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## Founding & Chief Editor

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju, Department of English, Osmania University is trained from EFLU and a Doctorate from Osmania University. She prefers the designation of a trainer and a writer. She has presented several academic articles to international and national seminars, conferences, journals, and magazines. Casual and creative writing is also her forte. She is a prolific reader and writer. Her areas of interest are Post colonial Literature, Gender Studies, Film Studies, English Language Teaching, Contemporary Literature and Communication Skills.

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Dear Readers & Contributors,

Thank you for staying with us, on this wonderful journey of IJELLS. We complete 7 years in research publishing. With this issue, we foray into our 8<sup>th</sup> year.

We take this occasion to extend our gratitude to our team, our reviewers, our editors, our online support and web administrators.

The issue is unique in its own right with a compilation of articles which will take us on another interesting ride.

This issue features some immediate reads and some leisurely reads.

Welcome aboard!

Let us know your experience and what you have learnt.

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju  
Founding & Chief Editor

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## The Trap

Swati Choudhury

Perennial goals, steering to intertwined paths.  
 Various, aesthetic, perplexing and leading nowhere.  
 I stand hush, with my precarious mind,  
 Amongst nowhere!  
 Embellished, however, and appealing are the  
 Exultant flowers which smirk; the floating leaves bar,  
 Bar the hovering kites, pretentious!  
 Conducting as the veracious and adroit of all,  
 Which cues to the path leading to destiny.  
 The chirping of birds inscrutable,  
 The fog engulfs the culmination, roads murky!  
 A mirage it is! "A trap" utters my mind!  
 Nature's attempt to sidetrack my journey,  
 Beauty, its weapon!  
 I pause, contemplate and reassess!  
 The flowers still gaudy, but exuding serenity,  
 The leaves adding shapes to the blue roof,  
 And bleached clouds, catechizing on crystallizing the goal.  
 The exuberant, high-rising kites demands perseverance,  
 And tenacity to fly and perceive the zenith!  
 The birds' chirping now resonate my thoughts,  
 And the fog holds the truth, the magic of resolution!  
 The undying will to leave no regrets,  
 Taste joy and havoc, and emerge  
 Only the valiant dares to break through the unknown,  
 And unfold the treasure!  
 The destination!  
 The dream!





## The Library

Uma Jayaraman

Nishant did not think much of the dream he had that night. It was a regular dream with hues of red and yellow, burning buildings and charred bodies. But that was not unusual for a boy who had lived in the midst of street bombings all his life.

He arrived into the world with a bang; his father had been travelling in the local bus at 4 30 pm when his mother went into labour. The water bag burst and set off a journey that began with his mother's first wails of... widowhood. Even as the baby was contorting its limbs to make its way out of mummy, the young father's limbs had been blown apart by a bomb maliciously thrown into the over laden bus by a hand that had claimed to demand justice.

Amit, Nishant's father, had been a DJ at nightclub *Shell*. The club had got its name from Amit's latest album 'shell shocked in the city' that had struck the youth in a unique way! Sandhya, his young wife, had created a stir at the club everytime she accompanied him. She was the 'first lady' of the club after all! Every girl wanted to be in her shoes.

This was the time when Sandhya had also gone on the celebrity kitchen television show with her new fusion Indian- Italian pasta fare. From the weekly shows, she had gone on to open *Sandhya's corporate kitchen* that catered to the busy beings of the business world! At this precise moment, pregnancy came with its illnesses for Sandhya and she was forced to stay home to bring Nishant safely into the world. On the fateful day, it was a very pregnant Sandhya that had bid an all smiles adieu to Amit who was on his way to meet a potential producer of his new album. Not wanting to drive on the treacherous hilly path, Amit had chosen to take the bus.

Sandhya had tried to resume her catering business after Amit's death but like it happens all the time in the showbiz world, new faces had filled old frames and Sandhya's talent had been forgotten with the death of her celebrity husband.

Cooking for big parties was an option that Sandhya had never considered before. It carried with it the 'I need this money badly' air about it. Seven years of widowhood had their way now. Sandhya found herself at Mrs. Verma's door at 10 am on Saturday morning to cook. Mrs. Verma, the owner of *Rashi Films* had invited the media's big names to her 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party, and she had allowed Sandhya to take over her kitchen for the day-for a small fee, of course.

Nishant, a curious seven-year-old now, had sauntered along with Sandhya, to see mummy's kitchen. Sandhya was a little awed by her little boy's demeanour. He had never



asked about daddy even though she had often seen him looking at one of Amit's photos taken during his holiday with friends at Mauritius. In a pair of blue shorts and sky-blue cotton half-sleeves shirt that had big white flowery designs on it, and his curly auburn hair framing his well-defined facial features, Amit looked like a Greek god in the picture. Sandhya had often seen Nishant salute this picture at night before curling up under his comforter. Sometimes, it served as a bookmark for his science magazines that he borrowed from the school library or from friends. At other times, it perched on the bookshelf in which he kept his precious books and articles from newspapers and media magazines that had featured Amit. The photo would promptly be returned to one of the drawers in Nishant's writing table whenever he left home.

If Sandhya had any worries about Nishant, it was more to do with his meticulousness at everything rather than the lack of it. Nishant had a sense of discipline about school work which is seldom seen in the primary school children. He was enviably popular amongst his classmates and teachers. But to her surprise, he kept to himself while at home. He remained locked up in his little room that Sandhya had let him have despite the fact that it left her with little more than the living room and the kitchen for herself.

Sandhya had sold their tastefully furnished apartment in the posh Patel enclave and moved into this friendly but common neighbourhood. She had carried very few things from the old house with her. The apartment itself hadn't afforded her much. Months before he died, Amit had mortgaged the apartment to the bank against a loan for his new album...an album that wasn't to be! A letter from the bank that expressed its deepest regret at her husband's death, also gave her the breakdown of what she still owed the bank. She had hoped to use part of the proceeds to buy a premium education cum insurance policy for Nishant so that his future could be safe- come what may!

A curious phrase: *come what may*. Who can tell you that?

However, this did not worry Sandhya when she walked this Saturday morning with Nishant to Mrs. Verma's house. She was not even thinking of her future. She was lost in the present moment, watching her son happily skipping past Mrs. Verma's landscaped garden, a mirror of vulgar affluence than good taste. Too brash, thought Sandhya. She remembered how Amit had brought her the *musa* and the *bromeliads* from Mauritius. She had potted them in her terrace garden and taken care of them as if they were her babies. He had also brought her pictures of the very tall 'loneliest palm' and the endangered *vacoas screw pine*. She still had those pictures on her kitchen wall.

Holding Nishant firmly, Sandhya drifted through the double door into a hall that flashed slapdash abundance. Tall figurines of men, women and animals peppered all the nooks and corners of the hall. A huge fountain was installed at its centre. 'Song of India' and 'Calathea' shrubs in fibre glass pots encircled the fountain that splashed on man-made rocks and pebble stones. Directly above this fountain, the ceiling was weighted with a



chandelier that carried miniature gold antelopes balancing crystal lamps on their horns. Mrs. Verma who believed in occasionally adding a traditional touch to her home had ordered wax candles to be placed in these lamps. On big days, these candles were lit by young boys precariously perched on rope swings.

When the mother and son walked in, five boys were swinging around the chandelier. Mrs Verma was giving them instructions in clipped Hindi. Nishant's mind promptly drew up the aerial image that the boys sitting high up must have of her. Throwing her head back so that she may throw her voice up, Mrs. Verma was giving her double chin a good stretch. As she looked up, her facial skin folded up in layers and retreated towards her ears in such a way that she looked as if a strong wind blew on her face from the skies. Nishant clamped his mouth with his tiny hands to check a disobedient chuckle. Even as he was waxing red with the partially checked emotion, Mrs. Verma bestowed upon him, as well as his mother, the ceremonious hug and kiss she reserved for once-friends-turned-dependent variety of people. 'Oh, if it is not my own dear Sandhya', she said, with that unnecessary but characteristic stress on 'n' that added a languor to anything the rich and the famous said. 'What would I have done without you, my dear', she added thoughtlessly. 'Was it to make his mother feel welcome?' thought Nishant. 'If it is not little Nishant' (there she goes again with her stresses, Nishant thought with some guilt). 'You are quite a strapping boy, I see.' She paused briefly and looked up at the young boys she had picked up from the streets that morning to do her work. 'Do you want to join them up there, my boy?' she said, with a wink. Laughing affectedly at the alarm in Sandhya's eyes, she added, 'just joking'. She ruffled Nishant's hair and blew him a kiss that deepened the fine lines under her eyes in a way that made her look both friendly and fiendish.

After the initial fuss, she promptly lost interest in the duo. With a flourish of her left hand, she dismissed Sandhya into the kitchen. 'Get to work now Sandhya. I hope you remember your stuff,' she said in a business-like manner. She turned to Nishant briefly and said, 'You, my precious, walk around Aunt Verma's house but stay out of trouble' and here she paused. 'Or else, Aunt Verma will send you up there', she said, pointing to the chandelier.

Mrs. Verma's words scared him and he shut his eyes tightly. He still saw her but in a different way. He saw her languidly holding him by the belt loops of his Saturday shorts, and dangling him over the horns of the antelopes in the chandelier. Tick-tock, tick-tock, he swung like a pendulum over the sharp horns of the gold antelope.

Nishant shoved the image aside but he meant to retrieve it later to illustrate the story he was writing about monsters and goblins. Lost in these and other thoughts, he walked away from the sounds of the hall and stopped short in his tracks when his eyes fell on a strange door at the end of the corridor which he had just turned into. The door was ordinary and secured by a regular traditional latch, the like of which he had seen in his grandmother's house in the village. Before he knew, he had walked to the door and





thrown it open. He found himself staring into an enormous room. The room was beautifully lit by an auburn hue that is usually seen at the end of an exceptionally warm day. But it was still morning, wasn't it? Mused Nishant as he sized up the room. Beside the east wall which sported a stretch of wall-sized windows, there were two huge leather chairs with ornate teak wood frames, placed at such an angle that sieved the morning sun through the crafted frames and made intricate patterns on the floor. Nishant watched the patterns. There was a tiny leaf hanging between two hearts. As he stretched his hand to touch the leaf, it disappeared. Everything was dark for a moment and then suddenly the leaf was back in its coveted place between the hearts. Nishant covered the leaf with his forefinger. His tiny forefinger became a gigantic ruler that squished the leaf and sundered the hearts. He tried to cup his tiny hands around the hearts but everytime he brought his hands together, the hearts melted away.

Bored of this game, Nishant got up and looked around the room. For the first time, he saw the enormous bookshelf.

The bookshelf covered the entire west wall of the room. 'There must be 1000 million books in there' thought Nishant in his primary school English. As he put his fingers on one of the brass handles of the bookshelf, he felt a slight tremor. It was as if he had been struck by electric current. He rapidly withdrew his fingers and paused. His first instinct was to run to his mother in the kitchen. He took a few steps towards the door.

Just then, the book caught his attention...

It was hardbound in deep blue. There was a red satin ribbon that hung out from inside the book. Probably someone had marked the point until which it had been read. But it didn't seem as if anyone had touched this book for a long time. Drawing the book out of its perch with great care as if it would disintegrate upon touch, Nishant quietly slid behind the sofa by the window. The edges of the pages had a golden hue. There were letters A V engraved on the leather hardcover. Nishant opened the book with trembling fingers. He was convinced that the book would disappear the moment he opened it.

But it did not. 'What could A V mean?' Nishant wondered. 'Could it be someone's name? Probably, these were the initials of the person who wrote the book... Yes, it must be that.' The book didn't have a name. But it had a dedication. The first page read, *For my unborn son*. Nishant turned the pages gently as if ... he wasn't sure what... but the book seemed to call for gentleness.

As he flipped the pages, Nishant gaped in surprise. The book had no more words. He turned the pages once more. There were NO WORDS. None at all! The pages were blank. Page after page drew a blank. Nishant shut the book in trepidation. His hands shook uncontrollably. The book dropped from his hands and shuddered on the floor. The brass



handles of the bookshelf began to rattle. The Sun slipped behind the clouds. The wall-sized windows made a strange clanking sound that occurs when glass rubs against wood.

Then it appeared the first picture in the book. It was painted in morning hues of blue and white like the sky that adorned the great peaks of Kailash. He had seen images of Mt. Kailash in storybooks about Hindu gods and goddesses. 'Where did this picture come from? It was surely not there just now, or was it?' Nishant couldn't be sure. He lifted his eyes slightly to catch a glimpse of the morning sky from the wall-sized window. The sky seemed to bulge out with a chaotic array of nimbus clouds that threatened to burst and drown the room. Nishant rushed to the window and drew the curtains just when the first lightning struck and burnt the lush grass patch in Auntie Vema's over landscaped garden. 'Was this the season for thunderstorms?' Nishant speculated. 'It seldom rained in April, or did it?'

Well, these days it rains and shines on a whim. Does it not?

The windows suddenly burst open and a cold draught of wind hit the glass doors of the room, peppering them with tiny droplets of water. Startled by the onslaught, Nishant tugged at the handles of the windows so hard that they gave away. As he turned, he noticed the crack. It was a ten centimetre long crooked crack in the Burma teak window pane.

When Nishant returned to the book, the pages were flipping of their accord but there was a pattern that Nishant's eyes caught in them. He could see a series of pictures...beginning with the blue and white skies of his mother's stories. He was very sure that these were not there a second ago. It was as if someone was drawing these for him. Now it was a yellow palace with lots of crowned heads... a woman stood in the middle of the courtroom...she was young, and had been stripped to her waist. An assembly of old people sat on their thrones wringing their hands. Their heads were bowed. Who were they bowing to? The woman? Who was she? She was standing alone in a courtroom full of men. Her hands were placed together in a praying pose. Her eyes were tightly shut but tearing. She seemed to be trembling. Nishant trembled when he was angry or afraid. Was the woman angry or afraid? He could tell that the woman needed help. Even as he gaped at the picture with confused emotions of pity and fear, it melted into another one of solid colours. The picture showed a smaller room, a woman seated on a chair with a baby on her lap. A man whose face Nishant couldn't see sat beside her. He tenderly held the woman's hand. He held a small rectangular book in the other hand. It had a golden edge and... but before Nishant could see more, the man had walked out of the picture and stepped into a bus that sped up a hilly path. Nishant turned away trying to fight the images that were taking shape in his mind. Had the bus flown over the edge of the hill and into the valley below? No, the bus had flown into buildings. There were people in the buildings. The colours on the page became fiery. Reds, oranges and yellows of Nishant's morning dream.



But there had been no buildings in his dream. Only streets littered with wailing children. Their torn limbs hung loosely by their sides, their faces were split, eyes had been plucked out, and some lay stone dead. He saw a figure fiercely gunning down women, children, old people, everyone. Nishant shut his eyes in his dream, and almost immediately, the firing stopped. But he could see other things. He saw a middle-aged man who had been thrown to the ground in the stampede caused by the firing. He was leaning over his dead baby's bruised body and pledging revenge. On whom? Nishant didn't know. Another woman was trying to push away the solid pillar that had fallen on her ten-month-old baby. She said the baby was crying for milk.

A knock on the library door brought Nishant out of this fearsome world. He jumped out of the chair (He had no recollection of sitting down on it!) knocking it over as he ran hoping that Aunty Verma would not have heard the thumping sound of the chair on the carpet and flung the door open to see who it was. His mother had come to call him for lunch. As Nishant followed Sandhya to the Verma kitchen, he saw the boys who had been setting candles on the chandelier seated on the floor and eating from plastic plates. 'Mum, did you give them the food?' he asked. 'No', 'of course not', she said in a tone that she used when she wanted to say, 'don't be silly, dear!' As Nishant walked into the kitchen, he saw one of the boys stick out his middle finger at him. He proceeded to do the same to the boy but his mother pulled him into the kitchen just when he had bent two of the four fingers needed to complete the gesture.

The kitchen was painted white and green- Mrs. Verma's unique way of sporting a green kitchen. Sandhya had been labouring away here for nearly three hours with two assistants. The others wouldn't come in until five in the evening to set the tables and arrange the cutlery.

She had dished up amazing fusion meals for the evening. Besides the regular Italian recipes of Penne in Bolognese sauce, Spaghetti with Black olives and pesto, Fusilli in cream sauce and Hazelnut muffins to be set out in exclusive Italian dinnerware, she had added her signature fusion dish of Tandoori Ravioli with garden vegetables. This is the only dish Nishant cared to have but mum wasn't sure if this was allowed. She served him some rice and dal, with green vegetables, from the microwave which meant these were last meal's leftovers. She smiled and promised to cook up a delicious Italian fusion for him for Sunday's lunch.

Nishant was in no mood to have the leftover Indian fare. The book beckoned to him. So, he gulped down what was set before him for his mom's sake, gave her a tight hug and ran out of the kitchen. Once out of the kitchen, he paced his steps. On his way out, he noticed the boys were not there! Looking up, he noticed that there was one lone figure (was it the boy who had been obscene?) wiping the gold antelopes with a muslin cloth.



The room bore a serene countenance when he returned to it. He was luxuriously enveloped by the lingering warmth of the April afternoon. Only thing that discomfited him was the smell of the unfashionable food that he had just eaten that lingered even though he had washed his hands three times. He wiped his hands once again on his shorts lest the book should be offended by the smell, and picked it up carefully again.

Just then a fancy took hold of him. He wanted to give a title to each of the pictures he had seen in the book. He walked around the room looking for a pen with gold ink. Why gold ink? He didn't know. On a writing table near the bookshelf, he found a box of stationery. It had colourful stapling bullets, a stapler, four to five stick-me pads, a dozen rubber band packs, two boxes of unsharpened 2 B pencils, and a pack of erasers. The erasers caught Nishant's eye. They carried miniature images. Here was one of London Bridge opening up for the ships to pass, and another one of someone trying to hold up the Leaning Tower of Pisa; a third one showed a woman looking down from the fifth floor of the Qutub Minar and a fourth revealed Tavernier holding the tip of one of the minarets of the Taj Mahal. There was one of the Twin Towers too. A sheaf of writing paper stuck into a writing pad lay at the centre of the writing table. Putting the box away, Nishant started to move away from the table. At this precise time, he felt the tremor again. The handles on the bookshelf rattled again, and Nishant jumped in consternation when the writing table toppled over! How could the table have toppled over? He warily peered through the door to see if anyone had heard the commotion, but life outside seemed to have a normalcy that made Nishant dizzy. He closed the door keeping his eyes averted from the scene of chaos, half afraid that the table would have straightened itself.

It was then that he saw the pen. It was an ordinary fountain pen with a long cap and a metal clip holder but what attracted him was its unusual sheen. Moreover, 'where had this been all this while? Did it roll off the table when it toppled? It could well be so', Nishant said to himself. He rushed to pick it up curious to know if it had gold ink. It must. After all, it was his desire, wasn't it?

That was it then. In this room, things happened. Not magic but wish-fulfilment, Nishant thought. A new idea struck him. If this room could fulfil his desires, why shouldn't he ask for what he really wanted? But who should he ask? And what did he want? Did he want to taste his mother's signature dish? Or did he want a bicycle like Arvind's? He knew that he wanted to climb up the chandelier and bring down all the wax candles stuck there for the evening. But again, he probably just wants to walk out of this house and get a breath of fresh air.

The door opened slightly and a small face peered in. A whiff of myrrh and frankincense drifted into the room, and the soft voice of Auntie Verma's grand daughter drifted in with it. 'Grandma sent me to ask you if you are staying out of trouble' the face said. Having asked the question, the face withdrew. Nishant gaped at the spot where the face had been. There was something about it that reminded him of the baby in the golden book.



Returning to the book with the fountain pen, he hesitated. Now that he had a particular desire, will the book speak to him, show him pictures? The picture with blue and white skies was still there! Opening the cap of the pen and desiring golden ink to flow out of the nib, Nishant put down the first words: 'Mummy's Mt. Kailash' appeared on the paper. He smiled with satisfaction at the impression. The words appeared bright and golden.

But now, the letters began to float. The picture of blue and white skies began to melt. It was now a beach of deep blue waters...a man was standing by the serene waters striking a stunning pose of abandonment. His face exuded youthful bloom.

Nishant put pen to paper. The pen moved on the page. *AV in Mauritius*. Screaming, he threw the pen away. It crashed against the wall-sized window pane that had cracked, and fell without a sound on the carpeted floor.

Nishant snapped the book shut. He stared at the pen as if it was ....he was not sure what to name it. Mrs. Verma's image loomed up in his mind again. But this time, it did not have a threatening look. She looked quite amicable, standing tall on the balcony that led down to the huge hall where she was to have her evening party. There was a distant look in her eyes as if she had remembered something that she had long wanted to forget. Nishant put the book away and closed his eyes.

When he woke up, the room was dark. There were long tangerine shadows of the chairs on the carpeted floor. Nishant loved the twilight. This was the moment when it was neither day nor night. The sun was neither up nor down. There was something about this moment of the day. In days of yore, battles came to a halt when the Sun went down. But not so long ago, it was on such an evening that plenty of fish had been washed ashore, and the fishermen had not believed their luck. By the next evening, these very fishermen had been washed ashore when the seas had become greedy for land.

Nishant wanted to check on his mother. But to get to the kitchen, he had to walk across the hall. When he meekly stepped out of the library, he was struck by the luscious ambience of the hall. The chandelier had been lit up with candles and they cast their flickering shadows on the ceiling. It gave a mysterious aura to the balcony on which Nishant had seen Mrs. Verma stand in his vision. The guests had started arriving. They arrived in huge cars, alighted with a flourish at the entrance and walked in, tossing their heads up as if they had drunk the elixir of invincibility. 'Have they strained their necks lifting weights in the gym?' Nishant mused. Unwilling to be seen by these powerful men and women, Nishant slipped into the kitchen quietly. His mother had put away her chef's apron. 'I am done for the day dear', she said as he walked in. 'would you care for a samosa or muffin?' 'We are pretty much ready to leave,' she added, handing him a samosa in a ceramic bowl. Nishant hungrily munched on it smiling weakly when his mother asked what he had read in the library,



Mummy's samosas were always delicious but he couldn't relish the snack today. He was intrigued by the diffused images in his head. He pulled at his mother's hand as she was adding the final seasoning to her dishes. She stood back and looked at her work of the day with affection. 'Human beings are great creators', Nishant's mind absently recorded. He only said, 'mummy, don't you think that is a lot of food?' 'Come, my dear, we are good to go', she said, sneaking crumbles of a muffin she had baked into his mouth. As she walked to the kitchen door, she picked up her coach handbag, a gift from her husband on their first wedding anniversary. Her name, *Sandhya Verma*, was inscribed in gold, on the right-hand corner of the bag.

She wiped the crumbs that stuck to Nishant's lips with a tissue before opening the kitchen door. Just then, the kitchen windows began to rattle. Sandhya held the dais nearby to steady herself. The next moment she hurried towards the hall dragging Nishant behind her.

When they stepped into the hall, it happened.

The chandelier began to swing monstrously. Mrs. Verma was standing on the balcony waving to her guests. The flickering candles in the chandelier threw a ghastly shade of gold on Mrs. Verma's face. One of the guests shouted, 'everyone, outside. It's an earthquake.' There was sudden commotion in the hall. The double doors swung open. There were no butlers-in-waiting. The guests scurried out and hit the ground as soon as they could. The chandelier began to swing monstrously. There was a loud scream from inside the house. Nishant and Sandhya froze on the threshold of the Verma mansion.

Silence fell on the house. Mrs. Verma was lying doubled on the chandelier. The gold horns of one of the antelopes had passed through her middle. The chandelier swung languorously creaking under its new burden. The double doors remained open.





## Treatment of Mountains in Indian English Poetry

K. Balachandran

Mr. Rana Pratap Nandi, in his poem, "How Green was My Valley!" (Chants of Peace, p.178) records his experiences while visiting Cherrapunjee, one of the highest mountain peaks, where there will be immense rain. Though it reminds of his boyhood escapades, it records a very shocking event in his life in the mountain pool. On exam Sundays along with the warden, they used to look for the crooks of the trees; used to pluck berries with squirrels and birds; used to recite Poetry and chase apparitions. The beautiful huts are there with a coat of coal and limestone dust. He traced the trail of the river where truant boys indulged in merry - making with fear of the master's cane. While recalling the half cooked picnic which he loved also records the mountain pool which swallowed his friend and almost him. Luckily he wasn't dragged in - washed away by it. Now the scene has a sea change - the mighty falls are gone; in lieu of them resounding quarries. He could hear the old Kong Yulin laments, "How Green was My Valley!" The poem laments three important events.

- i) The once green valley is now a quarry.
- ii) His friend was swallowed by the mountain pool.
- iii) But somehow he escaped from being swallowed by the mountain pool.

Though mountain and its surroundings bring associations to the poet, it brings sad associations. The poem sounds elegiac.

In the poem, "Sunrise on the Kunchinjunga" A. Christina Albers (The Golden Treasury of Indo Anglican Poetry, pp 178-179), pays rich tribute to Kunchinjunga, "the Himalaya's Queen". How is she? Vapours rise in the morning skies, clothed in purple glory. Love - light glows on the Eternal Snows upon the summits hoary which is calm and serene; returns the heaven's greeting in white robes. Bathed in golden light, earth and sky meet. Morning dews and mellow hues paint her (the mountain's) cheeks with fairy fingers. The breaking day sends the first faint ray of love's undying fountains; "the heart feels the thrills/ of the voice from the hills/ and the Soul that dwells in the mountains." (p.179)

Thus the poem is a praise of Nature (like Wordsworth), how the sunrise beautifies the peaks of Kunchinjunga in the Himalayan ranges. It is a lovely description of Himalaya's Queen. Though the poem is simple in 24 lines, it is a rich tribute to Kunchinjunga. It is not sun light which one sees on her; it is gentle love - light: it is love's undying fountains. So it prescribes that there should be light in matters of love and one can voice from the hills! The poet answers positively. Where does the soul dwell? To people who have doubt about this, the last line in the poem answers, "The Soul that dwells in the mountains". Human heart feels the thrills of the voice from the hills (part of the



mountains). Thus Nature (mountain) helps humanity for love light, love feeling, love's undying fountain and soul's living.

M.R. Venkatesh in his poem "Lone Flower in the Hill" (Contemporary Poets, p 123) celebrates the lone flower in the hill very befittingly. It gazes into the sunshine. Lying between boulders it radiates all alone.

Who is the visitor there? A butterfly. What it does? It brings message from down the valley's passage where the relatives of flowers dwell! The lone flower (in the hill) feels happy knowing that her relatives (other flowers in the valley) are well. How beautiful is the imagination of the poet! In the last verse para (The poem is penned in three regular stanzas of 4 lines in each stanza), there are two more surprises for the readers. (i) The wild grass which grows there, gives respect to the lone flower which is so perfect! See how the objects in nature (grass and flower) respect each other lovingly. Does it happen between two neighbouring countries or between two families? (ii) "The clouds move to get a glimpse of the pretty damsel of their dreams". (p.123) the pretty damsel is none but the lone flower in the hill.

Thus the poem celebrates both a flower and a hill. It has become special because it is on a hill! The flowers in the valley don't get that special importance. So the hill becomes special because of a lone flower and the lone flower because of its place on a hill. So both enjoy freedom, happiness and she (hill) spreads them to others.

H.D. Sethna in his poem "Waterfalls" (The Golden Treasury of Indo- Anglican Poetry, pp. 254-255) celebrates waterfalls "over the naked hills /Mute rocky night" (p.255) How is the waterfall? It is thunderous. Its outpour is mighty like the effulgence the sky vastness bore in the world's dawn. It is like a Titan's throw of his great mace.

The rays of the moon - the white flow is like a cascade over a crag which is beauteous as the grace of a leaping stag. Amidst the wild amaranth (flower that never fades) blowing the waterfall is lost in the sylvan stillness. The white birds on trees glow in pale silences. The warm - limbed waterfall over the naked hill's mute rocky night spills its rapturous splendour. It, out of solitudes' dark womb brings to birth voices of virginal joy on this hoary earth.

Here the waterfall is like a woman warm limbed and the hill is like a man. As a woman gets immense satisfaction and sexual pleasure when she falls on her man, the waterfall when it (she) falls on the naked hills gets rapturous splendour. A world without men is useless for women and vice versa. In the same way, waterfall without a mountain /hill is useless and a mountain/ hill without a waterfall is useless. Indirectly both are interdependent like men and women. This is beautifully brought out in six regular stanzas of 4 lines each. The description is highly appreciable and appropriate.





Nilmoni Phookan, a poet from Assam in his poem, "Only the Sound of Stillness" (One Hundred Indian Poets: Signatures, pp.224-225, translated from Asamiya by D.N. Bezbaruah) describes how a dry cough sailing in the wind over the earth dash "against the cold mountain" (p.224) From where does it come? From a niche in the rock in the cold mountain. It splinters and drops down in the hairy darkness of a flock of grazing sheep. The sheep skip and their burning hairy darkness scatter numberless bits of cough; fall on the branches of a denuded tree: stick to the dry blades of grass until the sun disappears. To another field, the sheep scamper.

Some round words vapourised and flew away, flitting to and fro across the telegraph wires. There is stillness of a chunk of wax and skeleton; "some nameless old woman / Over the longevity of time/ Only the sound of stillness". (p.225) Can stillness have a sound? Can stillness echo? Mountain gives life to nature and human beings. But there is a difference here. Here it symbolises the sound of stillness.

Nilim Kumar in his poem, "Shillong, 16th April'89" (Signatures, p.439 Translated from the Assamese by Pradip Khataniar) compares the crystal body of the rock to a nude girl! The narrative is yellowish! "The world's hardest rock was sleeping / under a white pine tree". He admits that the yellow intoxication of whisky brought him to this rock! Moonlight fills the cracks and crevices of the rock. "The crystal body of the rock was sparking like a nude girl" (p. 439). Yellowish wind whirs in the den of the ear.

The poet narrates that his shoes were becoming pale in the moonlight. When he writes "Everybody/ wanted as if to be nude in the moonlight, my clothes were restless". (p.439), will any sensible individual agree with him? May be the "Intoxication" changed his mind - "be nude in the moonlight". He further allows his reel. "The rock was folding up getting twisted/ bending towards my lips." Is this possible? "Impossibility, thy name is Poetry" seems to be the poetic tenet to this poet. When he writes, "The world's hardest rock was/ becoming softer for two seconds" under a yellow wind, moonlight is highly imaginative! A wild thorn suddenly pierced his feet and blood spurted out. What a wonder! "...that my blood was not red, it was yellow instead". The question likely to be asked is - Are people sleeping? Are they yellowish? Or are people ready to become sleepy and yellowish?

Bharathiyar, the patriotic poet from Tamil country in his poem "Our Country" praises the Himalayas in the opening two lines, "Himalaya is our mountain/ There is no equal to this mountain". In his poem "Bharatha Country" he eulogizes, "Let us stroll in the silver capped snow mountain". In the "Bharatha Nation" poem, he gives a catalogue of the nation's worthy fortunes; "Rivers are many, mountain springs are many/ Breeze is immense and mountains are many". (p.21)



Bharathidasan, another revolutionary poet from Tamil Country speaks high about the slope of Sanjeevi Mountain.

*Cuckoos will be singing; beautiful  
Peacocks will be dancing; odourful  
Wind be coolbreezing. Mirror like  
Mountain springs; fruit trees in plenty  
Fragrance from flowers; Honey bees  
While sucking, humming in ecstasy  
Hunting women used to go for play  
Forest brave men used to love - marriage  
Steer all these in your heart! This place  
Only is called the slope of Sanjeevi Mountain. (p.1)*

Lalitha Kumari, in her poem, "Lord Srinivasa, the Cynosure" (Frames of Fancy p.47) celebrates the Seven Hills (Tirupathy) and the Lord of Seven Hills (Venkadachala Perumal) in 7 regular stanzas of 4 lines in each stanza. She addresses aptly, "Thou Lord of Seven Hills, the most pompous/ Of Gods on this side of river Indus" (p.47). She asserts that no temple exists with such splendour and no God matches His grandeur!

When she describes the Lord, it is inclusive of the Seven Hills. The Lord moves along the Thirumala (car) streets to the rhythm of clarinets and drum beats. He presents a picture of great beauty which surpasses any description and comment. While He comes in the car streets during the Bramotsava (10 day festival during the Tamil month, Puratasi i.e in September), people should enjoy the scene - if only one is blessed, one can see and experience that divine/ spiritual ecstasy! The real flower garlands are huge, attractive and colourful. What the flowers do? Not only they beautify the Lord and send pleasant odour but also vie with the dazzling large diamonds studded in His ornaments. What a beautiful imagination!

The poetess further details that His forms are many and His names myriad. What devotees do? They buy His pictures and frame them in their favourite frames. Some call him Vishnu, some Bala (Thiripurasundari a, Goddess). Why do devotees throng Thirupathi? To seek redress to their grief and grievances, pain and palliation, quail and qualm, rage and raid, sabotage and sack, taboo and taint, ulcer and under- world, vainglory and vandalism, wail and wastage.

Lalitha Kumari is able to see the difference between other Gods and the Lord of the Seven Hills. There are regional Gods; seasonal Gods too. The Seven Hills' God has immense power. His powerful sway transcends time and place. There is no limit to His grace also.



Is it that easy to reach the Lord of the Seven Hills? The poetess says that one should cross the six hills to reach Him and subdue the six foes to please him. And when people go before Him, though for a few seconds, only the heart remains. He comes and occupies the heart of devotees.

In the last (7th) stanza, the poetess puts forth all she has been longing - it is not her longing but also the longing of any devotee before the Lord of Seven Hills.

*Lord, enchain my mind to your lotus feet  
Drench me full in the rain of your kindness.*

When anyone goes to the temple (mosque or church) one should surrender one's mind to the lotus feet of God Almighty for getting His rain of kindness.

*If you condescend to give me succour  
Against all odds, the world I can conquer (p.47)*

The one, who surrenders to God, will get all succour, against all odds and also conquer the world. The poem ends with a ray of hope that is, what is wanted in this world to everyone. Though the poem has "Lord Srinivasa, the Cynosure" as its title, it can be even "Lord of Seven Hills" since, it is about the Lord of Thirupathy. Govinda! Govinda! Thirupathy Venkadachalathikku Govinda!Govinda!

## Conclusion

So in the nine poems (by nine poets) one can see the treatment of mountain or hill. Rana Pratap Nandi, though reminisces his early boyhood experiences in Cherrapunjee, later records the present plight - the green valley has become a quarry; his friend was swallowed by the mountain pool and his narrow escape brings pathetic fervour. Christina Albers' tribute to Kunchinjunga, "the Himalaya's Queen" is beatific for its gift of love light, love feeling and soul's living. R. Venkatesh's tribute to both the lone flower and the Hill spread the fervour of freedom and happiness; from which the human beings have to learn to follow them.

H.D. Sethna's description of the warm - limbed waterfall over the naked hills takes us to the sexual congress of a woman with a man - it is rapturous splendour - a world without men is useless for women and vice versa; stressing same sex marriage and union is nonsensical whichever high body dictates. Learn it from nature to be bisexual. Nilmoni Phookan is of the opinion that mountains give life to Nature and human beings, symbolising sound of stillness. Nilim Kumar's description of "the crystal body of the rock was sparkling like a nude girl" has yellowish fervour.



Bharathiyar's eulogy of Himalayas is highly patriotic, enkindling the patriotic fervour in the people who have been like slaves. Bharathidasan's encomium to the slopes of Sanjeevi Mountain has treasures in a mountain with a romantic fervour. Lalitha Kumari's treatment of Seven Hills (Thirupathy) has spiritual fervour. Let us do 'girivalam' and be happy and peaceful.

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## Studying Rabindranath Tagore as an Ecosophy

Gazala Gayas

Rabindranath Tagore, a great exponent of divinity in man, believed that only love and compassion can unite humanity. From his childhood Tagore was very close to nature. He found peace and solace in the company of nature. He embraced nature, and put it in every aspect of his creativity. The poet believed that to seek love, peace, relationships, and infinite one must follow the world of nature. Thus, he puts his thoughts into words, and always finds a sense to write about it. He himself says about nature as:

*I have been overwhelmed by another feeling-the one inseparable link between me the universe, nature- this everlasting unity of soul has drawn me intensely. How often, sitting on a boat, I have emptied forth my soul over the land, the water, and the skies radiant with the sun's light. I have not then considered earth apart from me; the water with its flow had passed within my heart raising its outburst and joy.(6)*

He never beautifies nature; he adores it in every form. He feels proud to be part of it. Nature to him is not only beautiful and mesmerizing, but it penetrates the visual beauty within and speaks of a divine presence. He is conscious of this presence, and thus through his Sophia, he advocates the philosophy of Deep Ecology.

Ecosophy is a philosophy of ecological harmony on this planet. The term was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. Another philosopher Flix Guattari, introduced Ecosophy into environmental literature. He believes that introducing Ecosophy in literature would link environmental ecology to social, and then to mental ecology. Naes too believes that the need of the hour is to shift the world view from factual scene to practical wisdom, from Ecology to Ecosophy. Another scholar Raiman Paanikar says:

*Much more than a simple ecology, Ecosophy is the wisdom-spirituality of the earth. The new balance is not so much between man and the Earth, but between matter and spirit, between Spatio-temporality and consciousness. Ecosophy is not simply a science of the Earth (ecology) and even wisdom on the Earth, but wisdom of the Earth itself that occurs when a man knows how to listen to love.(76)*

Tagore shared the same philosophy when he writes his famous pattern of rhythmic prose, *Gitanjali*, which reveals his intellectual depth and variety. It exhorts people to liberate themselves from vanity and hunger for power. He asserts that spiritual bond of love and worship should ultimately culminate in service to humanity. The poet considers that communication with nature is a great service of humanity to understand ultimate infinite reality. His work resonates with the philosophy of Deep Ecology. His assertion in seeking infinite through nature, is neither a creed nor a philosophy but a practical and realistic way of looking at the world with a pure soul. Bracketing away Tagore's spiritual



outpourings may lead to ignore the essential aspects of his philosophy, which is purely related to every other aspect of his vast output, and indeed the natural metaphor itself is central to his worldview. Tagore believed that the Infinite, the Nature, and the Man are but one entity, that the eternal diversity of forms in nature is the reflection of infinite, and man can realize his connectivity with the infinite through nature. The Infinite, the Nature and the Man shared a divine harmony in which each retained its distinctive individuality. To Tagore, presence of infinite can be experienced in the realm of everyday experiences, more than at conceptual level of understanding. Tagore himself records that his childhood was spent in a state of communion with nature:

*Almost every morning in the early hour of the dusk, I would run out from my bed in a great hurry to greet the first pink flush of the dawn through the shivering branches of the palm trees which stood in a line along the garden boundary, while the grass glistened as the dew-drops caught the earliest tremor of the morning breeze. (590)*

Even in his collection of essays, *Sadhana*, he states that human beings always lived in one world, the natural world, which welcomed man on earth with its forests streams, hills, mountains, fields, rivers, and the soil. Later man created his own world, which he created through time. Earlier these two worlds were very close to each other and were interconnected. They were interdependent and interactive. But, with the passage of time, man created an economic world, and the dysfunction between ecology and economy created environmental crises, which is difficult to overcome. Tagore as a philosopher tried to answer these questions in his works like *Sadhana* and *Gitanjali*. He criticizes the philosophers of West, and then seeks a solution that man has to honour nature, and like his earlier times he has to create only two worlds- the natural world and the social world. In his essay from *Sadhana* he says:

*But in ancient India we find that the circumstances of forest life did not overcome man's mind, and did not enfeeble the current of his energies, but only gave to it a particular direction. Having been in constant contact with the living growth of nature, his mind was free from the desire to extend his dominion by erecting boundary walls around his acquisitions. His aim was not to acquire but to realize, to enlarge his consciousness by growing with and growing into his surroundings. He felt that truth is all-comprehensive, that there is no such thing as absolute isolation in existence, and the only way of attaining truth is through the interpenetration of our being into all objects. To realize this great harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of the world was the endeavour of the forest-dwelling sages of ancient India.(1)*

In his love for nature, there are marks of spirituality and mysticism. He could decode the language of nature through his spiritual instinct. He explored nature and understood the mystical and mysterious sounds of the lapping waters, rising sun, setting sun to receive some kind of message from the Infinite.



“The Realization of Life” is a collection of spiritual discourses given by Tagore to the boys in his school, at West Bengal. Even the essay, “The Relation of Individual to the Universe” is the most inspiring discourse on his Ecosophy. In this essay he clearly distinguishes between the Western and the Eastern outlook of man-nature relationship. He clearly says in his essay as:

*In the west the prevalent feeling is that nature belongs exclusively to inanimate things and to beasts, that there is a sudden unaccountable break where human-nature begins. According to it, everything that is low in the scale of beings is merely nature, and whatever has the stamp of perfection on it, intellectual or moral, is human-nature. It is like dividing the bud and the blossom into two separate categories, and putting their grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principles. But the Indian mind never has any hesitation in acknowledging its kinship with nature, its unbroken relation with all. (7)*

Tagore differentiates between the outlook of a nature oriented man and materialistic one. The origin of materialism is “city walls” and these walls are the symbols of modern civilization delineated from Nature and Spirituality, whereas the Nature lovers are borne in the forests, and are connected to it very deeply. In ancient India the circumstances of forest life did not unhinge the process of his energies, but only gave it a direction.

Tagore’s Ecosophy is very deep. He believes that that when man creates physical and mental barriers, he detaches himself from the inexhaustible life of nature; he becomes merely man, not man in the universe. This man is the cause of every imbalance in the universe, and having shut off the source of his solutions, he tries all kinds of artificial methods, each of which brings its own crop of interminable difficulties. He falls ultimately, and thus this cannot go on forever. Tagore believes that man has to realize the wholeness of his existence, his place in the universe. His philosophy resonates the thinking of Arne Naess, a famous Ecosophy. Naess Defines Ecosophy as:

*By an Ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia or (wisdom), is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an Ecosophy due to significant differences concerning not only will they show many variations the ‘facts’ of pollution, resources, population, etc, but also value priorities. (8)*

Even in *Gitanjali*, he expresses that he connects himself with the infinite through nature. He feels the touch of God’s love in the company of nature. Natural scenery is the medium through which he experienced the ultimate spirit. His God in *Gitanjali* is all pervasive and immanent in nature. He connects himself with the infinite through the sun, the forests, the rain, the thunder, the clouds, and the smile of innocent children. The poet



feels that the ultimate infinite is behind all the activities that in the world of nature. About nature he says, "To impart the peace of the external to human emotions (7)".

Thus Tagore's philosophical concept of universe echoes the philosophy of Ecology. After reading his poems and essays, it is found that he is the most inspiring Ecosophy of his age.

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## Revisiting Women Rights in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Isam M Shihada

Khaled Hosseini's novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, written in 2007, is set in war-ravaged landscape of Afghanistan and focuses on the precarious and wretched lives of women. Afghanistan's troubled history of the last several decades is recounted through the eyes of women who suffered and lost the most during that period. Through the pitiable stories of Mariam and Laila, Khalid Hosseini presents the deplorable situation of Afghan women who are not only affected by the war but also by patriarchy, gender discrimination and domestic violence.

This paper aims to examine women's rights in Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It sets to identify kinds of gender discrimination faced by women. Crucial issues such as; gender discrimination, subordination, marginalization, education and health services will be tackled. The study also focuses on the expectations and concerns of women in Afghanistan and the factors which prevent them from moving forward. It emphasizes the fact that peace and stability cannot be achieved in Afghanistan without the restoration of women's human rights and violence against them is eliminated. When it comes to violence, we find it take the form of physical, psychological and sexual violence. We also find Afghan women alienated in their private sphere where the Afghan patriarchal society prefers boys to girls, women are forced to get married, while education, health services, and women's choice of dressing and freedom of mobility are tightly restricted. Women are also subject to unfair treatment in polygamy where they are portrayed as emotional, foolish and submissive. It concludes the importance of endurance, education and the collective power of women to survive, represented by Mariam and Laila. in deconstructing patriarchy, resisting oppression and symbolizing hope for women.

### Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is defined as an unequal treatment based on one's gender. In the patriarchal society; women are dominated by men who determine women's access to education, work, and public mobility which enhances gender discrimination. Afghanistan is identified as the most dangerous place in the world for women where 87% of women face abuse and violence. (Istikomah, 2015) Gender discrimination has obviously a wide-ranging negative impact on women since it can affect them physically, psychologically, socially, economically and politically. Patriarchy consolidates gender discrimination since both men and women's roles are constructed by its system which empowers men over women and instils deep in them the feelings of subordination. Therefore, we find women are forced to accept marriages they do not desire, wives become submissive to their husbands and many mothers have to quit their dream careers to take care of their homes and children.



Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is an example of great literary works which inspires women to understand their rights and believe in their great potential to stand against discrimination. Gender discrimination is portrayed through the three female characters, namely, Nana, Mariam and Laila who live in the Afghan patriarchal society where women are seen as a burden on family. Hosseini tries to shed light on the fact that "women suffer from gender discrimination and how much it is important to fight against it if we want to create a stable and healthy society. He deals with the plight of three Afghan women who are dominated and oppressed by men." (Walby, 1990, p. 20). In a patriarchal society, silence of the discriminated woman is a common phenomenon where most women choose to accept the discrimination and live their hard lives instead of struggling against it while those who struggle against it are only a few. Such silence encourages men to keep discriminating women if not ultimately challenged. Therefore, it is important to deconstruct the patriarchal system and expose its ugly side of gender discrimination.

## Violence

Violence against women can be manifested through violent physical acts of kicking, slapping and shaking which leaves its negative impact on women physically and psychologically. According to Nurul Istikomah, there are three types of violence such as; physical, psychological and sexual violence. (2015). When it comes to physical violence, we find that both Mariam and Laila are subject to physical abuse by their husband, Rasheed. In case of Mariam, she is subject to Rasheed's "punches, slaps, kicks" (Hosseini, 2008, pp.234-235) at the slightest mistake. On the other hand, Laila is severely beaten by Rasheed to the extent that she is unable to talk probably due to her sore jaw. "Tectonic," Laila said. It hurt to talk. Her jaw was still sore, her back and neck ached. Her lip was swollen, and her tongue kept poking the empty pocket of the lower incisor Rasheed had knocked loose two days before." (pp.234-235). We find that Laila suffer from terrible physical injuries left marked on her lips, tongue and skin to the extent that she loses her lower incisor. Rasheed's physical violence becomes vicious and systematic which becomes a manifestation of the Afghan patriarchal society ruled by Taliban which encourages violence against women. The Taliban beat women who break the rules imposed on them. For example, they beat Laila when she travels alone to visit her daughter, Aziza, in an orphanage without having a mahram or male relative. One day, a young Taliban beat Laila with a radio antenna. When he was done, he gave a final whack to the back of her neck and said, "I see you again, I'll beat you until your mother's milk leaks out of your bones." (p.313). It reflects how pathetic for women to live in Afghanistan where men have the authority to use violence against women when they commit mistakes out of belief that violence is an acceptable mode of expressing anger and maintaining control.



## Psychological Violence

When it comes to psychological violence, it takes the form of threatening and isolation which affects the dignity of women causing them psychological distress. (Annisa, 2010) Within this context, we find that Mariam's and Laila are subject to Rasheed's insults, threats and ridicule which is, for instance, hard for Mariam to bear. "It wasn't easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament." (pp.97-98). Rasheed's volatile physiological temperament always frightens Mariam who is always subject to his punches and slaps. She is simply treated as nothing but an animal. On the other hand, Laila also becomes the object of Rasheed's insults and threats. He often expresses his anger on Laila by finding fault with the way she smells dresses and combs her hair. Moreover, after getting fired from his job, Rasheed asks his daughter, Aziza, to be a street beggar which provokes Laila to confront him who, in turn, threatens her with a gun. "Up close, his sneering face seemed impossibly large. Laila noticed how much puffier it was getting with age, how many more broken vessels charted tiny paths on his nose. Rasheed didn't say anything. And, really, what could be said, what needed saying, when you'd shoved the barrel of your gun into your wife's mouth?(p. 293) Psychological violence is shown through Rasheed shoving his gun into Laila's mouth which frightens her leaving its deep psychological impact on her life.

## Sexual Violence:

When it comes to sexual violence, it includes all actions performed by resorting to force without the consent of the person such as rape, sexual harassment and marital rape. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, women experience marital rape. For example, Nana is raped by her powerful employer, Jalil, since Nana "had been one of the housekeepers. Until her belly began to swell." (p.6). Nana's case sheds light on the status of women servants in the Afghan society who become vulnerable and exposed to rape and humiliation. Jalil's status in the patriarchal society empowers him and unfortunately condones him for rape. We find that Nana has to bear disgrace in her whole life being abandoned by Jalil and her own father after she gets pregnant and gives birth to a harami girl named, Mariam. Within this context, many illegitimate children are born as a result of the sexual freedom enjoyed by men in the patriarchal class system. Supporting this, El Saadawi argues that the "phenomenon of 'illegitimate children' stands out in history as one of the crimes committed by the patriarchal class system." (1980:52).

In other cases, we find that both of Mariam and Laila experience marital rape. For instance, Rasheed always forces his sexual desire on Mariam and Laila no matter how they feel and how their conditions are. He forces them to serve him even when they are so exhausted and sick to the extent that sexual intercourse becomes sickening for both



Mariam and Laila. In this regard, Mariam considers sexual intercourse with Rasheed as laborious sessions to the extent that she feels great relief when Rasheed gets married to Laila and stops ever touching her again. She even feels grateful that her physical and psychological pain has come to an end. "Sometimes, she could smell Rasheed on her. She could smell his sweat on the girl's skin, his tobacco, his appetite. Sex, mercifully, was a closed chapter in her own life. It had been for some time, and now even the thought of those laborious sessions of lying beneath Rasheed made Madam queasy in the gut." (p.215). this may explain why Mariam is grateful for not having sexual intercourse anymore with Rasheed. The mere thought of having it with Rasheed disgusts her since Rasheed never asks Mariam for consent before having sexual intercourse which becomes literally a forced marital rape. On the other hand, like Mariam, Laila experiences a traumatic sexual life. We find that Rasheed always forces himself upon her to the extent that sexual intercourse becomes a duty done out of necessity for Laila. For example, when Laila gives birth to Aziza, the doctor forbids her to have a sexual intercourse for six weeks. Yet, Rasheed forces Laila to have a sexual intercourse with him before the time is due. Ironically, Rasheed flogs Mariam by his belt suspecting her for provoking Laila's sexual denial. "It's your doing. I know it is,....Her denying me. You're teaching her to. ... I should have known that you'd corrupt her," Rasheed spat at Mariam. He swung the belt, testing it against his own thigh. The buckle jingled loudly.... "Rasheed, you can't do this." "Go back to the room." Mariam backpedaled again. "No! Don't do this!" Now! Rasheed raised the belt again and this time came at Mariam." (pp. 234-235). It is seen that Rasheed accuses Mariam that she provokes Laila not to have a sexual intercourse with him. Seeing Mariam being tortured, Laila has no choice but to comply with Rasheed's sexual desires to spare Mariam painful flogging which is implicitly seen as a marital rape that is justified in matrimony. In other words, it is a one sided traumatic sexual relationship for both either Mariam or Laila.

### **Subordination**

Patriarchal system is defined as the concept of male domination which places women in an inferior position. Women's subordination forces women to comply with men's rules. In A Thousands Splendid Suns, women's subordination can be manifested in women being alienated, forced to get married, sons are preferred to girls, women are prohibited to dress up, and their mobility is limited and are treated unfairly in polygamy. To protect their reputation and names in society, men tend to do whatever they want without considering women's feelings and lives. For example, after knowing that Nana is pregnant with his illegitimate child, Jalil tries his best to keep his reputation intact and avoid any shame linked to his name. Therefore, he casts Nana out of his house. He does not care about Nana's alienated life since he sees her as unimportant. Moreover, Nana's father also leaves her for the sake of his reputation since he feels disgraced by her pregnancy and, therefore, he abandons his own daughter. "When that happened, Nana said, the collective gasp of Jalil's family sucked the air out of Herat. His in-laws swore blood would flow. The wives demanded that he throw her out. Nana's own father, who



was a lowly stone carver in the nearby village of Gul Daman, disowned her. Disgraced, he packed his things and boarded a bus to Bran, never to be seen or heard from again." (p.6). It is so contemptible that Jalil alienates Nana for the sake of his reputation when he actually should take responsibility for what he has done. He victimizes Nana, the victim of his rape, by abandoning her instead of marrying her and admitting that Mariam is his legitimate daughter. Later on, Nana and her child, Mariam, are alienated in a place which is far away from Herat which is better for Jalil where nobody will know his disgraceful deed. In the clearing, Jalil builds her a house that Nana calls a rat hole. "And, believe me," Nana said, "it was a relief to your father having me out of sight. It suited him just fine." It was Muhsin, Jalil's eldest son by his first wife, Khadija, who suggested the clearing.... When he came back, Nana said, he sounded like a warden bragging about the clean walls and shiny floors of his prison. And so, your father built us this rat hole." (p.9)

It is seen that the house is located in the middle of nowhere. To get to the house, someone has to pass a rutted with knee high grass and other plants surrounding. For Nana, it is like a rat hole which implies that they are not comfortable living in the house which is small and patched up. It is more likely to be called as a hut or kolba in Afghan language. Being one of the richest and powerful men in Herat, Jalil is actually able to build Nana a better and bigger house, but he makes her a hut instead. The way Jalil abandons and treats Nana and Mariam shows that men consider only their reputation and they don't care about what will happen to their women victims. Jalil and Nana's father may forget that Nana's life and reputation are as important as theirs and Nana and Mariam need to live normally in a proper place but Jalil strips Nana's dignity and right to live as a human being.

As women are being subordinated, they have no freedom to live their lives as they want it to be. Women have to give up on their dreams and careers due to marriage which is arranged to them by more powerful people. We find that Mariam and Laila are examples of many Afghan women who are set into a forceful marriage with an unwanted suitor. In different times and conditions, they find themselves forced to marry Rasheed, a shoemaker who is elder to them. Mariam's marriage is arranged because her illegitimate father, Jalil, and his family are unwilling to accept her in their house after her mother, Nana's suicide. "You have a suitor," Khadija said. Mariam's stomach fell. "A what?" she said through suddenly numb lips. "A khasiegar. A suitor. His name is Rasheed," Khadija went on. "He is a friend of a business acquaintance of your father's. He's a Pashtun, from Kandahar originally, but he lives in Kabul, in the DehMazang district, in a two-story house that he owns." Afsoon was nodding. "And he does speak Farsi, like us, like you. So you won't have to learn Pashto." (p.46). For Mariam, the arranged marriage is shocking and frustrating since marriage never crosses her mind before. She is only a fifteen-year old girl who is not mature enough to understand what marriage is. Despite Mariam's refusal, Rasheed and his family settle the marriage which reflects how unimportant women's lives in the Afghan society are where their voices and wishes are unheard and unappreciated.



The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the post-soviet civil war have contributed to its turbulent history and changing social, economic and political developments. (Emadi, 2002) Women are also victimized by the woes of civil war where many women lost their husbands and relatives. Since they are not allowed to work, they have no means to earn for living and, therefore, most women are forced to sell their belongings, resort to begging and, in some cases, feel forced to sell their bodies to sustain their families and survive. Within this context, Laila gets married to Rasheed because she is orphaned and pregnant which means she will not be able to travel anywhere unless she has a mahram or male guardian. It is feared that the Taliban may rape, torture and even kill women who wander alone in the city and may be killed by cross fire during raging war. At this, Rasheed smiled sadly. "She can leave. I won't stand in her way. But I suspect she won't get far. No food, no water, not a rupiah in her pockets, bullets and rockets flying everywhere. How many days do you suppose she'll last before she's abducted, raped, or tossed into some roadside ditch with her throat slit? Or all three?" (p.209). Rasheed slyly takes the advantage of her situation though he permits Laila to leave his house knowing she will not go far due to the threatening and dangerous situation outside for her as a lonely and pregnant woman without a husband. Rasheed knows that it is dangerous for a woman to travel alone, but he will not help Laila. Moreover, a woman being pregnant without husband will be sentenced to death by the Taliban. To save her life and her unborn baby, Laila is forced to get married to Rasheed. Mariam and Laila have unfortunately to spend their entire lives with a man they do not love. Yet, they have no power to hinder it once reality sets in. For instance, Leila's wishes to marry and live with Tariq are crushed. Her circumstances have brought her to a marriage which signifies the beginning of her long severe life with very violent husband. This forceful marriage is seen as a portrayal of women's subordination where women have no control over their lives in a patriarchal society consolidated by traditions, customs and misuse of religion.

In the Afghan society, son preference emerges due to the belief that sons are considered to be pride of the parents while girls are viewed as burden to the family. Son preference is seen clearly in the conversation between pregnant Mariam and her neighbor who suggests to Mariam that having a boy is better than a girl. He attributes it to the fact that a boy can carry family name while a girl takes her husband's family name dropping her own parent's name. Having a son means that a family can sustain its identity since the descent is in father's line. "The Minarets! Oh, what beauty! What a gorgeous city!" "Boy is better, Mariam jan, they carry the family name" (Hosseini, p.66). Moreover, It is very obvious Rasheed's preference for a boy. He is genuinely happy about Mariam's pregnancy and is excited to name the unborn baby if it is only a boy. "His hand shot protectively over her belly." "What about Zalmai?" he said. "It's a good Pashtun name." "What if it's a girl?" Mariam said. "I think it's a boy. Yes. A boy."... "If it's a girl," Rasheed said, "and it isn't, but, if it is a girl, then you can choose whatever name you want." (p. 85). Unfortunately, Mariam suffers a miscarriage seven times. Rasheed finally shifts his hope on Laila having a boy. She gives him a girl, Aziza and a boy, Zalmai. It becomes clear that Rasheed's heart will only make a room for a son since he treats both Aziza and Zalmai differently. This can



be seen in his sharing bed with Zalmai and buying new clothes and toys to him even when he is unemployed and bankrupt. "When Zalmai was born, Rasheed had moved him into the bed he shared with Laila. He had bought him a new crib and had lions and crouching leopards painted on the side panels. He'd paid for new clothes, new rattles, new bottles, and new diapers, even though they could not afford them and Aziza's old ones were still serviceable." (p. 288). Rasheed's special treatment for Zalmai shows how valueless a girl is. Girls are always seen to be not a priority but a burden to the family. This preference for sons continues to devalue women and prohibit their treatment as equals in society.

Patriarchal system has restricted women's freedom and their own choices where men control every detail of their lives including how the way women dress up. Within this context, Rasheed insists the importance of honor for women by covering their bodies from men's eyes except for their husbands. For women to keep their honor and pride, they have to cover their bodies with burqa. Burqa turns out to be a symbol of the oppression and subjugation of women when it is forced on women. Mariam and Laila feel distressed to wear burqa since they feel uncomfortable because it limits their movement. "Mariam had never before worn a burqa. Rasheed had to help her put it on. The padded headpiece felt tight and heavy on her skull, and it was strange seeing the world through a mesh screen. She practiced walking around her room in it and kept stepping on the hem and stumbling. The loss of peripheral vision was unnerving, and she did not like the suffocating way the pleated cloth kept pressing against her mouth." (p.71). Mariam's discomfort when wearing burqa is also felt by Laila. Although Laila admits that she feels somehow comfortable being unknown but she is actually desperate because her lofty aspirations and dreams are dashed and she is unconsciously, under the burqa, becomes someone else. "Still, she found some comfort in the anonymity that the burqa provided. She wouldn't be recognized this way if she ran into an old acquaintance of hers. She wouldn't have to watch the surprise in their eyes, or the pity or the glee, at how far she had fallen, at how her lofty aspirations had been dashed." (pp.225-226). Despite the sufferings that Laila has to go through, Rasheed forces her to wear it since he believes it is a husband's right to control his wife's activities. For Rasheed, a good wife should keep her honor for her husband by wearing burqa.

When it comes to the code of dress, it becomes a legal command from the Taliban that all women should wear burqa when they are outside their homes. Historically speaking, when the Soviet Union falls in 1992, Afghanistan is taken over by warring factions represented by Taliban which inflicts total destruction on the lives of Afghan people. Taliban asserts that they will restore peace and order by enforcing a strict Islamic code on the lives of people in Afghanistan. Taliban's radical interpretation of Islam has its great toll on the lives of the Afghan women. However, just the like the rest of the Muslims of the world, Burqa was worn as matter of personal choice. The Taliban have enforced it strictly so that anyone who violated the code had to pay fines or even suffer beatings. An accidental exposure of the feet can prove to be very dangerous. There were also no exceptions to the code, even women who were severely sick and those who were too



young have to wear the burqa. What could have been piece of clothing that represents the pride of Muslims turned into something that imprisons them? Women are ordered back to be confined to home and have to wear Burqa if they have to walk in public. They are required to cover themselves with Burqa, a garment that hides a woman's body from head to toe. Women are only allowed to see through a very small mesh. Though wearing Burqa can be a matter of personal choice for Muslim women, we find that the Taliban has enforced it strictly to the extent that any accidental exposure of the feet can lead to punishment and Afghan women will be subject to beatings and oppression if these rules are violated. They also forbid women to wear makeup, jewelry, charming clothes, and paint their nails. "You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten. Cosmetics are forbidden. Jewelry is forbidden. You will not wear charming clothes. You will not speak unless spoken to. You will not make eye contact with men. You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten. You will not paint your nails. If you do, you will lose a finger." (p.271). The Taliban enacts a punishment for women who break the rules. They will beat women for not wearing burqa and cut their fingers for painting their nails. Within this context, Anastasia Telestesky says that international community has documented numerous incidents of violence against women which indicate cruel and unusual punishment according to international law standards. In October 1996, a woman in Kabul had the end of her thumb cut off as a result of wearing nail polish. In December 1996, 225 women were lashed on their backs and legs for violations of Taliban rules on clothing. (Telestesky, 1998) There is a huge gap between what Islam stands for and how Taliban renders a radical interpretation of Islam to restore the Islamic balance that was upset by incursions from the West. Islam is littered with detailed references and stipulations which advocate women's rights related to marriage, divorce and inheritance. From their inception, the Taliban have passed edicts which legislates the exclusion of women from public life and divides the country into public and private spheres. (Telestesky,1998) Despite their so called claim that they represent the true version of Islam, under Taliban' rule, the Taliban have used Shari'a as a means to repress women, restrict their freedom and abuse their rights. In fact, women have been degraded to the bottom of society. They are not allowed to get educated work and are stripped of most of their basic human rights.

Living in a patriarchal society means women cannot go around the places they want because they are forbidden to travel unless they have male's guardianship. To intensify gender segregation, Taliban has ordered that the windows of houses should be painted in order not to let people outside the house see who is inside. Restrictions on mobility have led to severe cases of depression and suicide among afghan women. Women are also prevented from moving freely without being escorted by male relatives. Women are also forbidden from taking taxis with escorts. If they are caught, both of them will suffer punishment. When it comes to public transportation, there are special buses for women whose windows are covered by thick curtains in order not be seen by passersby in the streets. If a woman is caught with a man, she will be lashed in front of a congregation of people and if a woman is married, she is stoned to death which is ironically Taliban's





means of executing justice and sustaining a society where women should feel safe and have dignity. Limitation of mobility is experienced by Mariam who is forbidden by Rasheed to socialize with his guests. When he invites his friends, he tells Mariam to stay at her room upstairs until the visitors leave their house. "Rasheed had told Mariam that she was not to come down until the visitors had left." (p.80). Rasheed's order to Mariam to stay at her room reflects women's subordination and social mobility limitation. Furthermore, Rasheed also bans his wives, Mariam and Laila, to go outside the house without him. This ban is justified by the rule of Taliban after they occupy Kabul. "You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home." (p.271). Afghan women effectively live as prisoners who are unable to leave the house except under the guardianship of a male guardian. Taliban considers women traveling alone improper and this rule definitely limits women from getting what they need and pursue their careers outside home. Restricted women mobility maintains men's control over women's lives and enhances their dependence. It is because when men are not willing to accompany women, women will not be able to travel alone; otherwise they will be exposed to punishment. For instance, Laila is caught by the Taliban wandering alone when she visits Aziza in the orphanage. "She was spotted by the Taliban and riddled with questions What is your name? Where are you going? Why are you alone? Where is your mahram? Before she was sent home. If she was lucky, she was given a tongue lashing or a single kick to the rear, a shove in the back. Other times, she met with assortments of wooden clubs, fresh tree branches, short whips, slaps, often fists." (p.313). The Taliban punishes Laila with a kick and a shove in the back because she has no mahram accompanying her. Living conditions become so hard for women with no male relatives such as; widows or wives whose husbands are sick and unable to travel anywhere, because they will be really imprisoned at home.

## **Marginalization**

Women's marginalization has been going for many years in Afghanistan where the patriarchal Afghan society disadvantages women by marginalizing them from education, health services and active public life. Taliban's rule is considered to be one of the worst violations of human rights in Afghanistan since they have controlled all sectors of the Afghan society and stripped women of their basic human rights such as education and work. Women are literally prisoners in their own homes and don't have access to education. Taliban's war against women has begun by closing down universities. Going to school is enough to change a person in terms of discipline and behavior where there is a great exposure to children of other families of different ethical codes, and a freedom to learn and develop personally and professionally. (Falah & Nagel, 2005)

They are also prevented from working outside where many women are forced to abandon their jobs. Women need not read the classified ads in Kabul where no one will



employ them since the Taliban have issued directives in 1996, forbidding women from employment which is “a shocking financial blow for Afghan women because they represent nearly sixty-five to seventy-five percent of the Afghan population due to the numerous male casualties during the decades of the civil war and Soviet occupation.” (Telestesky, 1998, p.293). In Afghanistan, countless women have been widowed during the Soviet invasion and the internal civil war. Widowed women are often the only breadwinners in their family as they have participated in public sphere such as education, work and health services.

To deny a woman of her right to get educated is to deny her of good future. For instance, Mariam is forbidden by to go to school. Mariam learns how to read, write and understand the Koran by Mullah Faizullah. When the Taliban controls Kabul, they announce that “girls are forbidden from attending school. All schools for girls will be closed immediately.” (p.271) With the Taliban taking control, they begin their decimation of Afghan culture and the eradication of what remains of the rights of women they enjoyed during the Soviet rule which was “a good time to be a woman in Afghanistan.” (Stuhr, 2011, p.79) The Taliban forbid women to get formal and informal education and women who are caught attending school are severely beaten. Thus, they close every school, university and wipe out all things related to education.

Men wielding pickaxes swarmed the dilapidated Kabul Museum and smashed pre Islamic statues to rubble that is, those that hadn't already been footed by the Mujahideen. The university was shut down and its students were sent home. Paintings were ripped from walls, shredded with blades. Television screens were kicked in. Books, except the Koran, were burned in heaps, the stores that sold them closed down. The poems of Khalili, Pajwak, Ansari, Haji Dehqan, Ashraqi, Beytaab, Hafez, Jami, Nizami, Rumi, Khayyam, Beydel, and more went up in smoke. (p.273)

The Taliban also closes the stores that sell books. Books, except the Koran, poems, paintings, television, Kabul Museum and statues are all destroyed. With nothing left, women in Afghanistan cannot really learn anything and if they insist to study, they have to do it quietly in their own houses because if the Taliban know that the girls are studying, they will beat them and burn all books that they have. The deterioration of education continues till the end of the Taliban's regime in 2001.

In Afghanistan, women are excluded from health facilities such as hospitals and clinics. Sick women cannot see the doctors and take a medication unless their male relatives buy them the medicines. Unfortunately, not all male relatives are willing to help women. In regard to health, women's access to health services is very limited which leads to higher rates of mortality. If a woman gets sick and needs to be taken to a hospital, she has to be checked fully clothed and due to this many are wrongly diagnosed and treated. Due to these harsh procedures imposed by Taliban, there are no real opportunities for the Afghan women to realize fully their potentials and ensure that women will go down



deeper into poverty and won't have the ability to contribute positively to society. For example, when Nana is giving birth to Mariam, nobody comes to help. Jalil does not even come and bring her a doctor. "It happened on a damp, overcast day in the spring of 1959, she said, the twenty sixth year of King Zahir Shah's mostly uneventful forty year reign. She said that Jalil hadn't bothered to summon a doctor, or even a midwife, even though he knew that the jinn might enter her body and cause her to have one of her fits in the act of delivering. She lay all alone on the kolba's floor, a knife by her side, sweat drenching her body." (p.11). Jalil has excluded Nana from health care by not summoning a doctor whereas he knows that Nana needs a doctor or at least a midwife in her delivering. Finally, Nana delivers the baby, Mariam, by herself by cutting the cord by herself with the knife she has prepared before. Furthermore, the tragic accident of women giving birth happens again decades later. Laila, who is about to deliver her second child, is not allowed to deliver her second child in a hospital in Kabul because the hospital no longer serves women. She and many other Afghan women struggle to get the treatment from the hospital. The guard of the hospital then informs her that there is a woman hospital in Kabul, namely Rabia Balkhi. However, a young woman, who has been there, describes how awful the hospital is. "Go to Rabia Balkhi," the guard said. A young woman pushed forward, said she had already been there. They had no clean water, she said, no oxygen, no medications, no electricity. "There is nothing there." (p.279)

Hosseini tackles the pitiable issue of health services rendered to women during the Taliban rule where there is only one hospital in all of Kabul which serves women. Rabia Balkhi is severely short of staff and lacks supplies of medicine and anaesthetic. Rabia Balkhi has no facilities as is in hospitals for men, such as clean water, electricity, oxygen, and the medications. Having no choice, Mariam and Rasheed eventually takes Laila to Rabia Balkhi. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the hospital, not even the anaesthetic. The doctor says that when NGO offers money, the Taliban gives it all for hospitals that treats men. "You think I want it this way?" she said. "What do you want me to do? They won't give me what I need. I have no X ray either, no suction, no oxygen, not even simple antibiotics. When NGOs offer money, the Taliban turn them away. Or they funnel the money to the places that cater to men." "But, Doctor Sahib isn't there something you can give her?" Mariam asked. ... "Tell me what's going on!" Laila said She had propped herself up on her elbows. The doctor took a breath, and then told Laila that the hospital had no anaesthetic. "But if we delay, you will lose your baby." "Then cut me open," Laila said. She dropped back on the bed and drew up her knees. "Cut me open and give me my baby." (p.283)

It is seen that even though there is no anaesthetic, the delivery operation should be done immediately because if not, Laila will lose her baby. Laila has to go through the caesarean without anaesthetic which it is extremely painful. It is the Taliban who have made a rule that hospitals for men and women are segregated. Nevertheless, the amount of the hospitals for men and women are uneven because in Kabul, Rabia Balkhi, is the only hospital which treats women which reflects the hypocrisy of the Afghan society where



women should bear severe pain during any operation while men get health services that they need. Even Balkhi for women, but in practice it cannot even be called as hospital due to its shortage of staff, medicine and equipment.

### **Expectations and Concerns:**

Post - Taliban rule represents an opportunity for women to be an integral part of the policy making process and several laws that support gender equality have been passed. There have also been many promises to improve the situation of Afghan women but the question remains whether the situation of women has improved or not. However, there are several factors that prevent Afghanistan from moving forward. Afghanistan has received substantial amount of help since 2001 but it is still among the poorest nations in the world economically. The political situation of Afghanistan remains unstable and there are still cases of gender discrimination and violence meted against women. These factors have hindered the progress and implementation of many programs. One of the problems encountered is the inherent resistance of the Afghan women to empower themselves due to fear and years of persecution by the Taliban rule which is deeply engraved in their consciousness to the extent that they have dealt with it as the norm. Conflicts that plague Afghanistan have terribly affected Afghan women who become subject to war, death, injuries, constant displacement and destruction. Afghan women still remain powerless and they are constantly at the mercy of the patriarchal society where they are treated as commodities rather than as human beings. In Afghanistan, peace cannot be totally achieved until violence against women has not been eliminated.

The hope of rebuilding Afghanistan lies indeed in the courage of all Afghans, especially the women who play a critical role in building their society. (Skaine, 2014) For Namita Singh, in Afghanistan the "Socio-cultural extremism and religious elements continue to pose serious obstacles towards the development of women in Afghanistan." (2013,p. 89). These obstacles have immensely devastating impact on the quality of women's lives. The international community expects that the fall of the Taliban in 2001 will usher a new era of women rights. For example, Afghanistan's women and girls will return back to schools and workplaces and be freed from the infamously fierce restrictions imposed on their lives by Taliban rule. Women are concerned that the failure of the International community represented by the United Nations to take an active role in rebuilding Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal in 1992 left a dangerous power vacuum which was filled by the Taliban where they take girls out of schools and women are forced to leave their jobs and stay at home. (Mehta, 2002)

Restoring women's rights in Afghanistan has been a key justification used by the International community led by the Americans and British for the invasion of Afghans and overthrowing of Taliban's rule in 2001. Afghan women have seen little of the promises made and scared of future since they witness the gradual withdrawal of international forces along with the International agencies from Afghanistan in 2014. For Tracy



McVeigh, the outside world has used Afghanistan as a pawn in its geopolitical "great games" since the 19th century and ensnared it in a labyrinth of strategic and economic interests. (2013)

Since 2001, there have undeniably been tangible improvements in education, health services, employment and the representation of women in the government in Afghanistan but Afghan women are concerned that these changes are liable to be threatened and won't survive after the departure of the international community. In regard to education, the return of more than two million girls to schools after 2001 is seen as a great victory for women's rights but recently schools have gradually been forced to close after the withdrawal of the international community.

The same is true of the health clinics were millions of Afghan women won't have access to health services. Afghan women are concerned that promises by the international community will remain merely rhetoric rather than reality. For example, the Elimination of Violence against Women Act is brought into law in 2009 but it is rejected by religious leaders who call it un-Islamic and ignored by courts. In short, Afghan women are deeply scared and sceptical about their future which is already haunted by war. They are afraid that Taliban will fill the gap after the withdrawal of international community from Afghanistan.

## Conclusion

In order to fight gender discrimination, Afghan women must be empowered. One of the problems encountered is the inherent resistance of the Afghan women to empower themselves due to fear and years of persecution by the Taliban rule which are deeply engraved in their consciousness to the extent that they have dealt with it as a norm. Education is one of the most important means to empower women since it is very influential in enhancing women's awareness of their rights and building their potential. Compared to the uneducated women, they become less vulnerable to gender discrimination. If a woman is educated, she will be able not only to defend her own rights, but also to inspire other women. Educated women can create a strong bond which is called sisterhood. It encourages and turns weak women into brave ones. It is "solidarity against gender discrimination that draws Mariam and Laila closer and gives them the strength to transcend their own limitations, expose their vulnerabilities and perform devastating acts of self-sacrifice." (Singh, 2013, p.90)

Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* reflects on the fact that women have a strong ability to find support in one another. For example, Mariam would never have the strength to fight Rasheed's oppression and domestic violence if she doesn't gain confidence from Laila. The actions of both Mariam and Laila symbolize their strength and endurance to fight against the man who has stripped them of their right to live as dignified human beings. At this crucial juncture, Mariam, who has done all she can to



appease Rasheed living in fear throughout her marriage, is able “to resist not only his brutal force but her own revulsion of violent action to save Laila”(Sthur,2011,p.62) Through sisterhood, women can inspire and convince each other that they can create a difference and make the world a better place. Women’s attitudes towards the discrimination they face are important because it will affect their lives forever. Positive attitudes towards gender discrimination will enable women to be free from discrimination while negative attitudes will worsen their situation and consolidate the patriarchal ideology. It also emphasizes the fact that peace and stability cannot be achieved in Afghanistan without the restoration of women’s human rights and violence against them is eliminated. It concludes with the importance of education, political stability and the collective power of women to survive, represented by Mariam and Laila, in deconstructing patriarchy, resisting oppression and symbolizing hope for women.

### End notes:

- Kate Millett defines that patriarchy is a system where male domination is achieved through ideological means. Please see Millett, K. (1970). *Sexual Politics*. New York: Doubleday, 1970; El Saadawi, N. (1980). *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. London: Zed Books; Zuhur, S. (2003). *Women and Empowerment in the Arab World*. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 25.4. (2003): 17
- All references will be henceforth taken from Hosseini, K. (2009). *A Thousand Splendid Suns* New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- For more discussions on Taliban’s rule, see Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Ferguson, J.(2011). *Taliban: The Unknown Enemy*. New York: DaCapo Press.
- Mahram is an unmarriageable kin with whom marriage or sexual intercourse would be considered illegal in Islam, or people who are considered as legal escorts of a woman during journey longer than one day.
- Harami means illegitimate child. Please see El Saadawi, N. (1980). *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab world*. Trans. Sherif Hetata. London: Zed Books.
- A garment that hides a woman's body from head to toe. For discussions on women being forced to veil, see Kamalkhani, Z.(1998). *Women’s Islam: Religious Practice among Women in Today’s Iran* .New York: Kegan Paul International; Rashid, A.(2000) *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil & Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; and Khaled Abou El Fadl,K.(2001). *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* .Oxford: One world.
- For the debates on the veil, see Syed, A.(2004). *The Position of Women in Islam: A Progressive View*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Ahmed, L. (1992). *Women, Gender and Islam*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Hekmat, A.(1997). *Women and the Koran: The Status of Women in Islam* .Amherst: Prometheus.
- For extensive information on Islam and women rights of women in Islam, see J Esposito. J. (ed.).(2000). *The Oxford History of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press; Armstrong, K.(2000). *Islam*. London: Modern Library; Esposito, J and Tamimi, A (eds.). (2000). *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*. New York: New York University Press, 2000; Asgharali, A.(1992). *The Rights of Women in Islam*. London: Hurst; Khairat, A.(1999) *The Status of Women in Islam* .Dar El- Ma’arif, Egypt; Hosseni, Z. (1999). *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; Syed, A. (2004). *The Position of Women in Islam: A Progressive View* .Albany: State University of New York Press
- For information on the Wahhabis and Salafis’s obsession of excluding women, see Abou El Fadl, K.(2001). *Speaking in God’s Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* Oxford: Oneworld; DeLong-Bas,N. (2004). *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*. New York: Oxford University Press; Ayooob, M.(2008). *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.



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## Looking at Albert Camus' *The Outsider* through Religious Lens

Md Mijanur Rahman & Dip Das

The conflict between human tendency to find inherent meaning and the failure to figure out that meaning in human activity is known as Absurdism. Literally, Absurdism refers to human struggle for meaning and getting stuck for humanly limited constraints which makes them believe that only the conscience exist and except this nothing authentic. Thus Absurdism refers to something which is humanly impossible rather than logically impossible. It is believed that, this term was come out from the scepticism within some philosopher because of personal and social tension in twentieth century. The condition was so messy and unpleasant because of the different situation like holocaust, uprising in different country and mostly the effect of world war. Modern life was surrounded by a widespread sense of anxiousness, insecurity and uncertainty as human beings came to see themselves as meaningless living in an unpredictable and hostile universe of incredibly immense proportions. Such conditions affected Albert Camus and which results the birth of *The Outsider*, which is portraying the life of a sufferer of that time from social and family's perspective.

Though this novel is focusing on the ultimately meaninglessness of life and showing existential crisis in every act of day to day life but this philosophy can't be accepted as an authentic and rational philosophy for human being. Here it is presented that, life is meaningless and there is no god but just an illusion. But every rational human being can find meaning in every way of life and searching for existence accessibly is an OCD which is evolved for the scary condition of that particular time. On top of that, in *The Outsider* Meursault is seems like a lost soul for the surrounding tension which can make the people skeptic for a period of time. As a result, some people became obsessed and tried to figure out meaning in every act. But the mostly followed religion of the world like Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam are showing the rationality of life in every aspect. Moreover, religions say our purpose of life is predefined and presents that every act of human is related to different religious purposes which holds meaning literally. Here the novel *The Outsider* will be analyzed from the perspective of a believer who strongly relies on the meaning presented in front of the human being and how Camus philosophy of life is weak and premature.

Meursault, the title character of the novel *The Outsider* can be examined as an insensible person who does not have any feeling for his mother's death even. His expression on his mother's death was normal, the opening of the novel is very natural and seems like other beautiful text but gradually it embodies Meursault's absurdist outlook on life, his emotional indifference and detachment to people, and his passive but quiet alienation from the rest of society. It's also a big flashing clue that our protagonist is unaware and apathetic. When He got the news of his mother's death and was going there



as like he has no emotional attachment to the demise of mother but just going there as duty. When he was asked by the director of the old age home to see his mother's face, he rejects the offer. He was seated in front of the dead body but his attitude was so absurd that he was smoking over the night which is not acceptable in any religious and mannered society. At the time when his mother started to live there (old age home) for the first time, she cried a lot. Meursault thinks that it is because she was not used to it but it is very natural to understand that, this place is some kind of place where people become bound to go for helplessness and we generally consider this kind of place as absurd and emotionally detached place where it is hard to live for a person who has family and humanly characteristics. Here he is trying to overlook the matter or because of existentialist obsession. He was so abnormal that he didn't visit his mother for a year and he says, "... it meant giving up my Sunday- let alone making the effort of going to the bus stop, buying tickets and spending two hours travelling" (11). He finds the visit as a matter of disgust. Although he has attended the funeral of his mother which is generally a very sad event for the children and effects for a long time but he returned happily to his home.

Next day, he goes out for beach to swim and dates his former co-worker and lover Marie Cardona. They watch a cinema together and pass quality time. Though his mother died yesterday but he has no feeling and goes to office and joins a lunch with his friend. His feeling fewer attitudes can be seen here also. He said "It occurred to me that anyway one more Sunday was over that Maman was buried now, that I was going back to work, and that, really, nothing had changed" (11). This comment reveals how anesthetic he is that the death of his mother didn't affect him whereas normal people find everything boring and disgusting when loved one gone. One day Marie visits Meursault at his apartment. She asks Meursault if he loves her, and he replies that "it didn't mean anything" (38). His attitude shows that, he does not find meaning in anything. Another day she asks Meursault if he wants to marry her. He replies indifferently but says that they can get married if she wants to. Their relationship is like a one-sided affair and where Meursault's perspective is unpleasant and feeling less passive.

When he is arrested for the murder of the Arab, he has no remorse for that although he has done something seriously offensive. At the time of examination, the judge finds that he has no belief in god and asks him to keep faith but he was so surprised of the matter. Meursault repeatedly denies his belief in God even at the time when priest visited him for final prayer before execution, he explained to priest that, "I didn't have much time left. I didn't want to waste it on God" (118). Even at the time when he was announced verdict, Death, he was feeling less and for him it does not mean anything.

In contrast, Except Meursault the other character was full of hope and meaning. They find happiness in community and finds meaning in life. They also have faith in religion and social activity. From the surrounding environment of Meursault it is clear that other characters are vivid in their life. His mother is having an affair in old age home with Thomas Perez; his girlfriend is asking for marriage to him which seems meaningful to her,



his friend is having multiple affairs, everyone in the court is surprised to his reaction on death and about God. All these incidents show the protagonist is detached from the general life style and from the society. He is alienated from the community life style which leads him to figure out existence everywhere in every way.

At this stage it is important to present a brief biographical account of Albert Camus', to explain why he became disenchanted with life. The keys to understanding the thought of Albert Camus and his notions of "absurdity" and "revolt" lie in his personal experiences as a youth, as well as the intellectual, social and political environment of his time. Camus was born in the French territory of Mondovi, Algeria on November 7, 1913. His experiences as a youth included ambivalent feelings of exaltation and bitterness. On the one hand, as a boy roaming over the Algerian beaches and hills, he was overwhelmed by the magnificence of this beautiful landscape. This basic experience of sensual happiness was tempered with a feeling of despair. His father who was killed in the first Battle of the Marne in 1914, Camus was soon to comprehend the hard reality of life. Raised by his widowed and deaf mother, he was forced to contend with poverty, silence, solitude, and death. Albert Camus, his mother, and his brother shared a two bedroom apartment with the family's maternal grandmother and paralyzed uncle. A lonely child living in a beautiful, yet paradoxical world, Albert Camus learned his first "absurd lessons" as a boy growing up.

Camus entered the University of Algiers in his late teens. During his studies there he came into contact with two important literary influences, Dostoevsky and André Malraux. Their writings affected Camus, particularly because they matched his personal vicissitudes. Despite family's extreme poverty, Camus was running his university career supporting his education by working a series of odd jobs. However, one of several severe attacks of tuberculosis forced him to drop out of school made Camus immediately attentive to the fact that someday life would tragically end. His experience of World War II, Nazis regime and the chaotic condition of Paris influenced him. The poverty and illness Camus experienced as a youth greatly influenced his writing.

As mentioned in the introduction, the social, political, and scientific environment of Camus' time also greatly influenced his views concerning the absurdity of existence. He belonged to a generation which history forced to live in a climate of violent death. In this world which is shattered by the cruelties of two world wars, the holocaust, massive destruction, and oppressive regimes. Amidst the chaos of mid-twentieth-century Europe, the traditional longstanding belief in an all-loving omnipotent God ruling the universe for the good of all seemed to Camus that how it is possible if there is a God. Moreover, with the advent of new scientific discoveries, particularly in the realm of physics concerning the "relative" nature of reality, human beings' traditional values, beliefs, and assumptions about the nature of the physical universe and the individual's place in it were directly challenged. Human existence was surrounded by uncertainty, contradiction, risk, fear, and death. It was against this complex and dynamic background of personal, intellectual,



social, political and scientific experiences that the existentialism of Albert Camus grew and flourished. The condition of his mind leads him to an alienated unhappy world. Whose reflection felled in his writing and which gave birth of the character Meursault in *The Outsider*, who is mimicking him.

Though the Absurdism was practiced for long time but it got focus and arose during the period of world wars. These world wars had shaken the whole world. The mass killings of millions of people made the writers of the age believe that the world is meaningless. According to Merriam-Webster, Existentialism is a philosophical movement and Absurdity is a philosophy based on the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe.

Absurdism is a philosophical perspective and a part of existentialist movement which holds that the efforts of humanity to find meaning or rational explanation in the universe ultimately fail because no such meaning exists, at least to human beings. The word Absurd in this context does not mean "logically impossible," but rather "humanly impossible." And people make meaning of everything.

Absurdism implies a tragic tone and feelings of frustration that arise out of the contradiction between the human quest for the meaning of life and its inaccessibility. Absurdism is related to existentialism and nihilism, and the term has its roots in the nineteenth century Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard. Absurdism as a philosophical position was born out of the Existentialist movement when the French philosopher and writer Albert Camus broke from that philosophical line of thought and published his manuscript *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The aftermath of World War II provided the social environment that stimulated absurdist views and allowed for their development, especially in the devastated country of France. Mostly the tension of that time accelerated their work.

Additionally, it can be seen that in every absurd or existential writing, some common features visible. Absurd dramas are lyrical, like music: they describe an atmosphere and an experience of ultimate human situations. The author views life as essentially meaningless, hence sorrowful. There is no hope because of the inevitable futility of man's efforts. Absurdist thinks that reality cannot be borne unless relieved by illusions and dreams (religion). The absurd play includes conventional speech, slogans, technical jargon and clichés in order to make people aware of the possibility of moving beyond common speech conventions and communicating more authentically. Objects hold more significant position than the language. The final situation is absurd or comic. Absurd drama is not purposeful and specific as it solves no problem. It is like an abstract painting which does not convey a particular meaning. It negates rationalism because it feels that rational thought, like language, only deals with the superficial aspects of things.



Albert Camus has incited a question through his writing that, what is the ultimate meaning of life? Here, in *The Outsider*, he tried to give solution to this question by justifying meaninglessness of life or the universe. He repeatedly presented some hopeless situation or events in his writing with the intention of proving absurdity in every action. Meursault's attitude towards his mother's dead body, feeling less behavior to his girlfriend and weird, unsocial answers in front of the court etc. actions are used to provoke the question of absurdity. "I would rather not have upset him, but I couldn't see any reason to change my life. Looking back on it, I wasn't unhappy. When I was a student, I had lots of ambitions like that. But when I had to give up my studies I learned very quickly that none of it really mattered" (41). Meursault has become so much obsessed with meaning that he became unable to separate the happiness and unhappiness. It shows how his mentality became for the condition of that environment.

Existential OCD is an obsession with philosophical questions that you don't know the answer and finding everything absurd. Dr. Steven Phillipson, PhD - Clinical Psychology, says that Existential OCD is a subset of OCD in which sufferers are preoccupied with the philosophical aspects of life. You might obsess over questions like what's the meaning of life. Why are we even here? If there's no God, why should I care about anything? Your brain creates these abstract questions and creates an illusion that you need to solve them in order to kind of move forward in an undistracted way. This problem could happen if a person goes through any trauma or suffers in important aspects of life like family, social and personal issue.

Common symptom of this OCD, it's natural for us to look into topics such as meaning of life. Persons with existential OCD, it's a moment to moment and day to day torment because their brain obligates them to solve these mysteries and it obligates them on a day to day and hour to hour basis such that it creates a tremendous effects in normal way of life. These thoughts can be debilitating, causing extreme anxiety and discomfort.

Here Meursault is also having the psychological problem named Existential OCD. He is obsessed with meaning of everything in his life. He is failed to figure out the meaning of relation with any person and to him it does not mean anything. For example; his relation with his mother and his girlfriend. He does not find any meaning in God and in death. Literally he is failed to discover the meaning of serious issues of life.

It is visible that the philosophy Existentialism is trying to question the Purpose of life and meaning of universe. Additionally, it questions the existence of the universe. The question of the meaning of life may be asked in many ways, such as Why are we here? or Does my life have a purpose? In Christianity, The Bible discloses that our purpose in life is to build a friendship with God and meaning is belongs to the order and it fulfillment. Consider some of these fundamental truths that the Bible reveals, God is our Creator. The Bible says, "It is [God] that has made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3; Revelation 4:11). "God has a purpose for everything he creates, including us" (Isaiah 45:18). So,



Christianity demands that, whereas God has created human being so the ultimate goal is defined by him. Absurdism asks to make a meaning of meaningless life but Christianity demands that meaning or purpose is defined earlier. Bible urges that to become God's friend, one must live in harmony with his purpose for them. The Bible states this purpose at Ecclesiastes, "Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that we were created for" (12:13). So Christianity claims that Human's birth to death and the reason for sending them to this world is predefined by creator. Those who believes in Christianity they finds meaning because they knows that they are sent here to follow God's command.

According to Hinduism, the meaning (purpose) of life is four-fold: to achieve Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. These are mainly known as the four Purusharthas. The first, Dharma, means to act virtuously and righteously. That is, it means to act morally and ethically throughout one's life. However, Dharma also has a secondary aspect; since Hindus believe that they are born in debt to the Gods and other human beings, dharma calls for Hindus to repay this debt. The five different debts are as follows: debt to the Gods for their blessings, debt to parents and teachers, debt to guests, debt to other human beings, and debt to all other living beings. The second meaning of life according to Hinduism is Artha, which refers to the pursuit of wealth and prosperity in one's life. Importantly, one must stay within the bounds of dharma while pursuing this wealth and prosperity (i.e. one must not step outside moral and ethical grounds in order to do so). The third purpose of a Hindu's life is to seek Kama. In simple terms, Kama can be defined as obtaining enjoyment from life. The fourth and final meaning of life according to Hinduism is Moksha, enlightenment. By far the most difficult meaning of life to achieve, Moksha may take an individual just one lifetime to accomplish (rarely) or it may take several. However, it is considered the most important meaning of life and offers such rewards as liberation from reincarnation, self-realization, enlightenment, or unity with God. Hinduism says, the Supreme Self pervades and exists in all dimensions and all beings, sentient and insentient. And it is that Supreme Self which lives inside every person. Therefore every person is none other than the Supreme Self. Religion provides its followers a set of goals to achieve in life, and in doing so, provides a meaning to each follower's life. Without such guidance, one would likely conclude that life is ultimately meaningless. Purusharthas are providing meaning in every parts of a human self and revealing purpose of human life.

Rejection of religion which is followed by the majority in this world showing the excuses of meaninglessness is obviously not a normal conduct. Selfless action or work without motive is one of the fundamental features of Hinduism. In Bhagavad-Gita, everything is described beautifully. It is the duty of human beings to do the work properly. Without work human life cannot go forward. One should do one's duties without caring for prize or reward. When work will be done without the consideration of personal gain, it will be the source of liberation. When a person breaks the boundaries of self, he becomes the man of universe. People works always should be for the sack of



others. "Whatever you do, whatever you sacrifice, whatever you donate. Whatever penance you practice all these are to be dedicated at the feet of supreme lord." Bhagavad-Gita says that, God resides in the heart of all beings, animals and inanimate. It means that the fruits of all actions are to be for the benefit of all beings, it is not for the personal gain of the performer. Hinduism says that, there are lots of works in this society and one should do them properly. Person who abstains from work cannot be a Sannyasi. People are responsible for their actions not for the result. Supreme lord will reward them. Abstaining yourself from the societal duty is a crime. People should make this earth a welfare state (Sarvodaya Samaja). In which all will be pleasantly and profitably occupied. That which secures Abhyadaya (prosperity) here, and Nihshreyasa (highest bliss) or Moksha hereafter is Dharma (Religion). And that is the meaning of your life, finding the true soul of your.

"One thing I teach: suffering and the end of suffering. It is just ill and the ceasing of ill that I proclaim" (Buddha 4). Like Albert Camus, the Buddha also observed that life as it is typically lived is unfulfilling and filled with insecurity. In short, life is "suffering." The Buddha observed the "existential anxiety" common to all humanity nearly two and a half thousand years before the Algerian existentialist but, unlike Camus, he did not assume that this condition was irremediable. Instead, he sought to understand the root cause of and conditions for his "suffering." Through a profound and meticulous analysis of mind and its relation to reality the Buddha launched an exhaustive inquiry into the nature of suffering and explored the possibility of removing it from the human condition. According to traditional reports, he discovered that suffering could come to an end in this lifetime for anyone willing to make the effort necessary to achieve this goal. He trudged the dusty paths of India for nearly forty-five years carrying this message. His activities included training monks, public preaching, and private counseling, advising the perplexed, encouraging the faithful, and comforting the distressed, until he finally succumbed to death at the age of eighty. Like most ancient teachers the Buddha wrote nothing; yet his life and oral teachings have been extensively documented and recorded. The teaching of "The Four Noble Truths" directly addresses the problem of suffering and essentially constitutes the Buddha's most important fundamental convictions about life. To use medical terminology, "The Four Noble Truths" provide: one, a diagnosis or description of the nature of the disease "suffering"; two, an account of its aetiology; three, a prognosis for its cure; and four, a prescription for its treatment.

Islam says that, certainly there is a greater meaning of creating the universe and creating human being. Allah said, "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Al Quran 51:56). That means Allah has created human to worship him. Elaborately, it means every act of human being is related to worshiping Allah, human have to follow certain way to perform these daily activities so that the creator accept their works as worship. There are two ways to worship Allah, one is called Haqooq-Allah, means praying Allah directly, and another is Haqooq-Ul-Ebad, means duty towards other creation of him. Basically human are created with defined purposes. Every Muslim



follows these ways to get closer to Allah and by doing these they can reach to the final destination Jannat. From religious point of view every humanly act bears a greater meaning and that means they are not following any order without purpose. Apparently all the human activities are not out of order and most of them contain deep meaning even in earthly consideration. According to research at Binghamton University, State University of New York, the complex physical movements of the Islamic prayer ritual, Salah, can reduce lower back pain if performed regularly and properly. Camus feeling of exhaustion and rejection of the presence of God is pointless if we consider order of Islamic prayer by Allah. Furthermore, the authenticity of religion and Allah can be proved from many ways. Allah said in Quran 1400 year ago, "Have we not made the earth as bed, and the mountains as pegs?" (Quran 78: 6-7). Nowadays, science says that "mountains have underlying roots, these roots are deeply embedded in grounds, and thus mountains have shape like a peg" (see figure 7, 8, 9). Quran also said, "And he has set firm mountains in the earth so that it would not shake with you..." (Quran 16:15). "The modern theory of plate tectonics holds that mountains work as stabilizer for the earth. This knowledge about the role of mountains as stabilizer for the earth has just began to be understood in the framework of plate tectonics since the late 1960's." "The science of modern cosmology, observational and theoretical, clearly indicates that, at one point in time, the whole universe was nothing but a cloud of smoke (i.e. an opaque highly dense and hot gaseous composition). This is one of the undisputed principles of standard modern cosmology. Scientist now can observe new stars forming out of the remnants of that smoke." When there was not any scientific research available similarly in Quran Allah said, "Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion." They said, "We have come willingly." (Quran 41:11). These proof are adequate to reveal the presence of higher power and Allah. Fasting is an Islamic ritual and which must is for every adult. In a health magazine, named Healthline they have discussed its rationality. Several studies have found that fasting may improve blood sugar control by reducing insulin resistant. Fasting has been associated with a lower risk of coronary heart disease and may help lower blood pressure, triglycerides and cholesterol levels. Animal studies show that fasting could improve brain function, increase nerve cell synthesis and protect against neurodegenerative conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's. Additionally, it also proves the rationality of all activities. These mentioned proofs say that, whether Albert Camus was ignorance of it or he was suffering for some kind of OCD and because of that he raised question against the reality of universe and its activity.

In this novel the author presented protagonist Meursault as bored of his life. He is psychologically detached from the world around him. His mother's death does not make any effect on him. His attitude was like that, it happens to him every day. He is presented like a robot. The reaction to his girlfriend Marie Cardona about their affair and love proves his unfitness in this meaningful universe. He replied her about their love that, "it didn't mean anything but that I didn't think so" (38). This characteristic of him is enough to prove the emotional indifference and detachment to this world. Meursault's behavior





with his mother's dead body, smoking towards her and feeling less answer to his girlfriend Marie bears characteristics of Absurdity. Because, feeling of meaninglessness is one of the main points of absurd thinking. Till the end of this novel there are many dialogue and comments on as usual issues of life which is full of absurdity and irrationality. In his trial time his feeling of meaningless in trial and even feeling less attitude to life and death is sufficient to prove his disappointment on him. The judge of the court commented on Meursault, "I have never seen a soul as hardened as yours" (69). He (Meursault) said, "I reminded myself, 'it's common knowledge that life isn't worth living, anyhow.'" Though the character is a fictional but it is representing the effects of writer's personal life. It is containing an exaggerated thinking and obsession of over questioning the life.

Camus view to his life and universe according to *The Outsider* gives a clear portrayal of absurdity. He presented his dissatisfaction on every step of this world. His attitude towards the System, Religion, Relation, Feelings and Hope of this world are presented in this novel. If anyone looks over this novel he/she can get presence of feeling and meaning in other character except Meursault. It can be seen that everyone has a purpose and goal for living. When people faced Meursault, they got surprised and stacked after listening him. When he was describing his attitude towards the dead body in the court, a gentleman of the jury commented on him that Meursault does not have a soul and he has no access to humanity or to any of the moral principles which protect the human heart (98). Here certainly Meursault is representing the author. On the other hand, his girlfriend Marie Cardona, mother Madame Meursault and in other character feelings, hope and meaning are present. His girlfriend's question about love and his mother's affair with Thomas Perez somehow shows the presence of meaning. Though the author tried to represent the life of a person is lifeless absurd but unknowingly he revealed the meaning of human life through other character.

To sum up, Meursault is like a mirror image of Albert Camus because this character is revealing the subsequent condition of depressed person's mental condition. It seems that, Meursault had left every bit of his hopes behind him and now nothing to lose. That's why Life and death has no meaning to him. Everything is absurd and blur in front of him. Feeling of him is like this statement of existentiality, "There is nothing else but my conscious existence." The effects of his personal and social existence became fake and faded to him for the shock he has received throughout the survival of him. Load of the family over his head and the relation within his family members, the poverty stricken life style and obscurity in religion like Christianity at that time made him insecure in every way, which has gradually give birth of OCD in him. As Clinical Psychologist says that Existential OCD is a subset of OCD in which sufferers are preoccupied with the philosophical aspects of life. The person becomes obsess with over questions like what's the meaning of life and why are we even here? And these questions arise because of the condition he has been through. Gradually the person become so absurd in every way, he/she becomes feeling less of everything. That social and family's effect came out



through the character Meursault in the novel *The Outsider*. In this novel, it is clear how Meursault is obsessed with the meaning of everything. To him, visiting his mother at the weekend is just wasting the time, confession of sin to God before his execution is absurd and waste of time etc. reveals his discrepancy to mass people's belief. Religions say that, human are created with defined purposes and every act of life is presented in religions like Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam as predefined and sound. In general sense, Meursault is failed to represent the common people's philosophy where Islam says the act of human being is related to worshipping Allah. Additionally, it is seen that every religious and earthly act or things is scientifically proved and authentic. Hinduism divides the purpose of life with four Purusharthas which is providing meaning in humanly behavior. Christianity is defining the meaning as making a friendship with God and fulfilling the order of god in this earth. By obeying the order of God one can give meaning to the life of himself. Like other religions, Buddhism says, existential question is related to suffering and by fulfilling that lacking one can get rid of that psychological problem, for that there are some ways like meditation and encouraging the faithful etc. can help to minimize the obscurity. All these religious evidence asserts that, Existentiality or Absurdity is just a reflection of Camus premature or psychologically obstructed thinking not the world's substantial painting.

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## **Anxiety of Losing Authority: Old Age and Powerlessness in Shakespeare's *King Lear***

Puja Banerjee

Old age necessarily brings with it the question of the flow of wealth and power into younger generations, and, in kingships, the dispossession of power is given the greatest importance. In William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, old age and the anxiety of losing authority simultaneously engulf the protagonist. Jonathon Dollimore in his seminal work *Radical Tragedy* has commented that: "King Lear is above all a play about power, property and inheritance." (Dollimore 7) In *King Lear*, the very first scene opens with Lear's division of his kingdom among his daughters which leads to the emergence of an anxiety, in him, of losing power, control and authority over his possessions, where possessions should not be taken in its gross material sense. Consequently, Lear, in spite of intending "To shake all cares and business from our age" (1.1.29) and announcing an "Unburdened crawl toward death" (1.1.31), fails to forsake his powerless powerfulness due to this anxiety of powerlessness, a veritable identity crisis for a king. He seems to be trying to assert his power more than ever in his old age which can be seen as his attempt at asserting his fragile, temporary existence on earth as permanent. My paper will try to show how Shakespeare-- who himself has always been haunted by the idea of the mortality of the human existence-- has sought to dramatise, through Lear, the human tendency of accumulating wealth and power -- in spite of being well aware of their inevitable mortality-- and of trying the more to immortalize our existence, the more we get closer to death.

In the very first scene of the play, we find Lear about to divide his kingdom among his three daughters accordingly with how they would profess their love for their father. The two elder daughters, Goneril and Regan utter words of explicit flattery and win over their father, while the youngest one, Cordelia—who could not heave her heart into mouth— becomes an object of hatred to her father. Lear has always been criticised for his rash judgement and quick decisions without thinking about the matter twice. By this flickering attitude, he decides to divide his kingdom and power among his daughters, but later regrets his decision when he starts feeling an anxiety within himself of losing his authority, authority being the core of his existence as he believes that he is "every inch a king". Lear showers power and wealth upon his two elder daughters and apparently fulfils his announced aim of unburdening himself. But could he really unburden himself? Can any human being unburden him/herself from his/her mundane cares before the cruel hand of Time comes to unburden him/her? That Lear could not unburden himself can be realised from his words and actions, attitude and behaviour following his so-called disposal of authority.



When we first see Lear, we hear him referring to the kingdom and its affairs with a royal 'we': "Meantime we shall express our darker purpose/...Know that we have divided,/In three our kingdom, and 'tis our fast-intent,/ To shake all cares and business from our age,/ Conferring them on younger strengths while we/ Unburdened crawl toward death..." (1.1.26-31). It becomes ironical as even after transferring his responsibilities to 'younger strengths', he fails to transfer this royalty and carries on to use this royal 'we' which clearly expresses that he has only conferred the 'business' and not the 'cares' and that also only apparently, but not in reality. Nicholas Bonnet, in his article "Shakespeare's King Lear: The Promised End", makes a similar observation: "By dividing up his kingdom King Lear wishes to give up the responsibility of being king, but keep all of the benefits ... This wish to retain his power is made evident by Lear banishing Kent shortly after stepping down from the throne." (Bonnet N.pag.) Whereas to what extent Lear wished to keep up the benefits of kingship is debatable, it is clear from the future course of his action that he, consciously or unconsciously, refuses to lose his authority and tries to retain it at any cost. Material wealth matters no more to him, but what matters is his kingly authority, the wealth that he prizes over everything else. But as all humans must surrender to the tyranny of Time ultimately, Lear is bound to fail in his attempts --- the cruel daughters are only the medium, the means through which Lear is taught a lesson of his inevitable mortality. He carries the title of a 'king' before his name, only uselessly, even without realising it at first. It is actually a human tendency to stick to one's own belongings even after they are transferred to the next generation according to the rule of Time. Lear completes all the ceremonious rituals of transferring his authority and declares to Goneril and Regan: "I do invest you jointly with my power,/ Pre-eminence, and all the large effects/ That troop with majesty.../" (1.1.125-7). This would have been enough. But Lear fails to let everything go and declares: "...Only we shall retain/ The name and all the addition to a king;..." (1.1.130-1), and here he exhibits man's inherent desire to be the owner of something and this ownership he cannot abandon till the end of his life. He, consciously or unconsciously, loves those who still respect him as the king and this actually misleads him to think that his identity and authority is permanent. He declares to Kent: "That thou hast sought.../.../To come betwixt our sentence and our power/ Which nor our name nor our place can bear,/Our potency made good , take thy reward/.../...If on the tenth day following/Thy banished trunk be found in our dominions,/ The moment is thy death.../" (1.1.170-80). Dr Johnson has paraphrased it as: "As thou hast come with unreasonable pride between the sentence which I have passed and the power by which I shall execute it, take thy reward in another sentence, which shall make good, shall maintain that power." His comment clearly expresses that Lear has the wrong impression that he still can execute his power, while actually he has none. He still believes that he has the power to banish those who will offend his authority, while the actual power and authority now lie in the hands of Goneril and Regan who can now punish Lear himself and banish him from homely comfort on a tempestuous night.

In his conversation with the disguised Kent, the authority that he embodies in himself is recognised by Kent who has always known Lear better than Lear himself:



*Lear: Dost thou know me, fellow?*

*Kent: No Sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.*

*Lear: What's that?*

*Kent: Authority.*

(1.4.25-9)

Though Kent does not try to flatter Lear by any means here, Lear himself is flattered and being pleased with Kent for this comment, keeps him in his service immediately. As he, after giving up his responsibilities of kingship, suffers from a veritable identity crisis, he keeps asking everyone about his identity. When he asks Oswald: "Who am I, sir?" (1.4.75) and Oswald calls him his 'lady's father', he is infuriated as he is habituated to be respected as a king and fears to lose his place as a king. The Fool calls him "Lear's shadow" (1.4.226), and this comment becomes very important as all human beings, after losing their possessions and ownership, become veritable shadows of themselves. All know that they are not going to hold any of the titles that they have earned in their lifetime, still they cannot tolerate those slip from their hand and try to keep those to themselves as long as they can. They perhaps forget that their end is imminent and inevitable or perhaps, although knowing it fully well, try to immortalize themselves or their acts for the last time. Lear also fears to lose his identity like every man does in his old age. He meaninglessly tries to keep his retinue intact, as the retinue becomes the only symbol left of his power and authority. So, when Goneril cuts off his retinue, he is enraged as he is anxious that his possessions are slipping away from his grip and he is failing to prevent it. When Regan advises him to go back to Goneril, he at once bursts into protest: "Never Regan./ She hath abated me of half my train/ Looked black upon me, struck me with her tongue,/ Most serpent-like, upon my very heart." (2.4.166-9). He cannot accept that the last symbol of his authority will go away from him so easily. He cannot still believe that his authority has become so weak that he has to succumb to Goneril who has turned out to be the first *memento mori* to him, the first person to indicate that the authority is no more in his hands: "Return to her? and fifty men dismissed?" (2.4.225). He becomes anxious that his acceptance to stay with Goneril with his power reduced will accelerate the loss of his authority. So, he desperately tries to cling to his possessions. He realises that if he stays with Goneril, all his efforts to keep his hold upon his possessions intact will fail and goes to Regan expecting a better treatment from her, a better shelter, where he will not be threatened by the human cruelty which will remind him of man's inevitable failure to immortalize oneself, be him a king, or a beggar. But Regan also refuses to accept Lear as the centre of authority anymore and declares that she will never allow more than twenty-five attendants: "For now I spy a danger, I entreat you/ To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more/ Will I give place or notice." (2.4.268-70) This comment of Regan, very importantly, tells us that Regan realises the anxiety working in Lear and fears that he will continue to impose his powerless powerfulness on them as long as he lives. So, she immediately dismisses the idea of nurturing her father's impression of holding the authority still, by cutting off the number of his attendants furthermore. His love for pomp, homage and outward attention from everyone is a result of his take on life as something



permanent, which is actually an utter mistake, an apparent permanency which fades away with time and things that we take hold over as ours after so much struggle are either destroyed or become others' property.

This is the very idea that Shakespeare deals with in his sonnets. The mortality of human life and beauty has always tormented him throughout his life. He has tried to immortalize his beloved friend's beauty through his verse. In his sonnets, he talks about the human tendency of immortalizing themselves through material things like 'brass', 'stone' 'marble' or 'gilded monuments', but none of these is able to immortalize human existence as all are transitory, fleeting and destructible. So is the human identity which one sticks to all through one's life. This tendency is actually a result of an anxiety of aging, of leading towards death, of realising that death is looming large over an aged existence. It is this anxiety that Shakespeare himself undergoes and that leads him towards writing such a large body of poetry on the clash between Time and the human struggle that in vain tries to attain the permanency of the existence, a clash where Time is undoubtedly the winner even before the duel begins. That is why he writes in Sonnet no 64: "When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced/ The rich proud cost of outworn buried age; / When sometimes lofty towers I see down-razed/ And brass eternal slave to mortal rage" (64.1-4). In Lear, we get a personification of this anxiety. He struggles to protect his identity and when fails to keep his grip tight over a fleeting concept like identity, keeps on asking others about it: "Who' is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.225). Joseph Carroll in "An Evolutionary Approach to Shakespeare's King Lear", makes a general observation about human nature in assuming certain identities in their lifetime and when they are forced to forsake those long-assumed identities and long-played roles, they suffer from identity crisis and a deep anxiety arises in them: "People have a sense of personal identity... They connect their own identities with those of other people, and they create mental images of themselves created within a social order..." (Carroll 84). But Lear finally realises that all material objects and all titles of authority are actually transitory, and this realisation makes him mad, a madness which is equivalent to wisdom that he earns a bit late. Inside the hovel, he sees Edgar as poor Tom and it is this Edgar who has made the famous comment: "Men must endure,/ Their going hence, even as their coming hither;/ Ripeness is all". And, very importantly, on having the sight of this very Edgar inside the hovel on the stormy night, Lear attains 'ripeness'. He undergoes an epiphany when he sees Edgar in the disguise of a madman, devoid of the basic requirements of human existence and utters his most sensible words in the entire play: "Is man no more than this? Consider him well... Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings. Come! Unbotton here." (3.4.99-104) this is a moment of epiphany for Lear, in which the inevitable mortality of human life dawns upon him. He is reminded that whatever he does to cling to his possessions, to stick to his authority is a futile attempt as man is no more than a "poor, bare, forked animal", an animal whose anima is not something permanent, as he is animated and unanimated at the hands of Time. With this realisation comes the resolution of all his anxiety. Though in the outbursts of his madness, he is still bothered by the thoughts of authority and kingship, for example: "Ay, every inch



a king./ When I do stare, see how the subject quakes" (4.6.122-3); "No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself." (4.6.95); and so on. Later when Cordelia comes back to Lear and dedicates herself to the love and care of her beloved father, to the greatest surprise of Lear, he realises that all are transitory, be it kingship, authority or power, what is eternal is love, be it the love of a daughter for a father or that of a lover for his beloved and it is his love for his friend that Shakespeare himself has sought to preserve through his sonnets. Lear forgets all pomp and power and gives in to old age: "Pray, do not mock me:/ I am a very foolish fond old man,/ Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less/.../Pray you now, forget and forgive..." (4.7.68-70, 96). We can quote Lear, here, to show how all his anxiety of losing authority has been resolved finally and how he desires to resign from worldly affairs: "Come, let's away to prison/ We two alone will sing like birds in the cage" (5.3.10). It is evident how he longs for a seclusion from everything transitory and embraces eternity in form of love and peace.

Thus, in *King Lear*, we get glimpses of Shakespeare's own fears for the mortality of the human existence which we try to immortalize through struggles, but all these struggles for existence prove to be futile as Time's fell hand defaces all struggles, all efforts and all anxieties. Lear who has throughout tried to protect his authority fails ultimately and realises that all his efforts are meaningless as nothing is permanent and absolute on the earth except 'aging' leading towards Death.

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## Vision of an Ideal – An Introspective Detour

T. Radhakrishna Murty

### Introduction

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, having assumed the highest office with a heterogeneous heritage of a teacher, philosopher, thinker, scholar, orator, writer, patriot, educationist, statesman, administrator, diplomat and above all a universal human being, made his mark along with the likes of Max Mueller and Bertrand Russell. The mind voices the concerns of the civilization, devotion to the society and political empathy. *An Idealist View of Life*, said to be the magnum opus of Radhakrishnan, is based on his Hibbert Lectures given at the University of Manchester and at the University College, London during 1929-30. It is one of the profoundest books of the twentieth century, which made an impact on a generation of students and teachers of philosophy and public alike. Dr. S. Gopal writes, "The lectures themselves, swift and forceful in delivery, rich in substance, astonishingly wide in their range of learning and philosophical grasp, and crackling with epigram and wit, drew large audiences both in Manchester and London. They were the largest gatherings seen at either place since the First World War at public lectures on a philosophical subject; and the striking feature was that most of those present were young men and women straight from class rooms, offices, and factories, 'listening to a profoundly religious man expounding to a generation which has largely lost its religion a profoundly religious view of life.' After the last lecture in London the audience lined up to shake hands with the speaker; and many whom did not know wrote to thank him for his utterance: 'In you a great dream is realized – the East bringing its own message in our own language through one who knows all about Western thought.'" (Gopal 100-101)

In the book, divided into eight chapters corresponding to the eight lectures, Radhakrishnan examines the aspects of the modern intellectual and philosophical debate on religion and science and the unsuccessful attempts to install a substitute for religion. Extracting several sources from the traditions of East and West, he explains the nature and characteristic of religious experiences and assumptions and shapes a vista on religion, philosophy, human evolution and personality, intellect, intuition, science, scientific spirit, ultimate reality and higher ideals.

Radhakrishnan defines and restates the ideas of idealism before analyzing the challenges to the religion. The idea or value is the operative concept of the universe. An idealist finds that the universe has meaning and value and these ideal values are the dynamic forces that push the universe on its march. Idealism is concerned with the ultimate nature of reality and an attitude of mind. He expounds that the philosophy is understanding, contemplation, insight, and a philosopher is not contented until he gathers



a vision of the world of things, which facilitates the interpretation of the experiences and purpose of the reality. The idealist view of life is myriad and diversified. Yet underneath it, lurks a fundamental relation between the ideal and the reality. All philosophy is idealistic.

Radhakrishnan contrasts science with religion and examines the former's attitude towards the latter's in its approach to the reality. The method of religion to treat desires as facts, to take the world from the subjective perception and to reserve a part of life outside the scope of ordinary knowledge is contrary to the workings of empirical science. Science demands a law and a deduction from facts. The charm of religious mystery lessens as the scope of scientific explanation extends. In a walled world controlled by uniform laws, it seems no spiritual principle can interfere. He argues, "There are many things, which exist only in our imagination. We have an idea of perfect circle, but that does not mean that a perfect circle exists. The idea of God is no exception and God's existence cannot be deduced from the conception of God." (Idealist 39)

There is unrest and confusion everywhere about the effectiveness of religion in the face of the unravelling new knowledge and religion's failure to promote the best life. To be religious is old fashioned and to be rebellious against religion is progressive. The humanity is in transition and courage in faith is imperative. He reiterates, "At a time when humanity is struggling to rise from a state of subjection to authority to one in which perfect self-determination is possible, we need the assistance of creative minds. The prophet souls and not the priest minds, the original men of understanding and not the mechanical imitators of the inherited habits, are needed to help our wandering generation to fashion a goal for itself. Prophecy is insight. It is vision. It is anticipating experience. It is seeing the present so fully as to foresee the future." (Idealist 51)

The philosophical designs of alternative concepts are easy but they lack an adequate understanding of the 'natural profundity of the human soul.' This lack of spiritual note in the substitute theories makes the civilization more confused and fragmented. Radhakrishnan states that the present world is waiting for a "vital religion and a live philosophy which will reconstruct the bases of conviction and devise a scheme of life which men can follow with self-respect and creative joy." (Idealist 83) He enunciates that "It is the function of philosophy to provide us with a spiritual rallying centre, a synoptic vision, as Plato loved to call it, a *samanvaya*, as the Hindu thinkers put it, a philosophy which will serve as a spiritual concordant, which will free the spirit of religion from the disintegrations of doubt and make the warfare of creeds and sects a things of the past." (Idealist 83)

### **Religious Experience and Its Affirmations**

Philosophy of religion is concerned with a reasoned solution to a problem which "exists directly only for the religious man who has the spiritual intuition or experience and



indirectly for all those who, while they have no personal share in the experience, yet have sufficient belief that the experience does occur and is not illusory. The direct apprehension of God seems to be as real to some men as the consciousness of personality or the perception of the external world is to others.” (Idealist 84) Religion is involved with feeling, emotion, sentiment, instinct, cult and ritual, perception, belief and faith.

Religious experience is self-established (*svatassiddha*), self-evidencing (*svasamvedya*), and self-luminous (*svayam-prakasa*). It is beyond the limits of proof. It is a significance and completeness, which is filled with truth. He captures the religious experience in these words: “However much we may quarrel about the implications of this kind of experience, we cannot question the actuality of the experience itself. While the profound intuitions do not normally occur, milder forms are in the experience of all who feel an answering presence in deep devotion or share the spell which great works of art cast on us. When we experience the illumination of new knowledge, the ecstasy of poetry or the subordination of self to something greater, family or nation, the self-abandonment of falling in love, we have faint glimpse of mystic moods. Human love perhaps takes us nearest to them. It can become an experience, deep and profound, a portal through which we enter the realm of the sublime.” (Idealist 93) Though it is not possible to completely describe the phenomena of religious experience, since ages many sages have transferred myths and metaphors to devise a symbolic conception of the ultimate reality such as crossing the ocean of *samsara*, ascending into heaven or meeting God face to face. Radhakrishnan cites the experiences of great men such as Sankara, the Buddha, Moses, Jesus, St. James, St. Paul, Muhammad, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Porphyry, Augustine, Dante, Spinoza and Bunyan as evidences to the reality of religious experiences. He concludes that there is a self-evident and complete mode of consciousness, which is quite different from the perceptual, imaginative or intellectual affirmations of experience.

### **Intellect and Intuition**

Doubts and confusion persist about the veracity of religious apprehensions in spite of the descriptions and definitions of mystic experiences by many a great person. Radhakrishnan delves deeply into the eastern thought of creative intuition and western idea of critical intelligence and examines both the eastern and western philosophies of Sankara, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Bradley, Croce, Hegel, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Pascal. He asks the question: “Is there or is there not knowledge which by its nature cannot be expressed in propositions and is yet trustworthy?” (Idealist 127) Western mind emphasises on science, logic and humanism whereas the Hindu tradition believes in a power more inward than the intellect through which awareness of intimate individuality can be grasped. He elaborates about the different ways knowing, namely, sense experience, logical knowledge and intuitive apprehension. Intuition is an extended form of perception beyond the regions of sense and is not “a-logical but supra-logical. It is the wisdom gained by the whole spirit which is above any mere fragment of feeling or intellect.” (Idealist 147)



## The Spirit in Man

The intuitive knowledge consists of a supreme creative potential, which naturally characterizes the spirit in human beings and is responsible for the heightened awakening of a genius. Radhakrishnan says, "The roots of all great thinking and noble living lie deep in life itself and not in the dry light of mere reasoning. All creative work in science and philosophy, in art and life, is inspired by intuitive experience. While we all possess intuitive perception, and exercise it to some extent, in exceptional minds it is well developed. Intuitive life, spiritual wisdom at its highest, is a type of achievement, which belongs only to the highest range of mental life. The great scientific discoveries are due to the inventive genius of the creative thinkers and not the plodding processes of the intellect." (Idealist 175)

There has been an inexplicable link between the intuition and artistic achievement and poetic expression. Drawing extensively from classical literary texts of Plato, Aristotle, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelly, Radhakrishnan defines the qualities of poetic genius and says, "Prose which is meant for discussion and communication is not competent to deal with the highest themes. Poetry is the language of the soul, while prose is the language of science. The former is the language of mystery, of devotion, of religion. Prose lays bare its whole meaning to the intelligence, while poetry plunges us in the *mysterium tremendum* of life and suggests the truths that cannot be stated. An atmosphere of numinous envelops all poetry...Modern literature is essentially trivial. Even our greatest masters like Bernard Shaw and H G Wells do not touch the heights of genius. They have not given us one epic which brings out the full meaning of life, which leaves us throbbing with wild hopes and dazzled by new vistas, not a single drama of a profoundly moving nature which devastates us by its grandeur, burns into us unforgettable visions of men at grips with fate, which shakes, exhausts, cleanses us. It is because they deal with the tumult of the soul and not with its depth. They are predominantly intellectual. We are a generation of intellectuals, keen in analysis, patient in observation, but no great art was ever made of observation and analysis" (Idealist 191) Radhakrishnan sees the relevance of intuitive insights to ethical and religious life. The moral fibre of a personality draws its strength from intuition and the religious intuition is an all-comprehending ability. Instinct is unconscious and is a lower approach to knowledge and this cannot be confused with intuitive spiritual knowledge.

## Human Personality and Its Destiny

Reflective capacity distinguishes man from his ancestor, the ape. This self-conscious intelligence equipped man to leap into a new form of experience and is primarily responsible for his control of the nature. Knowledge is the significant aspect of human consciousness. Radhakrishnan finds gaps in the observations of the behavioural psychologist with regard to the conscious and unconscious behavioural patterns of man. Their reduction of man to the level of animal reflex action has been a travesty of facts.



The human self is an integral part of the world process and is not different in nature or kind from the process itself. Tracing the constitution and evolution of the human self in the history of thought, Radhakrishnan concludes that the human self is able to save the past, bind it with the present and face the future. He defines a person as the cross-section of this growing entity which is characterized by certain traceable features found over a period.

Radhakrishnan lists the two inherent features of nature i.e. connection with the past denoted by *karma* and creation of the future marked by freedom. He postulates, "The connection with the past at the human stage is denoted by the word "Karma" in the Hindu systems. The human individual is a self-conscious, efficient portion of universal nature with his own uniqueness. His history stretching back to an indefinite period binds him with the physical and vital conditions of the world. Human life is an organic whole where each successive phase grows out of what has gone before. We are what we are on account of our affinity with the past. Human growth is an ordered one and its ordered-ness is indicated by saying that it is governed by the law of Karma...Karma is not so much a principle of retribution as one of continuity. Good produces good, evil, evil. Man is continuously shaping his own self. The law of Karma is not to be confused with either a hedonistic or a judicial theory of rewards and punishments." (Idealist 275)

Human freedom is equated with the freedom of self whether it is external or internally controlled. Human freedom is a matter of degree. Radhakrishnan deciphers the idea of freedom thus: "Freedom is not caprice, nor is Karma necessity. Human choice is not unmotivated or uncaused. The character, at any given point, is the condensation of our previous history. What we have been enters into "me" and which is now active and choosing. The range of one's natural freedom of action is limited. No man has the universal field of possibilities for himself... We have a good deal of present constraint and previous necessity in human life." (Idealist 278)

### **The concluding ultimate reality**

Radhakrishnan discerns certain fixed features in the formation and existence of the world such as its order, its relatedness, its interactive union with the surroundings, its continuity, its purposeful changes and its all inclusiveness. Radhakrishnan comes to the question of God of the human religion and the Absolute of the amorphous philosophy and discusses the respective aspects in detail. The visualization of God as an embodiment of wisdom, love and goodness is a concrete reality rather than an abstract thought in religious parlance. God evolves as a 'loving redeemer and the holy judge of the universe' from the pages of morals, metaphysics and religion. As God quenches some of the wishes of the religious, on the other hand, the Absolute rises as a pure and passionless being transcending the cosmic life. While God is structurally bound up with the world, the absolute is not.



Radhakrishnan comes out as philosopher of the both spaces - this mechanized space and that metaphysical space. Dr. S. Gopal says, "His lifelong search for insight was a voyage of discovery of himself, a penetration of the depth of his own nature; but he had sharpened this insight from whatever outside sources available, evolved his own spirituality by applying it to everyday life, and transmitted it to those who would also apply it in their own way and learn from it." (Gopal 383)

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## Chetan Bhagat's *The Girl in Room 105* - An Analysis

Rajeswar Pal

Chetan Bhagat (April 22, 1973) studied in IIT and IIM and worked there for ten years. Later he gave up his job to become full time writer. He is the best seller of the decade in Indian English fiction. He has published *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), *Half Girlfriend* (2014), *One Indian Girl* (2016) and *The Girl in Room 105* (2018). He has practiced nonfiction too *What Young India Wants* (2012) and *Making India Awesome* (2015). His eight novels have been bestselling books and translated in more than twenty languages around the world. According to New York Times he has been declared as the biggest selling author in India's history.

*The Girl in Room 105* is his latest novel claiming that it is 'un-love' story but it is the love story of three males with a Muslim girl, Zara Lone, whose parents are from Kashmir and at present residing in Delhi. She is doing her research work in IIT under the supervision of Vineet Saxena who is also attracted towards her. The author is travelling from Hyderabad to Delhi in flight where he gets his junior of IIT in the nearby seat and they start the conversation about their past. Keshav, the hero of the novel is very sarcastic towards modern love and says to the writer, "You can always write another cute boy - cute girl romance. Half or quarter girlfriend types." (P.5). Simultaneously Keshav claims that, "Nowadays people don't fall in love. They swipe left and right." (P.4)

Keshav Rajpurohit has had a love affair with Zara Lone before three years, two months and three weeks. Zara too left the scholarship from MIT and joined IIT just to remain close to Keshav. After his break-up he could not forget her and her birthday, though the parents from both sides were against this love. Keshav's father is the RSS activist and he could not approve this love. Zara's parents wanted Keshav to turn into Muslim before marriage but Keshav was in favor of free marriage unconcerned with any religion because Zara was "the most beautiful, smart and articulate woman in the world." (P.24) He used to drink heavily sometime and misbehaved with the persons related to Zara.

Though Keshav tried many times to call her earnestly and threatened many times to Raghu and decides finally "never ever calling her again." (P.17) In the beginning Zara also loved Keshav and dated with him in Goa where "they had made love" (P.27) Keshav recollects his memories of past love with Zara and says how he used to climb the mango tree behind her room number 105 balancing himself with cake and flowers in one hand to wish her birthday and how "they spent the rest of the night in bed, legs entwined, imagining a life together." (P.29) Raghu's parents denied to unite them because "It's people like her who threw Hindus out of Kashmir." (P.114) Zara's father puts the condition before



Keshav that he will have to convert into Muslim, otherwise they cannot marry. He threatens to Keshav that “You are just a kafir.”(P.126)Keshav has very nice parents yet he does not adhere to their advice. He seems to be obstinate and pampered child when he remarks about his parents “Crying dads and slapping moms are a routine part of how Indian kids are hammered into shape and manipulated to give up on things they really want.”(P.115)

Zara found her love impractical and became away from Keshav. After this incident she falls in love with a Tamil Brahmin, Raghu who is ready to turn into Muslim for her. He becomes a rich person. His industry gets foreign investment also. Raghu transfers some shares of her property in the name of Zara to prove his love true.

Saurabh is the best friend of Keshav. He is also a teacher in Chandan Classes Coaching Centre with Keshav. He finds eating and anything “Better than loving....”(P.18) Saurabh is a practical man and he persuades Keshav to remain away from Zara. He does not like to accompany with his oddities yet he feels that “having a best friend is way more important than having a lover.”(P.46) The novel presents a good example of friendship.

Chandan has opened a coaching centre in Malviya Nagar where Keshav earns his livelihood and feigns before his parents that he was preparing for the job. Teachers are not allowed to meet or talk during classes in the coaching centre. Further it is the duty of the teachers to bring the students for coaching otherwise Chandan will cut the salary of the teachers. Saurabh says that they are faculty and it does not look ‘dignified’. At this Chandan retorts shamelessly “What dignity? This is dhanda, b\*\*\*\*\*.” Chetan Bhagat elevates this selfish education system where students use drugs and seem indifferent to study. Leaves are not allowed to the teachers easily. Chandan chews gutkha and spits in the pot in office. Keshav and Saurabh do not like their jobs yet they have no option. They look porn, drink wine and update their CV on LinkedIn. On the other hand, Keshav could never forget to Zara and tried to call her many times. Saurabh is never in favour of these activities of Keshav. He is a practical man but loves him so much that he assists Keshav in all his oddities. Chandan does not allow the leave of one week to them to invest the case of Zara’s death. Chandan is married yet he has love affair with his receptionist of fifty years named Sheela who has son and daughter-in-law too. Saurabh threatens to Chandan that he will expose him before his wife if he does not allow leave to them. Educated persons today have become very immoral and vulgar.

One day Raghu on the birthday of Zara receives a message whether he will not wish her birthday. He goes to Zara’s room at three in the morning to wish her where he found her dead in the hostel. He informs to Police and Inspector Vikas Rana comes for investigation. He suspects first on Keshav and Saurabh, then on Raghu and later on the watchman of the hostel. Inspector Vikas Rana is under pressure of the media, Hostel administration and his seniors to open the case soon. Though Keshav and Saurabh are cooperating to Police to open the case yet Vikas Rana scolds them many times and says,





“Are you going sit in my office like a jamaai all day? Go, wait outside.”(P.59) Nearly thirty persons from TV channels reach in Police Station to get news and they add spice that the father of murderer was an RSS activist and “It’s a politically connected family”(P.62) and broadcasts on the channel that “Ladies and gentleman, we have a big story here, and your channel has been the first to show it.”(P.63) and after it they start to show the ads replacing the murder mystery.

First Rana wanted to show Keshav as murderer but after meeting Keshav’s father he feels that “The only way to make power behave in India, well, more power” and wants to remain on safe side himself. He is afraid of media and says “If media says police went soft due to the accused’s connections, I am in trouble.”(P.66) It is a good satire on police and media how they work in India. Media wants someone to be arrested soon and they are broadcasting “Clueless Delhi Police” on TV. Rana says “They want us arrest someone. Right now. If I arrest no one, we are lazy. If I arrest all the people I suspect, I am confused and brutal. What am I supposed to do, for heaven’s sake?(P.68)Policemen rejoice in slapping the suspects and to open the case they arrest to the innocent watchman on the ground that once he had quarrelled with Zara. There is immediate broadcast on the channels “Himadri hostel watchman Laxman Reddy has been arrested for the murder of ZaraLone, a Kashmiri PhD student in IIT Delhi.”(P.77) Rana utters his fear “Because I don’t have the killer! And everyone wants closure. TV anchors, people, social media, activists and my seniors.”(P.94)

Inspector Rana wants to solve case honestly but could not do in the pressure, “That’s Laxman’s bad luck, and the country’s misfortune that this is how we solve cases. Nothing to do with us.” (P.165)Keshav wants to know the real murderer and meets Laxman Reddy and comes to know to know that the watchman was innocent. Later on his doubt slips to Prof. Saxena, Zara’s supervisor. It is another satire on the life of the Professors how they humiliate the students especially to females in the name of research. Prof. Saxena made “an indecent proposal to Zara” (P.129) and delayed her thesis for one year. Keshav meets this “One of the world’s best researchers in the world”(P.139) and slaps him. After it he goes to meet Saxena’s wife who abuses and tries to slap him. Prof. Saxena admits his mistake “I liked her. She was beautiful and smart. I became weak. But nothing happened. And I swear on you, I didn’t kill her.”(P.141) This investigation proved of no avail. It seems now that the sole purpose of Keshav’s life was to know the real murderer of Zara apart from job, risks and his career.

Keshav had listened many times Zara talking with her step brother, Sikander who was an activist in a terrorist group Tehreek-e-Jihad but again it was of no avail. After it his doubt slips to Captain Faiz who was a family friend. Zara’s father and the father of Captain Faiz were close friends. Keshav goes to Kashmir and interrogates Zara’s father and searches her personal belongings where he finds a bullet, small pouch of drug and a pair of costly ear rings. He interrogates Sikander two times and threatens him. Sikander commits suicide in the room of a hotel to keep the secrecy of his terrorist group.



Now, after the suicide of Sikander, Keshav decides to find out the person who gifted costly ear rings to Zara. He meets Captain Faiz and returns to his house in Delhi. Nobody was in the house as Captain's wife was in Dubai with her twins. Both Keshav and Saurabh search the house and find thirty gold biscuits of hundred grams each. They go to Kashmir and near the old house of Zara they enquire the goldsmith who made these ear rings. It was gifted by Captain Faiz. Actually Sikander was found in the hotel with other terrorists. Captain wanted to neutralize them. Zara requested to Faiz not to kill her brother. Captain acted according to Zara's desire. Zara was attracted towards Faiz and she is supposed to become pregnant. Faiz wanted to marry with Zara but finally it was decided that she should marry with Raghu and bring up the child without telling anything to Raghu.

In trying to solve the murder mystery Keshav's intuition awakes and compels him to contemplate that 'sometimes our heart leads us to wrong places'. So he decided to a new start alone. He came to Delhi from Pahalgam and checked flight schedule between Hyderabad to Delhi on the NET because now there was only one possibility that Raghu may be the killer. Raghu had constructed a plot against Zara to kill her for many reasons: Keshav used to call him a fool, Zara had affair with Faiz, she was pregnant as the conversation of chatting between Zara and Faiz is read in Zara's WhatsApp, though she was not pregnant. This conversation Raghu read this conversation in morning in Zara's mobile. Raghu hires some persons to beat him and break his bone. Next day he goes to Hyderabad and admits in Apollo hospital there. At night he comes to Delhi by flight, climbs in the mango tree to reach Zara's room where she was slept. He strangled her and sent messages to Keshav from her mobile whether he will not wish her birthday. Keshav went there and found her dead. Raghu returned to Hyderabad in the early morning by plane.

Keshav requested Safdar to invite guests for a prayer on Zara's death so that he may expose the killer. After the departure of all guests Keshav, Saurabh, Faiz, Raghu and Safdar are at dinner table where Raghu confesses his crime and motive of murder. "Here are my options. Option one; I am the idiot who raises a bastard. Option two, I break up with her and bear the pain of her loss while she walks away with her lover and half my company. Both ways I am screwed for life." (P.295) But Raghu chose the third option and it was to kill Zara. He will be safe; his half company will come back to him. Keshav will be caught by Police, Faiz would suffer for her love and Zara will also get punishment.

Zara was guilty of having sexual relation with Faiz but she did not want him to divorce his wife for her. She just wanted to get away. She wanted to make a fresh start. She was more faithful for Faiz than Raghu. Faiz says that pregnancy fear was real but she was not pregnant, "And she wasn't going to marry you so soon because she wanted you to raise my child." (P.295)



Inspector Rana comes to the house of Safdar to arrest Raghu who offers ten million dollars as bribe for Keshav and five million for Saurabh. Raghu is an ardent lover of Zara even after her death and declines the offer saying, "She left me. For a sick person like you. Son of a b\*\*\*\*." (P.299) Raghu is arrested by Rana as "Delhi Police is not scared of arresting rich people." Keshav sinks to his knees and says, "I loved you Zara, perhaps too much. Thank you. For showing me what love is all about. And thank you for also teaching me to never love someone too much." (P.301) Keshav and Raghu become famous for this spying activity after solving this murder mystery and they open their own detective agency. They got which for they never studied or planned.

Chetan Bhagat in the novel *The Girl in Room 105* elevates many questions regarding the modern civilization. He seems to ask the duties of parents and children whether the parents should object to reprimand the manners of their children or not. To what extent the children should be left free to act according to their own wish. Is every girl or boy free or moralistic to make corporal relations prior to marriage or extra marital affairs? Modern generation is on the conflict with traditional parents. Police and process of investigation, media and advertises, powerful men and their pressure on Police and media, education in the reference of coaching centers, Professors and college management system etc. are subject of debate today. The novelist seems truly a realist in exposing these problems in present day language. In enunciating these questions the plot construction is exuberant and style of narration is hypnotizing.

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All quotations have been taken from:

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## Nanalal, Poet Laureate of Gujarat - A Messenger of spring 'Vasantotsav' - A Case Study

Rashmi Maniar & Priya Raghav

### Cultural Renaissance in Gujarat

The dying embers of medievalism gave rise to the spark of a cultural Renaissance which gave a fresh lease of life to the literary world of India in the later part of the Nineteenth Century. The credit of the complete emancipation of the human soul from the fetters of mental inertia that befuddled the minds of a million Indians rightfully goes to the doyens of Bengali Literature, led by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Under Gurudev's sublime vision, the sons and daughters of India embarked on the path of cultural fulfilment in modern times. When Bengal set a precedent of leading India towards a phase of regeneration through art and literature and ignited a national awakening through social reforms, how could Gujarat, albeit a smaller region, be left behind?

Gujarat witnessed the rise of two masterminds on her literary horizon, the father-son duo of Dalpatram and Nanalal Kavi<sup>1</sup>, who brought about a new awakening in the creative expression of Modern day Gujaratis. The veteran poet, Dalpatram is acknowledged as one of two outstanding poets of his age and universally honoured as the triumphant leader of the social and cultural awakening of Gujarat through popular channels of poetry, current in his time. He used his poems to create a mental awakening acting through the social and educational life, directly appealing to the hearts of the people. Dalpatram embarked upon his literary career with his poem 'Bapani Pipar' in 1845, died in 1898 and his obituary notice appeared in a literary magazine ('Jnanasudha') simultaneously with a poem entitled 'Vasantotsav' or the 'Festival of Spring' by his undergraduate son - a remarkable coincidence which seemed to suggest that the torch had passed from the father to the son.

While Dalpatram had primarily worked as a realist of everyday life, Nanalal was a romantic idealist highly influenced by the English Romantic poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He dreamt of transforming the mental life of his people under the light of a poetic vision, touched by the splendour and glory of the new Renascent Spirit of India. There are few parallels in the annals of modern Gujarati poetry, of a father and son dedicated to the service of poetry in unbroken continuity for about a century as Dalpatram and Nanalal.

Between 1845 and 1898, when the father and the son wrote their first epoch-making poems, lies half a century of the rapid evolution of modern Gujarati poetry, wherein the contribution of the son is even more outstanding than that of the father. Nanalal, who was once defined as 'one completing the work begun by the father'<sup>2</sup> took special pride in describing himself as, 'Dalpatram in full blossom'<sup>3</sup>, which is, in a sense, true if it implies



that the process which the father began was brought to a fructifying stage by the poetry of his son.

### Poet Laureate in the Making

Having received his Master of Arts from Bombay University, Nanalal rose to the position of in-charge of the Educational Department of Saurashtra. Concurrently, his poetic genius, too, was flowering with equal potency at this time, he had positively won the heart of the new generation by his splendid lyrics, his rapturous songs and idylls, as also by his captivating lyrical romance, *Vasantotsava*, the Festival of Springtide. In this first adventure of his creative imagination, the poet sought to portray the efflorescence of the human spirit in its primal loveliness against the background of a blossoming Nature—a striking phenomenon which was to leave its indelible impression over the entire current of Nanalal's later evolution as an idealist of the romantic world. In this connection, it becomes highly significant that, as the young poet entered the memorable first session of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, held in Ahmedabad in 1905 under the leadership of Gujarat's greatest savant, Govardhanram, he was spontaneously acclaimed in a rousing reception by another celebrated poet of Gujarat, Kavi Kant, as "the Full Moon rising over the firmament of Gujarati literature, overflowing the soul of man with the nectar of perennial life".

All his writing is characterized by a distinctive diction of his own unsurpassed in sweetness and charm, and by a consistent strain of high moral purpose coming from his poetic creed, seeing the poet as a prophet. Quite a number of lyrics of Nanalal are gems of Gujarati poetry which have enriched Gujarati literature for all time. Nanalal read Burke and Tennyson at college, both of whom created a great impression on him<sup>4</sup>. While Burke's sonorous eloquence claimed him as a life-long admirer and, in some measure, probably influenced him in his innovation of the sonorous rhythmic style<sup>5</sup>, Tennyson's poetry fascinated him to such an extent that, while at the college, he was impelled to read his life, works and Stopford Brooke's commentary on them<sup>6</sup>. His magazine article<sup>7</sup>, 'The Purpose of Love-Marriage in Universal Order', written while at the college, not only bears unmistakable traces of Tennyson's thoughts on the same subject, but also carries relevant quotations from Tennyson in support of his arguments. Nanalal's views on love, marriage and the relationship between man and woman in his later lyrical plays provide further evidence of Tennyson's influence on him. Nanalal has openly admitted that for his poetic diction he was indebted to Tennyson<sup>8</sup> and that it was while trying to write something on the lines of Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' that he wrote his poem<sup>9</sup> 'Vasantotsav'.

Apart from his father, there are many other poets from Gujarat whose works left their indelible mark on Nanalal. The poet Narmad, with an indomitable instinct of a social reformer and exuberant poetic imagination, emerged as the natural apostle of a regenerate Gujarat forging ahead to emancipate humanity from the deadly shackles of a stagnant social life. Narmad, inspired Nanalal to search a suitable epic metre for Gujarati<sup>10</sup>.



Goverdhanram, who gave to modern Gujarat the epic of her resuscitated culture through his grand novel, 'Sarasvatichandra', the classic masterpiece of creative imagination which held entire Gujarat spellbound in awe and admiration in Nanalal's own words, did for him what 'Chapman's Homer did to Keats'<sup>11</sup>. Narsinhrao<sup>12</sup>, from whose 'Kusummala' he received his 'first lessons' in modern poetic diction; and 'Kant'<sup>13</sup> whose 'Vasant-vijay' he set out to imitate. These 'native' influences were, not so native as they might look at first sight; they represent what was already achieved in modern Gujarati poetry under the influence of English poetry and serve also to supplement, reinforce and accelerate the process of integration, which was still going on when Nanalal took over.

### The Advent of spring

There was the fragrance of spring's first blossoms in Nanalal's breath and his voice was resonant with the melody of Nature's own lyrical ardour. Standing face to face with the spirit of springtide, vibrant with the humming murmurs of woodland, the young poet poured forth the new inspiration of vernal life, welling from the depth of his being, into lyric after lyric, as he visualised the incarnate spirit of Nature's loveliness spreading its rich effulgence over the vast canvas of the universe, in the ethereal charm of its pristine purity. 'Vasantotsav'<sup>14</sup> his first masterpiece, was in the form of a lyrical romance, celebrating life's buoyant festival on the threshold of the prime of youth with its hopes and aspirations, frolic and gay abandonment.

Nanalal sang, both literally and symbolically, of Spring and his poetry exudes the very spirit of the joy of life. Hailed as the 'full-moon' of poetry<sup>15</sup> on his very first appearance, romantic lyricism seemed to have reached its high water-mark in Nanalal whose genius, despite his adventures in the dramatic and epic fields, was essentially lyrical and his approach fundamentally romantic. There is romantic grandeur of fancy, imagination, emotions and diction in his poetry, which seems to take off from the earth, using it more or less as a spring-board, and soar so high that the contact with the realities of the earth is not always maintained. The son of the earth-bound father, he seemed to revel in aerial flights and, in his romantic idealism, hardly- a more effectual angel than a kindred spirit,<sup>16</sup> Shelley. The role of a teacher and a prophet was to his liking, as it was to, Shelley's, and his lyrical plays, which were rightly described by him as belonging to the type of Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound' are prophetic in their fervour.

Nanalal in the Preface<sup>17</sup> to his poem spoke of Spring in almost identical terms as Shelley in "Ode to the West Wind", when he observed that 'the Spring was a symbol of the Renaissance, of quickening new life in what was blighted by Winter, added that the festival of Spring was the festival of the Renaissance. He also referred to the effects of this upsurge, as a result of which 'the flood-gates of India, closed for centuries, were suddenly opened and in its homes blew the winds of the world from all directions'<sup>18</sup>. The poem, the first among his poems in the 'rhythmic style', narrates the romantic story of a beautiful young girl and a handsome young man with a flute in his hand, against the background



of, nature, peopled by rural folks, delineated romantically in a characteristically Wordsworth style. It was spring time and the girl with her companions set out to greet the, spring and cull flowers from the woods, much like the English maids therewith to crown the most beautiful among the maids as the May Queen. The heroine of this poem is also crowned in a similar ritual. It may be noted that Nanalal in his poetic zeal painted the village and its folks romantically, introducing even the festival of the spring, depicting the maids as culling flowers, dancing and singing to celebrate the advent of spring, which is more representative of the English custom than that of the villages of Gujarat, where such ceremonies or customs are hardly in existence. The hero and the heroine of the story meet and fall in love at first sight, for in a pastoral romance like this 'who ever loved who loved not at first sight?'. The heroine's (Yilasus) 'eyes were smiling'<sup>19</sup>she offered a flower to the hero and 'her heart along with it'<sup>20</sup>. The heroine then joined her companions and looked 'like the moon among the stars'<sup>21</sup>, which is evidently in line with Keats's fancy 'The Queen-moon clustered around by her starryFays'<sup>22</sup>. The cuckoo was pouring forth its sweet song, which rained like moonlight on earth'<sup>23</sup>, which is obviously not different in its delineation from Shelley's Skylark, which poured its full heart 'in profuse strains and all the earth and air is loud with its voice...'as when the night is bare, the moon rains out her beams and heaven is overflowed.' The spirit of Shelley seems to appear again in the lines 'the spring kisses the flower; the wind kisses the fragrance; then why not the lover his beloved?'<sup>24</sup>which echo the sentiments and arguments in Shelley's poem, "Love's Philosophy"<sup>25</sup>. The love-story proceeds in this romantic vein in the very spirit of the Spring time; the philosophy of love, which is enunciated therein, is equally romantic. The heroine with slow steps advanced towards her lover 'like a breeze heavy with fragrance'<sup>26</sup>, which runs parallel with Shelley's fancy 'Like a rose embower'd...by warm winds deflower'd, till the scent it gives makes faint with too much sweet these heavy winged thieves'<sup>27</sup>. The story of the hero and the heroine is developed on the lines of the ideal of Platonic love. 'The abode of God is the temple of Love; there is no singleness there, all move in pairs over there'<sup>28</sup>which is once again a variation on Shelley's 'Philosophy of Love' which states,

*'Nothing in the world is single,  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle'.*

Four hundred years ago, at the zenith of the Renaissance movement in Elizabethan England, the twin poet-friends Sidney and Spencer, had heralded the first flowering of English poetry in similar tones, touched with the verve and felicity of vernal exuberance, flowing out into the 'first fine careless rapture of Elizabethan song'. The advent of spring season as viewed through the eyes of a lover, converted into words from the well spring of intoxicated joy emerging from the lover's heart.



*The Spring stands on tip-toe on the woods,*  
 ...  
*A superb fragrance flows from the flowers,*  
 ....  
*Flowers burgeon in bowers.*

As the vision expands, this concrete image of beauty passes on into the mystic depths of unfathomable reality, covered by transcendental loveliness:

*'Who will imbibe that loveliness?*  
 ...  
*Like the spirit that imbibes the heart, my Darling*

Here, the poet approaches the Spirit of Beauty with the heart of a lover and seeks the charm of her loveliness with child-like innocence. This is the yearning of a passionate soul, longing to voice, in lyrics, the emotions of an Eternal Lover who never loses his sense of confident self-command but attains the exalted harmony of a perfect lute under the magic touch of a master's fingers. On the threshold of youth's glorious prime, the poet gives superb expression to deeper melodies ringing in the heart of humanity in an unsurpassed rhapsody of lyrical outburst, as the beloved pleads to her lover to accept the rising tide of life's communion, taking shape in the surging intensity of their souls, through an interchange of their flutes.

*Ah! Let us give and take the flute*  
 ....  
*Out of the joy of our hearts.*

The poem has a picturesque and colourful background of Nature, which though peculiar to Gujarat, reminds one, in its delineation, of Tennyson's descriptions of nature where imaginative splendour and scientifically accurate observation go generally hand in hand.' Nanalal himself has admitted that he wrote this poem, while trying to write something on the lines of Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' <sup>29</sup>. He has also admitted his indebtedness to Tennyson for his poetic diction.<sup>30</sup>

The flowery tale- both literally and figuratively - ends in the marriage of the hero and the heroine. ' There are spring flowers, mango-trees, lakes, cuckoo, musical flute, full-moon and kisses - all ingredients of an Arcadian romance, with sophisticated lads and lasses, in the usual place of the shepherds and shepherdesses, dancing',<sup>31</sup> singing, falling in love at first sight, in the idyllic surroundings of- spring time in the woods. This was a poetic innovation in modern Gujarati poetry, which came to have, with the publication of Nanalal's poem, the Gujarati edition of the English May-pole and Arcadian romance, supplemented by the home-spun philosophy, out of the yarn of Platonic love and ideal marriage, delivered





in prophetic tones and thundering epigrams. The shepherd's pipe is wielded by the romantic hero of 'this sylvan romance, the cuckoo sings, its echoes dying, dying, dying, but the echoes of true love rolling from soul to soul. Nanalal claimed that though his poem was Gujarati in its background and characters, it was neither provincial nor parochial, but universal in its application<sup>32</sup>. A die-hard Romantic at heart, describing himself as 'the messenger of Spring', Nanalal said that he had adopted the 'international ideal of poetry', which, according to him, was the 'right ideal' in a rapidly shrinking world<sup>33</sup>. True to its 'international ideal', scattered through this poem are references to France, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, Rome, the United States of America and Japan.

## End Notes

1. Nanalal Dalpatram Kavi 1877 - 1946.
2. Vide, 'Jaya-Jayant', print 1914, Act III, Sc.1.
3. Vide, 'Ardhashatabdina Anubhavbol', print 1930, p. 62.
4. Vide, Ibid p.43
5. Vide, V.K. Vaidya 5 'Gujarati Sahityani Rooprekha', print 1901, foot-note, p. 174.
6. Vide, 'Ardhashatabdina Anubhavbol', print 1930, p. 43.
7. Published in the 'Jnanasudha'.
8. Vide, 'Ardhashatabdina Anubhavbol', print 1930, p. 43
9. Vide, Ibid p.44
10. Vide, Ibid p. 40
11. Vide, Ibid pg. 35
12. Vide, Ibid. Pg. 37
13. Vide, Ibid pg. 38
14. Vide, Sunderam ; 'Arvachin Kavita, reprint 2017 p. 262.
15. By Kant on the platform of the First Gujarati Literary Conference, presided over by Goverdhanram.
16. Vide, 'Ketlankavyo', Part II, print 1908, Preface, p.16 & 'Manimahotsavna Sahityabol', pp. 152-153
17. Vide, 'Vasantotsav', print 1905, Preface, p. 8
18. Vide, Ibid, p. 8.
19. Vide, Ibid, p. 14
20. Vide, 'Vasantotsav', print 1905, p. 14.
21. Vide, Ibid, p. 15.
22. Vide, 'Ode to a Nightingale'; John Keats; print 1819
23. Vide, 'Vasantotsav', print 1905, p. 18.
24. Vide, Ibid, p. 29. '
25. Vide, 'Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury', print 1959, No. 184
26. Vide, Ibid, p. 41
27. Vide, 'To a Skylark', Shelley P. B. , print 1820
28. Vide, 'Vasantotsav', print 1905, p. 47.
29. Vide, 'Ardhashatabdina Anubhavbol', print 1930, p. 44.
30. Vide, Ibid, p. 44.
31. Typical of Gujarat, many of them are mentioned by names, (Vide, ibid-, p. 57-58).
32. Vide, Ibid, Preface, p. 8.
33. Vide, Ibid, Preface, p. 8



## Growth from Dominance to Parity in Marquez's *No One Writes to the Colonel*

K. Rekha

The narration is set in a home where a colonel, his wife, a rooster and the memories of a dead son live. The colonel was a man in the forefront during the Civil war. After the war he faces neglect. Though promised a pension, he lived to be disappointed all his life. His life moves on, drawn by two hopes. The first was the pension that might arrive and the second was the prize money that will come if the rooster wins in the cock fight. The latter chances get transformed to certainty when he realizes that the rooster was loved by the entire town. His rooster was sure to win and the townspeople were raising money to bet on his cock.

The cock fight is "a centuries-old blood sport". The intention is "gambling" or "entertainment" where two or more specially bred "gamecocks are placed in an enclosed pit to fight" (cockfighting-fact-sheet) . It entertained people in several countries until it was banned. Emelyn Rude was of the view that the "American passion" for cock fight was "inherited" from England. The English inherited it from the "Romans" and they were introduced towards this pastime by the "Greeks" who in turn learnt about it from the "Persians". The Persians were inspired by the Harappans. Thus the origins of cockfight were traced to South Asia. As Rude, a researcher in the field of cock fights says:

*These spectacles drew the attention of local humans some eight to ten thousand years ago and many archaeologists believe that cockfight is the reason why chickens were originally domesticated. The sport began as a religious ritual and later transformed into a more secular, albeit blood-soaked form of entertainment.*

In a cock fight, two roosters are let out to fight. A rooster is a mature male cock. The fight continues until one of the roosters is badly wounded or killed. The fight is sure to involve bloodshed as metal spurs are tied to the legs of the roosters. This text deals with one such fighter rooster which is owned by the colonel. Here only the trial fight is introduced and the real fight is left to be anticipated by the reader. The cock fight was a common phenomenon in Colombia where Gabriel Garcia Marquez belongs.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his novella, *No One Writes to the Colonel* subtly traces the progression of relationship between an elderly couple and their rooster. The rooster belongs to their dead son, Agustin, who was shot dead at the scene of a cock fight. He was killed as he was accused of circulating clandestine materials against the powers that be.

The Colonel, around whom the narration centers, is the new owner of his son's rooster. He dwelt in abject poverty along with his wife. He was a civil war veteran who had become colonel at the very early age of twenty. After the civil war, his life was



reduced to the absurd situation of waiting for the pension that never came. Every Friday, he was at the waterfront anticipating the arrival of the ship that was supposed to bring in the much-awaited assurance of pension from the government. The text concludes giving no hope of it.

The Colonel's wife was an ailing woman who feels that she was moving towards slow death. She went on urging her husband to sell the rooster as it was a real burden to their already destitute state. The rooster was the hope of the town, at all times. Everyone in the village believed that this rooster was sure to win. The rooster is introduced in the initial phase of the narrative itself. It was tied to the leg of the bed. Its food pan and water bowl was placed near it. Nothing fell in its platter as the couple had nothing to give it.

The text moves on to take a subtle plunge into the complex relationship between the couple and the rooster. The importance of the rooster to the childless couple is expressed through their interactions. A group of children in the neighbourhood come to watch the rooster. The Colonel orders the children to stop staring at it. In his view "[r]oosters wear out if you look at them so much" (Marquez 3). Their thoughts and conversation always centered round the rooster.

There was a natural death in town and it was much hyped up. This was the first natural death after wartime which caused lots of unnatural deaths. The wife feels that this dead man and Agustin must have met. She is also concerned about the fact that Agustin will come to know of their present poverty from the dead man: "Maybe he won't tell him about the situation we've been left in since his death". To this the Colonel responds thus. "At this moment they're probably talking roosters" (3). Roosters seemed better off to him than human beings as they may transcend mundane planes.

The rooster has learnt to live with hunger along with the couple. A fighting rooster is supposed to be well fed. Their impoverished situation can be summed up in the woman's words. "We're rotting alive"(4). She is a chronic asthma patient and the colonel has problems with his stomach in the winter. The whole text seems to be obsessed with winter and the malady associated with it. Generally winter is a season when animals hibernate and there is a shortage of food. The cause of the colonel's illness could be attributed also to his hunger when, the stomach makes its presence felt. That added to the anxieties of poverty intensifies his suffering. The uneasiness he feels in his stomach is sometimes expressed with tropes from the animal world. "In October I feel as if I had animals in my gut" (9). It continued in the course of the week and worsened though the words used in the narration appear to be positive: "the flora in his belly blossomed" (Marquez 9).

The colonel is ready to identify with the flora and fauna. While the colonel was positive in his attitude to the rooster, the wife was very bitter. She talks about her son's friends who were cock fanatics who saved money for the betting. "I don't know what they



see in such an ugly rooster', the woman said. "He looks like a freak to me; his head is too tiny for his feet'. The colonel informs her that the boys think "he's the best in the district" (9). His response is intended to defend the rooster, which was a "legacy" from their son. The woman continues her offense saying when the stock of corn is over, it will feed on their "livers" (10).

Everyone who is in any way associated with the colonel brings in the rooster in their exchanges with him. It is because they empathize with his love for the rooster. The doctor, who attends to his wife asthmatic attacks, is never paid anything for his medical attentions. The colonel feels embarrassed because of this. He asks the doctor about the payment due to him. The doctor responds thus "I'll send you a fat bill when the cock wins" (17).

Their stock of money came from the proceeds of their son's sewing machine. They were "parceling" out little changes of this to satisfy their needs and the roosters (19). They were running out of their money and the woman advises the colonel to ignore the rooster's hunger. Her justification goes like this, "[t]he rooster is an animal, and therefore he can wait. In this argument, she seems to be influenced by the anthropocentric perspective which consider humans as the most "significant entity of the universe" [Webster]. The Colonel pretends to empathize with her stance when he says, "If it depended on me I'd make a rooster stew this very evening" but "[w] hat bothers me is that those poor boys are saving up"(19).

When they had nothing to feed the rooster with, the colonel remembered "a handful of beans which he had hung in the chimney in July. He opened the pods and put down a can of dry seeds for the rooster". Noticing its reaction, he advises it "Beggars can't be choosers" (31-32). The woman keeps on telling the colonel to get rid of the rooster. He tries to pacify her by taking her back to the days of Agustin. "Remember his face when he came to tell us the rooster won". This did not have the desired effect. Instead she is all the more bitter. "Those accursed roosters" caused his downfall. "If he'd stayed home on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, his evil hour wouldn't have come" (32).

The colonel's speech about the cock fights in the past brought in bitter memories instead. She goes to the day when she last saw her son. The woman exclaimed: "It seems as if I can see him when he left with the rooster under his arm. She advised him against looking for trouble and "he smiled and told me: 'Shut up; this afternoon we'll be rolling in money' (32).

The couple was engaged in a discussion about their penury and starvation. The colonel tells his wife that no one dies in three months which is the proposed time of the cock fight. He also assures her: "If we were going to die of hunger, we would have died already". The colonel looks at the starving rooster which was standing "very much alive next to the empty can". Though he says that hunger can never cause death, he feared "that



the animal would die after two days without corn” (31). The colonel and his rooster communicate incomprehensibly. “When he saw the colonel, he emitted an almost human, guttural monologue and tossed his head back”. The Colonel responds with a smile of complicity: “Life is tough pal”(33). From this we understand that there are common grounds of compassion between humans and other creatures from the animal world.

The colonel who felt one with the animal world sums his life to the wealthy Sabas’ wife. She was discussing her dream with the colonel. She wonders whether the colonel also dreams. His response goes like this: “Almost always I dream that I am getting tangled up in spider webs” (48). Along with him are tangled his wife, memories of his dead son, the rooster, and all his companions who find no escape from the dominant structures of his world.

He goes to meet Agustin’s friends and expresses his concern about his inability to look after the rooster. The boys assure him that they will take over the feeding of the bird. The colonel wonders whether “the animal is dying” under his care. Alfonso, one of the boys say, “Don’t worry about it, colonel”, and that it is molting now and it has got “a fever in his quills” (36-37). The colonel has his sick wife and also his own health to cause anxiety. But over and above this he fears for the health of his rooster. About his own health he cares the least and he tells the doctor, “the day I feel sick I’ll throw myself into the garbage can on my own” (17). He regards his life less valuable than a creature dependant on him for survival.

At the end of the narrative, the kinship between the rooster and the colonel gets stronger. Though he had taken advance for its sale, he decided finally that the rooster is not for sale. The scene of the trial is described poetically. In his absence at home, the rooster was brought to the cockpit by Hernan, one of Agustin’s friends. It was the words of a passerby that brought to his mind that it was the trial day. He rushed to the “turbulent atmosphere of the pit”. The rooster was in the “middle of the pit, alone, defenseless, his spurs wrapped in rags, with something like fear visible in the trembling of his feet” (61). This sight stirred no emotion in the colonel because he was confident that the rooster will not yield to its rival. The adversary was a “sad ashen rooster” (61). The fight is well described, employing the technique of synecdoche:

*There was a succession of identical attacks. A momentary engagement of feathers and feet and necks in the middle of an enthusiastic ovation. Knocked against the planks of the barrier, the adversary did a somersault and returned to the attack. His rooster didn't attack. He rebuffed every attack, and landed again in exactly the same spot. But now his feet weren't trembling.(61)*

The colonel felt the “disproportion between the enthusiasm of the applause and the intensity of the fight”(61). The rooster, who stood his ground and fought against his adversary finally turns out as a trainer to its master. Both have evolved as fighters. The colonel carrying the rooster home after the fight feels “the warm deep throbbing of the



animal” which “made him shudder. He thought that he had never had such an alive thing in his hand before”(62). Walking away with the rooster under his arm, he decides, “[t]he way home had never been so long”. He realized that his town which lay in stupor after ten years of war history now was “awakened”. His elation transported him to his past when he witnessed a show along with his son and wife, uninterrupted by the rains. He relived the past when he saw “the party leaders, the Election Sunday”, the crowd in jubilation and enjoyment of long ago along with the “painful resonance of the bass drum in his intestines (62).

The silent rooster brought to life the fighter in the colonel who learnt to see life in a new light. “Dawn was breaking” and he could see the “Sunday’s green clarity” [69]. He fought back all queries from his wife confidently. He rebuffed all provocations from her and “fell to the bottom of a substance without time and without space, where the words of his wife had a different significance” (69) or no significance. It is not sleep that he experiences but the power to transcend all challenges of earthly life. His wife wonders about the chances of the rooster losing in the fight to come. His answer is “[h]e’s one rooster that can’t lose”. Then they can live on when the fight is won, as the owner gets twenty percent of the money on betting. Her next question was “And meanwhile what do we eat?” He waited seventy- five years for this moment of maturity. “He felt pure, explicit, invincible” when he answered “Shit” (69). The lessons of a few minutes that he learnt from his rooster will last him his lifetime as he felt a union of souls when he carried the rooster back home after the trial.

Marquez has brought out the deficiency of thinking in binaries which perceives human and the animal in opposition. The inferior status given to animals over humans by anthropocentrism has been deconstructed whereby both are treated at par. There can be a mutuality of influence which will lead to strength.

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## **Conflict of Identities in Mother of 1084 by Mahasweta Devi**

Sarah Siddique

### **Introduction**

Mother of 1084 was written by Mahasweta Devi. The novel was first published in Bangla (*Hajar Churashir Maa*) in the periodical Prasad in 1973. The novel was translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay in English.

Mahasweta Devi belonged to a family of writers and social activists, her mother being in the upfront for the cause of educating tribal women in Dhaka. The compassion for the cause of the marginalized was deep steeped into her since childhood. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979 for her novel *Arenyar Adhikaar* (Rights over the Forest). It narrates the life and fight of Indian tribal freedom fighter Birsa Munda. She has written over 175 books, which include novels, novellas and short stories while much of her extensive work remains unpublished.

The author believes in the power of documentation, the way the various lives revolve around a political cause and how the political movements affect the lives of people are some of the central themes which the author deals with. The narrative style of the novel is evocative gripping the reader with the ordeals of a mother in search of the identity of her son and in turn herself. It is different than the other novels which she dealt with before where she brings about historical figures from the burning uprisings of the country.

### **Identities as the central theme of the novel**

The novel brings forth the conflict of identities in social, political and also individual level. The central figure of the novel is a mother, who is in search of the vanished identity of her son. The cause of the brutal killing of her son is evidently the identity and the ideology he stood for. The various gripping circumstances around her made her realize that her sons cause was not an ordinary one and it was definitely something her being was completely unaware about.

In the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to Sujata, the mother of Brati, packing her maternity material on the way to the hospital all alone bearing the weight of her child. The protagonist is introduced as a mother. Later as the story progresses, the mother unfolds her characteristics as a submissive wife dealing with a carnal, unfaithful and snobbish husband like Dibyanath. Sujata realizes during the course of time that she has failed to be a strong mother to Brati by being a subservient wife to her husband. A meek mother was someone Brati didn't deserve as compared to his characteristics in contrast as a strong individual with a clear ideology to fight for the right.



Sujata is introduced as the mother of 1084. An active boy in the prime of his youth is shot dead and subsequently reduced to a numeral after his death. The mother holds close this numeral which she has been allotted by the very same people who killed her son. She sets forth the journey to look for her son in a world full of deceit and false identities which the populace puts on.

The author again brings in the notion of identity when Dibyanath the father of Brati did not allow Sujata to take his car to Kantapukur, in order to conceal the identity of his dead son who is evidently shot in a contentious encounter by the police force. Sujata is taken aback by the indifference of Dibyanath while dealing with his son's brutal death. The refusal of taking the car to Kantapukur reflects how important the dynamics of identity is seeped into the novel. Her husband also made sure that Brati's name does not appear in the newspapers the next day as one of the youths killed in the encounter.

As the narration continues, the reader is made aware of Sujata's agony as she is unable to comprehend the apathy of the people around, regarding Brati's death. Indifference stems not out of the lack of emotions but out of the overpowering of them. Apart from Sujata every one in the family was intimidated by Brati and his ideology. In a family of insouciant and complacent members where each individual is too lax to say anything about the regime at home save about the country, Brati stood apart. Among all his siblings, Brati was the only one who cared about his ailing mother and stood by her side in times of estrangement with her husband. Living in Dibyanath's house Brati was his equal. They both stood at par against each other's ideologies and detested each other for their individuality. The father and son represented the cold regime in the burning state of Bengal with Brati being the leader of the oppressed and Dibyanath the tyrannical regime. The regime wanted the annihilation of the youth who rebelled against the law enforcement just like Dibyanath wanted Brati's identity to be vanished forever as soon as he was conveniently removed from his life.

Sujata is shocked in utter disgust on the man's open and direct command of removing Brati's portrait from the wall. She was well aware of the methods of her husband in order to vanish her son out of their easy going lives, as he had tried doing it even when Brati was alive. After Brati was born Sujata felt a different connection with her little boy, it was not the same with her other children. With Brati being born Sujata was imbued with a certain sense of courage and self belief, the same Brati whose birth almost made Sujata lose her life was the one who gave her the courage to live. In one of the memories of Brati, Sujata vividly reflects how she protested against Dibyanath making the eight-year old sleep alone on the second floor. She remembers her husband's annoyance at giving Brati more importance over her other children who too slept alone when they were kids. She loved them too but never objected for them in front of her husband but with Brati she felt the renewal of her esteem as a mother.





Not only did Dibyanath refuse his family to take his car to Kantapukur he also made sure that the newspapers do not publish Brati's name as one of the youth killed in the police encounter. In the following lines, as pondered by Sujata, the reader is made aware of how important the identity of Brati concerns the ones around him and how skillfully it was annihilated:

*But if you collected the names of the dead in the first two years and a half of the decade, would you come across Brati's name? If you relied on the newspapers for your source of information, you would never know about Brati.*

*Brati's father had seen to it that his name did not appear in the newspapers.*

This was a massive obliteration of the deceased and raises multiple questions on the issue of identity. Brati was a rebel for the tyrannical regime of the state but he was a freedom fighter for people like Somu and his family. This disparity served him his death. It reflects on major issues when it comes to the perception of the state and the individuals. For instance, during the pre-independence period in India, what we identify today as freedom fighters were often addressed as traitors by the British Raj. The conception of identity is a subjective one.

Brati's death was a shock wave in Sujata's life, but the people she was surrounded by were as calm as the sea. In fact, they refused to recognize Brati as a part of them. At home, it was only Hem the maid who consoled Sujata and sympathized with her. Apart from Sujata nobody was concerned enough towards Brati and his cause. Any conversation about Brati irritated and even infuriated the Chatterjee family. The removal of the phone from Sujata's room in order to make her forget about Brati's sudden and sad death is a clear suggestion of the way the obliteration of identity takes place in the novel. Every aspect of the dead person was dexterously and collectively removed by the family members without paying much heed to the cause or ideology. Brati was a black sheep in a family of self proclaimed peers of the realm, the law abiding citizens, and the faithful servants of the society and the detestable urban class who possessed at the top place, out of many deplorable characteristics, the trait of being hypocrites. Although he was begot by a disloyal and snobbish father and a timid mother, he grew up as an exact contradiction to his parents. He stood for his principles and was constantly surrounded by the people of his own ideology and individuality. He sacrificed his life for the cause he stood for.

## Discussion

The way Brati and his kind are perceived in the novel is conflicting and inconsistent. The author too does not give a clear image of Brati owing to the apolitical nature of the novel. The way Brati is perceived is relatively and exclusively dependent upon the background of the novel is set in, the naxalite uprising of the 1970's in Bengal. The novel is presented in a time which was known as The Decade for Liberation. Since the beginning of the novel Sujata is shown as a mother who is not aware about her sons



identity, but what she is sure about is, that her sons identity and ideology are the absolute cause of his death. She ponders upon the manner she raised Brati up, she questioned herself, as a mother what could have gone wrong that her son faced such a brutal death at the hands of the regime. The brooding of the mother is reflected in these words in the novel:

*Sujata screwed up her eyes as she tried to think out how, may-be even indirectly, she had been responsible for the killing of Brati. Was there anything in the way she had brought up Brati that had made him into number 1084 in the decade that headed towards liberation?*

The mother is not even well aware of the cause of death of her son, yet she is in conflict about her raising a rebel. For an extensive time in the novel, Sujata is unaware of her sons` ideology, but after she takes up the journey to discover her lost sons` identity she comes in term with the fact that even she was lost in the course of time when Brati was alive and needed her.

There were many instances in which Sujata was introduced to Brati, her son about whom she was completely oblivious. She was unaware that Brati was more than a child to others as he was to her. These incidents created pathos in the hearts of the readers for a mother who went through the misery of losing her son again. She lost her son twice, once when he was shot dead and the next when she discovered his identity and what he could have meant and be if only she knew him enough. During her interaction with Somu`s mother, she discovers a completely different Brati she had known as her child. The way Somu`s mother described Brati as their *messiah*, was a complete shock to Sujata. It was, as if she never knew her son at all. Her interaction with young Nandini instilled in her new hopes and she felt as if she had met Brati`s replica. She realizes the importance of Brati`s cause and his transcendent sacrifice. This realization of Sujata marks the rift between her husband and each individual who failed to understand Brati.

In the final scene of the novel, she refuses to hide the identity of her son or the fact that she is his mother. She is transformed into a mother, now, the mother of 1084 as designated by the regime. The Brati she knows now, he is no longer her child who everyone disliked, he is the child whose identity gave birth to a new Sujata and instilled in her the new hopes of life and a better understanding of the system. A little late but eventually Sujata realized that any individual, who does not fit in the ideological framework of the law making bodies, is only fit for annihilation.

## Conclusion

Mother of 1084 is an open ended novel. The ambiguity of the death of Sujata raises multiple questions on concealing truth and identity throughout the novel. It reflects the journey of a mother, who in search of her son`s identity finds herself too. In her dreams



Brati still sat on the windowsill reading poems. Her dream is narrated in the novel in the following words:

*Brati read :*

*The one who was most scared*

*Was the one who unlocked the room of darkness...*

*You left on a dark night.*

*Why don't you come back in secret on a dark night again?*

*Nobody will see you.*

*For they look for you only in the stars.*

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## Mohamed Rupani: A Gujarati Translator of Shakespeare's Drama and Sonnets

Sunil Sagar

### Introduction

Translation is an intercultural construct that we know little about. Translation history is a way of uncovering the historical context in which translation occurs. It is also an investigation into the cultural agent called the translator who facilitates the cultural transfer. It is no longer held true the translation is an innocent act that is not affected by cultural and political forces. It is now outmoded to believe that there are no power relations and that the translator acts freely and translates without being influenced. There's a growing interest in the role played by patrons, powerful individuals, agencies, translation scholars etc. which influence the translator and shape the translation in one way or the other. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the life and work of translators and try to reconstruct the historical context in which the translation occurred.

In the case of a country like India, it becomes even more crucial to study the historical context and examine the influences because there's a history of colonization. It is necessary to consider the colonial encounter and see how it shaped Indian history in general and translation history in particular. To start with, Shakespeare's works form the part of colonial legacy in the syllabi of universities. Shakespeare also offered a lot of entertainment value in the form of his plays. Playwrights adapted his plays in myriad ways in Indian languages and extended this legacy. Reception and appropriation of Shakespeare in India is an ever growing narrative that continues till today as we have found new ways to adapt his plays on the screen. The common thread to all these is the role played by the human agent who adapts, translates and transcreates. Without a thorough study of the life and work of the translator, it would not be possible to reconstruct the narrative.

### Shakespeare in Gujarati

Incidentally, Shakespeare's legacy in India began with an adaptation in Gujarati. A Parsi theatre group adapted Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* into Gujarati as *Nathari Firangiz Thekane Avi* and performed it in Andrews Library, Surat in 1852. This was not only the first ever adaptation of Shakespeare in Gujarati but also the first one in any modern Indian language.

It was followed by a flurry of Gujarati adaptations of Shakespeare which lasted half a century or more. Adaptations in Gujarati were done mostly by Parsis as they ran theatre groups. There were a number of theatre groups based in Mumbai performing adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. There were a couple of theatre groups in Morbi and Wankaner in



Saurashtra region as well. These adaptations borrowed freely from Shakespeare's plays and adapted to suit the local contexts.

Translations proper occurred only by the fag end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Narbhashankar Pranjivan Dave was the first Gujarati translator of Shakespeare's plays. He went on to translate five of Shakespeare's plays namely *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet* during 1898 to 1917. This is how translation of Shakespeare's plays began to occur in Gujarati. It was followed by Hansa Mehta's translations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* in 1942 and 1944 respectively. Jayant Patel, a lecturer in Gujarati at MTB Arts College translated four of Shakespeare's plays titled *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* during 1963-64. Around the same time, Jashwant Thakar translated two of Shakespeare's plays into Gujarati namely *Macbeth* and *Richard III* in 1964 and 1969 respectively. In 1967, 1978 and 1983 respectively, noted Gujarati scholar, Mansukhlal Jhaveri translated *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *King Lear*. Krushnashankar Ambashankar Vyas translated *The Merchant of Venice* in 1975. It was followed by Mohamed Rupani's translation of Shakespeare's 159 Sonnets and *As You Like It* in 1977 and 1979 respectively. Nalin Rawal provided the lone translation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 1992.

### **Mohamed Rupani: Life events that led to translations**

Among all the Gujarati translators of Shakespeare, Mohamed Rupani (1912-2016) holds a special place. Rupani is a unique instance in translation history of Shakespeare's works for several reasons. Firstly, he is the only translator who has translated both Shakespeare's sonnets and at least one of the plays. Secondly, he is arguably the only translator to have translated Shakespeare's sonnets. Thirdly, he travelled a number of times between Indian and East Africa and yet retained his attachment to his roots, love for poetry and Shakespeare and went on to translate for nearly 60 years. Moreover, he is also unique as a translator because he is one of the only two Gujarati translators who self-published the translations. The only other translator to do it was Jashwant Thakar.

Rupani's life is nothing short of a gripping narrative which would best fit in a Shakespearean play. He was born in Inhabane, Mtamba, Mozambique in 1912. He was born there because his father had immigrated to South Africa for work at the age of 14. But his father wanted his children to get proper education so he returns to Kodinar, Gujarat, India to ensure their education. Rupani could return to Gujarat only because his father wanted his children to get proper education. If it had not been so, Rupani would not have returned to India and we would have lost an invaluable translator of Shakespeare!

Anyway, Rupani came to Kodinar and as planned earnestly went about his education. He received his primary education at a vernacular school in Kodinar. It was followed by a brief tenure at H.H. The Aga Khan Boys School, Mumbai for the first year of English in Junior high school. Back to Kodinar, he acquired his high school education at an



Anglo-vernacular school. It does not however go as planned as he had to abruptly abandon studies and return to East Africa in 1928. He continued to stay there in 1931. If it was any solace, he discovered his love for reading when he explored his father's rich library.

While books fascinate him, Rupani's heart lay in India because he wanted to pursue his studies. His mother came up with an alternative for him to continue to stay in South Africa with a suggestion that he may start a new business venture. For this, she offered a lot of financial help in the form of diamonds, jewelry and cash. Rupani considered it but politely turned the offer down. He returned to India and resumed his studies at Baroda. He attended Baroda High School during 1931-34 and Baroda College during 1934-38. Following which, he graduated from Bombay University in 1939. While at college, he had a chance meeting with Ms. Dilawar K. Kavi. She was the first student from Muslim community to enter Baroda College in 1936. He married her in 1940. After their marriage, the couple shifted to East Africa in 1940. Since both were qualified enough, they rendered their services as teachers in schools in Zanzibar during 1940-41, Dodoma during 1942-49 and Mombasa during 1949-68.

Once he retired, he was free to move around. He stayed in Nairobi for a year in 1968. It was followed by a stay in Ahmedabad during 1968-70. He returned to Nairobi for a while during 1970-75. He lived in Ahmedabad again but this time for a period of 13 years during 1975-88. Nairobi kept attracting him for some reason and that's why he returned for a period of another 8 years from 1988-1996. He returned to India and stayed for a year in Porbandar, Gujarat in 1996. He stayed in Rajkot during 1996-2000. He also stayed in Jamnagar for 6 years during 2000-06.

After these many travels and different places of stay, the couple decided to stay at Dignity Lifestyle Retirement Township, Neral. Shortly after this, his wife passed away on December 14, 2006 at the age of 89. After this, Rupani shifted to Swami Ramanand Shastri Senior Citizens Home, Lonavala in year 2009. He stayed there for 4 years and shifted to Janseva Foundation's Old Age Home located near Pune. His stay did not last long. After a stay of 3 years, he passed away there in 2016.

Mohamed Rupani moved between India and Africa for a long life that he lived spanning 104 years. He lived in different places and continued to shift from one place to another. It's a marvel in itself that in such an unpredictable narrative of travelling and uncertainty, he translated Shakespeare's 159 Sonnets and a play titled *As You Like It* in 1977 and 1979 respectively. He also translated a huge collection of British poetry during 1939 to 2000 and brought out two volumes titled *Angla-Kavya-Darpanin* 1999 and 2000 respectively. He had self-published the translation of sonnets and *Angla-Kavya-Darpan*. Yasin Dalal mentions in the blurb on the *Angla-Kavya-Darpan* vol. 1 as to how Rupani struggled hard to find a publisher for his two volumes and it was this struggle that brought him to Rajkot. It was to no avail because he found no publisher willing to publish



his translation. In the end, he finally decided to bear the burden of publishing his translation.

### **Mohamed Rupani as a Translator**

Rupani's work as a translator gives rise to more questions than answers. He goes to Africa and works there during 1939 to 1968. He come back to India for a year or so but returns to Nairobi and stays there during 1970-75. The question is while he was traveling to and fro, while his life was not stable for a moment and while he apparently retired, how did he manage to translate Shakespeare's sonnets and play and publish them in 1977 and 1979 respectively? The more fundamental question is why did he translate anything at all? How did get interested in translation?

Some answers are found if one reads his translator's prefaces closely. First of all, his preface to the translation of *As You Like It* does not reveal his initiation or training in translation. Even his preface to the sonnets does not mention how it occurred that he went on to pursue the translation of sonnets unlike every other Shakespearean translator opting for the translation of his plays. However, his preface to the translation of British poetry titled *Angla-Kavya-Darpan* does come to translation historian's rescue. It mentions that it was during his tenure at Baroda College during 1934-38 that he came in contact with teachers of English who introduced him to the world of English poetry. When he was introduced to English poetry of Shelley and Keats, Rupani was deeply delighted and subsequently he also tried his hand on writing poetry. Fortunately, he was also taught prosody at Baroda College which helped further. However, it was Prof. Romans who persuaded him about writing poetry in Gujarati. This led Rupani to write in Gujarati in the first place. Translation must have followed it as a logical next step because his love for English poetry must have made him think that such wonderful poems need to usher into Gujarati so that Gujarati readers can also get access to English poetry.

### **Translation of Shakespeare's 159 Sonnets**

Since his objective is to usher in Shakespeare's sonnets in a way that the average Gujarati reader can understand it, he does not mechanically or literally translate Shakespeare's sonnets. Instead, he uses transcreation as a way of ushering in Shakespeare's sonnets into Gujarati. His preface reflects that this must have been difficult because he had consulted a host of critics and scholars who provided different inputs. For instance, Rupani quotes what Umashankar Joshi said that only prose translation can do justice to the source text. (8) Rupani, however, says that his transcreations bypass this statement and follow their unique path of rendering Shakespeare in a way that is adaptable to Gujarati. Yashwant Shukla also opined that if one has to translate sonnets into Gujarati, one will need to translated them first into prose and then transform them into sonnet form. Suresh Dalal was also interested in the way sonnets are rendered and



advised Rupani to write about the method of translation in the preface if it gets published.  
(9)

Rupani overruled all and rendered the sonnets in his own unique way. In the preface, he does not shy away from accepting that these are transcreations and not mere translations. Even on the cover page, it mentions that these are transcreations and not just translations. While he was not aware perhaps, he provided an apt illustration of translation as rewriting. He explains translation as rewriting through a metaphor. He likes translation to the way the moon receives the light from the sun but goes on to become the light of the moon. In the same way, he claims that trancreation becomes the independent creation of the translator although it is based on a source text. He has no hesitation in appropriating Shakespeare's sonnets in his own way and claiming them as their own. He was the most modern or all modern translators!

### **Translation of Shakespeare's *As You Like It***

Rupani had a special reason to translate *As You Like It* perhaps. The translation carries dedication to a particular theatre actor namely Himmatbhai Kalubhai Mir who belonged to the theatre group called Deshi Natak Samaj based in Mumbai. At the end of the translation, there's a detailed note on Mir and how he worked in the theatre. If it's a coincidence, it is quite astonishing that Mir performed in plays which were comedies and the translation is also that of a comedy. Rupani was in some way related to Mir as well. Mir belonged to a community which did not encourage the education of the girl child. Therefore, girls from Muslim community never made it to the college. Mir encouraged his niece, the daughter of his brother-in-law to continue higher studies. Emboldened by the support offered by Mir, his niece becomes the first Muslim girl namely Dilawar to enter Baroda College and pursue higher studies. The same girl happened to be the one Rupani meets in Baroda College and eventually gets married. So in some way, Rupani was related to the theatre actor by marriage. Rupani interacted with the family in East Africa as well. Mir's sister related several instances from the life of Mir which inspired Rupani to perhaps dedicate the translation to Mir.

In his preface, he mentions how he tried to usher in a version of blank verse in Gujarati. He also relates how his predecessors such as Hansa Mehta had tried to use different meters to render Shakespeare in Gujarati. In this way, he was aware of the translation history than many of us are and acted in accordance with what he deemed suitable as the way of translating Shakespeare into Gujarati. He also recounts how he made a seamless transition from his creative effusions in the form of *Yogini Mari* to the translation/transcreation of *As You Like It*. He mentions that it was natural to make a transition to verse translation because he had written verses in *Yogini Mari* using the language of every day speech. He goes on to relate how he tried his hand on blank verse in Gujarati first in his poems in *Yogini Mari* (1969), then in the translation/creation of





Shakespeare's Sonnets (1977) which finally led to the translation of *As You Like It* in blank verse in 1979.

Rupani's translation of *As You Like It* is significant because he employed a sort of blank verse in Gujarati and tried to find a different way to render Shakespeare. This was a bold and unorthodox move by a translator who was neither established nor scholarly. In fact, he never lived in India long enough to study how community of Gujarati writers, scholars and translators translated but he continued to keep track of how translations were attempted. He also consulted every known scholar of the day and tried to seek guidance from them. The translation of *As You Like It* carries a Foreword by the renowned Shakespeare scholar Santprasad Bhatt. In all, Rupani's endeavor of rendering Shakespeare's sonnets and *As You Like It* deserve a special place in translation history.

### Lead Out

Mohamed Rupani was perhaps the only translator who earned the glory of translating Shakespeare's sonnets as well as a play into Gujarati. Rupani's life and translations deserve deeper and enduring study. His life deserves a special mention because it was full of travels and challenges and yet he managed to hold on to the literary inclinations and translated Shakespeare's works. His translations break a new ground in many ways. Firstly, he was the first translator to attempt the translation of Shakespeare's sonnets into Gujarati. Secondly, he did not try to render Shakespeare in a mechanical way but took creative liberty as and when required and provided proper transcreations. Thirdly, he was aware of translation history that preceded his translation and acted in accordance with it. Above all, he made a valuable contribution to the translation history related to Shakespeare's works in Gujarati.

Rupani's life and work open up new avenues of translation history and research. Further research will yield a better understanding of the historical context in which Rupani made his contribution. Such an effort will also shed new light on the translation history of Shakespeare in Gujarati.

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## Comparing Literature across Genre: History Verses Literature in Tharoor's the *Great Indian Novel*

Swati Chouhan

Comparative literature is the study of inter-relationship between any two or more than two significant literary works or literature. Bijay Kumar das comments in this context:

*The simple way to define comparative literature is to say that it is comparison between the two literatures. Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallel between two literatures. It further studies themes, modes, conventions and use of folk tales, myths in two different literatures or even more. (Das 1)*

Comparative literature evolves from two or more than two literatures for example- American literature, English literature, Australian literature and Caribbean literature-et al are written in English language. The study of comparative literature encompasses all these literature in its scope. Comparative studies will brighten perspective of literary criticism as it possesses higher value. Bonsaquet asserts that 'comparative literature can be of immense value in freeing the mind from the shackles of provincialism and myopia'' (quoted in Dhawan 27)

I am hereby taking the comparative study of History and literature in the Great Indian Novel by Shashi Tharoor. Shashi Tharoor borrows the story of The Great Indian Novel from Mahabharata, and recasts it in the context of Indian Independence movement. The Mahabharata describes the dynastic struggle over the throne of the kingdom of Hastinapur between the Pandavas and Kauravas. Tharoor recasts the story of the nascent Indian democracy. Tharoor artistically interwove the story of the Mahabharata into the texture of pre and post-independence Indian history. The novel challenges the 'official' and 'imperialist' versions of history in its fictional mode. The narrator makes his subversive aesthetics prominent when he asserts:

*They tell me India is an underdeveloped country. They attend seminars ,appear on television, even come to see me, creasing their eight-hundred-rupee suits and clitching their moulded plastic briefcase, to announce in tones of infinite understanding that India has yet to develop. Stuff and non-sense, of course. I tell them they have no knowledge of History and even less of their own heritage. I tell them that if they would only read the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, study the golden ages of the Mauryas and the Guptas and even of those Muslim chaps the Mughals; they would realize that India is not an underdeveloped country but a highly developed one in an advanced stage of decay. (18)*

Shashi Tharoor derived title, The Great Indian Novel from the concept of "The Great American Novel' '.Shashi Tharoor's The Great Indian Novel relates to the ancient epic. In Sanskrit Maha, means 'Great' and 'Bharata' means 'India'. Thus the Mahabharata



is a Great Indian Story. The novel synchronizes the epic narrative of Mahabharata and political history of India from pre and post-independent India as Tharoor demonstrates: "The nightmarish experience of the country during the darkest period in the history of free India helped revive the memory of the battle of Kurukshetra, giving birth to the realization that contemporary Indian reality can be understood only in relation to the myths and legends of India's past" (32).

The novel covers the period of Indian History from the advent of Mahatma Gandhi as undisputed leader of the freedom struggle against the British Raj to the emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, highlighting some important events like Champaran satyagraha, the Salt March, Quit India movement, Partition of India, the birth of Independence. The shape and sequential drift of the novel is the epic narrative of the Mahabharata.

Tharoor's fictionalized introduction of the subcontinent's history refers to Nehru, Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose, Indira Gandhi et al. The major characteristics of Tharoor's novel are that the readers have to be familiar with the original source of work, otherwise they can't judge the significance of the events fictionalized.

Tharoor's fictionalized introduction of the Indian history is an instance of the pride enjoyed and expressed by Tharoor in his religion, culture and political history. Tharoor recalls the grandeur of India's past in this way: "they tell me India is an underdeveloped country... I tell them that if they would only read the Maharashtra and the Ramayana, study the Golden Ages of the Mauryas and the Guptas and even those... Mughals they would realize that India is not an underdeveloped country, but in a highly advanced state of decay" (6).

Tharoor further comments on history:

*We tend to look back on history as if it were a stage play, with scene building upon scene, our hero moving from one action to the next in his remorseless stride to the climax. Yet life is never like that...so the recounting of history is only the order we artificially impose upon life to permit its lessons to be more clearly understood. (37)*

The historical narrative in the novel begins with the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on India's political scene during British rule and ends with triumph of Indira Gandhi after the premature downfall of the Janata Front government. The novel covers nearly seventy years including all the major political events of Indian history.

The Indian resistance against tyranny effectively began after the appearance of Ganga Dutta in the Kaurava Party. Tharoor delineates the role of Ganga Dutta in the awakening of Indians against the Britishers. Ganga Dutta followed non - violent struggle against Britishers' unjust exercise of Power. Gangaji believed in non- violent struggle: "No



dictionary imbues the word with the depth of meaning that Gangaji gave it. His truth emerged from his convictions it meant not only what was accurate, but what was just and therefore right. Truth could not be obtained by untruthful, or unjust, or violent means" (48).

Like Gangaji in the novel, Gandhiji also believed in truth and non-violence struggle. Gandhiji believed in 'moderate' methods as he was deeply convinced that no methods of political struggle were viable except Satyagraha. He only wanted to join an organization or a movement that adopted non - violent Satyagraha as non-violence in Gandhiji's view was a tool that anyone could use.

In the very beginning, Tharoor describes Gangaji's weapon of non-violence against Britishers. Tharoor describes the emergence of Ganga Datta as a national leader. The radical ideas of Ganga Dutta began to worry the British rulers. "Gangaji becomes gradually became known as formidable opponent of the foreign rule" (Ghosh58). Gangaji, like Gandhiji, preached equality justice, non-violence, truth and right of native people to describe their own fate. He firmly believes in Swaraj and self-rule. "He seems to believe in force of moral authority" (37). Ganga Dutta was altogether completely different from other leaders of the time.

### **Khadi Campaign**

Tharoor describes Gangaji's war against British goods and policies. The narrator delineates his role in the awakening of Indians against the colonizers by his non-violent struggle against unjust exercise of power. Gangaji in the novel started Khadi movement "the strange weapon of disobedience" (46).

The Indian National Congress passed a resolution to use only Indian goods at its 7<sup>th</sup> session in 1891 and gave a clarion call for 'Swadeshi'. Gandhiji in his own words: "I am a salesman of Swaraj .I am a devotee of Khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear Khadi' (Quoted in Joshi 2).

Gandhiji was considered as one of the pioneers to understand the need of craft based society in which all indigenous arts and crafts flourish besides Khadi. Gandhiji through his Swadeshi politics encouraged the production and consumption of hand-spun, hand-woven cloth of Khadi. The movement also includes the exhibitions that demonstrated cloth production and sold Khadi goods. Gangaji started a moral war against the British through boycott of foreign made clothes and insisted Indians should wear Khadi. Men, women, children, school, college going students took active part in the movement: "unarmed, slogan chanting demonstrators falling defenceless under the hail of police lathis, the power of wave of Khadi-clad men and women, arms and voices raised, marching handcuffed to their imprisonment"( 46). Khadi imbibes the value of simplicity, social equality, harmony, dedication humanitarian attitude amongst Indians. Khadi



caught the eye of every class, including the middle class and the sophisticated people and even the poor people, thus bringing all less than one canopy.

Khadi according to Gangaji is not mere piece of cloth but a way of life. "The entire purpose of wheel was not symbolic, but down-to-earth and practical" (47).Gangaji presented Khadi as a symbol of equality, nationalism and freedom from British rule. Khadi was a symbol of revolution and resistance against foreign goods. In the, year 1891 charkha found a proud place on the Indian national flag.

Gandhiji firmly believes in invincibility of Khadi as he comments "Khadi is the only economic preposition in terms of millions of villagers until such time, when a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every able bodied person above the age of sixteen, male or female, is found for his field, in every one of the villages in India" (Ibid 26). In reality, Khadi was introduced in 1920 as a weapon of Satyagraha and act as instrument to express Swadeshi spirit to boycott foreign goods. Khadi inculcates self-discipline and self-sacrifice amongst every man and women.

Like Gangaji in the novel Gandhiji believes that Khadi proves to be a massive exercise in organizational approach. According to Gandhiji, Khadi delivers the poor from the bonds of rich and wearer of Khadi is truly Indian. "The wearer of Khadi from a Swadeshi standpoint is like a man making use of his lungs -- a natural and obligatory act has got to be performed whether others do it out of impure motive or refrain altogether because they do not believe in its necessity of utility" (quoted in Kripkani 121). Khadi thus, became a successful tool for freedom struggle; it embodied the national integrity of all as well as acted as a communal harmony.

The boycott of English goods and clothes acted as a boon for Khadi to prosper. The lost industry of Khadi came to life again with considerable vigour, but there were many famous leaders who did not appreciate the idea of using Khadi.

### **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre**

According to Indian History Britishers planned to form self-government in India as early as possible. E.S. Montague, who was the secretary of State for India, announced, on 20th August, 1917, that there was increasing associations of Indians in every branch of administration. Indians were progressively moving towards self-government. As a result, the viceroy of India Lord-Chelmsford, appointed a selection committee on 10th December, 1917 popularly called as Rowlett Committee. The main intention of committee was to investigate and report the criminal conspiracies affiliated with the revolutionary movement in India.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, two bills were published in the Government of India Gazette on 18 January 1919: "Two bills, popularly known as the



Rowlett Bills after the man who chaired the committee that suggested their introduction, aimed at severely curtailing the civil liberties of Indians in the name of Curbing terrorist violence, were introduced in the legislature council" (Chandra 181).

One of the bills became an Act on 21 March 1919. Mahatma Gandhi decided to organize a Satyagraha, non-violent civil disobedience campaign, against the bills. Gandhi finally called for a countrywide hartal on 6 April. But due to some confusion about the dates Delhi observed the hartal on 30 March resulted in considerable violence in the streets. The strike in Lahore and Amritsar passed off peacefully on 6 April. Suddenly on 9 April, Sir Michael Francis O' Dwyer (1864-1990) deported two popular leaders named Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifud-Din Kitchlew from Amritsar. On the same day Gandhiji's entry was also prohibited in Punjab under the Defence of India rules as a historian describes: "Gandhiji tried to go to Punjab to help quieten the people, but the government deported him to Bombay. He found that Bombay and even his native Gujarat, including Ahmedabad, were up in flames and he decided to stay and try and pacify the people" (Chandra 182).

Suddenly on 10 April, Satyapal and Kitchlew were called to the deputy Commissioner's residence arrested there and sent off to Dharmsetla in Himachal Pradesh, leading to a general strike in Amritsar. People merged together into a crowd of about 50,000 to protest against deputy Commissioner. However, later the crowd was stopped and fired upon near the railway foot bridge. Officially, the number of people killed was 12 and those wounded between 20 and 30. But according to the evidence the number of dead was between 20 and 30. This "led to an attack on the town hall and the post office; telegraph wires were cut and Europeans including women were attacked" (Chandra 182). Later on Brigadier - General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer arrived in Amritsar. He immediately established army rule there and issued an order prohibiting any public meetings and assemblies.

In the novel, we find that the news spread all over that Gangaji would address mass rally to denounce the imperialist design, people of all class and community began to flock to the Bibigarh Garden. Apprehending trouble, the British Resident immediately called the army. Soon Colonel Rudyard of the fifth Baluch arrived and ordered soldiers to fire indiscriminately, killing hundreds of innocent unarmed men, women and children. "Colonel Rudyard asked his men to level their rifles at the crowd barely 150 yards away and fire" (80). Before the disastrous act no one was warned:

*There was no warning, no megaphone reminder of the illegality of their conjugation, no instruction to leave peacefully; nothing. Rudyard did not even command his men to fire into the air, or at the feet of their target. They fired, at his orders, into the chests and the faces and the wombs of unarmed, unsuspecting crowd (80).*



The soldiers that day fired 1600 bullets that took thousands innocent lives. "Just 1600 bullets into the unarmed throng, and when they had finished, perhaps minutes later, 379 people lay dead, Ganpathi, 1,137 lay injured" (81). Rudyard passed most callous remark on receiving the figures of dead and injured people "Only 84 bullets wasted. Not bad" (81). Tharoor reveals the brutality of the colonizers and their lack of human sentiments. The incident naturally left the people in a state of shock. Rudyard retired and returned to his country home in England. Even after the incident the message of Gangaji was clear towards the British, namely, "Quit India."

According to history, on 13 April which marked the Baisakhi festival, a large crowd, mostly Sikhs, gathered for a meeting in Jallianwalla Bagh at 4:30 in the evening. During the meeting two resolutions was passed, one calling for the repeal of the Rowlett Act and the other condemning the firing on 10 April. A third resolution was proposed regarding the general repressive policy of government. Dyer arrived at 5.15 pm and ordered his rifleman without any warning to fire. The firing continued for about 20 minutes, 1650 rounds and 303- inch ammunition had been fired.

Officially 379 were killed and 1200 wounded. But according to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, over 1,000 people were killed. The total crowd that gathered was estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000. Rabindra Nath in a letter to Governor General wrote in this context:

*The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my past, wish to stand shorn of all special distinctions by the side of these of my countrymen who, for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradations not fit for human beings (Ghose 124).*

Eventually, after the riot enquiry committee was set up known as Hunter Committee named after its chairman, Lord Hunter. He held General R.E.H. Dyer guilty, and he was relieved of his command and prematurely retired from the army. Later on the Indian National Congress held its annual session in December 1919 and called upon British government "to take early steps to establish fully responsible government in India in accordance with the Principle of self-determination" (Pannu124).

Bibigarh Garden massacre in the novel is the fictional representation of Jallianwala Bagh massacre where Colonel Rudyard Kipling actually stands for Brigadier Reginald Dyer. We find that in the wake of Bibigarh Garden massacre, Dhritarashtra and Pandu joined the revolutionary movement. Tharoor's narration describes Dhritarashtra's / Nehru's ability as a leader in a negative way. As Dhritarashtra, Nehru is Gandhij's blind and visionary disciple. Tharoor added that "He had blind man's gift of seeing the world not as it was but as he wanted it to be" (85). Tharoor also highlights that Nehru gained importance and his control in party only after India attained independence.





Tharoor shows Gangaji spearheading the national struggle against colonial subjection and the Kaurava party. Gandhiji also headed the struggle against Britishers to attain complete independence. Gandhi also nurtured Indian National Congress through his strong ideals and beliefs.

### **The Principle of Non-Violence**

Gangaji was engaged heartedly to develop a close rapport with the masses of India to attain freedom. The Kaurava party had been in existence for thirty years when Gangaji entered into the politics. Before the advent of Ganga Dutta in politics, the party had been "a distinguished but remarkably ineffective forum for the rhetorical articulation of Anglophile dissatisfaction with the English" (110). But Gangaji's principle of non-violence changed everything in the party and in the country. Ganga Dutta never compromised on his principles. He joined politics only to bring a change in country and society.

In the similar way like Ganga Dutta, Gandhi followed his principle of non-violence. He went on hunger strike, but never broke his principles. Gandhiji was a true satyagrahi: "Gandhian methods involved sufferings and sacrifices. A true 'Satyagrahi' is a fighter for truth with soul force. He must be prepared to make endless sacrifices in which "there is only one - sided suffering that is without killing others one has to die." (Choudhari, 120)

Gandhiji as a true believer of non-violence never took up weapons against anyone. He fought the British army without weapons. Like Ganga Dutta, he never compromised on his principles. Besides Gandhi there is no political leader in the world that resorted to non-violence except Martin Luther King, the Champion of American Negroes and he too was moved by Gandhi's example. He advised his supporters to follow the method of non-violence to fight against brutality of white.

### **Conclusion**

*The Great Indian Novel*, thus, proves to be a text elucidating a severe indictment of India politics after independence. Soon after independence, the degradation of morals in Indian politics is juxtaposed with disappointed hopes of many Indians. The narrative depicts Indian Political vicissitudes before and after Independence and conveys Tharoor's disappointment with the political scenario. Tharoor through fiction fictionalizing history portrays that in colonial and post-colonial era, India has always suffered. India suffered due to British rule for many years and later on suffered due to Priya Duryodhani's evil plans. Tharoor describes the tragic fate of Indian democracy in the following words:

*We Indians are so good at respecting outward forms while ignoring the substance. We took the forms of parliamentary democracy, preserved them on a pedestal and paid them due obeisance. But we ignored the basic fact that parliamentary democracy can only work if those who run it are constantly responsive to the people, and if the parliamentarians are qualified to legislate. Neither*



condition was fulfilled in India for long. Today most people are simply aware of their own irrelevance to the process. They see themselves standing hopelessly on the margins while the professional politicians and the unprofessional parliamentarians combine to run the country to the ground. What we have done is to betray the challenge of modern democracy. (371).

These words show the nation's destiny career in naive hands. In pursuit of power petitioners not only made wrong decisions but degraded democracy as well.

Tharoor through the novel highlights that the essential nature of humanity remains the same, and history repeats itself. Tharoor envisages two diverse histories of the sub-continent, in spite of the gap of thousands of years, brings them together. *The Great Indian Novel* emerges as a recreation of distant past in the context of the ancient past.

Thus, *The Great Indian* highlights facets of history and literature. Through including history in literature Tharoor highlights the sad misfortunes of India before and after Independence. The novel describes the selfish mechanizations of political leaders. It is observed through the novel that though Indians have enjoyed the freedom since long, but they are incapable of enjoying a true freedom in Democratic country.

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## Multicultural Ethos in Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra*

Swati Chandorkar

An Ethos is something a people or a community shares. Culture in the words of E.B. Tylor is defined as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral laws, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society.” Culture is not inborn, but every individual member of the society receives it as heritage from preceding generations. India as a nation is known for its cultural heritage and this is ‘multicultural’ in its nature. The real spirit of our nation is multiracial, multilingual and multi religious. In a sense India shares a multicultural Ethos.

Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* focuses on the multicultural ethos of India. It focuses on the unity & diversity of cultural variety. Religious tolerance is an extraordinary trait of our country. We have Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and other minorities living peacefully together since ages. All these religions are linked by a common bond of love and tolerance for all religions. Mehta in *A River Sutra* has effectively expressed this multicultural ethos. The binding thread here is the Holy River Narmada & it is shown as a Sutra to bind all the different religions. People come to Narmada as a child comes to a mother & all get some consolation and are fully satisfied. Bhasha Shukla Sharma also observes the River ‘as a gamut or ‘sutra’ to create ideological consensus between Hinduism, Islam & Jainism.’

The novel has six different stories altogether but the narrator is the binding agent and binds all the different stories into a single Sutra. The happening of all the stories is the holy bank of river Narmada. People from different religions and background come on the banks of Narmada in search of solace and peace and all of them achieve it in the manner they want.

An attempt is made here to study the cultural ethos prevalent in the novel and posit that as multi cultural in nature. This colorful, vibrant culture and the various ideology practices express Indian sensibility in true sense. Every character of the novel represents a particular community. The novel presents the secularism of Indian sub- continent as an ideological consensus among Hinduism, Islam, Jainism & tribal myths. It is much more than interlinking of stories. It explores how various cultural practices live together in perfect harmony. This indigenous culture is unaltered by long period of colonialism. The paper highlights how Mehta presents the spirit of secularism. It also unfolds how nature and environmental consciousness is nurtured in Indian spirit. Human & nature relationship is also thus explored in the novel as a part of multicultural ethos.

We have stories about Hindu & Jain ascetics who represent their religions. There are diamond merchants, tea executives, courtesan in search of her kidnapped daughter



and minstrels, Muslim old Mullah, all from different professions and multi level strata of society. The novel also throws light on other cultural aspects of India as classical Indian music, tribal traditions and beliefs. It focuses through the story of master Mohan and Imrat on important tradition of the great Guru- Shishya Parampara. The unconditional love between both of them is free from the barriers of caste, class and age. Bhasha Shukla aptly remarks, "Gita Mehta studies Indian cultural in depth and tries to hold it by strings of her narratives in her novels".

Mehta has put before us the principles of Mahavira, the pioneer of Jain religion through the mouth of the monk as a narrator of his own story. Various religions are represented by different characters in this novel. The narrator himself stands for Hindu religion. Tariq Mia is for Muslim religion. Jain religion is reflected through the Jain Monk. Though all the religions are different from one another in following the path yet they all exhibit the same purpose - enlightenment and the ultimate destination of human life. Banks of pious river like Narmada are considered to help in seeking enlightenment for self. The ultimate knowledge of seeking enlightenment binds all people together. Mehta becomes a strong critic while she bluntly speaks upon the exhibition of extra wealth and through it establishing societal supremacy though material world even during the moment his son is denouncing wealth and opting to be a Jain Monk. Through the monk the principle of non-violence is also discussed. The culture of renouncing the worldly pleasure in search of ultimate peace is also reflected in the monk's story. In the surrounding of the Narmada River, all religion are assimilated. They become a single whole which is rarely seen in Indian English writings. But a River Sutra tells about the harmony amid religion diversity.

Through the teacher's story the age old Guru - Shishya Parampara is displayed. Master Mohan, a music teacher meets a blind orphan Imrat. He gives him music lessons amidst various family and societal opposition. As an ideal Guru, he is so deeply involved in Imrat that he could not imagine life without him. Imrat equally loved Master Mohan for being his teacher and guardian. Master Mohan loves Imrat so much that he thinks himself responsible for Imrat's murder while the Great Sahib Killed him after listening his rapturous songs. It is immense guilt and love that Master Mohan also commits suicide after Imrat's murder. Tariq Mai says, 'Perhaps he could not exist without loving someone as he had loved the blind child. (ARS)

The Indian psyche and tradition where immoral acts of sexual relations are not entertained by the society is well reflected through the story of Nitin Bose. He is a manager of tea estate who falls in love with a tribal woman and later realizes that his relation with her is immoral & feels afraid of the regulations of the society. He knows that such an act cannot be pardoned. He buries his immoral act in mind and this leads to his utter madness. The sense of guilt pinches him till last. The concept of 'Prayaschitta' is seen here, that he comes to the river to find peace. He takes aid to a dairy where he confesses his immoral act. He through confession gets relief and is cured of amnesia.



Music is the identity of the culture where it is played. Indian music also reveals its cultural tendency and approach prevalent in India. The source of the Indian music and lyrics arise in the emotional appeal. Vocal music, dance and instruments constitute a major factor of Indian culture. The novel explores the element of music and intensity of emotions found particular of India. Music and lyrics are not only glimpses in the novel rather it seems the very heartbeat of the novel which exceeds the plot, create life- like Indian culture and its unified characters to explore their musical tendency. Uma Ram also finds the novel as a treatise on music saying, "Becoming a musician was like entering into a pact with Shiva himself. The story, thus, is a brief treatise on musicology that enthralls the reader into nuances of music. The devotional songs, music and lyrics abound in the novel. The very approach of Mehta seems musical in writing the whole novel."

The concept of 'vanprastha' is reflected in the character of the narrator himself. He retires from active life in search of the meaning of life and this is a planned vanprastha. Indian society has a culture which believes in four ashrams and vanprastha is the last one where an individual leaves his home and settles in some religious abode, in search of real meaning of life & moksha; the eternal peace. "I have no body. My wife is dead. So, I should go into the forest vanprasthi." (ARS)

Women condition through 'The Courtesan's Story' speaks about their negligence by the society. The Courtesan here is not considered as human beings but they are used as entertainers. Gita Mehta through the character of the Courtesan's daughter, express the mentality of the society and portrays, how an innocent person becomes a victim of the society. Rahul Singh becomes a bandit due to the compulsion of the society & later his wife (Courtesan's daughter) is forced to commit suicide. Both of them are the victims of the societal harassment. This story also exhibits Indian belief in the concept of rebirth and the freedom of the soil.

The selfish and the material world is exposed through the story of the musician. His daughter is ugly and she faces the rejection and mental torture only due to her ugliness because in this materialistic world only external beauty is appreciated.

Tribes are one of the main constituent parts of India. Their beliefs, way of living and basic instinct all are different from other religion communities. Though they are considered backward as far as technology and modern civilization is concerned. But they retain the rich cultural values which are sometimes modified or distorted by others. Along with the religion followed by Hindu, Muslim and Jain, Mehta also deals with the religion practices and beliefs followed by the tribesmen in communities and are unwilling to let others enter in their life. The tribeswomen allowed Nitin Bose to worship Narmada to seek her forgiveness by which he becomes quite a normal person - free from any possession. The Naga culture is well studied here through the Minstrel's Story. The details of an ascetic's life are well explained through Naga Baba and he is a representative of ascetic's



community. The story also describes how people are victims of superstitions and religious faiths.

To conclude, Mehta tries to penetrate into the hidden dimensions of Indian culture by focusing on the individual culture while maintaining the traditional focus on the collective cultural identity of others. *A River Sutra* emphasizes the real tendency of harmonious co-existence of all humanity as essential feature of Indian culture. It also reflects the new identity of the empowered post colonial novelists who create keeping in mind to highlight the forgotten, ancient tradition and culture.

As Salman Rushdie (1997) puts it, "Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* is an important attempt by a thoroughly modern Indian to make her reckoning with the Hindu culture from which she emerged." The multicultural ethos is found at all levels, whether at the level of basic concepts of religion, human love, tendencies or actions. All these people representing special section of the society are called Indians and their culture is what we proudly call 'Indian Culture'.

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## Exploring the Varied Manifestations of Homelessness in Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*

Udita Banerjee

This paper seeks to discuss the idea of homelessness in Basharat Peers' memoir, *Curfewed Night*. The idea of homelessness in literature is frequently associated with immigrants and diasporic identities who suffer from a sense of alienation due to their inability to accept the culture of the host land as well as the hostile behavior of the natives. Diasporic literature by and large consists of the issues of identity crisis and lack of belongingness on the part of the immigrants and a constant lamentation for the homeland and a desire to return to the same. In Peer's work which is a memoir, there are accounts of the ordinary populace of Kashmir. The state has witnessed the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley and the text deals with the consequences and trauma arising from the same on a number of occasions. But what I seek to represent here is a different sort of homelessness where the isolation is mainly a characteristic of the mind which renders people with a sense of utter despondency because the loss is of the calm, comfort and the sense of refuge and protection associated with the word 'home' and not about the concrete four walls which form its exterior. It is a homelessness that is not physical but metaphorical.

### Section I

This section of the paper deals with the introduction of the author and the text, the rise of insurgency in the Indian part of the valley and how the army has been stationed in the valley to take under control the militant activities that the state fosters. This will definitely help in the better understanding of Peer's work and the circumstances under which he wrote it.

Basharat Peer is a New York based author and journalist who was born in Kashmir in the year 1977. *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir*, published in the year 2008, is a memoir written by Peer describing the conflict-ridden Kashmir of his childhood. The memoir describes the social and political conditions of the valley through personal experiences and anecdotes. He talks about loss and pain and is one of the few Kashmiris to have drawn such a portrait of his war-torn homeland. According to Wikipedia,

*The history of Kashmir is intertwined with the history of the broader Indian subcontinent and the surrounding regions, comprising the areas of Central Asia, South Asia and East Asia. Today, it denotes a larger area that includes the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir (which consists of Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh), the Pakistan-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, and the Chinese-administered regions of Aksai Chin and the Trans-Karakoram Tract.*



India and Pakistan have fought a number of wars to claim their authority over the valley since independence. With time, the conflict took a more difficult and dangerous shape and remained unresolved. The rise of militant groups like JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) fuelled the violence while peace was a far cry. In the process, describes the author, the people became the worst sufferers.

Kashmir's demand for self-rule has stimulated the insurgency attacks in the state and as a counter insurgency force the Indian government has stationed the Indian army within the state. This has been a major turning point in the history of the valley. In his memoir, Peer describes life before 1990 and says it was peaceful and it felt home. At the very beginning of his book, he describes his homeland:

*Spring was the season of green mountains and meadows, blushing snow and an expanse of yellow mustard flowers in the fields around our village. On Radio Kashmir, they played songs in Kashmiri celebrating the flowers in the meadows and the nightingales on willow branches. My favourite song ended with the refrain: 'And the nightingale sings to the flowers: Our land is a garden'. (Peer 2)*

The idea of the Kashmiri common people being churned in the struggle for authority between the Indian and Pakistani governments; between the Kashmiri militants, trained in the Pakistan occupied area of Kashmir, returning in an endeavour to accomplish their dream of Azad Kashmir and the Indian Army which is supposed to shield its motherland from the clutches of the Pakistani intruders is delineated throughout the text. What changes the most in this entire disagreement is the life of the masses, eventually ensuing in the slaughter of their aspirations. Peer calls this a 'war of his adolescence' which created a fire and engulfed his life and the lives of those close to him.

*It was January 1990; I was thirteen...The war of my adolescence had started. Today I fail to remember the beginnings. I fail to remember who told me about aazadi, who told me about militants, who told me it had begun. I fail to remember the date, the name, the place, the image that announced the war of my adolescence, a war that continues. Time and again I look back and try to cull out from memory that moment which was to change everything I had been and would be. (Peer 14)*

## Section II

In the second section of my paper I would highlight some extracts from *Curfewed Night* which would elucidate the plight of the people who had been rendered homeless in their own place of birth.

The author's father had been a government official posted in Srinagar and his homecomings were times of celebration for the family before the conflict erupted in the valley. Their life in a small village near Anantnag was almost a fairytale where the father had built a library of his own and the sons were encouraged to read Shakespeare and





Dostoevsky over lavish dinners and cups of kahwa or Kashmiri tea. They were motivated to prepare themselves for Indian Civil Service examinations. It is poignant how home for them changed in ways inexplicable and homecomings were perilous. The sounds of gunfire pierced their tranquil existence and no matter how different the gunshots of the militants sounded from that of the soldiers, the message was the same, the message of death and destruction.

*I ran home. 'Mummy, JKLF people are outside. They are going to attack a convoy, I shouted...we have to run...Mother folded the sleeves of her pheran...she suddenly said, 'What about the books?'...We had to leave the books in the house and father was supposed to arrive home soon...'God will keep him safe.'...we were half a kilometer from the river when the first bullet was fired. Kashkolnikoovs used by militants sounded different from the machine guns and other rifles used by the soldiers. (Peer 43-45)*

In his memoir, the author describes a time when he was sent to the Aligarh Muslim University for his higher studies and 'Kashmiri' became a stigma he had to bear. There were massacres where his acquaintances were killed by irate mobs on the suspicion of being a militant. There were some who obscured their identities as Muslims, mainly as Kashmiri Muslims. In the homeland as well, there were rigorous and customary inspections of people irrespective of their families, educational qualifications or place of belonging. They were made to stand in a row one after the other and checked by paramilitary forces. This regular mechanical activity would hurt the dignity of any self respecting human-being. The author describes an instance where he and his mother had boarded a local bus to visit his uncle's village. The bus left the village, and ran a mile ahead where they had to stop for an identity check at one of the two military camps bordering the village. They were asked to walk. After a hundred metres, a soldier would ask them to stop. The author describes the whole process as a video game that started and stopped with the command of the soldier. And the same game, laments Peer, repeated itself at every alternative check post in the valley.

The Kashmir of Peer's childhood dies a slow and excruciating death and the author laments for all the people he had lost in one way or another. It was during his school days that he discovered some vacant seats in his classroom, those belonging to the Kashmiri Pandit students, who were forced to leave their homes and migrate to other parts of the country because of the rise of fundamental Islamic culture in the state, proliferated all the more by unsparing militant-ism. Years later in Delhi, Peer comes across a Pandit landlady who hires him as a tenant when no one else does. He finds a home in her. He meets his old teacher Kantroo who too had been turned out and was bound to seek refuge in Jammu and a family that had once been his father's neighbors and best friends living in the most wretched of conditions as refugees. This part of the narrative reflects that home is never the same without the people who used to be in it. With the departure of the Kashmiri Pandits, a part of Kashmir, a part of home, is lost for him, forever.



He also talks about his friends who had joined militant groups because they believed in the dream of Azad Kashmir. Peer himself had too been swayed away by the idea of the same only to be brought back by the persuasion of his family. We come across the account of Tariq, his cousin, a 17 year old, who lost his life in gunfire and so many more like him. There are instances of children joining militant groups belonging to the ages as less as 14. They are lost and with them is lost a part of the family, a part of the neighbourhood and a part of the nation. The homes lost were lost forever because the people who made these homes complete were gone, never to return again.

The homelessness in Kashmir is all pervasive. This homelessness which is not merely about a lack of house they reside in but rather about the lack of serenity of a roof above one's head. If the roof is not adequate enough to shelter then it is definitely no home. The conflict-ridden Kashmir valley is fraught with situations where there are houses but no homes; there is no reliability, safety or dependence. Among many others, we come across the account of Farooque who had almost lost his eyesight in the torture camps and somehow survived the Gawkadal massacre. Farooque had lost his 'home' the day he was denied financial help from both the Indian government and the militant group he had once engaged himself with. He knew he had to fight the battle all on his own. Mubeena had lost 'home' when she was discarded by her own community and family for bearing the disgrace of a rape on the night of her wedding, by CRPF soldiers. Mubeena lived among them, estranged and unaccepted. Hussein, a young man in his twenties could not marry because he was impotent. This impotence was the result of the brutal electrocution in the torture camps. This made him unwelcome among his kin. His culture refused to accept him. He too had lost his home. "Kashmiri identity is lost, and all that remains is conflict - not simply in political terms, but in a far more existential sense" (Zutshi 1).

The comfort of a cozy corner is something most people crave for and there can be no home without security, love and hope. What we often fail to realize is that this invisible homelessness is plucking the soul out of Kashmir and the people are losing their identities. Basharat Peer, through his memoir, creates a discourse which needs the utmost attention of the nation. We can hope that someday they get back the homes they have lost if only in parts and fragments. Peer thus ends his work with the lines:

*I hoped that someday they would cease being part of processes that reduced individuals to suspects or military targets, shorn of all human complexity; processes that left them with bare nomenclatures like 'militants', soldiers, paramilitaries. I hoped that some day they could return to their homes where they could sit on balconies, or argue with their cousins about changing channels. I hoped that someday the war they were fighting and the reasons for its existence would disappear like footsteps on winter snow in my childhood. (Peer 233)*



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## Gandhi and Dalit Emancipation: Rereading Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

B. Venkat Rao

*There have been many Mahatmas in India whose sole object was to remove Untouchability and to elevate and absorb the Depressed Classes, but every one of them has failed in his mission. Mahatmas have come and Mahatmas have gone. But the Untouchables have remained as Untouchables*  
- B.R Ambedkar

From the twenties onwards, Indian life and thought were powerfully affected by the national movement and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. It is therefore not surprising that during this period all the regional literatures of India show a marked impress of Gandhiji's views and personality on various issues (Harish Chandra Raizada, 137). Mulk Raj Anand, though working mainly under the influence of Marxian ideology, has also depicted vividly the wide popularity of Gandhi among Indian masses. Anand delineates a full-length portrait of Gandhi and describes his powerful hold on the masses, exclusively from Anand's own perspective and his own upbringing.

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*, published in 1935, provided the most comprehensive outlook on the problem of untouchability. Anand can rightfully claim uniqueness for introducing "into creative narrative... whole new peoples who have seldom entered the realms of literature in India (M.R. Anand, 79). The novel came out in the period in which the untouchables had emerged as a potent political force and Gandhi was trying to win them over. Anand stayed with Gandhi in Sabarmati Ashram in 1932, where he prepared an early draft of the novel. In 1933 he revised the novel in England and submitted it to nineteen publishers, one after another, only to be rejected. In his social outlook Anand came under the spell of Gandhi's love of the outcastes and he went to his Ashram at Sabarmati and himself cleaned latrines (Shaileswar Sati Prasad, 30) This helped him develop "the idea of work as worship" and imbibed in him "an integral outlook towards all labour, as a kind of creativity". Anand's stay at Gandhi's Ashram had an impact on him. He writes:

*... after beginning to do this kind of work, I found that, In redrafting my novel in Gandhiji's Ashram, I could make the very act of cleaning latrines by "Bakha:" seem no better and no worse than any other work. In this sense, the exploitation of this person for doing his work, on a very small pay, began to be important, and the dirty aspect of the job seemed not so much to be his attitude towards cleaning commodes but part of the anal-aortic complex of the Hindus through which they condemned a whole caste of people who cleaned their dung-pots (M.R. Anand, 24)*

In writing *Untouchable* Anand had to face many problems. Untouchability In India is a socio-economic problem and a popular subject for such research. Anand's genuine fellowship and inspiration with Gandhian ideology is to be reviewed and re-examined



from the political and Dalit perspective. Prof S. S. Prasad rightly analyses the contemporary socio-political reality in his critical framework: "Ambedkar's leadership threatened to break the Untouchables way as a separate force and further underlined the political necessity of writing their confidence. Western egalitarian ideologies had also been at work but the political dimension of the idea of a fair deal to the Harijan had an urgency that could not be ignored. (Shaileswar Sati Prasad,32)

Gandhi makes a brief but ideologically moving appearance in the novel *Untouchable*. He comes to deliver a speech in the Goal Maidan near Bulaghah. In the words of Saros Cowasjee; 'Perched on a tree, not quite unlike an ape, fashions the image of Gandhi as he knew him: the little man swathed in a white shawl, with his big protruding ears expansive forehead, quixotic smile and determined echini. But more than the physical details are the magic of Gandhi that Anand has been able to capture' (Saros Cowasjee, 19)

Bakha, the protagonist, experiences discrimination and literal insults at different incidents in the hands of caste-Hindus during the course of the day. At the end of the day in the usual life, Bakha sees a huge crowd, dressed mostly in white tunics in a playground near Golbagh. They shouted aloud "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai" and "The Mahatma has come. The Mahatma has come" The word "Mahatma" fascinated Bakha. He was in such mad hurry that he forgot that he was an untouchable and touched many people. They too were in a hurry and did not mind him touching them. A motley crowd of people belonging to different castes, religions and communities gathered to welcome and have a glimpse of the Mahatma. Bakha realized that there was an inseparable barrier, the barrier of caste, which kept him away from the other people.

Gandhi, he thought, was coming to remove that barrier and unite him with them. Bakha eagerly waited for the Mahatma. He had heard people calling Mahatma Gandhi the incarnation of God. They said he would be "Maharaja of the whole of the Hindustan". A Babu who had crammed an article from *The Tribune* that morning affected great knowledge about the Mahatma in the midst of ignorant people who were charmed by the Mahatma's charisma. Indeed Mahatma Gandhi had become a legend, a tradition, and an oracle. Mulk Raj Anand directly draws Gandhi's speech from his autobiography, *Young India* and other writings. Since Anand selects only a few passages from Gandhi's writings, and presents them exclusively at crucial level of the action, it is necessary to look at Gandhi's "plain and fair" attitude towards untouchables, from historical and critical perspective.

The privileging of Gandhi as an emblem of nonpartisan feeling has, as its inverse, the demonization of Ambedkar as a purveyor of sectarian politics. The view that "the national hagiography in India has rarely conceded a space for Ambedkar alongside Gandhi" is borne out by the amazing excision of Ambedkar from several well-known literary works about untouchability (Valerian Rodrigues,137) . One of the best known of these, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), is written in the heat of Ambedkar's challenge



of Gandhi and around the period of Ambedkar's decision to convert. The novel is said to have educated the conscience of its English readers about the moral evils of assigning ritual pollution to untouchables and rendering them outsiders, but it makes no mention of Ambedkar at all. Instead, the novel celebrates Gandhi as the saviour of the untouchables, whose message of cleanliness and purity is destined to redeem them as "children of God" (Gauri Viswanathan, 220). Anand interprets the complex issues of electoral representation, being negotiated in the 1930s from Gandhi's exclusive viewpoint, which interprets separate electorates as a divisive British strategy. Gauri Viswanathan further states that, in adopting Gandhi's perspective, Anand's narrative alienate and marginalize the assertion of Dalit will, and totally ignores the debate initiated by Ambedkar on the same issue

*The British Government sought to pursue a policy of divide and rule in giving to our brethren of the depressed classes separate electorates in the Councils that will be created under the new constitution. I do not believe that the bureaucracy is sincere in its efforts to elaborate the new constitution. But it is one of the conditions under which I have been released from gaol that I shall not carry on any propaganda against the government. So I shall not refer to that matter. I shall only speak about the so-called "Untouchables", whom the government tried to alienate from Hinduism by giving them a separate legal and political status.*

*'As you know, while we are asking for freedom from the grip of a foreign nation, we have ourselves, for centuries, trampled underfoot millions of human beings without feeling the slightest remorse for our iniquity. For me, the question of these people is moral and religious. When I undertook to fast unto death for their sake, it was in obedience to the call of my conscience' (Untouchable, 162)*

Unsurprisingly, many of Gandhi's speeches appearing in the novel are taken verbatim from his political writings. From the paragraphs cited above we can obviously raise many questions on the objective of Gandhi's idea for the welfare of the Untouchables and Anand's appeal for the Gandhian ideology. At this juncture it is necessary to turn to the historical evidence on the commitment of Gandhi to the cause of the Untouchables.

Gandhi was arrested during the civil disobedience movement and he was kept in Yarawada jail from March 6, 1932. In jail Gandhi was thinking about giving a constitutional fight to British Government. The Franchise Committee of Lord Lothian was touring India during the month of February, interviewing various politicians and party leaders on communal problems. At one stage, the caste Hindu Members of the Lothian Committee who were influenced by the Congress movement violently differed from Ambedkar on his demand for separate electorate for the Untouchables. However, one should remember that at every stage of discussion with regard to the separate electorate, no caste Hindu leader or member of any committee could honestly admit that untouchability was really a burning problem of Untouchables if not the bane of the nation. On the contrary, almost every caste Hindu leader or politician used to hold similar views with regard to the separate electorate and put maximum obstacles in the way of Ambedkar's struggle for special constitutional rights for the Untouchables. These obstacles



were also raised by the Hindu communists in the name of the national interest (Dr. M. N. Javariah, 82). Nevertheless, Ambedkar was determined to convert the case of the Untouchables into a people's movement. M. N. Javariah further explains, having sensed this, Gandhi wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare on March 11, 1932, warning the British Government, that if separate electorates were to be created for the Untouchables "I must fast unto death". The British Government announced its Communal Award on August 17, 1932. This Award was given for settling the communal question based on the joint memorandum, which was submitted to the Prime Minister at the end of the Second Round Table Conference. One should remember that the Mahatma was one of the signatories to this, According to the Communal Award the Depressed Classes were granted separate seats in the provincial assemblies and the right to double votes by which they were to elect their own representatives and to vote in the general constituencies earmarked for the Hindus.

Ever since the days of Gandhi's fast unto death in the Yarrowada jail against the constitutional rights of the Untouchables, the Hindu writers have constantly been lamenting on the Communal Award. But the Untouchables on the other hand remained grateful to the British Government not only for the Communal Award but for their philosophy of equality before law, which never existed in India before nor were propounded in any Hindu Shastras. M.N Javaraiah further explains Gandhi knew what would have happened to his life if he resorted to a fast unto death against separate electorates for Muslims or Christians or if he had gone on a fast unto death against the British Government for immediate independence. Nor did Gandhi ever threaten a fast unto death for the immediate abolition of Untouchability<sup>23</sup>. Even we forget Ambedkar's views for a while for the sake of argument, his own Congressmen like Jawaharlal Nehru and other did not appreciate Gandhi's resort to fast unto death and Nehru said "I felt angry with him (Gandhi) at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question and his frequent references to God in connection with it. He even seemed to suggest that God has indicated the very date of the fast. What a terrible example to set (Norman Dorothi,271), Subhas Chandra Bose while reacting to this from jail said that all-rational thinking in India had been suspended<sup>25</sup>. The interests of the Nation were set against the Constitutional Rights of the Untouchable. Such an atmosphere was created as though the independence of the Nation was in danger because of Untouchables.

Gandhi's other problematic message was his recollection of his childhood. He did not try to show any concrete causes for the revocation of untouchability. He further made support by eliciting his bygone days where he could not revolt for the social justice. With his gift for symbolism, Gandhi selected the Bhangi, a scavenger caste of North India, to represent the problem of untouchability. Gandhi's abhorrence of untouchability, and his association of such practices with the sweeper caste, appears rooted in childhood experience. Although not mentioned in his autobiography, Gandhi's reactions, to his family's sweeper at the age of twelve are recorded in an article that he wrote in *Young India*. 27 April 1921.



*A scavenger named Uka, an Untouchable, used to attend our house for cleaning the latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him. If I accidentally touched Uka, I was asked to perform ablutions, and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child. And so far it was consistent with respect for parents; I often had tussles with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering contact with Uka as sinful. (Young India. 27 April 1921, 163)*

In another paragraph Gandhi spoke about the food habits of the Untouchables. He failed to find out the culture and tradition of the untouchables. Thoughtlessly he suggests that they should not eat beef. He chastises the distinct and innate habits of the untouchables. He hid the chasm between the Hindus and Untouchables food culture. He did not question the primitive practice of his community people.

*If, therefore, the Hindus oppress them, they should understand that the fault does not lie in the Hindu religion, but in those who profess it. In order to emancipate them they have to purify themselves. They have to rid themselves of evil habits, like drinking liquor and eating carrion. (Untouchable, 165)*

The difference between Hindus and Untouchables was a glaring difference. Everybody could see it. It divided society as nothing else did before. All the same, this difference need *not* give rise to such extreme division of society as is marked by Untouchability. It could have remained a social difference. There are many reasons where different sections of the community differ in their foods. What one likes the other dislikes and yet this difference does not create a bar between the two.

"There must therefore be some special reason why in India the difference between the Untouchable and the Upper Castes in the matter of beef-eating created a bar between the two. What can that be? The answer is that if beef-eating had remained a secular affair - a mere matter of individual taste -such a bar between those who ate beef and those who did not would not have arisen. Unfortunately beef-eating, instead of being treated as purely secular matter, was made a matter of religion." (Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, 172)

*I was at Nellore on the National Day. I met the untouchables there, and I prayed as I have done today. I do want to attain spiritual deliverance. I do not want to be reborn. But I have to be reborn, I should wish to be reborn as an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavor to free myself and then from their miserable condition. Therefore, I prayed that, if I should be born again, I should be so, not as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, but as an outcaste, as an Untouchable.(p: 164)*

The above paragraph clearly demonstrates the inability of Mahatma to deal the problem in a rational way. He fails to address the problem with profound rationality. He further, proposes to continue and promote this type of diabolic and nefarious practice in





the future generation also. This reveals his obsession with Hindu philosophy and its ideological predestination. What concerns us here is obviously that he had not come out of his own subjective upbringing.

K. Satyanarayana, a Dalit scholar and critic, rightly points out that in Gandhi's view, the caste system with its four divisions is an equitable and just system (K. Satyanarayana 79). He further explains the divisions are 'natural' and, therefore unchanging. This caste system 'fuses' all the castes of sub-castes into the four divisions of Varnas. It is a system that Gandhi strives to restore in its pure form in the colonial period. Gandhi's attempt to recover the purity of the Varna system can be seen as part of his redefinition of Vedic Hindu Society. In his view, the 'glorious' Vedic Hindu Society is an egalitarian society which degenerated after the 'Muslim' period and declined even further in the colonial period, Since Gandhi believes that the caste system is a just system; he suggests that there is no need to destroy the system itself but only strive for its reform. Commenting on the virtues of the caste system, Gandhi says:

*The beauty of the Caste System is that it does not base itself upon distinctions of wealth-possessions., Caste is but an extension of the principle of the family. Both are governed by blood and heredity ... just as the spirit of the family is inclusive of those who love each other and are wedded to each other by ties of families of a particular way of purity of life,*  
(*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. 19,175*)

In spite a few good points about the novel, propaganda mars the last or concluding part of the novel. The appearance of Gandhi and his long speech don't contribute artistically anything significant. What is more Gandhian ideology was consistently countered and challenged by Dr. Ambedkar who rose as a great scholar, leader and philosopher. By the time, Dalits across the nation were not convinced by the Gandhian messages. On the contrary, Anand hails Mahatma and tries to show that Gandhi was the only emancipator for the Dalit problems

*'I am an orthodox Hindu and I know that the Hindus are not sinful by nature, 'Bakha heard the Mahatma declaim. 'They are sunk in ignorance... Peaceful persuasion is the only means. Two of the strongest desires that keep me in the flesh are the emancipation of the Untouchables and protection of the Cow. When these two desires are fulfilled there is swaraj, and therein lies my soul's deliverance. May God give you strength to work out your soul's salvation to the end.'*  
(*Untouchable: 166*)

The paragraph cited above clearly shows the outright rightwing Hindu mindset of Gandhi's comparison of Untouchables emancipation with an animal called Cow. He did not strongly condemn the Hinduism, which sanctions the caste system and moreover he highly appreciates the Hindus that they were the righteous and sinless people. One side he speaks as a fundamental Hindu spiritualist and another side he speaks as a liberal humanist. He applies his Hindu religious obsession that the achievement of *swaraj*



depends on the protection of cow and the emancipation of Untouchables. This theory is deeply related to fascist Hindu agenda providing privilege to the cow than the degraded human beings.

According to Ambedkar, religion played an important role in this respect. From about the fourth century AD, Brahmanical orthodoxy took a firm stand in the society, and killing of cows became a punishable offence. Before that, at the time of Asoka or in the law book of Manu, killing of cows was not a serious offence but a minor one (Mukerjee Prabathi, 33). Gradually, however, excessive veneration for cows and cow-worship was advocated, possibly as a reaction to Buddhism, and the Brahmans, therefore, promulgated the law against cow slaughter. It was no half-way measure. From killing of cows, the Brahmans went a step further; they went against eating beef, although they ate it previously. Cows were now held sacred and beef-eating was considered profane. Consequently, those who did eat beef came to be regarded with scorn in society. Ambedkar thinks that hatred for Buddhism coupled with contempt for beef eating was the main reasons for making these people untouchables.

One may raise the question: 'why did not the untouchables accept the ban on cow slaughter or stop eating beef for that matter? The point to note in this context is that, over time, the untouchable castes have tried to emulate caste Hindu manners and customs, thinking-erroneously though -that such imitation will raise their social status. In the opinion of Ambedkar, since untouchables did not kill the cows themselves for eating their flesh but ate only dead cows' meat (possibly killed by others or those dying a natural death), the ban was not applicable to them. One could say that the account of Gandhi's personality, philosophy, popularity and movement could neither innately inspire the dalits nor reflect their life in his social and political activities. It seems to us that the concluding chapters were not objectively justified in the perspective of Untouchables. In the Saros Cowasjee's words "Anything following the Mahatma's visit was bound to come as an anti-climax, and what happens in the novels is no exception (Saros Cowasjee, 98). While applauding Anand's greatest contribution to the downtrodden characters in all his writings, Prof. Susie Tharu explains Anand's sympathy for the down-trodden, his broader commitment to the individual's freedom to live humanly is always limited (Susie Tharu, 98)

One would wonder if the author had genuinely progressive perspective on Untouchability he should have written about the struggles of Untouchable leaders. There were more Untouchable leaders like Jyotiba Phule, E. V. Rama Swamy and B.R. Ambedkar who led anti-caste movements and even laid down their lives for the sake of Untouchables' emancipation. Nevertheless, Anand does not even refer to them let alone consider their ideas seriously. Thabis Khair rightly comments "It must be said that a number of Indian English authors stress the emancipation of the lower castes. But, significantly, the impetus to emancipation almost always comes from Upper-Caste characters and the narration is from a Babu or Babuzied viewpoint (Tabis Khair, 138).



Many Pre-Independence writers sketched the characters and protagonists as the inspirers, admirers and followers of Gandhi in the respect of preventing the social evils. In fact, one could say that the main difference between Dalit and Non-Dalit writer is that most of the Non -Dalit writers suggest the Gandhian path as one means of eradicating the practice of Untouchability while Dalit writers on the whole believe in anti-caste progressive philosophy propagated right from Buddha to Ambedkar. Thus, Anand fails to acknowledge the legacy of anti-caste initiatives, advertently applauds parochial Gandhian values.

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## Commodification in Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage"

Vijay Kumar Datta

The leitmotif of commodification is not very clearly imprinted in our mind about British Romanticism, even if since the turn of cultural criticism in the mid-1980s some seminal works in Romantic studies have come up on this topic, particularly Jerome Christensen's *Lord Byron's Strength: Romantic Writing and Commercial Society* which critically looks at the poet's career in terms of his "quarrel with his own commodification" (William Galperin, "Review" 135), and Orrin Wang's *Romantic Sobriety: Sensation, Revolution, Commodification, History* which contends that "mystifying and commodified pleasure comprises one of the great scandals of Romantic poetry" (Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud 549). Taking cues from these critics, this chapter contends that the augmentation of the commodified culture during Wordsworth's time gets implicated to quite a few of his poems, wherein he seems to be anxious to make sense of the thingification of the social relations developing around him. It is assumed that the poet is both attracted to and critical of the reifying processes occurring around him due to the rise of commodity fetishism in a poem like "The Ruined Cottage."

"The Ruined Cottage" zeroes in on the eerie presence of Margaret in a rural cottage in shambles. The rural locale is vulnerable to the economies of debt and production that had become quite noticeable in the 1790s. The teller, of the tale, a Pedlar by trade, chips in, and helps maintain the economic system that oppresses Margaret. Her spectral presence is troped as a haunting debt that the Pedlar cannot recover through a narrative embroiled in economic realities. What intertwines the narrative is the reality of failed harvests, rising prices, and high debts that precisely reveal economic conditions during the mid 1790s. This is how the sub-text gets played out in the poem:

– *You may remember, now some ten years gone,  
Two blighting seasons when the fields were left  
With half a harvest. It pleased heaven to add  
A worse affliction in the plague of war:  
A happy land was stricken to the heart;  
'Twas a sad time of sorrow and distress:  
A wanderer among the cottages,  
I with my pack of winter raiment saw  
The hardships of that season: many rich  
Sunk down as in a dream among the poor,  
And of the poor did many cease to be,  
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridg'd  
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled  
To numerous self-denials, Margaret  
Went struggling on through those calamitous years*



*With cheerful hope: but ere the second autumn,  
 A fever seized her husband. In disease  
 He lingered long, and when his strength returned  
 He found the little he had stored to meet  
 The hour of accident, or crippling age,  
 Was all consumed. As I have said, 'twas now  
 A time of trouble: shoals of artisans  
 Were from their daily labour turned away  
 To hang for bread on parish charity,  
 They and their wives and children – happier far  
 Could they have lived as do the little birds  
 That peck along the hedges, or the kite  
 That makes her dwelling in the mountain rocks.(1) (133-60)*

Wordsworth traces the effects of the economic ills on the family, leading to the destruction of domestic bliss. According to Toby R. Benis,

*The social group most emblematic of such conditions in Wordsworth's writing is the poor. . . . The Wordsworthian 'poor' is a vast, diverse group, including abandoned women or widows, discharged veterans, beggars, gypsies and children. Wordsworth's representations of such figures dramatize the complexities of his immersion in the political and social contexts of his era. (182)*

The exploitation of the poor by merchants and dealers had put the former on the front lines of the suffering.

"The Ruined Cottage" narrates a tête-à-tête between the poet-figure and the Pedlar. As the two men sit in the front entrance of a now ruined and unkempt cottage, the Pedlar starts recounting the heart-rending tale of a former tenant, a war-widow named Margaret, who has breathed her last in the ruined cottage. Because of indigent poverty, her spouse, Robert, once a hard-working weaver, now finds he cannot eke out a living for the family and, abandoning them, joins the army. He never comes back, and desolate Margaret becomes careless towards her home and children, ultimately succumbing in the crumbling weed-ruined cottage that had once been a haven for family fostering.

Marxist critics have praised Wordsworth for dramatizing Margaret's suffering as well as the audience's reaction to it at a time when rural British populations were suffering tremendously from the debilitating economic stringency of the time. William Galperin quotes E. P. Thompson for taking "The Ruined Cottage" as "reflect[ing] 'a creative moment' in the social, political, and intellectual history of England, a moment 'when the received culture was challenged, all conventions were called into question, and the great humanist affirmations were abroad, but when sharp experience had shown that the florid periods of the platform Jacobin or the abstract period of the *philosophies* were inadequate'" ("Then ... ," 344). Since Jerome McGann's seminal book *The Romantic Ideology*, critics have



scrutinized the ways in which poems such as “The Ruined Cottage” in fact seek, to quote McGann’s, “to occlude and disguise their own involvement in a certain nexus of historical relations” by not overtly criticizing the socio-political undercurrents accountable to such a sorry state of affairs (82). According to McGann, the pantheism-suffused addendum to this poem, functions to “elide” the deplorable reality and its root cause “from our memories” (83). Unlike the MacGannian critical trajectory, this chapter’s critical assumption regarding “The Ruined Cottage” is that the poem covertly acknowledges the all-embracing energy of the then commodity fetishism in which the sustainability the human community amidst questions of suffering and sympathy is imagined.

Karl Marx’s concepts of the commodity and commodification throw a flood of light on the above critical assumption. A “commodity,” as Marx postulates in *Capital*, “is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind. The nature of these needs, whether they arise, for example, from the stomach, or the imagination, makes no difference” (125). It is characterized by use value and exchange value—features which reify it as commodification—the transformation of goods, services and people into objects of trade which have a direct bearing on social relations. The conversion of people into commodities brings in blindness to the human wretchedness accruing in the processes of production, sale and purchase bereft of even a bit of bother about their affinity to them.

“The Ruined Cottage” turns the aesthetic experience into a commodity fetish by concretizing it into a distinct object—both haulable and transportable. This becomes ostensibly clear when the Pedlar explains that

*But often on this cottage do I muse  
As on a picture, till my wiser mind  
Sinks, yielding to the foolishness of grief. (117-19)*

By reifying the cottage and its inmates into photographic image, the Pedlar presents Margaret as an object drawing, and not stirring up sympathy. It is not for nothing that he sees the loss of the commodity—the ruin of the cottage and its inmates—as a moral and intellectual loss –‘my wiser mind / Sinks’ but describes ‘grief’ as ‘foolishness.’” It is the Pedlar’s immersion into a growing consumerism that makes him see the commodity structure as ethically right but sorrowful sympathy as mawkishly foolish. Later on, too, he reiterates the same thing when he says:

*‘Tis now the hour of deepest noon. –  
At this still season of repose and peace,  
This hour, when all things which are not at rest  
Are chearful; while this multitude of flies  
Fills all the air with melody,  
Why should a tear be in an old man’s eye?*



*Why should we thus, with an untoward mind  
And in the weakness of humanity  
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,  
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,  
And feeding on disquiet thus disturb  
The calm of Nature with our restless thoughts? (187-98)*

The Pedlar's statement clearly shows that he is not too much concerned with grief but with usual wisdom that makes him give precedence to comfort. As John G Rudy rightly remarks, the Pedlar "does not, after all, question the fact of suffering. He questions only why we obtrude our perception of it on what is otherwise peaceful, even a blissful state" (161). That the poet-figure simply follows the Pedlar's wisdom becomes palpable when Margaret's woeful story fails to get registered in his mind:

*He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:  
But when he ended there was in his face  
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild  
That for a little time it stole away  
All recollection, and that simple tale  
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound. (199-204)*

The Pedlar's happy countenance runs counter to the affect of grief that the re-telling of the tale is supposed to evoke. His body language, which remains at odds with the grief, is due to his wholesale immersion into the burgeoning consumer culture of the time. The behaviour of both the Pedlar and the poet-figure is consistent with those who subscribe to commodity fetishism: their reactions, which hold back social concern and finer feeling, make the cottage turn into a commodity fetish.

Wordsworth's imagery in the poem follows the model of commodity fetishism that is coloured by his own experience with debt along with his insight into the economic realities facing artisans in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth's economic concerns in "The Ruined Cottage" foreground labour as its product—a handiwork. Throughout, handiwork is enmeshed with a larger economic context and it keeps the both "eye" and "I" busy:

*She had a husband, an industrious man,  
Sober and steady. I have heard her say  
That he was up and busy at his loom  
In summer ere the mower's scythe had swept  
The dewy grass, and in the early spring  
Ere the last star had vanished. They who passed  
At evening, from behind the garden-fence  
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply*





*After his daily work till the daylight  
Was gone, and every leaf and flower were lost  
In the dark hedges. So they passed their days  
In peace and comfort, and two pretty babes  
Were their best hope next to the God in heaven. (120-32)*

Like her husband's Margaret's occupation shows her literally tracing time with thread:

*There to and fro she paced through many a day  
Of the warm summer, from a belt of flax  
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread  
With backward steps. (459-62)*

Margaret's labour corresponds with the activity inside a cottage industry, which creates commodities, which are configured as the fabrics of temporal passage. As David Simpson observes in *Wordsworth, Commodification and Social Concern*, Wordsworth casts her as the spectral figure of the factory worker, being in heads over heels while "spinning her own tether in a motion that mimics the movements of a machine and the automated motion of a ghost. She thus signals her unwilling affiliation with the very processes of industrial production that are putting her and her kind out of work" (47). Given that the weaving industry in the rural areas were financed through invisible loan system – the kind of debts that the likes of the Pedlar had provided to the poor artisans like Robert and Margaret only added to their woes. The Pedlar's retelling of Margaret's tragic tale is not for cathartic purpose but for dressing up his grief over the loss of the loan provided.

To wrap up, the Pedlar in "The Ruined Cottage" turns out to be not a humanizing force working as a conduit for the floodgates of sympathy but an analogue for the circulation of money and the commodity. The poem fails to actuate a cathartic mourning, since the narrator's attempt to mourn the tragedy remains enmeshed with material interests.

#### End Notes

As the Pedlar is named only in Ms. D. version, all references to this poem are to this version as figuring in *An Addendum to the Poems of William Wordsworth* edited by Jared Curtis.

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## Linguistic Innovation in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

Zynullabedin

Arundhati Roy is a luminous star in the firmament of Indian literature. She has won the Booker prize in 1997 for her linguistic innovations in her debut novel *The God of Small Things*. She has a different stylistic approach toward this novel when compare to other Indian novelists. It is not written in chronological order. The reader feels very difficult to understand her style of writing. She used the non-sequential narrative style. Novelist constantly has applied linguistic devices and grammatical deviations for some particular effects that the readers have on their mind. *The God of Small Things* is written in a different style. The style used by Arundhati Roy differs from other Indian writers. She breaks and subverts the accepted and so-called standard convention of the language. Arundhati Roy followed R.K. Narayan, has said:

*"..... the time has come for us to consider seriously the question of a Bharat brand of English. So far, English has had a comparatively confined existence in our country chiefly in the halls of learning, justice or administration. Now the time is ripe for it to come to the dusty street, market place, and under the banyan tree."*

Arundhati Roy is one of the gifted Indian novelists. The novel *The God of small Things* is considered as one of the most accomplished novels in Indian writings in English. The stylistic and linguistic devices of the novel have created sharp reactions among the readers. She has experimented with the language use. A linguistic investigation of the text shows that the treatment of the morphology and the syntax is original and creative.

### Deviation and Parallelism:

Arundhati Roy's *The God of small Things* is the best example of deviation and parallelism. There is a complex and abundant use of alliteration and assonance. There are characteristic of parallel structures in text, referring specifically to the repetition of consonant and vowel sounds respectively. Alliteration occurs with the repetition of the letter 'r' in the very short sentence 'Red bananas ripen' and of 'b' in the phrase 'black crows gorge on bright mangoes', while assonance is apparent in reiteration of 'I' in the phrase 'river shrinks' and 'a' in 'fatly baffled'. Groups of words with associated meanings and similar phonetic or morphemic structures called phonaesthemes are also evident, in the novel which has words like 'glittering and glistening'. She has made use of repetition both lexically and syntactically. She uses intermittent repetition as a linguistic stylistic device. As in the novel: Ammu dreams of a cheerful man with one arm, "The God of Small Things", Velutha, and the sentence begin with the 'if construction' "If he held her, he couldn't kiss her. If he kissed her, he couldn't see her. If he saw her, he couldn't feel her" (215). The 'If construction' is repeated again. "If he touched her, he couldn't talk to her, if he loved her he couldn't leave, if he spoke he couldn't listen, if he fought he couldn't win"



(330). Thus, repetition constitutes one of the most conspicuous traits of Arundhati Roy's narrative style.

### **Roy's handling of English Syntax:**

Arundhati Roy has used English syntax according to the need in her novel. She has excluded at many instances structural words, such as auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, subordinators and coordinators. It contains elliptical sentences, verb less clauses and non-finite clauses; all these have added new dimensions to the narration in terms of effect and novelty such as "Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted have imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story" (32-33). Subject less sentences is another technique she has used as Rahel's marriage to Larry McCaslin is described as: "With a Sitting Down sense" (18), where the sentence doesn't have a subject. There are a lot of one-word sentences that are stylistically aberrant, like "There were so many stains on the road. Feathers. Mangoes. Spit" (82), "Estha never saw her like that. Wild. Sick. Sad" (159). Roy also has used sentences without a verb like: "A face in the crowd" (173), "The water. The mud. The trees. The fish. The stars." (333), "The Meenachal." (203), and "Dark of Heart" (304). Another stylistic feature in the novel is the indulgent use of graph logical sentences such as "Not old. Not young. But a viable-die-able age" (3).

### **Roy's Use of Rhetorical Devices**

Without the analysis of the Rhetorical devices and style in a text remains incomplete. Metaphors and Similes have always been an integral part of creative literature. Arundhati Roy's single crowning achievement lies in the field of imagery. Many key images in the novel are structurally important. The novel has presented a brilliant display of the most appropriate and striking images. Roy's images have freshness and vitality. Although the images of the two children have been repeated throughout the text, a scrutiny of the entire range of imagery in the novel reveals the power and frequency of images relating to filth. The novel has begun with a brilliant description of Ayemenem and its bright surroundings, which hints of 'over-ripeness', 'decay' and 'disintegration': "...black crows gorge on bright mangoes... Jackfruit *burst*..." . "The roads have 'potholes', the garden is 'wild' and 'overgrown', the house looked 'empty', the doors and windows were 'locked'" (1-2). The novel has clearly demonstrated that the whole text is a network of similar or connected images. Description of 'filth' pervades the whole novel as a kind of leitmotif. It is associated not only with the once proud Ayemenem House, which has formerly seen days of glory, but the whole topography permeates with it. "Filth had laid siege to the Ayemenem house—dead insects lay in empty. Vases. The floor was sticky" (88). The inmates of the house are people with broken dreams, lost childhood, mis-spent youth, and sad tragic adulthood. The once flourishing Pickle Factory too has fallen into disintegration. "The Paradise Pickles & Preserves signboard rotted and fell inwards like a collapsed crown" (295). The Meenachal River where the twin's had spent some of their



happiest moments of life fishing, swimming and playing is now a river with “a ghastly skull smile”. And it had ‘shrunk’ and “was no more than a swollen drain... that ferried fetid garbage to the sea’ and covered with ‘Bright plastic bags’ and ‘choked with succulent weed” (124) and containing “unadulterated factory effluents”, the river “smelled of shit and pesticides” and “most of the fishes had died” (125). Ayemenem is a microcosm of the nation as a whole. She has presented the sickness and rot present in society and the world in graphic details in the novel. With the help of these images, the author has suggested that our society is filthy and everything connected with it, has shown sign of decay and disintegration. An investigation of the similes used in the novel reveals many interesting facts about them. She has used similes in the entire novel as a potent literary device to express her thoughts. They are deftly interwoven into the structure of the novel and are not only illustrative and illuminative, but also an indispensable mode of the author’s creative expression.

### **Child’s Language:**

The language used in the novel is more of a child’s language. Words are freed from their traditional, recognized meanings or spelling. Arundhati Roy has used the language at her ease and she has used it perfectly. She has molded the speech-sound, twists the language and the syntax to suit her needs in presenting the characters. She has narrated many events through the eyes of twins, Rahel and Estha. As the children do not always, exercise control over their thoughts and imaginations in their immaturity the narrative naturally becomes receptive. However, this fragmented and unconventional language enhances the beauty of the speech and charm. During Sophie Mol’s funeral, Roy narrated the event through the eyes of Rahel:

*The sad priests dusted out their curly beards with gold ringed fingers as though hidden spiders had spun sudden cobwebs in them.*

*The baby bat flew up into the sky and turned into a jet plane without a crisscrossed trail. (pp-6)*

*Inside the earth Sophie Mol screamed, and shredded satin with her teeth. But you can’t hear screams through earth and stone.*

*Sophie Mol died because she couldn’t breathe.*

*Her funeral killed her. Dus to dus to dus to dus to dus. On her tombstone it said A Sunbeam Lent To Us Too Briefly. (page-7)*

### **Use of Regional Language:**

One of the stylistic innovations of Arundhati Roy is her use of Malayalam – the regional language of Kerala. Kerala is her native state. In the novel *The God of Small Things*, Roy has actually narrated the stories of her own childhood. *Punnyan Kunju* is Sophie Mol’s grandfather. The meaning of *PunnyanKunju* is ‘Little Blessed One’. Many other words like ‘*mundu*’ (page-52) which means ‘dhoti’, *onner*, *runder*, *mooner* (page-63) which means one, two and three. The word ‘*Veshyas*’ is used when Ammu went to the Kottayam police



station to inform the inspector that there had been a mistake regarding Velutha, the Inspector told her that:

*'..... the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam police didn't take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children.'* (page-8)

*Some Malayalam slogans were also used. Velutha holding a red flag and shouting the slogans for his right:*

*Inquilab zindabad!*

*Thozhilali Ekta zindabad!* (page-66)

*Malayalam folk songs:*

*Enda da korangacha, chandi ithra thenjadu!*

*Pandyill thooran poyappol nerakkamuthiri nerangi njan* (page -196)

*Chorus of the boatsong:*

*TheeyomeThithome*

*Tharaka*

*Thithome*

*Theem* (page-197)

### **Indian Pronunciation of English:**

Several examples of Indian pronunciation of English can be noticed. Arundhati Roy has made fun of Indian pronunciation. Comrade Pillai talking to Rahel pronounce the word divorced as 'Die-Vorced' (page-130). Baby Kochamma says 'Prer NUN sea ayshun' for pronunciation (page-154). Some words are deliberately spelt wrong 'America' is 'Amayrica' (page-129), 'always' is 'Orlways' (page-154), 'fatal' is 'fatle' (page-158). Another important device is the reversal of the order of letters in certain words, phrases and sentences. Some words like, 'Politeness', 'Obedience', 'Loyalty', 'Intelligence', 'Courtesy' and 'Efficiency' as: ssentiloP, ecneidebO, ytlayoL, ecnegilletnI, ysetrouC, yeniciffE. (page-313)

### **Conclusion**

The aim of these analyses is to have a deeper understanding and appreciation of literature. *The God of Small Things* clearly exhibits great craftsmanship. The novel becomes unique from its linguistic perspective. Thus, Arundhati Roy's use of words, phrases and sentences of Malayalam is especially significant in the novel. She has ventured herself into the realm of art with her debut novel *The God of Small Things*. The novel is very unique blend of fiction and reality. She has portrayed her own native place and comes up with a conclusion that the traditional values have now become consumer products to attract the global readers. The fragmented and unconventional use of child's language enhances the beauty of the speech and charm. Indian pronunciation of English words also adds the



Indianness to the novel. Roy has risen to the occasion with her new idiom and vocabulary to suit the narrative techniques of her novel.

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## Socio-cultural aspects of ESL learning in Odisha: An Exploration into Hidden Truth

Rajendra Rana

Odisha is a prototype of multi-cultural and multi-racial India with all kinds of diversity. Even after seventy years of independence we are yet to achieve our target vested on us. Cent percent ESL ambience for the undergraduate learners is a nightmare. Various factors or challenges come the way that affect the ESL learning.

Degree colleges in Odisha are heterogeneous like government, aided, private and so on. Undergraduate learners are with heterogeneous socio-cultural background and with heterogeneous colleges. Some colleges are with adequate infrastructure where as the others are with meager facilities. Even there are instances of no infrastructure at all. So accordingly ESL learning is affected.

First of all it is religion that matters a lot in ESL learning. Most of the learners hail from Hindu community in which English is treated as alien. Besides, their scriptures deny them of complete exposure to this alien language. Though the Christians are minority, their ESL learning is spectacular because of their religion and influences of the missionaries since the time of the British-India. While learning L2 the Muslim gives priority to Hindi and Urdu as per their religious scripture. The Sikhs do their learning through Punjabi. In this way the other minorities Jains, Buddhists and others prefer their own for L2 learning. Finally religion in Odisha is the most intangible factor that affects undergraduate learners' ESL learning.

Many castes, sub-caste and sub-sub castes and tribes reside in Odisha. It is observed that majority of the undergraduate learners are OBC/SEBC. Both the general and SEBC communities persist well in their L2 pursuit. The literacy rate of ST community is less than other communities despite the govt. assistance. Problems arise with ST and SC communities. In spite of uniform classroom environment provided to the undergraduate learners, their responses show marked dissimilarity and this may be attributed to the background they are led to stand on. Very often inferiority complexion arises among themselves which hinders the ESL learning situation.<sup>4</sup>

Entertaining film or movie is another socio-cultural factor. It's observed that majority of the undergraduate learners have fascination for Hindi and Odia movies. Rarely are English movies liked by them. Majority of them have no love at all for English movie. So they miss many learnable things. They are not able to take the advantages from the available resources at their hand. Consequently their ESL ambience is not possible.





Majority of them are expected to participate in co-curricular activities like debate, speech, extempore, Group Discussion, quiz etc. but they do not show interest in the programmes in English. They prefer Odia and Hindi for the same. Few of them have only English option. This may be due to their lack of confidence in English generated from their poor learning of the language at grass root level. Repercussion is that they are losing the best platform of ESL learning.

Institutions offer very conducive platforms to undergraduate learners through various cultural and literary programmes like drama, street play, song and dance and orchestra etc cultural programmes. These are performed in Odia, Hindi, Sambalpuri-Koshali. Rarely are programmes in English performed. They have no interest at all as they feel uneasy. So they are denied of learning many things of English culture, custom and tradition. Language chauvinism attitude they do very often possess. Consequently ESL learning situation is affected.

Showing courtesy like wishing the teachers and elders at the meeting and departure is done in mother-tongue and other tongues. They hesitate to utter like "Good Morning", "Good Afternoon", "Good Evening" etc. They behave in their own way as the part of their age old culture and custom. They behave indigenously. Intentionally they do not like to expose themselves. To some extent their ESL learning situation is affected in their day to day life situation.

Gender discrimination is another issue among the undergraduate learners at colleges. One thing is detected that some taboos hinder women education. Girls are socially more restricted than their counterparts. As a result, they get less exposure which affects their ESL learning situation.

Familial set up is a major socio-cultural factor regulating ESL learning situation. The undergraduate learners belong to nucleus and compound families. Family is the arch of the social system. Influence of family members moulds one's language culture. It's obvious that English speaking families are very less in number. So there are repercussions on ESL learning situation. Language ability of the family members is an important social factor. It is found that maximum family members are good at MT, Hindi and other local languages. But there is inefficiency of English language ability comparatively. The family members are inefficient regarding this. It's a matter of regret that not a single undergraduate learner is found speaking English at home. They have the hesitation of speaking English and are not able to speak efficiently in English. The family members are found non-cooperative. The frequency of this language use affects the ESL learning situation.

Outside families exist in a vast community constituted by friends, peers, juniors, seniors and others. This community is supposed to give boost to the learners' ESL learning ability. But that hardly happens in Odisha. The importance of English is increasing day by



day but there is miserable condition of ESL learning situation among the undergraduate learners due to the paucity of proper conducive ESL atmosphere around them. Again there is less language frequency of the undergraduate learners with their college teachers. The university guidelines and the college teachers' ratio of English speaking stand pole apart. There is appearance versus reality. This is the ground reality realized from the actual classroom situation of these degree colleges. MT interference affects the ESL atmosphere.

Most of the undergraduate learners feel comfortable in MT to express their literary creativity. They are born with latent potentiality but handicapped in English. Even they do not try for the same as per the demand of the situation. They could manage themselves with their MT. As a result ESL ambience is not possible.

Majority of the undergraduate learners have culture of reading newspaper. They prefer Hindi, Odia newspapers. They feel uneasy in reading English newspapers. They feel uneasy in reading English newspaper. They can manage in their regional newspapers. Consequently their ESL learning is affected in their day to day life situation.

Following pedagogical suggestions have been suggested with regard to a multi-cultural and multi-racial situation of Odisha so as to bring the solution to the problems coming on the way of ESL learning situation for the undergraduate learners:

Proper steps at government level are required for providing resources to all the variety of colleges which ultimately can lead to the all-round growth and development of learners' individual personality resulting in a suitable ESL learning situation. Moreover, in order to bring uniformity among all the undergraduate learners of different colleges having discrimination, the following steps can be taken. An interactive session among the learners at least once a month is to be conducted at different venues from time to time so that an ESL ambience can be created. They will be interested to reach their target.

An orientation on new pedagogic developments of teachers to teach the Language skill is essential at regular intervals. Such orientation should be grounded in the localization of the teachers' and students' need. They can keep themselves abreast of new developments in ELT so that they can tackle the new challenges in their day to day teaching and learning situation. It is the twenty-first century of emerging Indian society with different kind of challenges. The government of Odisha and the universities should make all kind of efforts to make the teachers refreshed or reoriented by organizing different kind of refreshers and orientation programmes taking into account the specificity of needs of the teachers and the students alike. The same they can comply with their ESL learners at grass root level for which ESL atmosphere can be made automatically. Teachers should also be initiated into innovation in English language teaching.



No religious discrimination should be made among undergraduate learners. Religious tolerance is essential with cooperation, fellow- feeling and harmony. ESL learning should be their target. Teachers should therefore be sensitive to the learner's culture, language and gender. Narrow outlook should be replaced by global outlook. Exchange of ideas through discussion, sharing, interaction etc. among all the years of the undergraduate learners can make ESL learning interactive and communicative. They must be brought together to make them feel a crucial part of communication rather than as mere religious sect. Along with communal harmony ESL ambience comes by and by. Students should be initiated into collaborative learning so that a sense of communal harmony can be fostered in the students.

Undergraduate learners should not be discriminated on the basis of caste or sub-caste. There should not be any discrimination between higher and lower caste, the rich and the poor; on the contrary social equality should prevail among the students that can create a suitable ESL learning situation among themselves. Social equality can be instrumental in creating an ESL ambience so that they can march ahead with their target. They can find it at ease for their ESL learning. Students should have equal status irrespective of their castes. Staff and the college authority should take initiative to build up confidence in the psyche of the backward and the minority class students. Harmonious relationship should be made among them. The Government of Odisha should come forward through different grants to promote ESL learning situation. We cannot expect good products out of ill-equipped ESL setting. Well-furnished ESL learning setting should be provided to them. Then ESL atmosphere can be created automatically.

A plethora of studies reveal that the quality of parent's interaction plays a formative role in the learners' language learning. Family members may not be all literate or they may be half literate. But they should always be inspirers or motivators for their wards. Family can be a great support for their wards to learn English. This indeed matters a lot in ESL learning. Home-family inspiration will be reflected in learning environment. The family culture that they imbibe does matter a lot that can help in ESL learning situation. The role of family can never be ignored.

PTA should be organized at regular intervals to assess the progress of the students Parents-teachers interaction should be made. Orientation programmes for parents should be organized so that they can allow their wards to grow. An active PTA can foster a good climate for language learning which can lead to the students being motivated into language learning. PTA members can share their expertise with students giving them more positive and professional role-models independently by knowing their areas of weakness. Most of the respondents are from the have- not section. Government is providing stipends to S.C. /S.T. students. Still then, economic disparity persists on. Proper study should be made at the grass root level. How can we expect a suitable ESL learning situation in them? So whatever the occupation their parents may take up, all the learners should be treated as equal economically so that we can expect a situation conducive to ESL



learning. Learners should be free from all kinds of financial constraints. Their minds should function freely, and then they could learn ESL in a free way.

The company the learners keep often regulate ESL learning situation. Interactive or communicative ESL learning can also be possible with friends. Thus, it is good if the learners organize debates, discussions, quiz competition, essay competition, extempore speeches, mock interview etc. in English. Hesitation to speak in English and the psychological fear can be eliminated. They should be enthusiastic and energetic to participate in the above mentioned activities so that they can nurture their potentialities along with ESL ambience.

The formal schools and colleges are not the only places to make ESL learning; it can be done anywhere. ESL learning is an open-ended learning. English is the most suitable language for SMS sending. If SMS sending takes place in English, they will feel obliged to respond in the same language. They can even get pleasure in e-mail sending and Whatsapp and FB messenger chatting. They can learn English informally. But here, there is also a danger of English. All attempts should be made to compose SMS and e-mail only in English. Plain structure can be preferred. Phobias for hesitation towards English are eliminated and interest for ESL learning be created.

In order to become a well-rounded communicator one needs to be proficient in each of the four skills. These four skills give learners an opportunity to create contexts in which to use language for exchange of real information or their own ability of their learning. Listening and reading are receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive skills. Hence all these four skills are integrated in developing learners' English skills. Writing skill in English can help them to develop their language skills. Parents and teachers should motivate them for writing in English on a daily basis through diary writing. Teachers should give them scope through wall magazines and college magazine which will serve as a platform to develop their writing skills. Learners can improve their creativity from school and college level. They should make a habit of daily reading. Uneasy feeling becomes easy in course of time. They can be strong in vocabulary, expression, language, syntactic, semantic and lexical aspects of English. Again, reading skill will be developed. Learners' mental horizon and outlook will be broadened. Newspaper reading is a kind of self reading process. Self learning is a good learning process. ESL learning can take place best through newspaper reading. Monitoring should be made while reading in library. Learners should prefer only English. Teachers and parents should also advise them to cultivate the habit of listening to good conversation in English both on the radio and TV. ESL learning should take place in an entertaining way. In this regard, Cinema/ Film entertainment and programmes based on sports events have a great scope. A film of three hours can give scope for a lot of learning. Learners should see English movies. Dialogue, tone, intonation, pronunciation, pause, style, get up etc. can be learned. Learners learn English without being conscious that they are learning.



Besides movies, TV serials have also a great influence on ESL learning. Learners should be choosy about this matter. They should not confine themselves to entertainment rather they should be shrewd enough in choosing English TV serials. Learners should enjoy as well as learn ESL learning. Unfortunately there is less or no scope for good English films in the area of our study. Hence learners are deprived of a good means of learning English in an entertaining manner. Students should expose themselves to watching English news, Ted talks and the like in order for them to hone their English skills. They should make it a habit to watch the news and talks on a daily basis to keep them updated. On TV many English films are telecast with English sub titles that can benefit the students in a manner.

Teachers, parents, guardians - all should encourage them for speaking English through debate, discussion, speech competition, extempore speech, mock interview etc., which should be organized at regular intervals for the development of speaking skill. In tutorial classes, the teacher can encourage the learners to open up without hesitation as such classes have limited number of students in each group. Situation for English speaking should be provided. Experts from outside should be invited. Students should also be initiated into enacting role plays to dispel their shyness and hesitation to speak English.

In fact, socio-cultural factors in Odisha multi-cultural and multi-racial setting on the way of ESL learning situation in India which can never be underestimated. They are the major factors on the way of ESL learning. The undergraduate ESL learners must be aware of the above mentioned socio-cultural factors. They should take utmost care so that their ESL learning must not be hindered. It should be the collective responsibility of all the teacher, parents, guardians, school and college authorities, government officials and the people of the community to create a proper conducive atmosphere for ESL learning. Then there can be all-round growth and development of a proper ESL learning situation for the undergraduate learners of English in multi-cultural Odisha in India. Again it is not an overnight effort nor a fortnight one to see the problem solved. It requires consistent effort well collaborated by the peers from all corners to prevail a highly conducive ambience for ESL learning in Odisha. We have no other way out than promoting this as English has become a way of living in India. A lion share of the state's progress depends upon the proportion of its English knowing population. Institutions, peers, teacher-guardians and government – all should find themselves under one umbrella so as to work out effective plans to ensure cent percent ESL learning situation.

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## Use of Innovative Methods and Practices in ELT

Rashmi Gupta

### Introduction

The marvels of Information Technology have shrunk the huge universe into a small 'global' world where China is no far from India or Uganda via the internet. There was an age when English was considered to be a 'status' quo and the prerogative property of the intellectual elite. One of the major reasons for the 'global village' phenomena is the techno boom and the colossal mushrooming of software and the plants of IT which has made the universe into a small village: where people meet others everyday (if they care to). Life has become much more easy, quick and cheap. It has become impossible to think a world without the two 'e's : one being English and the other 'e' communication.

With the world coming closer and closer, thanks to technology, English as a subject or rather a language would not just enable as to get into the job market, but it also helps us to communicate. The essence of good relationships is effective communication. A fair knowledge of English along with a good flair of interpersonal skills can help us carve a niche for ourselves in today's global world. The world of commerce depends heavily on effective communication and so English does project Indians to the world. Conversely the knowledge of the language also enables us to engage in cultural exchange of ideas and economy. Thus English becomes a window of the world: a window from which we can talk to our neighbors and they can interact as well.

Now a day's though faced with the endless evil of illiteracy English is the buzzword which has conquered all the major fields of the world: medicine, commerce and all fields that which we can possibly think of. Today, English is not just a language, but a valuable asset which is used as a selling faint for any aspiring youth of the IT Age. In this global world, it is but obvious that English plays the role of a global language: the language comprehensible by almost all the developed and developing countries today. Due to the rise of globalisation, it seems that the English language more than any other is having a most pronounced and lasting impact on the collective networks of the world mind.

As the invaders of professional arena are required to be armed with the skills of communication in English language, as it being the universal official language, many events are conducted to take care of Indian students who are hesitant to those who are confident. The paper is a record of those events which are helpful to enhance English speaking skills and overall personality development of students. With this aim to provide the students of all year and branches a common single platform and means of unhindered interaction for their mutual benefit, many interactive and interesting events are organized.



These events are conducted through a committee named “Linguistic Committee” headed by one senior teacher. The committee has a vision and a mission which is entrusted to keep the spirit of communication flowing and grooming the overall personality of students. The committee works with an aim to prepare students appearing for different competitive examinations, which involve English Aptitude as well. It prepares students for competitive exams like GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS and CAT. The main aim of the committee is to keep the spirit of communication flowing. Hence, it also helps the students in personality enhancement and development of their communication skills.

### **Theoretical Background**

At the moment, a global revolution is taking place in which more people than ever are learning English. This is because it has become the planet’s language for commerce, technology and also empowerment. According to a recent report from the British Council, two billion people will be studying English and three billion people will speak it in ten years. Linguistically speaking, it is a totally new world. At the moment, there are more non-native speakers of English than there are native speakers.

English as a means of communication is good at incorporating the ‘other’ into its own language as can be seen with the many words and phrases originally from other languages that most people would now consider authentically English. The strength of the English language is that it accepts these variations and integrates them into itself effectively.

It is the English language however that seems to be having a bigger impact on the world as a whole and has become the global de-facto standard used in business, cultural and political exchange. There is a huge cultural uptake of English, with dozens of variations on the language coming into existence as people have shaped it with their own cultural conditioning. These differing versions of the language are still understandable as English however, and have helped it to evolve and grow at a rapid rate.

English has become a sort of common denominator in international affairs, as it has a fairly open ended linguistic structure and is able to be understood in a wide variety of circumstances. The birth of the Internet in an English speaking country has also had a huge impact on this global evolution of the language, with almost 80% of the worlds’ digital information now stored in English.

The Internet is basically English oriented, as most of the large search engines are based in the U.S.A and the major computer languages themselves are a kind of sub set of the English language. This alone has been a huge effect on globalisation and has meant that English speaking countries are at a definite advantage when it comes to communicating with the world as a whole.





Hence, globalization is unfolding in a two-stage manner. In the first stage, global media and businesses extend their reach into new domains throughout the world. In a second stage, these same businesses and media are re-localized in order to best meet the economic and social imperatives of functioning in different regions of the world.

Just as businesses and media have experienced globalization and re-localization, so has the English language. The last few decades have seen a growth in the role of English around the world as the lingua franca for economic and scientific exchange. According to information gathered by Crystal (1997), 85% of international organizations in the world make official use of English, at least 85% of the world's film market is in English, and some 90% of published academic articles in some academic fields, such as linguistics, are written in English.

In summary, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there will be a growing basis for learners around the world to view English as their own language of additional communication, rather than as a foreign language controlled by the "Other". Teachers would do well to exploit this situation by creating opportunities for communication based on the values, cultural norms, and needs of learners, rather than on the syllabi and texts developed in England and the United States.

### **Development of English Language**

English language teaching and learning is developing rapidly worldwide in general and in India in particular. Indeed, the position of English language is enriched and strengthened greatly due to the application of Internet and intense progression of Information and communication Technologies (ICT) these days. The use of internet, World Wide Web and ICT are having encouraging impact on learners' motivation. Rapid advances in the technologies for communication media like television, computer, internet, printing and publishing has enabled us to get prompt access to requisite information. ICT has replaced conventional methods of teaching English language as now the students are more mesmerized towards computers and Information and communication technologies. The blackboard- a perfect vehicle for the one way transmission of information was later on supplemented by the overhead projector that is another excellent medium for the teacher dominated classroom. Now-a-days, use of mass media sources in the classroom has improved students' knowledge and motivated them to pay attention to English study.

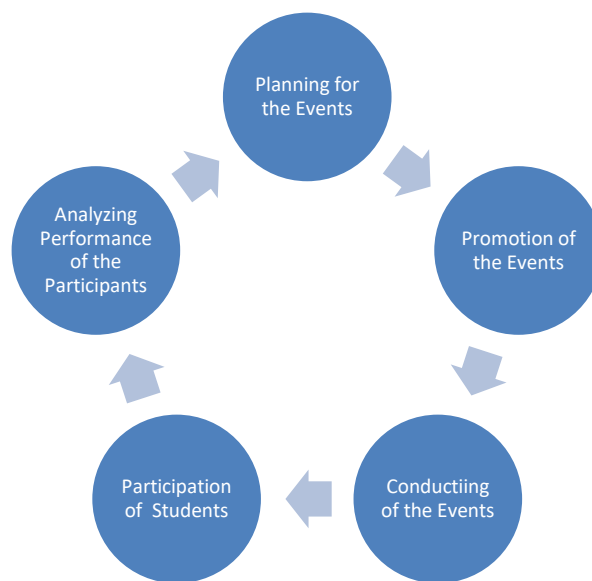
Besides uses of ICT and mass media communication few other methodologies can be adopted for English language learners. In order to avoid de-motivation on the part of learners, the methods of learning should be interesting and interactive. The uses of different kinds of events as pedagogical tools have attracted much attention from learners. Some researchers point out that these creative events are useful medium because they expose students to authentic material in an interesting way. They can be linguistic models for skill development. Through these events, students who are participating learn



presentation skills, cultivate English language and improve in many interpersonal soft skills.

### Constructivist approach rather than objectivist in teaching:

As it has been mentioned above that a committee is formed to look after the conduction and the management of different creative events in order to provide a platform to English Language learners. A senior teacher of the institute takes the permission from the management to organize these events in campus with the help of few other faculty members. The first task of the convener of this committee is to recruit few teachers through interview process for the systemization of the variety of events. These teachers help in various tasks such as in making decisions, in preparation of question papers, in selecting venue, in maintaining discipline and in other managing task. A proper promotion is done with the help of poster displaying and in making announcement in class rooms. Students are motivated to participate in events for their overall personality grooming. Students who take part in events are awarded with certificates and three top winners are encouraged with attractive prizes.



### Description of the events

Stereotyped and homogeneous methods and materials are replaced with various interactive events such as **The Critic, Chauvinist and Broadway**. These events are having authentic knowledgeable material to equip students with right information. However, all these events' names are self originated and given in order to generate interest among students.



## **The Critic (Movie Review)**

It is one of the most popular events among the students. In this event, the participants will be shown a movie and will have to answer a questionnaire based on the same movie. Movies will be decided via poll on the event website and ballot box polling.

### **Rules:**

- Type of participation: Individual
- Screening of movie selected via poll
- Written questionnaire (Objective + Subjective)

In this event, number of participants is based on registration.

## **Broadway**

Broadway - 'The English skit' is all about fun, excitement and learning. It provides a stage for all stage artists to spread their wings and show their colours.

### **Rules:**

Type of participation: Individual / Team (Max 10 members)

- Prior submission of Complete script
- Compulsory to mention the names of director / cast / background music arranger in the script
- Dialogues should be strictly in English
- Max allotted time: 15 minutes (Skit) + 2 minutes (Character introduction)
- Script will be censored by The Committee
- No. Of Performances : 5

### **Category of Awards:**

- Best Skit
- Best Actor (Male)
- Best Actor (Female )
- Best Director
- Best Background score

## **Chauvinist**

Chauvinist is an event checking the knowledge about real India where participants will show their chauvinism for their state and fight for 'The Best State Award'.

### **Rules:**



Type of participation: Team (2 members)

### Round 1:

Written questionnaire (Objective + Subjective) on selected State States (choose any 3; give preference to your choice)

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| (1) Andhra Pradesh | (6) Assam        |
| (2) Gujarat        | (7) Karnataka    |
| (3) Kerala         | (8) Maharashtra  |
| (4) Orissa         | (9) Rajasthan    |
| (5) Tamil Nadu     | (10) West Bengal |

### Round 2:

- Represent your State
- Give a presentation for the selection of '**The Best State Award**'
- Presentation can be audio/visual or power point (Max 5 minutes)
- Cross questioning allowed

### Conclusion

Thus, decolonizing English studies call for innovative and creative use of pedagogical materials to suit the needs of the native students. Decolonizing means rejection of the old imported stereotyped methods of teaching English which were used alike irrespective of the heterogeneity prevalent in the Indian classrooms. Stereotyped teaching methods were not able to produce good results due to their general applicability and able to respond to typical local situations and problems. It requires empowering individuality of the teachers to take the decisions about selection of the teaching material and adopt flexibility in their teaching methodology. Thus by capitalizing on available native resources and using them innovatively and creatively, a teacher can create a congenial teaching-learning situation and can reap better results by decolonizing English teaching-learning methods.

In summary, if the central contradiction of the 21st century is between global networks and local identities, English is a tool of both. It connects people around the world and provides a means to struggle to give meaning to those connections. If English is imposing the world on our students, we can enable them, through English, to impose their voices on the world.

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## English Language of Law Profession in India

R. Udhayakumar

*Language can make or break a career*

-Prof. N.L.Mithra.

People with good command over English are valuable to law firms. Knowledge of English words like an entry barrier, students cannot join the big league unless how they speak and write is really up to the marks. Those with good command on English will do better than rest. Anything less than flawless English will restrict student (or) lawyer professional success. As far as law student is concerned, usually writing perfect English is way more important than speaking. However, flawless English is necessary. A lawyer's task is often to be a nifty crafter of words that achieve targeted goals.

### International link language

Undoubtedly, English is regarded as International link language, which is spoken, written and practiced in the most of the world. However, language used in legal profession is not exception to it. According to Article 348 of the constitution of India, 1950, the language of the Supreme Court is English.

Further, Efficiency in English language is foremost important to understand the provisions of various states as the interpretation made by Supreme Court and high courts in medium of English language. Moreover, without attaining a proper knowledge of grammar the efficiency in any language would not be possible.

It is universally accepted that legal profession is a profession of language. In view of this concept the Bar council of India have introduced the subject of English language in the Bachelor of Law Degree course.

### The Formulas of English Grammar

The knowledge of the rules of a game helps a player in playing it confidently and speedily. The same principle applies to a language (Indu Prakash, 2007). The pattern of a language allows a student to practise rules. Practice brings speed. Speed saves time, and time is everything ( Indu Prakash, 2007).



## **The importance of learning legal English for lawyers**

### **1. Legal English**

It is one of the many forms of English that is used in law. In other words, it is a technical language specifically originated as a language for legal professionals such as judges, lawyers, legal assistants and attorneys. Legal English is not a native language for these professionals. Therefore, they are required to learn this language from a technical context in order to perform well in the field of law.

### **2. The Difference between Legal and Regular English**

Even when we talk about English being spoken in two different regions, we can analyze that there is a lot of difference between the two. For instance, there are certain terminologies in British English and the US English that greatly differ. This can lead to confusion if a British lawyer is practicing law in the US. However, English of law can set language standards that align well with the law of that particular state.

### **3. Why Is It So Important?**

Learning legal terms is important for law student's career if they are studying law regardless of the country. The main reason behind this is the rise in globalization. Since a lot of people study from one country and apply their learned skills by moving to another country, it is important that the student should be able to communicate well while interacting with others.

When students enter the market as a qualified lawyer, they will come across various clients in the country he has shifted to. Similarly, students will have to use all the legal terminologies that other lawyers use in that region. For instance, if students have studied law from US and they want to practice in the India, They will most likely interact with Indian attorneys. In order to talk to them regarding legal matters, students must adapt their legal language, i.e. English used in law that is particular to their region.

### **4. Considerations of Learning English Containing Legal Terminologies**

English is a second language for many people. Therefore, learning professional law definitely indicates that students should learn the English terminologies in the same area. However, as a law student, he can come across various challenges. This is because student will have to consider many things while searching for the right instructor and the right platform to prove his legal language.



Lawyers who are required to apply technical legal terminologies in their career have to ensure that they consider the following points:

#### **4.a. Finding a Professional Language Instructor**

It is necessary that students should find an instructor who is not only proficient in English, he should also be an expert in understanding the law. Since the concepts and terms of law are precise as well as complex, you can learn it from the legal context only if your instructor is a professional in English as well as law.

#### **4.b. Participating In Relevant Classroom Activities**

While student attend his law classes, it is important that he considers what actually is required from these classes. Participating in law classes will benefit student throughout his career if the classroom activities help him understand those common legal terms he will be using while talking to his clients in the future. Such activities can comprise of mediations and negotiations within class groups.

#### **4.c. Joining a Legal Communication Skills Program**

Since learning both written and spoken legal communication skills is essential to succeed in the legal profession, student should give special emphasis to it. He can test his legal language skills himself by enrolling in a specific program that caters to lawyers who want to polish their language skills in applying legal terminologies. Learning legal terms along with the concepts of law is the only way student can represent himself as a lawyer. Due to a challenging market for lawyers, it is a necessity for all lawyers.

### **Daunting Task**

The language of law is characterised by precision and complexity. The interpretation of legal language calls for an in-depth understanding of its specialised 'register' of vocabulary and a wide range of complex language structure. Its effective use in speaking and writing demands an even greater mastery of the varied resources of the English language. Preparing aspiring law professionals to become efficient communications in English is therefore a daunting task.

### **Tradition of Law**

Ancient India represented a distinct tradition of law, undid a historical independent school of legal theory and practice. The Arthashastra, dating from 400 BC and the Manusmriti, from 180 AD, were influential treatises in India; texts that were consider authoritative legal guidance. Man's Central philosophy was tolerance and pluralism and was cited across Southeast Asia. Before the Islamic conquest India never became a really centralised political entity but indulged in widespread decentralization. Inter-state relation Hindi pre-Islamic period resulted in clear cut rules of warfare of a high humanitarian





standard, in rules of neutrality of treaty law, of customary law embodied in religious charters, in exchange of embassies of a temporary or semi permanent character.

Early in this period, which finally culminated in creation of the Mauryan and Gupta Empire, relations with ancient Greece and Rome were not infrequent. The appearance of these similar fundamental institutions of international law, in various parts of the world, show that they are inherently present in international societies, irrespective of the culture and tradition. This Hindu tradition, along with Islamic law, was supplanted by the common law when India became part of the British Empire. Which state has the freedom to draft its own laws on subjects which are considered state subjects. Laws passed by parliament of India and other pre-existing central subjects or binding on all citizens of each state. Each state has its own laws for the taxation rates.

### **Criminal Law**

Indian penal code formulated by the British during the British Raj in 1860, forms the backbone of criminal law in India. Jury trials were abolished by the government in 1960 on the grounds they would be susceptible to media and public influence. This decision was based on and 8-1 acquittal of Kawasaki Nanavati in *K. M. Nanavati vs. state of Maharashtra*, which was overturned by high courts.

Capital punishment in India is legal but rarely used. The last execution was conducted in 2004, when Dhanjoy Chatterjee was hanged for rape and murder of a 14 year old girl. Homosexuality in India is criminal offence, though never prosecuted, under a Victorian era Criminal Statute which is currently facing a constitutional challenge at the Delhi High court.

### **Contract Law**

The main contract law in India is codified in the Indian contract Act which came into effect on September 1, 1872 and extends to whole of India except the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It governs entering into contract, execution of contract, and the effect of breach of contract.

### **Tort Law**

Development of constitutional tort begins in India in the early 1980s. It influenced the direction tort law in India took during the 1990s. In recognising state liability constitutional tort deviates from established norms in tort law. This covers custodial deaths, police atrocities, encounter killings, illegal detention and disappearances.

### **Trust Law**



Trust law in India is mainly codified in the Indian Trust Act of 1882 which came into force on March 1, 1882. It extends to the whole of India except for the state of Jammu and Kashmir and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

### **Family Law**

Family laws in India are different for different religions and there is no uniform civil code. As far as Hindus are concerned there is a specific branch of law known as Hindu law. Though attempt made by the first parliament after independence did not succeed in bringing forth a Hindu code comprising the entire field of Hindu family law, laws could be enacted touching upon the major areas affecting family life among Hindus in India. Indian Muslims personal status laws are largely based on Sharia. The development of the law is largely on the basis of judicial precedents. The contribution of Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer in the matter of interpretation of the statutory as well as personal law is significant.

### **Christian Law**

As for Christians, there is a distinct branch of law known as Christian law which is mostly based on specific statutes. Christian law of succession and divorce in India have undergone changes in recent years. The Indian divorce (amendment) Act of 2001 has brought in considerable changes in the grounds available for divorce. By now Christian law in India has emerged as a separate branch of law. It covers the entire spectrum of family law so far as it concerns Christians in India. Christian law, to a great extent is based on English law but there are laws that originated on the strength of customary practices and precedents. Christian family law has now listing sub branches like laws on marriage, divorce, restitution, judicial separation, succession, adoption, guardianship, maintenance, custody of minor children and relevance of canon law and all that regulates familial relationship.

### **Domestic Violence**

After independence, some efforts were made to modernize Indian family law, the most recent being the Domestic Violence Act (2005). It is significant because for the first time the term 'domestic violence' has been widened in meaning and scope from the culture specific restriction of 'dowry deaths' and penal provision provisions to two positive civil rights of protection and injunction. Some other areas in which reform has occurred recently are custody laws, guardianship laws, adoption laws, etc.

### **Nationality law**

Nationality law or citizenship law is mainly codified in the constitution of India and the citizenship Act of 1955. Although the constitution of India bans multiple citizenship, the parliament of India passed on January 7, 2004, a law creating a new form of very



limited dual nationality called overseas citizenship of India. Overseas citizens of India will not enjoy any form of political rights or participation in the government, however, and there are no plans to issue to overseas citizens any form of Indian passport. India has multitude of law enforcement agencies. All agencies all part of internal affairs ministry (Home Ministry). At the very basic level is the local police which is under state jurisdiction.

A large work is difficult because it is large, even though all its parts might singly be performed with facility; where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and the labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole; nor can it be expected, that the stones which form the dome of a temple, should be squared and polished like the diamond of a ring.

### **Legal Language**

Language occupies paramount place in the legal profession. A person who has equal command over regional Language, Hindi, and English can become a successful lawyer or an advocate. Legal language differs from ordinary language. Infact, legal language is chiefly based on formulate of Anglo, Latin, and French languages etc. It is, therefore necessary for the law students, especially those who are aspirants to enter into legal profession as an advocate, pleader or lawyer, to attain perfection in legal writing and drafting. Thus, there is a need make a presentation of his case before the Courts/Tribunals, relevantly and eloquently to seek justice and also to render assistance in administration of justice.

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## Soft Skills: Need of the Hour

Kiran Shekhawat

The phrase 'soft skills' is often used to describe the skills which characterise relationships with other people, or which are about how you approach life and work. Other phrases that are often used for these types of skills include: 'people skills', 'interpersonal skills', 'social skills' or 'transferable skills'. 'Hard skills', by contrast, is a phrase usually used to describe job-specific skills. Ironically, for many people, the so-called soft skills are often some of the hardest skills to develop. However, over the last twenty to thirty years, understanding has grown that perhaps soft skills may ultimately be more important in determining levels of success. That is, hard skills are a basic minimum necessary in order to operate in that particular workplace. Whether or not you are successful in your career may depend on how you relate to other people and to work: the so-called soft skills.

The importance of soft skills can be understood through the ways in which you work in key areas of your profession. Here are major contributions of soft skills:

**Communication**-To communicate effectively is more important than just being able to speak and write. Through effective communication, you can express yourself and your ideas in meetings, presentations and emails in a calm, concise, respectful and engaging manner. Communication skills help you build useful relationships and rapport with your colleagues, and need to be adapted depending on the situation.

**Self-Motivation**-Positive attitude and the initiative to work well without round-the-clock supervision is important for any employee. Not only does it demonstrate reliability and commitment, but it shows that you can fit efficiently into an organisational structure without the need for constant oversight.

**Leadership** is a soft skill that not only directly manages others but can be thought of as a collection of various other soft skills, such as a general positive attitude and outlook, the ability to communicate effectively, and an aptitude for both self-motivating and motivating others.

**Time management** shows that you can take responsibility and manage your work and meetings on time, sticking to scheduled breaks, getting your work done in time to meet your deadlines.

**Personal presentation** is dressing in an appropriate way for work and generally being neat and tidy. It shows you are self-aware and understand that your appearance and behaviour has an impact on others



**Problem Solving and Critical Thinking** is the ability to identify a problem and then come up with possible solutions. Critical thinking skills allow you to evaluate each possible solution, using logic and reasoning, to determine which one is most likely to be successful.

**Being a team player** is the key if you are ambitious to work your way into a leadership position. To be a successful manager, you need to understand what you're managing and have the ability to work efficiently and respectfully with other people who have totally different responsibilities, backgrounds, objectives and areas of expertise to you. You must treat others how you would like to be treated.

**Hard skills** are objective, specific, teachable, technical or administrative attributes that are based on facts. Some examples include typing a certain speed, operating machinery, financial procedures and speaking a foreign language. Companies value both of these skills because research suggests and experience shows that they are very important indicators of job performance.

A recent survey conducted online revealed that a majority of employers (77%) believe that soft skills are just as important as hard skills. The top soft skills that companies look for, based on survey results, are strong work ethic (73%), dependability (73%), positive attitude (72%), and self-motivation (66%).

### **Three Key Differences between Hard Skills and Soft Skills:**

- Hard skills usually take IQ (also known as your left brain-the logical centre) and soft skills usually take Emotional Intelligence or EQ (also known as your right brain- the emotional centre).
- Hard skills are skills where the rules stay the same regardless of company, circumstances or people you work with. In contrast, soft skills are skills where **the** rules change depending on the company culture and people you work with. For example, programming is a hard skill. The rules for how you can be good at creating the best code to do a function are the same regardless of where you work. Communication skills are a set of soft skills. The rules for how to be effective at communications change and depend on your audience or the content you are communicating.
- Hard skills can be learned in school and from books but there is no simple path to learn soft skills as they are not taught but have to be learned and adapted during job and interactions with people.

It is difficult to say whether hard skills are more important or the soft skills. It mainly depends on the career you choose. Careers that need hard skills and little soft skills (example: Physicists); this is where you see brilliant people who may not work easily with others but are still very successful in their career. There are careers that need both hard



and soft skills like accountants and lawyers who they need to know the rules of accounting or law well but they also depend on selling to clients to build a successful career. Dealing well with clients require excellent soft skills like communication skills, relationship skills etc. There are careers that need mostly soft skills and little hard skills like sales. A car salesman doesn't really need to know much about cars, just a little more than the consumer. His job is more dependent on his ability to read his customers, communicate his sales, pitch, persuasion skills, and skills to close to deal.

### Tips for Better Soft Skills:

Soft skills are very important for the advancement of one's career and these are certain ways to enhance the soft skills:

1. **Aim for targets in hierarchical manner:** People generally say that *aim big* and it's right but don't try to make a leap for higher positions. Similarly, improvements in soft skills cannot be made within a short period of time. It would happen gradually and with focus on soft skills in an ideal way.
2. **Try to be in other's shoes:** Put yourself in other's shoes to understand their motivation, their insecurity, their challenges etc., these factors may thus help you to understand your flaws in communication compared to them. Thus, understanding the loops of others communication and implementing such in your progress will help you in improving your communication.
3. **Self awareness:** Try to figure out the way in which people trigger certain emotions like stress, anger, irritation, awkwardness. One must first learn to understand oneself in depth for developing better self management skills.
4. **Change begins with oneself:** Change is not a fast process and so be patient when you think of change. It is usually believed that change takes place only when everyone contributes to it, but here it doesn't work that way. For a change in oneself, one must rigorously strive to make a difference. Improving soft skills is almost like changing the thought process as well as the behavior.
5. **Emotional aspect:** This skill does not have any set rules or guidelines unlike the hard skills, like Mathematics, where the perfection is attained by the same rule every time. Change in soft skills solely depends on the emotional factors, external situations, and people one encounters with everyday.
6. **Flexible:** Soft skills are valuable to any career as they enhance the inner strength, energy and interpersonal relations. Also they are flexible in nature and differ according to the audiences.



7. **Pressure handling:** Learn to handle pressure when there is a pile of work lying on your desk and thus one should be able to manage time. That is your queue to practice the skill of time management. It gives an opportunity to test the skill of prioritizing and allocating adequate time to the targets and enhances your flexibility as well as prepares you to handle challenges in work and life both.
8. **Learning never stops: Like Learning** is a never ending process, in the same manner the process of adapting soft skills is also a non stop action. One can reach the goal of proficiency in it but there are always chances of encountering new situations which maybe to test your skills and help you learn better.

Not many people give importance to the soft skills, but one should not have the misconception that hard skills are the only requirement employers look forward to. Even though the academic qualifications fit your dream job, but the adequate soft skills are of equal importance. Soft skills and hard skills both are equally important. Soft skills when combined with hard skills together strengthen the person. It not only benefits in striving for advancements in jobs or career level but also nourishes your mind with peace and harmony. Hard skills can help in completing work better whereas soft skills help in slyly making your way to the top of the hierarchy. One should have an idea of using both hard skills and soft skills properly. Thus, both skills are equal companion on the road towards peace and success.

### Objectives of Soft Skills

1. Develop effective communication skills (spoken and written).
2. Develop effective presentation skills.
3. Become self-confident.
4. Take part effectively in various selection procedures adopted by the recruiters.

### Training Methodology

Soft skills are mostly taught using examples, scenarios, games, and assessment. The teaching methods in the soft skills training include

1. Lectures
2. Projects
3. Role plays
4. Quizzes
5. Games
6. Group activities
7. And various other participatory sessions

Employers these days are not satisfied with just mere interviews in order to assess a candidate's abilities. They also assess the behavior of a candidate in a group. A group



discussion has three major objectives to test the candidate's subject knowledge, to check his/her communication skills, to assess his/her personal traits, leadership qualities, spirit of accommodation, tolerance and self-confidence.

Soft skills are learned behaviours which require training and focussed interest. Soft skills enable students with a strong conceptual and practical framework to build, develop and manage teams. They play an important role in the development of the students' overall personality, thereby enhancing their career prospects. It includes concepts such as problem solving, team work and adaptability to change. These are essential qualities required for full development of an individual. Grooming of the students with soft skills will enable them to successfully take part in various selection procedures.

The teaching methods in the soft skills training should include lectures, projects, role plays, quizzes, and various other participatory sessions. The emphasis will be on learning by practicing all sorts of soft skill programs. Since the method of training is practical and highly interactive, the students imbibe the skills and attributes. The students will not only learn the skills and attributes but also develop their interpersonal skills over a period of time. Internalization ensures that the skills and attributes become part of the students' nature.

Changes are bound to occur in their behavior and outlook, and these will make them more self-assured and confident. Moreover, the behavior changes will be gradual and natural and will not appear artificial. Thus, the changes in them will be genuine and positive. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are crucial to increase employment opportunities and to compete successfully in the business environment. The real key to the effectiveness of professionals is their ability to put their domain knowledge into effective practice. In this context soft skills have a crucial role to play.

To enhance the soft skill traits among students some training modules have to be made at college under graduate level. To conclude, the soft skills program is about enabling and empowerment. With these training programs students have a smooth transition from aspiring students to young successful managers. Therefore, this paper throws light on the need of soft skills training programs in colleges and workplaces. The paper also puts forward some suggestions for making above initiatives more effective for developing students fully equipped with relevant soft skills. The first step that the educational institutions can do is to recognize the needs of the students gauge their weaknesses and then take steps to patch them up with the required training. Students should be encouraged to read books that are focused on improving Soft Skills, attend training courses, take part in debates and socialize with their peers. Each student should be encouraged to present a topic of their choice during the seminar sessions.

In addition to this, a period with a defined syllabus should be incorporated as a subject. At school level, students may be required to do a research and present a paper or a





small write-up and submit the results during a particular period. At institutes of higher learning, Soft Skills classes can be arranged with topics like leadership skills, listening or writing skills, cross cultural conflicts, problem solving etc. Such practices are well received by students and turns out to be fun learning for them.

In conclusion, we can say that Soft Skills occupy supreme importance and one has to take the trouble to acquire Soft Skills beyond academic or technical knowledge. Soft Skills are gaining importance in all areas of the work industry. It shall not be wrong to say that this world would be a better place to live in if each individual contributes his / her bit, the society, at large, would improve dramatically, thereby contributing to the peace of the world in a bigger way.

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## Acquiring Soft Skills through Willing Suspension of Disbelief

P. Vignesh

Soft skills, the non-technical skill are demanded in every sphere of life. An individual can be identified as a successful individual only if one has acquired these skills. These skills which are termed as burning characteristics viz. communication skills, organization skills, leadership, logic, effort etc. are highly essential in a person's private & public life, inclusive of his career. So that he can emerge as a successful individual in all spheres of his life. 'Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social grace, and facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degree'. This soft skill is a non-technical skill that is intangible and extremely demanded. Naturally soft skills influences how a person interacts and relates one with others. This becomes the most essential for realizing a smooth professional life, integrated operations, effective management and most important of all an appealing personality.

In the modern world where every relationship has become tangible, Soft skills have become the identification for a person with good personality as they testify the EQ (emotional intelligence quotient) of an individual. Just as the hard skills testify on the IQ(intelligence quotient). The importance given to soft skills can be proved with the fact that it is the yardstick which a person is judged by his kith & kin, colleagues, higher officials including subordinates. A person's career depends on this acquisition of soft skills. In this dog eat dog worked every relationship can be maintained only if one has these soft skills.

Soft skills as understood by everyone influence a person's private and public life. Naturally the soft skill attributes can be classified as intra personal skills and inter personal skills. Intrapersonal skill is about time management, stress management and creative thinking. Intrapersonal skills are related to the work environment which reflects on the way person behaves with his co workers in order to optimize the development. This involves various factors that include motivating others, capacity to lead and to make negotiations effectively. These skills are inborn for some and for most others these have to be cultivated and nurtured consciously so that the outside world will acknowledge the individual's talents. It is always a constant practice and application of these skills which can transform these skills into characters. This transformation is the most demanded by employers from employees. Naturally all the educational institutions strive for this employability in their students by conducting various training programme and making these skills a part of their curriculum. Colleges have labs and schools have smart class rooms for the purpose of imparting these skills in their students. Syllabus for these labs and class rooms has been designed to improve these skills in them.



Engineering college curriculum has incorporated these skills in such a way that the students have a separate lab for the senior students. It is called communication and soft skills laboratory and the syllabus has been framed to inculcate these skills in the form of Group Discussion and Presentation. The students are to make the optimum use of this lab and assimilate these attributes into their characters. This lab provides a platform for the future engineers to become employable and also successful in their endeavours. In spite of this many students fail to inculcate these skills. Opportunities are given to these students to come out of their shyness, hesitation and fear. These chances given become futile for most of the students coming from rural background. The mixed class room in which the students from urban background converse in English without any kind of inhibition becomes a hindrance for these students from rural area. The degree of exposure that these two kinds of students have creates a wide gap which has to be filled with constant practice on the part of the students from rural areas. Repeated use of the language in given hypothetical situations, with the correct expressions and grammar alone can bridge the gap between these two different sections of the students.

Given the importance of the soft skills that is already believed and for the sake of mastering them, it is necessary to implement these soft skills through a system called soft skills management system. Through soft skills management system, the achieving process of the goal can be realized and intentionally done by benefitting from a well-prepared plan, execution and evaluation. (<http://iaesjournal.com/online/index.php/IJERE>)

The most important factor that makes this implementation hard is the atmosphere in which it is taught. In a lab a student has to converse in English on topics like situational dialogue, formal & informal conversations, group discussions, presentations and interview skills as these situations must be imagined by the student in order to learn the expressions, vocabulary, body language method and manner of speaking. For instance if it is an informal conversation for a topic 'At the market' the student has to imagine himself and his friend as the shop keeper and buyer or vice versa and write a dialogue in order to enact before others. This exercise or task given can be useful for the students if it is seriously done. Unfortunately the atmosphere has nothing new or special about it to make it possible. It is like another lab or class room where the students are their friends. So considering a friend of his as a shopkeeper or buyer becomes difficult at the conscious level. The efforts taken by some of the students get spoiled, diverted or mocked at by others. The nonchalant attitude towards the language and class room that few students have infects the others also. As a result the purpose of having a separate curriculum & syllabus for the purpose of teaching and learning English language becomes futile. The course outcomes and objectives do not get realized.

LSRW communication lab in which all the four LSRW skills are to be learnt can be fruitful like other labs, in which practical demonstrate theories only if the students can into Shakespearean audience. Shakespeare's stage did not have any back drop, screen or stage settings to create a physical representation. This communication lab is similar to that



as students have to imagine the situations, everything and set their mind. This is what Coleridge termed as 'willing suspension of disbelief' which helps the audience to set the maximum pleasure out of watching a play. If the audience watches the play consciously they will fail to enjoy. That is why not only Shakespeare's audience but anyone gets moved powerfully by tales of ghosts, magic and dream. So the term 'willing suspension of disbelief' upholds the fact that there is always a fascination for the supernatural in human mind. This fascination is fuelled by a voluntary suspension of one's consciousness in order to enjoy it as fiction, drama or poetry.

The audience indulge themselves in these with a complete awareness about its fictitiousness. That means that their judgment has been kept dormant for a short time and it has not been completely deluded into believing what it sees or hears

"The true stage-illusion consists not in the mind's judging it to be a forest, but in its remission of the judgment that it is not a forest". (Birjadesh Prasad 193)

The learners who come to learn their communication skills can become successful learners if they willingly suspend their own staff and class mates. They have to let this conscious level sleep and seriously imagine a situation on their own vividly. So that dialogues and conversations that they indulge in can be realistic. This consciousness effort combined with their zeal to master the language can develop their LSRW skills. Though this is specific to speaking skill- the unconscious registration of both informal and formal language will be acquired while speaking- it will have its effect on the other skills also.

Coleridge says that man's natural liking for the supernatural helps him to suspend his disbelief.

*Its influence is abundantly proved by the one circumstance, that it can bribe us into a voluntary submission of our better knowledge, into suspension of all our judgment derived from constant experience and enable us to peruse with the liveliest interest the wildest tales of ghosts, wizards, genii, and secret talismans.*(193)

Coleridge coined the phrase in his 'Biographia Literaria', published in 1817, in the context of the creation and reading poetry.

Coleridge recalled:

*In this idea originated the plan of the 'Lyrical Ballads'; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth on the other hand was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by*



*awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.*

The term suspension of disbelief or willing suspension of disbelief has been defined as a willingness to suspend one's critical faculties and believe something surreal; sacrifice of realism and logic for the sake of enjoyment. The term was coined in 1817 by the poet and aesthetic philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who suggested that if a writer could infuse a human interest and a semblance of truth into a fantastic tale, the reader would suspend judgment concerning the impossibility of the narrative. Suspension of disbelief often applies to fictional works of the action, comedy, fantasy and horror genres.

This is applicable for a class room where a student has to forget the everyday occurrences and create an illusion in their mind to practice a second language which is entirely different from one's own mother tongue. These learners spend a whole in the same room or other class rooms together. Their day to day experiences have to be suspended in order to have a real time practice. Usage of idioms, phrases, some language specific expressions can be acquired from these practices. When a topic like 'At the theatre' is practiced by the learners for a dialogue in spite of the fact that they are true friends, the class room has to become a theatre and they are meeting each other after a long time or at least after a short break. Only when this 'dramatic probability' is ascertained the learners will be able to create a dialogue with all the etiquettes that have to be followed. The seriousness and the amount realism will train the learners various aspects of speaking like greeting, expressing emotions, opinions, taking leave is not suspended they will concentrate on some aspects and leave out some which may make their learning process incomplete.

Learners are fully aware of the fact that they are in their class room with their own friends. Just as Coleridge says,

"The poet does not require us to be awake and believe; he solicits us only to yield ourselves to a dream, and this too with our eyes open, and with our judgment Perdue behind the curtain... only, not to disbelieve". (193) The learners must yield themselves to the process of learning. Too much of reality during this is going to hinder their learning. So they have to forget the real situation in which they are physically present and mentally transport themselves to an imaginary situation. It does not require them to disbelieve what is in front of their eyes but to stop questioning it and go on with the usage of a new language that they are learning.

Psychological critic Norman Holland points to a neuro-scientific explanation. When we hear and watch in narrative, our brains go holly into perceiving mode, turning off the systems for acting or planning to act and with them go our systems for assessing reality.



Skills required to participate effectively in a GD are listed as below.

### Skills to ace GD

- Communication skills
- Co-operation skills
- Leadership qualities
- Analytical skill
- Subject knowledge
- Attitude & confidence

Participating in a GD augments the soft skill traits in a learner. The skills required for this are all soft skills add a good idea about the topic that they are going to discuss.

‘Presentation skill can be defined as a set of abilities but an enable an individual to: interact with audience; transmit the messages with clarity; engage the audience in the presentation; and interpret and understand the mindset of the learners’. (<https://www.cleverism.com/skills-and-tools/presentation-skills/>)

Similar to a group discussion presentation also aids in the development and sharpening of soft skills. Presentation always depends on the relationship bet the presenter and the audience.

“Presentation skills can be defined as a set of abilities that enable an individual to: interact with the audience; transmit the messages with clarity; engage the audience in the presentation; and interpret and understand the mindsets of the listeners. These skills refine the way you put forward your messages and enhance your persuasive powers. The present era places great emphasis on good presentation skills. This is because they play an important role in convincing the clients and customers. Internally, management with good presentation skills is better able to communicate the mission and vision of the organization to the employees.” (<https://www.cleverism.com/skills-and-tools/presentation-skills/>)

Some of the skills referred for presentation and verbal communication, deliver, leadership quality, persuasion, humor, self awareness, adaptability, stress management, resilience, problem solving, body language, time management and organization.

Presentation skills which enable a person win and influence others is the most important of all in soft skills acquisition. While presenting in a class room a learner has his friends as the audience and naturally the seriousness of real presentation which made great orators like Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi and Churchill, Hitler is missing. Even while practicing presentation the learner has to imagine as auditorium instead of a class room and an audience which has people of all ages, caste, creed, religion and business. It is an audience from different walks of life and gathered there because of the oneness in their interest. So, the learner has to fake his work seriously and prepare a good presentation.



This preparation should be reflected in the choice of the topic itself. Though the audiences are his friends the learner has to choose a topic that is relevant for them and at the same time adding something new that he has observed which is similar to the addition of spices to food. When he presents he has to consider his friends as his valuable honoured audience and critic. The learners do not have the confidence to talk in front of his peer group as he is afraid of mockery. The root cause of this fear is that they will have to spend the rest of the days with them. Committing a single mistake is going to cost them hours of embarrassment. This can be overcome if the friends who listen to the presentation forget that it is not a stranger who is presenting so that they can approach objectively. The objectivity alone can make them refrain from making the speaker a bud of ridicule. Adopting such an attitude can help the presenter and the listener learn more from each other. The suspension of truth or reality for a short time will teach them the skill of active listening and the act of polite response to each other. Instead of impolite questioning the listeners will raise polite arguments that would give them a practice in interpersonal relationship.

Soft skills as a set of life skills that are essential can be inculcated in a lab or smart class room only if the teacher and the learners willingly suspend their disbelief and practice effectively. For this GDs and presentations are more than enough as these two activities involve all the soft skills that are grouped as intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. This can become a possibility only if Coleridge's idea of willing suspension is adopted by them. Just as the audience get maximum pleasure or thrill out of watching a play or film in the modern times a learner can acquire and sharpen his soft skills only if their disbelief is put to sleep. In such a state the lab 'neither deludes nor lets the judgment remain fully awake' (194). The learners acquire these soft skills 'neither consciously nor unconsciously but when consciousness is voluntarily suspended' (194).

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## Author Profiles

Swati Choudhury is a consultant by profession and writer by heart. She works for Microsoft, Hyderabad. She has a thing for poetry and believes that Art (in any form) exposes a person like nothing does. Writing is bliss.

Uma Jayaraman is based in Singapore and teaches English at Institutions of higher learning. She is a published short story writer and a theatre practitioner.

Dr. K. Balachandran, Former Prof., Dept. of English, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar – 608 002 (Tamil Nadu), a bilingual writer has published 21 books (17 in English and 4 in Tamil) and a number of poems, research articles and reviews in India and abroad.

Dr. Gazala Gayas is associate professor in English at Amar Singh College Srinagar. She has authored two books and has published about fifteen papers in international journals. She has also published many poems and short stories in reputed journals of English.

Prof. Isam M Shihada received his doctorate in English Literature from Pune University, India, in 1999. He is currently teaching at the Department of English and head of academic promotion, research and translation center at Al Aqsa university, Gaza Strip.

Md Mijanur Rahman has recently completed his Master of Arts in English from North East University Bangladesh and he has also completed his B.A. Honors in English from the same university in 2017.

Dip Das has accomplished his B.A. Honors and M.A. in English from North East University Bangladesh.

Puja Banerjee is an independent researcher, having postgraduated from The Department of English and Culture Studies, The University of Burdwan, securing the position of First in First Class in English.

Dr. T. Radhakrishna Murty is working as Professor of English at Vignan's Institute of Engineering for Women, Visakhapatnam. His areas of interest are prose writings in commonwealth literature and discourse studies. He has been a frequent contributor to literary journals.

Prof. Rajeswar Pal is the Principal & Head, Dept. of English Shree Ram College of Higher Education Baghpat, UP, India,

Rashmi Maniar is a Research Scholar at Lingaya's Vidyapeeth, Faridabad under the able guidance of Dr. Priya Raghav and is currently employed as the Academic Coordinator at A.V.N. Sr. Sec. School, Faridabad. Her research area is eco-critical study of select green poets in Gujarati, Malayalam and Marathi language.





Prof. Priya Raghav has completed her PhD on personal narratives by women of colour from NEHU Shillong. Currently she is employed with Lingayas Vidyapeeth, Faridabad as a faculty and Research Guide for PhD students.

Dr. K.Rekha has been working as Asst. Professor at The Zamorin's Guruvayurappan College for 12 years. Her research was done on the recent works of Toni Morrison. She has published a few papers in books.

Sarah Siddique is a student of Osmania University. She is currently pursuing her Masters in English and her areas of interests are Comparative Literature comprising of Literatures in Translation and Cultural Poetics.

Dr. Sunil Sagar has been teaching English for the past 12 years. He holds a doctorate in Translation Studies. His research interests include Translation Studies, Translation Historiography, Comparative Literature and English Language Teaching.

Swati Chauhan is a PH.D research scholar at Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Currently she is working in D.P.G degree college at Gurugram. Her area of specialization is 'New Historicism'.

Dr. Swati Chandorkar, is a Prof & Head, Dept. of English at Govt . SSNM Mahila Maha Vidyalaya, Narsinghpur MP, since 20yrs. She is a research guide and many are awarded under her supervision. She is a motivational speaker and trainer for personality development and travels pan India for orations.

Udita Banerjee is an M. Phil Scholar at the Department of English & Culture Studies in the University of Burdwan. Her research interests include Gender Studies, Partition of India, Border Studies etc

Dr. B. Venkat Rao is an Assistant Professor, Dept of Literatures in English at EFL University. His area of research and teaching include Postcolonial studies, Indian Writing in English, Dalit and Subaltern Studies.

Vijay Kumar Datta, who is the Associate Professor in Janakourdhm, Nepal, has been in PhD in English. He has been serving the nation for more than two decades. He has been serving also in the social sectors as well.

Zainullabedin has 17 years of teaching experience as English lecturer. He is pursuing his Ph.D in Literature in Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur. Andhra Pradesh. He qualification is M.A., M.Phill., and B.Ed.

Dr. Rajendra Rana teaches English in the P.G Department in Government College (Autonomous) Bhawanipatna, Kalahandi, Odisha.



Dr. Rashmi Gupta, is Head, Department of English, College Of Engineering Roorkee, Utrrakhand.

Dr. R. Udhayakumar has been teaching English language for nine years. He facilitates students to train in English language communication. He teaches Technical English, Communicative English, Business English, and General English. At Present, he teaches General English for the law students in Tamilnadu.

Dr. Kiran Shekhawat, is working as an Assistant Professor of English at School of General Education, Bhartiya Skill Development University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. She has ten years of teaching experience in various colleges and universities. She has completed DELF-A1 certificate in French.

P. Vignesh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English, K.L.N. College of Information Technology, Pottapalayam, Sivagangai.