey this to Shrikanth who seems to be very busy and fails to listen to her words. She has decided to move on for a good cause.

"Finally, she made up her mind. She could not stay here. She had to go some place where she could get the same joy that Shrikanth got from his work. That pleasure was more valuable than money. She was going away not to earn money, but to find her own individuality". (156)

When Shrikanth announces the good news of him being selected as the Managing Director (MD) of the company occupying one of the top outstanding position of executive in his field. It's a sheer achievement for him and a landmark in his career. On hearing this Shrimati did not take it as hers or respond much to his emotion. She stayed calm and composed and was contented to reveal the news of her departing and bidding bye amicably handing over the house. Which includes almirah keys and house key.

On the whole, this decision of her shocked him to utter dismay. He couldn't believe and digest that his wife is leaving. "When I was thinking about my life so far, what my goal has been, I have realized what I want" (161).

Conclusion

Towards the end of the novel Shrimati embarks on the journey of discovering her own true self, which sounds extremely feminist aspect of self-identity. Through this paper self-identity of Shrimati in her marital life and the leading to her self-appraisal are dealt. This is one of the current issue that is more prevalent after the upsurge of many IT companies. Sudha Pillai in her article for Bangalore Mirror, India Times points out that we are not equals in the eyes of the society even though we prove our capacity. Most of the new generation women though they are equally efficient, educated, and administrative still suffer of subjugation and neglect. Moreover they are taken for granted without due acknowledgement leading to identity crisis.

Thus undoubtedly Sudha Murthy weaves magnificently the true picture of today's women and the way they handle it.

It's time to conclude this paper with a little trial of wholehearted poem of mine,

*Marital relationship seems fragile more like
shedding bakula flowers, Marriage of Shrimati
with Shrikant Making much difference in
thought*

*More like a puppet of patriarchal attitude
brought May be it is Shrimati or Mridula of
'House of cards' Merely struggled with
shattered emotions,*

*Mightily holding the familial perceptions
May be her husband's success means her own?
Mutual sharing and caring most mandatory.
Moment she realized means a lot. Mightily are
those who identify their self. Moment has come
to makeover.*

Millions of women ready to move on.

References

1. Murthy, Sudha. "Gently falls the Bakula" Penguin books publications, India, 2008.
2. Pillai, Sudha, bangloremirror.indiatimes .com 27 Oct 2013.
3. Pushpalatha and Parvathi's "Quest for self in the select novels of Sudha Murthy" 2006.

PORTRAYAL OF DARKNESS IN LITERATURE: A DIACHRONIC STUDY

S. KEJAPRIYA

*Research Scholar, Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli*

Dr. S. PRABAHAR

*Dean, Faculty of Indian and Other Languages
Chairperson, School of Languages
Professor and Head, Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli*

Abstract

The present study is devoted to the scientific observation of historically and socially oriented discourse studies presented through various approaches and research traditions. The research also gives a historical and diachronic discourse analysis, in investigating the historical changes in the depiction of Darkness in the select works of world literature and regional literatures. The research suggests that the use of corpus methods might considerably enhance the perspective of finding out some prototypical features of discourse and their historical variations. The clearly defined corpus data could help in retrieving information on social and cultural aspects of the discourse type represented in the text collection of a historical period under study. The further comparison of the text collection in particular historical periods and regional references opens the way for discovering diachronic vectors in the discourse type development through stating changes and transformation replacements in the discursive forms and genres.

Keywords: *Cultural Discourse, Darkness, Diachronic Study, Historical Variations, Regional References.*

Introduction

Structuralism, a French movement of the 1950's closely associated with Russian Formalism concerned with the underlying relations constituting language and all symbolic systems, believes that the way of thinking about the world is predominantly concerned with the perceptions and descriptions of structures. Structuralism believes that the nature of every entity in any situation has no significance by itself and in fact, is determined by all the other entities involved in that situation. The most significant idea of Structuralism is that 'things cannot be understood in isolation'. Ferdinand de Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics* (1966) introduced the most important concept of Sign- The basic unit of signification, splits it into Signifier (the sound image) and Signified (the concept). The relationship between these two is conventional and arbitrary. "Therefore, it is inferred that meaning is arbitrary and unstable" (Venugopal 33).

As Structuralism believes, things can be understood what it is not. Thus, Darkness can be defined as the lack of light, which is its binary. The symbol Darkness has a significance in representing things based on their social and cultural backdrop. Saussure's concept of Sign – Signifier, Signified is employed in analysing the historical, social, and cultural variations and their representation in the selected works of literature.

Structuralist theories examine the elements that make up a text and help generate meaning. The focus is on the minutiae of any work of art, visual text or moving image, and their combinations. In its emphasis on close-reading, Structuralism proposes that meaning is the result of interrelations between the basic elements, whether in poetry or in film.

However, the combination of the elements is also read in connection with the cultural meanings we have come to associate, by convention, with certain words, sounds or symbols (Nayar 1).

Darkness

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the first known use of Darkness was before the twelfth century. It was derived from the old English words 'deorcnysse' and the middle English 'derknesse'. The word Darkness can be defined as the quality or state of being dark: the word darkness represents various states of being dark, such as the total or near absence of light, the quality of being dark in complexion, a gloomy or depressed state or tone, representing Evil and lack of knowledge or enlightenment.

Thus, Darkness's signifier can be the lack of light and has numerous Signifieds as stated above, which can also be known as the Transcendental Signifier, as Jacques Derrida states.

Darkness in Literature

Dr Jintu Borah in the article *Symbol of Darkness in Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger*, says that Darkness in *The White Tiger* can be the poor economic condition of the oppressed people and also the corruption and the illegal activities of the oppressors.

Darkness is referred in the novel about the village life area where people live with minimum advantages...Darkness does not only refer to the poor economic condition of the downtrodden people but, the corruption, lawlessness of the rich people in the rural areas is also Darkness. Darkness is also referred to ignorance. Knowledge is light. Darkness is not only village it also in some parts of metro cities like in Old Delhi as the author mentioned in TWT. Many-a-times, the author refers to the word 'darkness' which shows the sharp contrast of the Delhi, Bangalore like big cities grandeur, light and education. The street lights, the lights from the shopping malls, cinema halls, in metro trains, buses, etc enlighten the city in the literary sense. The economic conditions of the people, the health facilities, the high living style, the freedom they get, the road-transport condition which they get in Delhi and in Bangalore etc., all are light in other sense. But crime is also there in the so called 'enlighten' area. For example, Balram, the narrator hides himself after

the murder of his employer, Mr Mukesh. The following lines are from the novel, 'The police searched for me in Darkness: but I hid myself in light In Bangalore! (The White Tiger, 118).

A Nanny Loosely, in his article *Analysis of the use of "darkness" in the "Heart of Darkness" by Joseph Conrad*, presents Darkness as a symbolic representation of slavery based on racism.

In Heart of Darkness, one of the main themes is racism that comes from the white characters of the book, including Marlow; also, many believe that Joseph Conrad is the centre of this racism, himself. Let's look at Marlow's very first dialogue in the story; "And this also has been one of the dark places on earth..." I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago-the other day. . . . light came out of this river since-you say, Knights? Yes; but it is like a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker-may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling! But Darkness was here yesterday"(5).

Regional References

In his *The Bastion*, Su Venkatesan presents the history of the people of Tatanur from the time of the king's reign to the British colonial rule. How they got their right to protect the town, the denial of their right to protect the town during the British rule and how the violation got initiated right after the denial of the right was depicted in the novel.

By stealing the Two Royal Emblems, The Periyakazhuvan of Tatanur got the right to protect the town. The way he stole the Emblems by crossing all the heavy security guards of the palace surprised King Tirumalai Naicker. That's how they got the right to protect the town, which continues through generations.

The kazhuvan who, trespassing the security, made with the Royal emblem shall be given three lashes in the pressure of all the courtiers at this dharbar. The Kazhuvan that passing so large a column of sentry on duty carried away the

royal emblem shall be the security authority of Madurai (Venkatesan, 357).

The Tatanur men have excellent connectivity with nature, especially with that of Darkness, as they live a nightlife; also, they were very rigid about their cultural practices. It is impossible to distinguish larceny and security from Tatanur. For them, both are inevitable sources of their lives. "Security and acts of burglary are Tatanur's twins. Security ensured their kanji (food) and Burglary ensured security" (Venkatesan, 361).

Tatanur men had the tradition of going to robbery as a small group of four to five members, "Rakkan kotthu left for the place in the company of some four other men" (Venkatesan, 145). But during British rule, when they were denied the right to protect the town, they started to go for stealing as a vast group of different kinds. They went to robbery as three other groups; they each faced a difficult situation. How they escaped from the villagers shows how much these people are connected with nature, especially Darkness.

Now they gather together as a single mass of men dividing themselves into three cliques. The seasonal team was going to burgle. The next clique was intent on an act of robbery on the train; the last one was prepared for going to the paddy fields for corn squeezing (Venkatesan, 788).

As the water from the Periyar dam flourished, the villagers of Madurai had huge yields, failed to give kaavakuli, and the fields in the villages were stolen. The Periyambalay of Tatanur didn't accept safeguarding all the villages; he accepted guarding only the significant villages.

"Periyambalay Ochu was not a man who would easily give a word to anyone. "Go and come back ten days after. We'll see". So he told those people and sent them back. Not all the villages as such needed security men. So they accepted only a few big villages (Venkatesan, 785).

Later in the colonial period, these Tatanur people struggled more due to their rigid practices and

were labelled as Criminal Tribes by the British Government.

The Kallars lived a life closely associated with nature. They were very much aware of the nuances of the Darkness as they lived a nightlife. Darkness was an inevitable element in the lives of the Kallars. Su Venkatesan also presents the history of Kallars during the British Colonial rule and their sufferings.

Findings

The regional literature is different from that of the other literature, which treats Darkness as a binary of light and the symbolic representation of ignorance, immorality and a kind of racism. As stated earlier, the Sign Darkness does not have a defined Signified but a Transcendental Signifier. The symbol Darkness has its historical variations concerning the particular historical period. *The Heart of Darkness* symbolises Darkness as an image of slavery based on racial prejudices. *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga, a novel published in 2008, treats Darkness as a symbol of corruption and the immoral activities of the oppressors and not only the poor economic condition of the oppressed people. In *The Bastions*, the author presents the history of Kallars from the 14th century to the 20th century. During the Kings' rule, the Darkness is presented as the literal Darkness, which is the lack of light or the binary of the light and also an inevitable element in the lives of the Kallars. These works belong to different periods in the history of literature, and they have some interrelationality among them, yet they show different variations of Darkness in particular periods.

Conclusion

Applying corpus approaches could substantially enhance the chances of discovering some archetypal elements of discourse and their evolutionary modifications. The clearly defined corpus data might be helpful in retrieving information on the social and cultural features of the discourse type depicted in a text collection from a historical period under study. The subsequent comparison of the text collection with particular historical periods and local contexts

provides the way for discovering diachronic dynamics in discourse type development via declaring modifications and transition replacements in discursive forms and genres.

References

1. Venkatesan. *The Bastion*. Translated by Pattu M Boopathi, Sahitya Akademi, 2021.
2. ANannyLoosely. "Analysis of the Use of 'Darkness' in the 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad." *Medium*, 3 Mar. 2022, medium.com/@Anannyloosley/analysis-of-the-use-of-darkness-in-the-heart-of-darkness-by-joseph-conrad-29219b3fad77.
3. Borah, Jintu. "Symbol of Darkness in Arvinda Adiga's *The White Tiger*." *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 9, no. 6, 2455–3662, June 2023, p. 244.
4. Nayar, Pramod K. *From Text to Theory: A Handbook of Literary and Cultural Theory*. 1st ed., Viva Books, 2017.
5. Venugopal, Rajitha, et al. *What About Theory?* 1st ed., Bodhi Tree Books, 2018.

THE VIOLENCE OF ECONOMIC HIERARCHY IN IMAYAM'S *BEAST OF BURDEN*

P. V. NARASIMMARAO

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Hindustan College of Arts and Science, Mylapore, Chennai

Dr. U. THANESH

Associate Professor, Department of English
Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda College, Mylapore, Chennai

Abstract

*The constraint of the economic hierarchy is repeatedly enforced by social order. People who have less power and are on the poverty line; have faced various scuffles in their day-to-day lives. This makes them reside in the violence of economic hierarchy and orderly neglect in their preference and independence according to the social construction. Consequently, the overwhelming of this frame can be seen in Imayam's first novel **Beast of Burden**. The novel on the matter of heated argument on the difficulties of Dalits who are segregated in search of identity. The character Arokkyam suffers a lot by oppression and hierarchical social division. She is not only ill-treated by the elite people but also by her community because she belongs to a washer man community "Vannan". The novel shows a different aspect of Dalits' living condition like insult, starvation, sexual assault, and impoverishment with pathetic situations. This research paper aims to highlight the struggling society, specifically Dalits, and present how they have been segregated by the violence of socio-economic hierarchy.*

Keywords: Violence, Oppression, Caste, Dalit, Economic Hierarchy.

Introduction

The novel *Beast of Burden* presents a clear picture and explains the different phases of the writing and activities of Dalits from the late nineteenth century to the present. But still, it struggles to reach its distinct, especially in the Tamil literary writing domain. Dalit literature probably records their experimental reality through autobiographical and fictional novels; these novels are manipulated to create a space for literary writing in Tamil. For instance, the writings of Sivakami, Edayavendan, UnjalRajanAbimani, Bama, Anbadavan, Gunasekaran, and Imayam have been voiced more to bring the affirmative presence in their works for recognizing the field of Dalit literature.

(Tamil Dalit literature: an overview. Language Forum, vol 33, pg.73)

Imayam is one of the most contemporary prominent Tamil writers to highlight the realistic lives of Dalits. He started to write at the age of twenty. Imayam's *Koveru Kazhuthaigal* is translated into English as *Beasts of Burden* by Lakshmi

Holmstrom. This novel fetched him a wide critical acclaim and projected him as a literary icon. This novel has been reprinted in manifold editions for a remarkable period of twenty-five years after its first publication. The novel discusses exhaustively about the impoverished family and how such families become accustomed to a condition of modernity in their denounced circumstances. Meanwhile, they seem to cause a change, decline, and less impressive in their life.

Social Stratification System and its Subjugation

Caste-based socio-economic hierarchy refers to the social stratification system prevalent in certain societies, particularly in parts of South Asia such as India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. In these societies, caste is a rigid social classification system that historically determined a person's occupation, social status, and opportunities in life. Caste systems are characterized by the division of society into hierarchical groups, where individuals are born into a

particular caste and remain in that caste throughout their lives. The caste system traditionally consisted of four main castes: Brahmins: The priestly caste responsible for religious rituals and teaching. Kshatriyas: The warrior and ruling caste responsible for governance and protection. 'Vaishyas: The merchant and agricultural caste responsible for trade and commerce. Shudras: The laboring caste responsible for service and manual labor.

The prominent characters presented in the novel are discriminated by the majority Dalits and are marginalized in the society. They are treated as Untouchables even for Dalits and are considered outside the caste system and often relegated to the most menial and degrading tasks in society. The socio-economic hierarchy on caste is such that individuals belonging to higher castes traditionally enjoyed more privileges, opportunities, and social status compared to those in lower castes. People who belonged to higher castes typically had better access to education, employment, land ownership, and political power, while the others from lower castes faced discrimination, social exclusion, and limited opportunities for upward mobility.

Despite efforts to address caste-based discrimination and promote social equality, caste continues to influence socioeconomic status in Indian societies. Discrimination based on caste, although illegal in India, persists in various forms, including in access to education, employment, healthcare, and political representation. Efforts to address caste-based inequalities include affirmative action policies, legal reforms, and social awareness campaigns aimed at promoting social justice and equal rights for individuals across all castes. However, overcoming centuries-old prejudices and dismantling entrenched social hierarchies remains a significant challenge in Tamil societies where caste-based discrimination persists.

The Rampant Practice on Caste and Economic Hierarchy

Imayam's novel *Beast of Burden* depicts caste oppression and the living conditions with stipulated

rules even within the Dalit communities. The novel begins with the central character Arrokyam, a middle-aged Dalit woman who struggles to live with her family and is exploited by the treatment of violence in the socio-economic hierarchy. In this novel, Imayam has portrayed the washer man community and their impoverished conditions. To live a normal life Dalits are forced to take up menial jobs like incineration, lamenting, and doing small work for a lower wage.

The novel is set in the Tamil society of 1970s. Arrokyam, the central character is deeply anxious about the socio-economic reposition. She is ordered by the caste system where roles and exchange take the position. Arrokyam and her husband Savuri perceive their inhibition with more work but their allowance is drastically cut down.

Despite working hard, Arrokyam and her husband Savuri get less grain from the villagers as their wages. However, they continue to exert their labour in the agricultural fields to fulfil their basic needs. On special occasions of birth or death in the village, Arrokyam and her husband are rewarded for their labour and fulfillment of rituals associated with the ceremony. The condition of Arrokyam and her husband is so pathetic that they are left to plead for their food every evening from the villagers. They sustain on the food collected and continue to work as a bonded labourers in the fields of the landlords.

Modernity reduces rituals associated with the ceremonies in the village and thereby affects Arrokyam and her family. They face economic hardships because of modernity and suffer heavy consequences. It affects them and all the similar Mahadalits (marginalized among Dalits).

Imayam through this novel has attempted to reject caste identities at a time when caste discrimination was practiced all across the state. This novel took up heated political arguments about Dalit identity and the role of the writer. It was criticized over much and even considered an anti-Dalit text by those who are against securing the structure of culture. However, Imayam ignored the critics and continued to present the plight of Dalits in a realistic

manner. For which he worked for himself and the depiction of caste oppression within Dalit communities. In his wonderful vision of caste discrimination, he said in an interview "*I'm writing to do away with caste, then how can I have a caste identity*".

Socio-Economic System and its Application

The writings of Iyamam mostly revealed the way of doing away with caste by uncovering dynamic complexities. The novel *Beasts of Burden* also raised this way of the complex web by social discrimination. Accordingly, he wrote "The world is an ocean, in which concepts and theories are like ships which appear and disappear. My works were not composed with the comfort offered by these ships, but written from within the sea and by looking at its vastness." He has given the result is this story rooted in the narrowness of a range of substances with certain experiences. Therefore, his writings are recognized as a resounding universality and it is simply about how life goes on accordingly.

Arrokyam and her family are amiable with everybody in the village. They are generally calm and composed in their attitude with the villagers and get their due rights appropriately. At times, they are forced to burst out and fight for their rights whenever they feel exploited, humiliated, and insulted.

Iyamam has written about the family's life and daily activities relating to the scientific description of people and cultures with their customs. Iyamam in the novel scrutinizes the exploitation that happens to the Dalit families in events and rituals associated with weddings, births, bickering, love, and goodbyes. Josep, the first son of Arrokyam is suddenly moved away by intention of his modern wife who is always derided by the family's dominated lifestyle and following the system of caste oppression. Mary is helpless and often found to be dejected throughout the novel. Peter, the youngest son gets an opportunity to escape from the discrimination associated with caste system by becoming a priest. However, his mother Arrokyam is unhappy with the prospect of her son becoming a Christian. She wants her son to

follow the tradition of the family and continue to serve the villagers.

When Arrokyam was young, she and the members of her family always had a granary filled with a variety of grains. It was sold at the time of famine. In the early days, their life was a "prince's life". It changes completely during the time of national economic crisis. Later, the family's primary occupation (washing and mending) is affected much because a laundryman and a tailor set up shops in the village. But Arrokyam never abandoned her regular activities, which she persisted in following routinely. After washing of the few clothes, she prompts to collect the remaining clothes from the village people. She held the responsibility of midwife in performing childbirth and carrying out all her tasks. And while she calms down the village women and children, she curses her children who have left, in this situation she longs for them to come and also be there for her death. It is the plight of an ideal Indian mother's position in a rural backdrop. She was certainly stubborn at Savuri who is often annoyed for trivial things. But they never leave on their strained exchanges.

Hierarchical Fractality and Inequality

On behalf of this reality, this research paper intends to present the tragedy of the lifestyle by the violence of socio-economic domination. Even though Arrokyam is supposed to be in a good position she is never recognized as equal by elite people. The reason is because of their social status of Dalits. Socio-economic domination contains three fractality, which introduce and analyze poor, rich, and middle-class. Firstly, hierarchical fractal approximations of wealth and income distributions are established. Secondly, the intrinsic hierarchical fractality of wealth and income distributions is unveiled. Thirdly, socio-economic hierarchical fractality is shown to be pervasive across the society.

Economic hierarchy and caste hierarchy are in the violence of elite class atrocities, in that the author has extensively covered to write about the Dalits, in which how they are still treated as worse manner

among the social culture and their context. Economic Hierarchy states the construction of the money is broadcasted to people and the ability of those who have more money to gain power over those with less. Most probably, Economic hierarchies are seen everywhere in the course of the field. In India, it dealt several times with progressive organizations and individuals for the development to secure the rights of the impoverished people.

The research article analyses not only the struggles of Dalits but also what happened in each community by the order of social condition. It seems that the atrocity manifested the place of Dalits in Indian society and politics in particular during the 1970s. Due to these inhabitants of villages are called victims of violence of socio-economic hierarchy.

In addition to that socio-economic systems are used to make a visual force as a complex, adaptive, dissipative system, designed by an emergency program to stabilize the economy in the mode of cycles. Here the violence is given the way of repression to never bring a score of living life tranquilly. The energy of society is firmed by a dynamic equilibrium. However, due to time constraints, these kinds of issues occur casually without any opposition in most of the region. The effect of this equilibrium belongs to different hierarchical levels (caste; class; religion; individuals; economy; environment). For the changes of modernity has to focus great effort on the improvements of improvised people. Then only the equilibrium can be sustained at a particular point in time and space.

Conclusion

The research paper on the violence of socio-economic hierarchy attempts to create awareness on the discrimination based on caste, class, and work among the marginalized section. This novel has established a reality of an unequal system of social order, in which the violence is by the system of

economic status especially in own community. Accordingly, the lifestyle of Arrokyam is a remarkable epitome to explicate the lives of marginalized people in an imbalanced social circle. Hence, the research paper opens up the statement to a lucid idea to rectify the problem of those who struggle to secure their identity to their context.

References

1. Imayam. *Beasts of Burden*. Trans. Lakshmi Holmstrom. Chennai: East West, 2001. Print.
2. Poornima, Nancy. "The Unheard Screams of Dalit Woman in Imayam's 'Beast of Burden'." *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, Volume 6, Issue 3, March 2019, ISSN-2349-5162.
3. R. Jayakumar, T. Deivasigamani. *Victimisation of Marginalised People: A Study of Imayam's Beasts of Burden*, Volume 6, no. 4, 2022.
4. "Dalit Literary Movement." *Indian Culture & Lifestyle*. Web. 25 Jan 2024.
5. "Imayam." *Katha*. Web. 27 Jan 2024.
6. *Tamil Dalit literature: an overview*. Language forum. Web. 28 Jan 2024.
7. Brinda S., et. al. *An Echo of Cultural Embellishments of Dalits: with reference to Imayam's Beasts of Burden*. *Annals of R.S.C.B*, Volume 25, Issue 4, April 2021, ISSN:1583-6258.
8. Mario Giampietro, Kozo Mayumi. "Structural Change and Economic Dynamics: A dynamic model of socioeconomic systems based on hierarchy theory and its application to sustainability", Volume 8, Issue 4, October 1997. Pages 453-469. <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0954349X97000179>>
9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_violence
10. <https://www.drbrambedkarcollege.ac.in/sites/default/files/Academia-The%20Rising%20India%20%26%20Economic%20Thinking%20of%20Dr%20Ambedkar.pdf>.

DAVID DAVIDAR'S *THE HOUSE OF BLUE MANGOES* AS A POSTCOLONIAL NARRATIVE

R. MIZPAH

*Research Scholar, Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli*

Dr. S. PRABAHAR

*Dean, Faculty of Indian and Other Languages
Chairperson, School of Languages
Professor and Head, Department of English
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli*

Abstract

David Davidar's novel, The House of Blue Mangoes, intricately weaves together themes of identity, culture, and colonialism in the context of postcolonial India. This paper aims to analyse the novel through a postcolonial lens, examining how Davidar explores the complexities of the legacy of colonialism, the construction of identity, and the structures of power and resistance. Through close textual analysis, this paper will demonstrate how The House of Blue Mangoes reflects the historical realities of colonialism and engages with the complexities of postcolonial societies and the ongoing struggles for agency and self-definition.

Keywords: David Davidar, *The House of Blue Mangoes*, Postcolonialism, Colonial Legacy, Identity, Power Structures.

Introduction

David Davidar's *The House of Blue Mangoes* presents a rich tapestry of characters and narratives set against the backdrop of colonial and postcolonial India. Through the lens of postcolonial theory, this paper seeks to explore the novel's portrayal of the complexities of the impact of colonialism on Indian society, the construction of individual and collective identities, and the structures of power and resistance. This paper aims to elucidate how *The House of Blue Mangoes* serves as a compelling postcolonial narrative by situating the novel within its historical context and examining its narrative strategies.

Colonialism and Its Legacy

Colonialism, as a historical phenomenon, profoundly shaped the socio-political and cultural landscape of India. The British Raj imposed colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent for nearly two centuries, leaving behind a legacy of exploitation, marginalisation, and cultural hegemony. *The House of Blue Mangoes* critically engages with this legacy, portraying how

colonialism disrupted traditional social structures, imposed Western values and norms, and entrenched systems of inequality. Through the experiences of its characters, such as Solomon Dorai and his descendants, the novel reflects on the enduring impact of colonialism on Indian identity and society (Davidar 44).

Identity and Cultural Hybridity

Central to the postcolonial experience is the negotiation of identity after colonial rule (Iverson). *The House of Blue Mangoes* explores the complexities of identity formation in a society marked by cultural hybridity and fluidity. The novel's characters navigate multiple layers of identity-ethnic, religious, linguistic, and social-each shaped by the legacies of colonialism and indigenous traditions. Through intergenerational narratives and shifting perspectives, Davidar portrays how individuals and communities assert their agency and distinct identities in the face of colonial hegemony.

Power Structures and Resistance

Postcolonial narratives often examine the structures of power and resistance during colonial rule and in its aftermath. *The House of Blue Mangoes* portrays various forms of resistance against colonial oppression, ranging from overt acts of rebellion to subtle acts of defiance and subversion. The novel's characters, whether actively engaged in political struggle or striving for personal autonomy, embody the resilience and agency of postcolonial subjects. Through their stories, Davidar highlights the complexities of power relations in colonial and postcolonial contexts, challenging simplistic narratives of domination and resistance.

Conclusion

To conclude, David Davidar's *The House of Blue Mangoes* emerges as a significant postcolonial narrative that grapples with the complexities of the

legacy of colonialism, the construction of identity, and the structures of power and resistance. Through its richly drawn characters and evocative storytelling, the novel offers insights into the enduring impact of colonialism on Indian society and the ongoing struggles for agency and self-definition in the postcolonial era. By engaging with these themes, *The House of Blue Mangoes* invites readers to critically reflect on the complexities of postcolonial experience and the possibilities of imagining alternative futures beyond the legacies of the past.

References

1. Davidar, David. *The House of Blue Mangoes*. 2002. Aleph Book Company, 2013.
2. Ivison, Duncan. "Postcolonialism | History, Themes, Examples, and Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 7 Dec. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/postcolonialism.

NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS BY ANGELA CARTER: A FEMINISTIC EXPLORATION

KEYA SARA GEEVARGHESE

*Ph.D. Research Scholar (FT), Department of English
Kongunadu Arts and Science College, Coimbatore*

Abstract

Nights at the Circus by Angela Carter is a feminist literary classic that subverts social norms and conventional gender roles. Carter challenges preconceptions and reinterprets femininity through the main character Fevvers. She does this by using the circus as a metaphorical backdrop to examine how gender roles are performative. The novel's examination of sexuality is a striking declaration of female agency that defies conventional expectations. Through complex male characters, Carter's outspoken indictment of patriarchy gives the story more depth and invites readers to consider the structural issues that both men and women face. All things considered, Nights at the Circus continues to be a provocative and uplifting work of feminist fiction that challenges readers' deeply held beliefs on gender, identity, and social norms. Angela Carter's creative narratives never cease to astound and provoke, making a lasting impression on the conversation about gender and power.

Keywords: *Feminist, Gender Roles, Social Norms, Uplifting and Identity.*

Introduction

Angela Carter is an icon in the world of literature, and her audacious narratives have helped shape history. One of her most popular works was "Nights at the Circus," which came out in 1984 and had elements of feminist magical realism. In this book, against a circus background that is so vivid, Carter, known for her penetrating examination of social mores, delves into the intricacies of gender, identity, and society's expectations. This paper will examine feminist standpoints in *Nights at the Circus* by Angela Carter. It will explore how Carter challenges stereotypes, traditional gender roles, and power structures associated with male dominance.

Discussion

Fevvers, the main character in *Nights at the Circus*, is a flying trapeze artist who undercuts and reinterprets traditional notions of femininity. Carter deftly employs Fevver's as a way of undermining and subverting society's expectations for women by placing her in the center. Her wings and self-confidence make her an emblem of dissent against women's confinement. When women portrayed as weak and dependent, Fevvers serves as a symbol of

strength and resilience in their society too often they are seen as feeble or dependant. Initially thought to be symbolic of fragility, her wings eventually signify independence and autonomy. In Fevver's case, Carter challenges these beliefs about women being assigned particular roles and expected standards. Rather than presenting Fevvers as one-dimensional strength however, she is depicted with layers by the author herself. A complex individual, Fevvers has various emotions, desires or problems. However it is also marked with diversity which deeply enriches her representation challenging some basic assumptions that can sometimes be made about female characters.

Carter's treatment of sex is a very complicated and critical part of the feminist discourse in *Nights at the Circus*. Fevvers is an unapologetically sexual and liberated woman that provides a platform for Carter to critique traditional understanding of female want. The story presents a character who follows her instincts instead of subscribing to the notion that women have to be pure, innocent or passive. Fevers' sexuality challenges both the virgin/whore dichotomy, showing it can be empowering. Carter argues also that femininity can manifest itself as both carnal and holy by rejecting the narrative which

confines women to either sensuality or purity. This is a form of resistance against patriarchal ideology and therefore it aligns with feminism's focus on self-determination and opposition to social controls over women's desires. Furthermore, there is a deconstruction of male gaze in this book which originates from feminism theory analyzing how heterosexual men perceive objectification of females. Through her wings and captivating presence Fevvers nullifies all accepted hierarchy related to masculine eye-contact over feminine objectivity; she transforms herself into being desired rather than desiring others.

Fevvers' character is provided with a marginal existence, which disregards the binary concepts of chastity and promiscuity according to the Carter's portrayal of her. This is meant to show that women are not only complex but also freed up in their intimate relationships. *Nights at the Circus* by Carter is set within a circus, serving as a mirror that reflects society's expectations towards women. The circus becomes like any other society where these women have to live day after day; acting and fitting into presets. In the circus, women like Fevvers can choose their own roles and escape from social norms. The surrealism of circus provides an interesting prism through which gender dynamics may be considered in today's world. Under its spell, this very tent becomes a place for finding oneself or changing one's identity, thus enabling females break free from societal constraints. Again, Carter addresses how gendered performances occur within bodies. Among circus characters, Fevvers is both performer and non-performer on stage. The division between these two contrasting aspects mirrors the societal demands on women to conceal their true identities in private and perform specific roles in public. Carter expresses her disapproval of the societal pressure to conform to preconceived notions and invites readers to contemplate the authenticity of these roles by employing the circus as a symbol.

Carter's strong disapproval of the male-dominated society and the oppressive structures that confine women is central to the feminist exploration found in *Nights at the Circus*. Throughout the book,

the male characters often embody the patriarchal system, illustrating power dynamics and the importance of female independence through their interactions with Fevvers. Waldo, a male character, serves as a symbol for patriarchal individuals who seek dominion and authority over Fevvers. His desire to control and shape feminine identity is represented by his attempts to dissect and lay claim to her wings. Carter brings to light the past and present endeavors to limit women's control and power over their own bodies by employing Waldo's character. In addition, Lizzie, the circus artist, serves as a vivid illustration of how gender discrimination impacts a woman's existence. Lizzie's struggles with her body image, dating, and societal expectations reveal the profound impact of patriarchal norms. Through the character of Lizzie, Carter sheds light on the barriers that women face in their journey towards self-discovery and independence. Interestingly, the male characters in the book are not one-dimensional caricatures. Instead, Carter presents them as complex individuals grappling with their own identities and confronting societal conventions. This approach adds complexity to the narrative and underscores the idea that patriarchy affects both men and women, albeit in distinct ways.

Conclusion

In *Nights at the Circus*, feminist masterwork *Nights at the Circus* by Angela Carter goes beyond convention. Carter crafts a story that subverts social norms and confronts readers' deeply held beliefs about gender roles using the character of Fevvers, the investigation of sexuality, the setting of the metaphorical circus, and an examination of patriarchy. Fevvers, with her unwavering spirit and wings, becomes an icon of feminist rebellion, rejecting the constraints society places on women. The novel's examination of sexuality rejects the idea that women should adhere to socially predetermined standards of desire and instead acts as a potent celebration of female agency. With its enchanted atmosphere, the circus provides a platform for women to reimagine who they are and question the

performative aspects of society norms. Carter offers a subtle and unashamed indictment of patriarchy, showing masculine characters who are both victims and criminals of society norms. Because of its intricacy, the story has more depth and invites readers to consider how patriarchy impacts both men and women. *Nights at the Circus* is essentially a feminist masterwork that touches readers on a deep level and challenges their conceptions of gender, identity, and social expectations. The daring and inventive narrative of Angela Carter never fails to

uplift and provoke, making a lasting impression on feminist writing and the larger conversation about gender and power.

References

1. Bradbury, Malcom. *The Modern British Fiction*. Martin Secker & War burg, 1993
2. Clark, Catherina, and Michel Holquist. Mikhail Bakhtin. Harward University Press, 1984
3. Carter, Angela. *Nights at the Circus*. Random House, 1984.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER NOVEL EXPLORING FREUDIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE DARK SECRETS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND IN GILLIAN FLYNN'S *GONE GIRL*

M. KANIMOZHI

*Assistant Professor of English
S.T. Hindu College (SF), Nagercoil*

Abstract

*This research attempts to provide insight into Amy Dunne's psychiatric condition, the main character of Flynn's third book, *Gone Girl* (2012). American mystery writer Gillian Flynn's book *Gone Girl* offers a psychological look into the motivations and state of mind of Amy Elliott Dunne, the main character. The story opens with Nick, the husband, being investigated by the police for the disappearance of his wife Amy on the occasion of their fifth anniversary celebration. But as the case progressively develops, the situation becomes even more intricate. Amy is shown as having several layers and a deep complexity. After closely examining Amy's persona via psychoanalysis, it becomes clear that her behavior patterns and actions are a mirror of her deeply embedded sense of self. Amy's attractive demeanor and skillful manipulations characterize her disposition and actions. The study emphasizes the type of psychopathy shown in the book as well as the internal and environmental variables influencing Amy's actions. In the novel *Gone Girl*, a psychotic woman finds herself torn between the real and the imagined, her ego and the punisher and the victim. The study's focus on Amy's personality's psychological problems is further aided by Freudian notions. Close textual analysis is the research method used in this study, which is based on the psychoanalytic theory.*

Keywords: *Psychoanalytical Theory, Freudian Notions, Internal Conflict, Manipulations, Demeanor.*

The present article aims to investigate Amy Elliott Dunne's the main female character in Flynn's *Gone Girl* personality traits. American novelist Gillian Flynn examined the value of mental health in her psycho-thriller books. Freudian notions can be used to better examine Amy's psychotic traits. The id, ego, and super-ego are the three divisions into which Sigmund Freud divided the human mind. Although they serve various purposes and have distinct dynamics, all three groups are related. The super-ego serves as a moral conscience, the ego is the realistic portion of the mind that mediates between the impulses of the id and the super-ego, and the id is the primal and instinctive component of the mind that includes sexual and aggressive instincts as well as buried memories. Amy Dunne acts because she has illogical subconscious urges. Amy exhibits a strong version of the Id, a psychological feature thought to be innate in humans and associated with people who are inclined to hurt both herself and others. Amy worries that her spouse is having an extramarital

affair. Amy intends to wreak retribution by planning every one of her transgressions to paint Nick as the main person responsible for her death. The unconscious influences her ideas, dispelling all moral principles.

The person seeks validation for himself in another made-up notion out of a fear of disintegration and lack. The 2009 novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn is classified as detective and crime fiction. Flynn portrays Amy Elliott Dunne, the heroine of this book, as a grey figure who leans more in the direction of the necessary evil. On the occasion of the fifth wedding anniversary, the central tension in this mystery novel primarily revolves around the subject of whether or not husband Nick Dunne is connected to the unsolved case of his wife going missing. Flynn uses an intriguing storytelling technique here, alternating between the present and the past throughout the story. Nick tells the story from the present as events unfold gradually, while Amy's diary recordings bring the past to life.

Nevertheless, it is eventually discovered that neither Nick nor Amy are trustworthy storytellers. The underlying conflict in their marriage is effectively shown in the opening chapter, which opens with Nick Dunne considering his current circumstances.

When I think of my wife, I always think of her head... What are you thinking, Amy? The question I've asked most often during our marriage, if not loud, ...What are you thinking? How are you feeling? Who are you? What have we done to each other? What will we do? (Flynn, 2012, p. 3).

In his very first self-reflective thinking, Nick describes a nearly ruined marriage in which the husband and wife were already chilly, distant, and estranged from one another. The recession, which Nick dubbed "The Missouri Grievance," only made matters worse for them. Nick decided to return to their Missouri birthplace, where his mother was battling cancer and his father was suffering from Alzheimer's. Amy followed her spouse even though she didn't like the concept. There, using money borrowed from Amy, Nick and Margo opened a pub together. And Nick promised to give the money back to his wife, interest included. He also kept telling himself in the back of his mind:

I would not be a man who borrowed from his wife- I could feel my dad twisting his lips at the very idea. Well, there are all kinds of men, his most damning phrase, the second half left unsaid, and you are the wrong kind (Flynn, 2012, p. 8).

Growing up in an impoverished household, Nick witnessed his father using verbal and physical abuse. This caused him great dread as a youngster, as he believed that he would one day end up like his father and he was unwilling for that to ever happen. He fled that cramped little village so he could follow his dreams and avoid the influence of his father. Ultimately, he was forced to move back to his hometown, and although he didn't like his father, the things he said to him as a youngster still resonated with him, demonstrating the severity of the trauma he had experienced. These traumatic experiences and

early life events have a significant impact on an adult's behavior. In this connection, it should be noted that Sigmund Freud asserted in his psychoanalytic beliefs that a person's gender is determined by their psychosexual development rather than their biological makeup. Childhood experiences that eventually cause men to believe they are naturally macho and women to believe they are naturally feminine are the root causes of gender disparity. It also makes the case that gender discrimination creates a male-dominated social structure, which has an impact on people's psychosexual development.

As with Amy, her early life experiences have a significant impact on how she develops as a person, affecting her psychological state of mind, her way of thinking, and the decisions she makes in the end. Amy was born into an affluent family of child psychologists. Hope was the name given to her by her parents after she was born, following a string of miscarriages. Even though Amy was their beloved and much-loved daughter, she occasionally felt jealous of her mother Marybeth Elliott when she took time off to remember her Hopes. Amy felt that the Hopes who had passed away were always flawless, even though they were only alive for a short while, and Amy had always been pressured to live up to their desires and prove herself to be perfect. She served as the model for her parents' joint book, *The Amazing Amy*, which they co-wrote.

As a result, the fictitious Amy turned out to be the rival of the actual Amy. She needed to maintain a far higher standard of righteousness and morality than the made-up Amy. To maintain her diversified persona, Amy created several role plays. She also had a propensity to view herself as the pinnacle of elegance and beauty and was intolerant of any kind of compromise or denigration of her status. The psychological state of women is significantly shaped by their prior experiences, as asserted by psychoanalytic feminists, and this is demonstrated in Amy's case.

Amy's ego is evident as she struggles to determine which version of herself to trust more. Amy's self-destructive attitude might be linked to her

ego phase, a time when she goes through a confusing and recognized period. She does, however, blame her parents for her difficulties. This directly contributes to Amy's internalized loathing of her parents, whom she refers to as her 'child psychologists.' She didn't feel regret or sympathy for her parents, so when she purposefully vanished, she wanted them to suffer and be devastated. She also prioritizes her outside look above her inner self. Amy always keeps her appearance flawless and is well-groomed, clothed, and accessorized. She believes that she is more socially and intellectually mature than those typical couples. Amy wants to make her house a nice place to live and win her husband's emotional and physical devotion. When her request is denied, she feels betrayed and treated unfairly as a wife. Amy took revenge on her spouse to satiate her cravings and ease her suffering.

It's possible that she felt inadequate for wanting to dissolve her marriage. Her ego so painstakingly devises a scheme to get Nick charged with her murder. Amy Dunne struggles with the opposing ideas of truth and fantasy throughout *Gone Girl*. When she gives up striving to be the perfect lady, her genuine self shows. Amy had changed from the "Amazing Amy" who was concerned with upholding the reputation she had built for herself to someone else when she was on the run. That was her only chance to reconnect with herself. When an individual's dominant personality is potent, the influence of others is diminished. There is only enough energy to sustain a single individual. This suggests that to maintain equilibrium, the ego or super-ego must lose energy for the id to gain energy. Amy's other two identities behave irrationally because Amy's id exhibits an inordinate level of power.

Psychopaths frequently act in an antisocial manner and hurt those who are close to them. Psychopaths are recognized for their tendency to project an air of friendliness to appear appealing. Amy's convoluted and confusing nature frequently draws people to their deaths. Psychopaths have "complex personality traits," according to Freud, and

the general public won't be able to understand what they are up to. Amy strives to convince others that she is unique, which is why she is wonderful and presents herself immaculately. She thinks that acting "nice" may conceal the wrongdoing.

Amy Dunne, the main character, is depicted by Gillian Flynn as a successful lady who gets what she wants. Amy's activities have been studied, and they typically exhibit psychopathic traits. Amy's personality is further examined using Freud's theory of personality dynamics. Amy's ego and superego are so weak that they are unable to control her id. Amy discovered satisfaction in exacting revenge on her straying husband, since pleasure is the central theme of Id. Amy moved over her parents' depressing thoughts about her disappearance. She additionally murdered her ex-boyfriend, who had supported her at a difficult period, to reunite with her hated husband. Amy is a psychopath because, her features show, the id that forms her personality is more prominent and provides her greater psychological energy. Adults with a more significant id will have difficult-to-treat psychopathic problems if the ego and superego are not stressed. Her id, ego, and superego are at odds, which leads to instability in her psyche. Additionally, Amy's unbalanced persona highlights psychiatric issues brought on by her unequal relationships. Deciphering the true individuals behind the complex personality characteristics and pretensions is the novel's greatest problem.

References

1. Flynn, Gillian. *Gone Girl*. Random House Publishing Group, 2016. Print.
2. Mellard, James M. *Beyond Lacan*, Suny Series in Psychoanalysis and Culture. State University of New York Press. 2006. Print.
3. Metz, C. *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*. Indiana University Press. 2000. Print
4. Surprenant, C. *Freud, and Psychoanalysis*. Oxford University Press. 2006. Print.

DESTRUCTIVE PRESENT - A CRITICAL READING OF MAYA. C. POPA'S "LETTER TO NOAH'S WIFE"

A. JEHLIN RESHATHA

III B.A. English

Women's Christian College, Nagercoil

Abstract

Conserving nature in this industrialistic era is one of the primary duties of all human beings. The slow-changing world and the environment will soon reach the doom if the responsibilities are not properly handled. The liable will find space in which they can work and create awareness to others and literature plays a great role in creating awareness. Literature has always been a tool for expressing the reason behind everything, including the truth behind natural calamities happening due to climatic change. Climatic change has an impact on all living beings. Maya.C. Popa a Romanian-American poet and the author of two chapbooks, writes a poem, "Letter to Noah's Wife" expressing her regret and grief over her actions against nature that would lead to destruction in the future (Maya C. Popa). The poem is in the form of seeking advice from Noah's wife, a character from the Bible, to teach the poet how she overcame the destruction in her days. This paper deals with the exposure of Popa's thoughts about the time when she had to reveal everything to her children, the next generation about the "climate change" that was brought about by the flaws of the present generation. This paper also analyses the questions that Popa asks to Noah's wife. Popa's poem shows the importance of conserving nature and the after-effects.

Keywords: Climate Change, Destructive Present, Conservation, Nature, Natural Calamities, Future.

Introduction

The present generation is exposed to modern problems related to nature like climate change, and other environmental issues. The persistent nature of these problems is secured due to the modern habits of the inhabitants of nature, that is, humans. This generation's desire for something more advanced in a quick approachable way is incomparable and results in good outcomes along with many destructions. These disasters are saved enough to harm the future of humankind. The future that holds no peace with the environment is something mankind should be aware of. The awareness should be voiced in every possible platform and literature can be taken up as a more efficient tool. A special bond between literature and climatic conditions causing environmental issues can be traced back.

"Below, the cracked, brown earth, Like ancient earthen-ware, Spreads out its dusty, worn Old surface, baked and bare."

"Above, the polished blue Of a burnished August sky Is an inverted bowl Of every drop drained dry (Converse, 1927)."

In these few lines and sparse verse are contained a vivid description of the Great Plains landscape and the experience of drought. Literature has had a long relationship with climate as the human species attempts to capture its home environment and convey a sense of it to others, develop an understanding of why landscapes vary from one place to another, and communicate as well as preserve our environmental knowledge. Literature can be any writings of universal interest, carefully crafted in form and expression." (Dando)

Christina Dando writes about the connection between Literature and climate as it is associated with environment and nature. Humans and their habitats are based on nature and they greatly influence each other. The humans and their discoveries that were stirred up by the influences of nature are recorded in Literature. Modern literature dedicates a separate quarter for this theme, climate, and literature, and is addressed as Climate Literature. The most popular form of Climate Literature is Climate fiction or Cli-Fi.

Climate Literature is a sector that consists of literary works based on climate, environment, and nature. The authors write about the boons and banes of climate and especially, in recent times about climatic changes. As Dando mentions, these literary works can also take many forms such as, *“Literature can be in the form of fiction, writing from the imagination, as in novels, short stories, drama, or poetry.”*

Some of the most famous poets writing Climatic literature are Craig Santos Perez, Amitav Ghosh, James Bradley, Franny Choi, Molly Fisk, and many more. Maya C. Popa is one of these famous poets.

The Poetic Lines

Maya Catherine Popa is a Romanian-American poet, who was nominated various times for awards for her wonderful works about nature and preservation (Maya C. Popa). Her concerns about nature can be seen in her poetry collections. The poem chosen for study, *“Letter to Noah’s Wife”* has a significant title that portrays the content of the poem clearly, that is, a letter written in the form of a poem to Noah’s wife. Noah’s wife is a biblical character from the book of Genesis. The doom that occurred at her age caused tremendous destruction and she and her family were the sole survivors. Popa imagines that Noah’s wife would have conveyed the cause of the destruction to her following generations. And so, now Popa requests Noah’s wife to teach her to convey the reason for the destruction caused by the present generation.

The poem, *‘Letter to Noah’s Wife’* is in first person, where the poet uses “I” to express the speaker’s connection to the poem. It is directly addressed to the other character with a point out as “You”. The poem is of 29 lines, which expresses the speaker’s guilt. The speaker can be the poet Popa herself as she writes about her day-to-day life circumstances and the concern she has over her actions.

Popa expresses her guilt towards the future children. She confesses to her mistakes and selfishness. These lines, *“Do the selfish/ grow self-conscious by the withering/ Begonias?”*

(Lines 7-9) show her thoughts on being self-centered and her fear of the after-effects. Her fear of withering nature is clear. Her thoughts travel from the country to the city side in these lines.

“New York a bouillon, eroded filigree. Anything but illness, I beg the plagues,/but shiny crows or nuclear rain.” (Lines 11-13).

These lines show the picture of cities in the future. New York, the famous city will be full of sewage and an uncleanly atmosphere that will lead to climatic change which will result in disaster, the line *“Not a drop in London May through June.”* (14) This line can be observed as the untimely rain in the city causing calamities and spreading disease. The word, ‘Plagues’ shows the spread of diseases after a calamity caused by the untimely rain. Popa records her fear of “nuclear rain”, which causes the most dangerous diseases.

Popa after realizing her mistakes tries to secure her family in the safest place. Ironically, the safest place she finds is the past. These lines *“Tucking our families into the safeties of the past”* (16-17) show Popa’s hopelessness about the present and future.

Popa doubts if her children will ever know the beauty of nature. These lines, *“My children, will they exist by the time/ it’s irreversible?...”* (Lines 18-19) show her uncertainty about the future. The word “irreversible” clearly shows that there will be an age where nature will be destroyed, leading to ‘climatic change’ and conveys that the situation cannot be turned back.

These lines *“Which parent will be the one to break/ the myth; the Arctic wasn’t Sisyphus’s/ snowy hill”* (22-24) can be observed as Popa’s hesitation in revealing the truth to future generations. The myth of *“Sisyphus”* (23) in Greek mythology is about a greedy King Sisyphus, who cheated death twice and became the witness to Zeus’ anger.

“Sisyphus (or Sisyphos) is a figure from Greek mythology. He was king of Corinth and became infamous for his general trickery when he twice cheated death. Sisyphus ultimately got his comeuppance when Zeus dealt him the eternal punishment of forever rolling a boulder up a hill in the depths of Hades.” (Cartwright)

Popa compares the mountain to the melting glaciers, which has to be explained in the future, and that the situation caused by the climatic change will lead to destruction in the Arctic, where glaciers will melt. She raises the question of who reveals the truth to the future children while the present generation is the cause of it.

In the lines, *"Was it you/ who gathered flowers once the earth/ had dried?/ How did you explain the light/ to all the animals?"* (26-30), it can be observed that the questions are pointed out to Noah's wife. Popa believes that Noah's wife should have helped the world return to its present state after the destruction. She mentions, *"I know a woman's hand/ in salvation"* (2-3) which shows her strong belief in the power of women, to prevent the world from being destroyed.

The poem travels in a path, from Popa's doubts to guilt and to her longing to turn around from her mistakes. She yields to the mistakes she did and tries to create an awareness for the people of the present. Throughout the poem, underlines the expected destructive future resulting from our deeds.

Popa describes the relatable and simple, yet dangerous human acts through these lines of this small, constricted, and beautiful poem. The following line explains the day-to-day usage of plastics and air conditioners which emit Chlorofluoro carbons (CFCs). Her guilt for not being a vegetarian is expressed as a supposing effect that she has on the environment.

"I'm not a vegetarian, shop plastic,/use an air conditioner." (5-6)

Popa enables the readers to think about the theme in detail by giving understandable instances. Through her poem, the readers can picture the future and think about ways to alleviate destruction. The poem encompasses the undeniable truth about the actions of the present people and allows the readers to relate and establish a greater measure towards the situations that were not familiar before. Popa follows the same reflective tone throughout the poem. Her short lines and the incoherent nature of the poem give the readers space to think about her supposes.

The poem has a narrative feature, which Popa uses to jump from one thought to another from her memories. Popa's understandable lines from the poem give the readers better access to her theme, fear of destruction of nature and climatic change. She expresses her confusion, especially in this line, *"I am wringing/my hands not knowing"* (25-26).

Ultimately, Popa tries to make mankind realize their deeds towards nature, which play as a cause for climatic change. Also, she tries to motivate mankind to protect nature, to spare their home with everyone playing their roles.

Cryptic Addressing of Noah's Wife

Popa is instilled in the roles that should be followed by humanity and the roles of an individual to create a better community guarding nature that would save all, from answering to the next generation about the doom that is to follow. She hints at the past events that happened in the age of Noah by introducing Noah's wife in her poem. The disaster that killed all of mankind and turned over the world and its creations once and for all. Noah's wife is not a significant character in "The Bible" or in any other scriptures such as "The Quran". She is neither named nor mentioned for her duties after the ruin. A vague record of her being in the ark is recorded in the Bible.

"On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, together with his wife (Noah's wife) and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark" (Gen.7.13).

But, Popa credits her as a person who took upon the reconstruction of the world from its catastrophe, which she noted in the lines of her poem. *"Noah's wife, I am wringing/ my hands not knowing how to know/and move forward"* (Lines 24-26). In the following lines, one can observe Popa's greatest ache to learn to art to explain like she assumes that Noah's wife did.

Popa secretly hides the fact that no woman in this world is given credit or appreciated for her work or her talent in society, which she notes in her lines, *"You are never mentioned on Ararat/ or elsewhere,"*

(1-2). This goes equally for Popa and her admired character Noah's wife, whose name was not recorded, though the responsibility a woman takes up built her family, her society is evident well enough in the society.

Recent studies put forth the same idea that women do not generally take credits or are given credits based on their duties. "*In a study recently published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, researchers Michelle C. Haynes and Madeline E. Heilman conducted a series of studies that revealed women were unlikely to take credit for their role in group work in a mixed-gender setting unless their roles were explicitly clear to outsiders*" (Steiger)

All studies apart, Popa strongly believes in the strength of a woman and thereby brings forth the character that had been kept hidden for a long time. She tries to bring out the strength and hope in women who would stand with her to preserve the world from the catastrophe and she brings out the effect of individual responsibility in the poem.

Conclusion

Dr. Jane Goodall says "*What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.*" The time that passed and the passing time can never be stopped nor prolonged. The high time to tone up responsibilities should be the present, not the future. To avoid the scenarios Popa mentions, that is to explain the causes of these disasters to future generations. It is good to protect our valuable resources and nature to avoid the forthcoming ruin. The poem evokes an awareness

among the readers and enables them to think about the potential downtrodden mankind has to take if this time is played out with none. The precautions are minimal and the effects are endless is the deep-sounding hope in Maya C. Popa's poem "Letter to Noah's Wife".

References

1. Brady, Amy. "10 Poems About Climate Change To Read Right Now." *Chicago Review of Books*, 18 Dec. 2019, chireviewofbooks.com/2019/12/18/10-poems-about-climate-change-to-read-right-now/.
2. Popa, May C. *Maya C. Popa*, www.mayacpopa.com/about.
3. Popa, Maya C. "Letter to Noah's wife." *Poets.org*, 30 Sep.2019, poets.org/poem/letter-noahs-wife.
4. Dando, Christina. Literature and Climate. In: Oliver, J.E. (eds) *Encyclopedia of World Climatology*. Encyclopedia of Earth Sciences Series. Springer, Dordrecht, 2005, https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3266-8_126.
5. Cartwright, Mark. "Sisyphus." *World History Encyclopedia*. World History Encyclopedia, 14 Dec 2016. Web. 06 Feb 2024, <https://www.worldhistory.org/sisyphus/>.
6. Holy Bible. New International Version, Zondervan Publishing House, 21 Nov. 2017.
7. Steiger, Kay. "When Women Don't Take Credit for Their Own Good Work". *The Atlantic*, 5 June. 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/saxes/archive/2013/06/when-women-dont-take-credit-for-their-own-good-work/276555/>.

AN OVERVIEW: AN INTERSECTION OF GENDER, MARGINALIZATION AND POSTCOLONIALISM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

Ms. S. JAYALAKSHMI

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Shri Krishnaswamy College for Women, Chennai

Abstract

This paper addresses postcolonial issues and the convergence of several marginalization themes, including untouchability, caste segregation, and feminism. The central issue of the story is how the untouchables and women as subalterns are dealt with on different levels by the superior class and to raise public awareness of the caste system in the United States. It exposes that everyone in society renders a bereaved woman penniless. It discovers identity, local realism, cultural complexity, and colonial heritage. It also suggests that those who disobey face harsh penalties. It could be a reflection of the potential for significant social and political transformation. Postcolonial theorists respect and promote words like marginality and displacement in the current postcolonial literature. Arundhati Roy wrote the semi-autobiographical book "The God of Small Things." Arundhati Roy was a citizen of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the Republic of Ireland, Pakistan, or South Africa wrote the work in English. The inaugural Indian woman to win the Man Booker Prize. Roy's victory is especially noteworthy because it happened during India's 50th independence. Roy was born in Assam to a Bengali Hindu father who was a tea planter by trade and a Keralite Syrian Christian mother who was also a woman's rights activist, Mary Roy. The book given away as the finest full-length. Roy skilfully strikes a balance between the fallout from a family tragedy and the backdrop of sexuality and love, social obligations and private wants, as well as honour and taboos. She addresses a number of pretty uncomfortable topics, including incest, mental illness, child sexual abuse, and intercaste relationships.

Keywords: Gender, Cultural Perception, Discrimination, Intercaste Relation.

An Outline of The God of Small Things

Following her father's retirement, Ammu and her parents travelled to Ayemenem at the beginning of the story. Pappachi served as the British Empire's Imperial Entomologist and, following independence, as a joint Director of Entomology. Her father was a short-tempered person, Mammachi was a violinist who gained notoriety in the pickle industry with her company, 'Paradise Pickles and Preserves'. Despite her aversion to stay with her parents, Ammu manages to persuade them to allow her to spend the summer in Calcutta with her distant aunt. Ammu marries a Bengali man (non-Syrian Christian) who helps run a tea estate in order to escape going back to Ayemenem. She eventually learns that he is a strong drinker and that he physically abuses her, even going so far as to urge her to sate his boss's libido. (Mr. Hollick), in order to save his employment. Rahel and

Estha were born of Ammu. This was the extreme of humiliation at which Ammu started to struggle. Ammu reluctantly went back to her parents' house.

Ammu was treated less like a member of the Ayemenem family and more like an invader there, and her children were seen as fatherless orphans with no chance of survival. To make matters worse, the children were half-Hindu hybrids that no respectable Syrian Christian would ever marry. The reason for that was Ammu was divorced from an intercaste marriage. Ammu's father forbade her from attending college, although Chacko completed his studies at Oxford. Chacko fell in love and married Margaret Kochamma, an Englishwoman, while he was a student at Oxford. Sophie Mol is the daughter of Margaret and Chacko.

Margaret had dumped Chacko soon after Sophie Mol was born due to his sluggish, unproductive

behaviour, and she had been having an extramarital affair with Joe. As a result, Chacko goes back to India. He was hired to work as a professor at the Madras Christian College. After Pappachi's death, Chacko returns to Ayemenem and assumes leadership of his mother's Paradise Pickles and Preserves company. This incident suggests that a lady forfeits her husband's protection upon becoming a widow. It seems as though a widow could not manage a company on her own. Mammachi helps her son and puts up with Chacko's 'libertine relationships' with the attractive women at the factory.

However, Mammachi ignores Ammu's wants and the comforts that contribute to a child's development. However, Chacko asserts that just his factory, where Ammu works.

Pappachi's sister, Baby Kochamma, resides in their Ayemenem home as well. Despite being called Baby Kochamma because of her young age and recent grandmother status, her real name is Novami. She had fallen in love with a young Irish priest named Father Mulligan when she was a young girl. Mulligan came to study Hindu texts at Ayemenem. Baby Kochamma had a thing for a man who wasn't from their community. She also went to Mulligan's convent, where she made Pappachi very unhappy. Pappachi then brought her home and sent her to America to pursue her education, where she earned a diploma in landscape design. After that, Baby Kochamma came to the realisation that she had kept her romantic sentiments to herself in order to conform to social conventions. Kochamma chose spinsterhood and celibacy as a way to repress her emotions. Chacko loves to see other people suffer, and he manipulates the world to bring disaster upon Ammu and the twins. Chacko asks Margaret and their daughter Sophie Mol to spend Christmas in Ayemenem after Margaret's second husband dies in an automobile accident.

The God of Small Things addresses the depressing situation of India's untouchables. Velutha is a dalit and an untouchable. Velutha is a very talented mechanic and carpenter. Velutha has a charming disposition. His involvement in political

exercise and his time spent outside had made him feel equal and respected. He is highly valued by both Mammachi and Chacko. Mammachi treats Velutha differently from other touchable workers at the Factory because he is a subaltern, and he gives him less money. Ammu and her twins are placed in total isolation while Chacko's windowed ex-wife and their daughter enjoy special treatment.

Ammu is clinging to an anchor in this situation. The fact that Ammu was so beautiful made Velutha recognise her as a woman. But when Velutha has an adulterous relationship with Ammu, he transgresses. thus Ammu lets go of all her concerns and worries and spends two weeks letting Velutha's love wash over her every night. Velutha had grown to be very beloved by Rahel and Estha. Velutha genuinely bestows upon them her father's love and affection. They start a brief relationship that ends tragically for the family. After it is revealed that Ammu and Velutha are together, Velutha is exiled and Ammu is kept in her chamber. Rahel and Estha, distraught, made the decision to flee. Sophie Mol, their cousin, persuades them to bring her along. Sophie drowns in the river during the night as they attempt to cross to the abandoned house across the river in their capsized boat. Upon their return from Cochin, Chacko and his widowed ex-wife Margaret notice Sophie's corpse sprawled on the couch. She strikes Estha, throws up, and chastises the twins in the past. Baby Kochamma accuses Velutha of being to blame for Sophie's death when she visits the police station. According to Baby Kochamma, Velutha intimidated the family, tried to rape Ammu, and abducted the kids. Baby Kochamma made up the fake narrative to exact revenge on Velutha for his liaison with Ammu. Velutha is hunted down by a bunch of policemen who severely beat him for stepping across caste boundaries and the twins. Velutha was disregarded by the political party, he was loyal to as well as the police. Ammu went to the police station when Velutha was being held by the police and told them about their relationship, claiming that Velutha was innocent. However, Thomas Mathew, the police inspector, threatens her to get her to put the matter to

rest. The Chief of Police is shocked to learn the truth about Sophie's death from the twins. He is aware that Velutha is a Communist, and he fears that he will be killed as a result of Velutha's unjustified imprisonment and assault. Baby coerced the twins into making the false claim regarding Velutha. Kochama Ultimately, Velutha succumbs to his wounds. Baby Kochamma deceives Rachel and Estha into blaming Velutha for Sophie's death in order to save herself. Baby Kochamma persuades Chacko that Ammu and her twins are to blame for his daughter's death out of fear of being discovered. Ammu and her twins are expelled from the house by Chacko. "The penalty is death" when "women seek to transgress the rules that govern love and desire." Ammu is compelled to send Estha to live with his father and stepmother as a result. Ammu is never seen again by Estha. Rahel was entrusted to Chacko, who showed no interest in her matters from the start. Following the death of his daughter, Chacko loses all feeling in his body. Ammu lived in poverty for a few years before dying alone at the age of thirty-one. Meanwhile, Rahel arrived in India. Ammu could not be buried in the church. Ammu was thus deprived of the honour of a funeral. Therefore, Chacko and Rahel finished her burial, with Chacko draping her in a soiled bedsheet, arranging her on a stretcher, and cremating her in an electric incinerator. Rahel leaves his chaotic upbringing and youth behind in India to pursue his studies in America. Her union came to an end when she and her American spouse, Larry Mccashin, were divorced. She spent several years working as a night clerk at a petrol station outside of Washington, D.C., in a cabin that was bulletproof. Only Rahel was capable of handling a job like this. The feminine virtues of humility, gentleness, modesty, and subservience were stripped from her. Women in sophisticated societies nurture these attributes. Rahel was the exact opposite of Estha, a disconnected and aggressive individual, while the latter had introverted qualities. Rahel and Estha They are reunited for the first time since they were kids, and they are both 31 years old. Rahel and Estha's sorrowful pasts and feelings of guilt, for which they

made false statements about Velutha, have followed them around for years. Rahel's eyes are haunted, while Estha remains silent at all times. They had mutual understanding. The twins' rekindled bond is completed when they share a bed. The novel closes with them meeting one another.

Motif (Motive)

The frail universe of marginal individuals struggling against the oppressive weight of tradition in Ayemenem culture is the central theme of the book. The confluence of several marginality discourses, including untouchability, caste segregation, and feminism, demonstrated in *The God of Small Things*. This book explores the struggles of the oppressed and powerful, as well as Roy depicted vivid picture on castes and gender norms in social and religious contexts. It also deals with subaltern groups and individuals. A thorough understanding of "The God of small things" requires knowledge of Kerala's Communist movement as well as the role played by the Syrian Christian community. It also requires knowledge of South India's caste system. The main themes of the book include abuses of children's innocence.

Portrayal of Characters

People are perplexed by how their dreams seem to come true. The characters in this book are categorised according to societal and gender norms that have been arbitrarily ascribed to them. The persona and their actual philosophy that deliver the catastrophic and transformative repercussions for the main characters. Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, and Estha, the marginalised and downtrodden members, are at the heart of the book. Roy portrays women in the vicinity of the plant as either sexually exploited by Chacko (like the women workers) or uprooted (like Mammachi) and dispossessed (like Ammu). Traditionally, a male entity is used to define a woman's identity. A woman is a person's mother, wife, or sibling, although Ammu is rarely an independent entity.

Discrimination and Caste Prejudice

India is a multifaceted nation with a wide range of cultural and religious customs and beliefs. Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus all live in the same area and share it. Class consciousness and the rigid caste system are two factors that separate society. There exist the quantity of languages used in India. The primary distinction between the masses (untouchables) and the upper classes is that the latter actively speak English, send their kids to study in England, and adopt some English customs. The novel is set in Kerala, a complicated social environment where Christians, Muslims, and Hindus all have distinct customs and ways of living. Roy assesses the postcolonial complex in India, or the cultural perceptions that many Indians hold of their former British overlords. The interactions between untouchables and touchables in Ayemenem reveal a similar inferiority complex; VellyaPaapen, Velutha's father, is an example of an untouchable who is so appreciative of the touchable class that he is willing to When the touchable class finds out that his son has violated the most stringent class segregation rule-that there be no interclass sexual relations-he is willing to kill his son. The twins' relationship with Sophie Mol, Ammu's relationship with Velutha, Chacko's relationship with Margaret, Pappachi's relationship with his family, and finally Baby Kochamma's relationship with Father Mulligan are just a few examples of the nearly all the relationships in the book that are influenced in some way by cultural complexity and relationships. While Ammu and Velutha are the most unusual and courageous in their endeavours to follow that social rule, characters like Baby Kochamma and Pappachi are the most harsh and savage in unpacking it. Roy makes hints on how harshly they are punished for their offence. Arundhati Roy is an amazing author, who has given such a vivid details on the characters relationship. Roy has brought attention to the inhumane conditions faced by the underprivileged class as well as the inflexible status of women in this book. The entire narrative was written so exquisitely, artistically,

and lyrically good in excellence. Roy has included numerous stylistic devices that give the book a distinct feel. The use of words, phrases, and even sentences from colloquial languages, the use of italics and upper caste letters, subject-free sentences, topicalization, departures from standard word order, single-word sentences, word class changes, word clustering, and a variety of other strategies are examples of stylistic innovations. Roy is well aware of how the wealthy oppress and take advantage of the underprivileged, especially women. Political concerns are also interwoven throughout the narrative. Roy draws the reader's attention to the little things in a society where the big things are the main preoccupation. Roy focused on the little things—like social and political unrest—that are happening in the background of the big things. This is the reason Roy's writing is so moving. Roy depicts the struggles that the Untouchables—who are not allowed to touch members of the upper caste—face in a very sensitive way. The narrative discusses the protagonists' experiences with less overt kinds of discrimination in addition to the severe caste prejudice that permeates India. The underprivileged, exploited, and socially outcast members of Kerala society are all included in the book. They are factory workers, misfits, and outcasts. and those from lower castes Roy eloquently highlights the catastrophic results of widespread industrialization. This novel has two stories to take into account. The book tells a "before and after" scenario in this way. The storyline begins when Rahel is seven years old and ends before the main drama. After the story, Rahel, who is thirty-one years old, goes back to her native from the United States. Naturally, these two plots eventually come together to form a unified narrative. "Metatemporal narrative mode" is the term for this kind of narrative method.

Conclusion

The subjects chosen for examination in *The God of Small Things* have been examined from a post-colonial perspective. This book addressed postcolonial issues. Identification is a necessary fact to support

one's own existence. The characters are always looking for their own concepts. In her first book, *The God of Small Things*, Roy emphasises the subjugation of women and the abuse of the other marginalised group, the 'Untouchables'. The reason behind the violence committed by the 'Touchables' against the 'Untouchables' is this philosophy and value system. All of this has been portrayed by Roy via Rahel and Estha's perspectives.

In the facts of history. The work exhibits a comprehensive local realism rooted in colonial past. She has depicted the struggle of women to find their "identity" in a conservative society dominated by men. She has made an effective attempt to draw attention to social reform. She has undoubtedly awakened our empathy and compassion for the oppressed, the underprivileged with this *The God of Small Things*. In this instance, the untouchable still represents the marginalisation that works. Roy has made an effort to make this postcolonial community more aware of the harshness of some of its customs.

She has questioned several long-standing, self-satisfied, but dehumanising social taboos and demonstrated how an ancient culture's patriarchal ideology determines rules of women and untouchables.

References

1. R.Krishnaveni, A Brief study of *The God of Small Things*, International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities.
2. Naik, M.K of Gods and Gods and Men A Thematic study of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. The journal of Indian writing in English.
3. Bose, Bindra. "in Desire and in Death: Eroticism as politics in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Ed. Murari Prasad Arunolhati Roy critical perspective, New Delhi: Penacraft International, 2006 print.
4. Roy, Arundhati, *The God of Small Things*. New York: Harper, 1997.

RECOLLECTION AND HIDDEN INJUSTICE : A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY IN KAZUO ISHIGURO'S NOVEL *NEVER LET ME GO*

J. S. HARANI

III B.A English

Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil

Abstract

This novel takes place in an alternate reality of England during the 1990's in which mass human cloning is authorised and performed. This novel tells about the story of three friends Kathy, H, Ruth and Tommy. They grew up in an enclosed environment, a kind of boarding school only gradually coming to understand that, parentless and unable to have children themselves, they are not considered to be fully human like the people outside, destined for only very brief and restricted lives as adults before they are required to fulfil the purpose for which they die or, as they call it, they 'Complete'. This novel gives a thought about the issue of Organ donation through human clone in which there are people who want to have a long life.

Keywords: Clone, Brutal, Mortality, Science Fiction, Memory.

Never Let Me Go is a 2005 dystopian science fiction novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. It was shortlisted for the 2005 Man Booker Prize (an award Ishiguro had previously won in 1989 for his work *The Remains of the Day*), for the 2006 Arthur C Clarke award and for the 2005 National Book Critics Circle award. Time magazine named it the best novel of 2005 and included the novel in its "100 Best English – language novels published since 1923 – the beginning of TIME". Ishiguro started writing *Never Let Me Go* in 1990. It was originally titled "The Student's Novel".

We are introduced to Kathy and the fact that she is a carer. We are spoken to as if we know and understand the world that she lives in. This has many implications for the reader but the most important is that it shows Kathy knows no other way of life/world. The tone is conversational and help develops the theme of memory.

Kathy leads us to believe that those who came from Hailsham are special and even resented in part by others. She is happy to be able to choose to care for those from Hailsham. Again she introduces us to issues we are not fully aware of, like Tommy and Ruth. This helps again to plunge us into her world and memory.

Kathy speaks about one of her donors who was dying and wanted to hear about Hailsham. He desire to hear the stories and talk as if they were his own show an escapist fantasy theme. This donor knows he will die and takes Kathy's memories as if they were his own. Kathy begins to remember Hailsham's sports pavilion and tells us of how she would do this often while driving around. We learn that the sports pavilion was a difficult place to a quiet spot and that Ruth was the one to generally get one for the group. Straight way we are shown that Ruth is a strong character. We get introduced to Tommy and the way other students tease him.

Kathy remarks that the bullying got worse. It happened mostly at sports even though Tommy was a good sports man. This shows that the students of Hailsham put a lot of importance in the exchanges. We also learn that the exchanges happen four times a year. Kathy goes on a tangent to mention this again bringing in the conversational tone to the text.

The guardians controlled the exchanges and how much exchange tokens everything was worth. Kathy believes that the exchanges were important to the student as it was their only way of building personal possessions. This idea shows the limitations of their existence at the time. Kathy moves to how she was having this conversation with Ruth after her first

donation. We learn that Miss Geraldine was one of the favourite guardians.

Miss Geraldine praises the picture and the other students became resentful from that point. Kathy feels that Tommy was struggling with art and that was the reason for his silly attempts. Teasing started in art and moved gradually from there. Tommy stopped becoming angry and reacting to people after a while and the teasing stopped. Kathy watched as Tommy was accepted again.

Kathy asks Tommy what has changed. Tommy reveals that he had a chat with Miss Lucy and asks Kathy to tell no one. Tommy reveals to Kathy that Miss Lucy told Tommy that if he did not want to be creative then he did not want to be. Kathy is angry at Tommy as she believes he is lying. Tommy pleads with her to meet him at the pond so that he can explain what happened to her.

Tommy remarks that Miss Lucy was shaking with rage when she was talking about art being unimportant. This hints at the futility of the exchange and what Hailsham society believed to be important. Miss Lucy also mentioned to Tommy that the students were not being taught enough. Tommy believes that this has to do with the donations. Here we get the feel that the students are being kept from an important secret regarding their lives.

Miss Lucy's outburst with Tommy gets Kathy thinking and she starts to question the society that she lives in. Kathy begins to question the relevance of the gallery. Kathy's inability to explain the reason behind the gallery or if there is a gallery shows that the students of Hailsham do not truly understand their purpose in life and their reason for being. This brings in more of the idea of their sheltered/censored existence.

While there is a sense of freedom throughout the text the reality of the freedom is something different. When the students talk to a teacher after class and the gallery is accidentally brought up the conversation changes. This incident works on the theme of freedom actual and perceived.

Ruth, Kathy and the girls talk about Madame and Ruth believes that Madame is afraid of the

students. This will be important later on when it is revealed that society fears people from these institutions and what they represent or could represent. The description of the Hailsham grounds shows that there is no place to hide. We get the idea of a 'big brother' society where the students are always under watch. Madame arrives and the girls intercept her to see how she reacts. The reaction is one of fear and this could be seen as a representation of how society views Hailsham and its counterparts.

We learn about students that went into areas that they were not allowed to go. The stories of what happened to the students are horrific. We get the idea that these stories go around you keep the students from exploring and going places that they cannot be watched. This develops the idea of a restricted 'big brother' society. They continue to discuss the secret guard. Other than this it seems that the students would have nothing else to do. Kathy talks about how they had outgrown the secret guard but kept it going for Ruth.

Kathy remembers listening to the song and using a pillow as a baby. She realises that she is being watched by Madame and that Madame is crying. She goes on to explain that Madame's looks normally give students the 'creeps' but this look is different. Here we must look at the idea of Madame questioning the real humanity of the students of Hailsham. Kathy tells us that years later she only told Tommy what had happened. She goes on to say that later they all knew they could not have babies and that somehow she thought she had already known but didn't realise she knew.

We learn that a couple of months later the tape disappeared. Kathy mentions that she could not link it to Madame and even now still does not. Simply by mentioning it she brings across the idea of the shady/gated element of Hailsham. We learn that it was Ruth that put in most effort to find the tape for Kathy. Ruth gets Kathy a different tape and Kathy is happy with the gesture. After few years Tommy asks Kathy about the lost tape and takes her to a music shop and buys her a new tape this makes Kathy too happy.

Kathy goes into years from thirteen to sixteen and refers to them as darker years. We have to take this idea because she is maturing and understanding more and therefore can begin to see the realities behind Hailsham to extend. She begins to explain through an episode with Miss Lucy. She begins to talk about a time in the pavilion with Miss Lucy.

Ruth and Tommy breaks up. Ruth comes to know that Tommy is in love with Kathy and asks Kathy to stay away from him. She also considering their friendship leaves Tommy. After her 3rd donation Ruth calls Kathy ask sorry for separating her and Tommy. She gives them her wishes and gives the address of Madame asks them to meet her.

Because there was a rule in Hailsham that if two clones were truly in love they would get exception from donation. Tommy and Kathy also went to meet Madame and came back cheated. And Tommy was so angry because he couldn't get exception. Ruth was done with the fourth donation and was dead. Tommy was also having his donation. and at last Tommy is also dead. Kathy accepts her fate and tells that even though she couldn't be with her friends, she

would live with the memories she had with them in Hailsham.

References

Primary Source

1. Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go* Faber and Faber Ltd., 2005.

Secondary Sources

2. Dermawan, Ferry. Warno Dalama Desain (teks). [Online] (28 June 2015).
3. Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. Canada: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. [Online] (23 February 2015).
4. Kennedy, X.J. *Literature: An International to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc, (1991).
5. Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*. United States of America: St Martin's Press, (1990).
6. Taylor, Richard. *Understanding the Elements of Literature*. New York: St. Martin's Press, (1981).

MAGICAL ADVENTURE IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S *THE CONCH BEARER*

N. ASHWIN SHYAM

III B.A. English

Pioneer Kumaraswamy College, Nagercoil

Abstract

The Conch Bearer is the first book of the Brotherhood of the Conch series written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. It was an adventurous story which tells about the experience of the child protagonist Anand along with Abhaydatta and Nisha in their way to the brotherhood. Anand was a twelve years old boy; he was a believer in fairy tales and magic. He was asked to help by Abhaydatta to restore the conch in the Silver Valley. On his way to restore the conch he faces many difficulties by Surabhanu, the antagonist of the novel. He has given the task to pass the three trials of the brotherhood. His journey wasn't an easy one as a child it is very difficult for him to tackle these difficulties. Finally, after reaching the silver valley, he successfully restored the conch and he was given the title *The Conch Bearer*. My thesis deals about the magical adventures that Anand has faced during his travel to silver valley. It also dealt with the magical elements presented in this novel like the conch shell, speaking mongoose which is really an impossible thing to achieve in this real world. It is a fantasy and a mystery to all the readers especially children.

Keywords: Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Magic, Adventure, Trials, Silver Valley and the Conch.

Introduction

English Literature is said to be one of the finest literature of the universe. It reflects the society, cultural aspects etc., It is the reflection of the society. Literature is the mirror of the society. English literature had no of powerful genres like fiction, non – fiction, short story, drama, novel etc., William Shakespeare, John Dryden, Wordsworth, Coleridge are some of the famous writers of English literature and they have produced many notable works to the literature.

Indian English literature is one of the branch of English literature. Some of the main themes in this literature are the main societal problems, crime thriller, sci – fiction etc., Aravind adiga, Divakaruni, Jhumpa lahiri, Chetan bhagat are the finest writers of Indian English literature.

The Conch Bearer is a novel written by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni published in the year 2003. It was a trilogy written by her. The other two parts of this novel has released in the years 2005 and 2009 respectively. It is a fully dedicated novel to childrens as it has a twelve year old boy named Anand as the Protagonist. Conch bearer is also comes under the kind of literature named Fantasy Literature.

The Author of this book Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was an Indian born American author born in the year 1956 at Calcutta. She writes in the genre of magical realism, historical fiction, young adult etc., She was the one who impart moral and cultural values through her novels. She had done her B.A in university of Calcutta and she completed her Ph.D in the year 1984. Her thesis is about the great writer Christopher Marlowe. Famous works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are *Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of my heart*, *The Conch Bearer* etc.,

The aim of this novel and my thesis is to tell how magical things create fantasies to us and how it creates a pleasure in our life through the journey of our twelve year old protagonist Anand along with his friend Nisha and Master Healer Abhaydatta.

Magical Adventure in The Conch Bearer

Snowy, white Himalayan mountains, luscious green trees, flowing serene Rivers, the eternal silence, atmosphere of adventure, a Sanctum sanatorium of peace and happiness; the narrow, crowded and filthy streets of Calcutta, the cold evenings and nights with eerie atmosphere mark the setting of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's children's Novel, "The Conch Bearer."

(Symbolic and Allegorical Fantasy in Divakaruni's the Conch Bearer by Dr.B.Sushma pp.81). The Story revolves around the Twelve – years old boy named Anand who lives in modern India. He was a believer of Fairy Tales and Magic. "Twelve – year old with knobby knees and elbows into the happy young boy he'd been before ill luck had turned his life upside down two years ago." (The Conch Bearer pp.1) As his family situation was very worse, he works as an employee in a tea shop. He lives with his mother and his sister Meera. Meera was mentally depressed after witnessing a murder.

Thus, he and his mother had been forced to do work. Anand's tea shop owner's name was Haru. He was displeased with Anand's work and he pays only little to him. One day, a beggar came to the Tea shop, he doesn't know that time this beggar is going to change his life. Haru told him to send away the beggar from here. But he was sympathized and he guides the old man to get out and also he gave him lunch of stale pooris and tea. "Anand nodded, poured himself a glass of tea, wrapped a few stale pooris in a torn newspaper, and left before Haru changed his mind." (Page.12)

Later in the night, he found a person next to his door, who introduced himself as Abhaydatta he was the person who came as a beggar in Haru's Shop. He tells Anand the story of the group of Healers known as Brotherhood, they were in Silver Valley which is hidden deep within the Himalayas. Now, Abhaydatta introduced him the Magical Item Conch and its story.

The Conch was a Magical item in Silver Valley. It only keeps the Brotherhood very stronger. One day Surabhanu, the Member of Brotherhood steals it and ran away from the Silver Valley. It makes the brotherhood weakened. Therefore, the Brotherhood was divided into four pairs to retrieve the Conch. However, Abhaydatta and his partner saved the Conch but his partner died in the fight while escaping from Surabhanu. Abhaydatta asks Anand for help in his journey to reach Silver Valley. Anand was very curious to know why he selected him he gets as a reply because of his belief in magic and Fairy tales. Abhaydatta tells him that he can cure his

sister too. He does some magic's but it doesn't work on her.

Due to this, Anand's mother gets angry and he tells to Abhaydatta that she won't permit her son to come along with him. Abhaydatta moved from their house but he informs that he will wait for him. Next morning, Meera started to talk very lowly and she was now cured totally. Now Anand's mother lets him to go along with Abhaydatta. He went to the place that Abhaydatta tells to him to meet. But there is no Abhaydatta. There he finds out Nisha, a Sweeping girl, she tells him that she knows the place of Abhaydatta. She also joins in the team of Anand. From the Railway Station their Adventurous journey begins. At the Time waiting for Abhaydatta, Surabhanu came in disguise as a Wealthy Passenger he tries to catch them. After this small tragedy ends, they found Abhaydatta. On their way.

Along the way Abhaydatta informs to the children about the dangers they are going to face in the journey of reaching silver valley. He asked them to be cautious always. He tells about the three trials they have to face for reaching the silver valley. At this time Abhaydatta secretly entrusts the Conch to Anand, Surabhanu would not expect the healer to trust the Conch to a boy.

"If I am indeed overcome and cannot re-join you," Abhaydatta continued, 'you must go on alone to the Silver Valley. Look, I am going to draw you a map.

Abhaydatta knelt and drew a line on the cement floor with his forefinger. To Anand's amazement, the line began to glow at once." (Page No.101)

Surabhanu Catches the three. In a duel that happens between them. At the time Abhaydatta mysteriously vanishes from there. Now the Conch begins to talk to Anand. It tells him that it will allow him to use when the human powers are exhausted. At this time a Mongoose came and join with the children. The Mongoose became the favourite of Nisha. Now, they reached their first trial of the Brotherhood. It was a raging river none of them can cross but they crossed with the help of Mongoose.

The Second trial is about an Enchanted Rocky pass, in this time Anand had confusion that either he has to move otherwise he have to stay here because, Nisha is injured badly in the first Trial. Now, the intelligent thinking will make them move. At the time Surabhanu came and catches them in a form of Red Snake. He reveals that Nisha was in the control of Surabhanu from their first encounter at the Railway Station. Surabhanu orders Nisha to smash the head of Anand with a rock, the mongoose fights with Surabhanu in order to save Anand, but it was defeated. It pains Nisha and it makes Nisha to betray Surabhanu. At this time, The Conch allows him to use it and so he defeated Surabhanu in the wave of Fire.

"Stand up, Anand,' the conch said, "and take me out. Don't be afraid. Use me. I give you permission."

'How shall I use you?' Anand asked. But already, an image had flashed inside his head." (Page 187)

Now, Anand arrives at the Silver Valley. Here is the Final trial ,now he is asked whether he is going to choose the glory of silver valley or his friends because Nisha and the Mongoose was Injured. He says that he is going to choose his Friends. At this time only we came to know about that Abhaydatta is in disguise as Mongoose. Because of Anand's good mind, the Brotherhood declared that he passes the final test. They were allowed to enter the Silver Valley. The Conch is restored in the Valley. Abhaydatta restored to his human form, Nisha was inducted as the first female member of the Brotherhood. Anand wondered why the Brotherhood did not invite him to join. Abhaydatta tells him that Nisha was an orphan but you had a family. Now, Anand has two choices , one is to live with his family other one is choosing the membership of the Brotherhood. Now only he came to know that his father was in prison for the mistake that he didn't commit. Anand choose to stay in the Brotherhood, so the Healers make their family to forget about Anand. Anand is not permitted to forget them. Because as a Healer he should remember what he had gave up for the Brotherhood. Finally, Anand was inducted not just as a Novice but also the titular "Conch Bearer."

Conclusion

We can easily say that Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has excelled in her Novel, The Conch Bearer. The portrayal of the Protagonist Anand itself makes me to read the novel. The novel is not just a novel to read and keep it in a shelf. It is a great thing we all need to think about how the society of India is. The life of Anand is totally fateful. His life of was divided into twists and turns. In the beginning he was happy with his family, but after his father vanished mysteriously the responsibility of the whole family came in the head of Anand. He had to take care of his sister and his mother this situation forced him to work. Really, it is the pathological situation of our Country. In Anand's life he got Abhaydatta and the group of healers to change his life, but the working children doesn't get any healers to change their lives.

The Magical Adventure in this novel was really an interesting one. From this Novel we can understand that everyone's life is filled with lot of happiness as well as sadness we have to come across all the difficulties as Anand came up in his life by inducted as Novice of the Brotherhood and Titled as The Conch Bearer. Thus, the idea of my thesis is to tell a message to this society that life has ups and downs and we have to overcome from the difficulties of life as Anand came up after every trials. Hope this thesis will help something to learn from the Novel the Conch Bearer by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

References

Primary Source

1. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. "The Conch Bearer." USA : Roaring Brook Press,2003.

Secondary Sources

2. Dhaliwal, Manreet. "Fantastic Quest for Self – Recognition and Revivification of Humanity in The Brotherhood of Conch Trilogy." (IOSR – JHSS), Vol.21, No.4, Ver.I (Apr.2016) PP.15 – 20.
3. Dhaliwal, Manreet. "Imparting Morals and Cultural Values Through Children's Literature : A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's the Brotherhood of Conch Trilogy." Literary

- Endeavour, Vol. IX, Issue. 1, Jan. 2018. PP.170 – 176.
4. Mishra, Parul. “Magic Realism in The Conch Bearer.” Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni a Critical Spectrum. PP.177 – 186.
 5. Rani, Rekha and Savita Ahuja. “Delineation of Magic Realism, Dream and Realistic in The Work of Chitra Banerjee by Depicting Culture.” JASR, Vol.15, Issue.7, Sep.2018. PP.375 – 380.
 6. Singh, Jagat and Shweta Singh. “ A Study of Magical Realism in The Conch Bearer.” IJAR 2020 ; 6(10) : 550 – 553.
 7. Sushma, “Symbolic and Allegorical Fantasy in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s The Conch Bearer.” RJELAL, Vol.6, Issue.2, 2018, PP.81-84.



Bodhi International Journal is assigned
by ISSN National Centre, India
National Science Library, New Delhi



Journal Indexed and Impact Factor by
International Institute of
Organized Research (I2OR)

Information of Bodhi Journal

Subjects for Papers

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science, agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, entrepreneurship, bioscience, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Hosted by



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH & RESEARCH CENTRE PIONEER KUMARASWAMY COLLEGE

Reaccredited with B++ Grade by NAAC
(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli)
Vetturnimadam, Nagercoil - 629003, Tamil Nadu
www.pioneerkumaraswamycollege.com

Articles should be mailed to
bodhijournal@gmail.com



BODHI

International Journal of
Research in Humanities,
Arts and Science

www.bodhijournals.com



Powered & Published by
**Center for Resource, Research and
Publication Services (CRRPS) India.**
www.crrps.in