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Dear Readers & Contributors,

One can never be bored of the seasons. They stay inspirational and we draw ours from them. Welcome to the monsoon issue of IJELLS. It brings a collection of interesting articles. There are some which garner a mention.

A comprehensive book review of Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* simultaneously bringing into the argument her earlier novel *The Palace of Illusions*. On the same breath the article on retelling Ramayana establishes the need to revisit the classics for newer interpretations. Also interesting read is Rajesh Kumar's translation of Nerella Srinivas Goud's Telugu short story 'Peddakka'.

We also have included an article on Madhubani Paintings, as Arts & Humanities have been a field with common research parameters. Alongside the movement towards specialisation, every field of knowledge should hold the promise of expansion and superimposition.

Also on the list is a paper on 'De-motivation' as an important element to be considered when designing a training programme alongside an on hands teaching experience and research flowing out of the classroom focussing on 'learner autonomy'.

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju
Founding & Chief Editor



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Womanly Yours

Abhishek Rai



Great are those souls
Who undeniably and untiringly
Fulfill their familial goals.

Godly are those faces
Who unanimously and unquestionably
Find time for their races.

Nothing seems more gratifying
Than dutifully shouldering
The mammoth responsibilities.
While you tag them fragile
You cannot afford to
Overlook their sensibilities.

While misogynists hate them,
Philogynists look up to them with admiration
Charismatically they dwell around
Oblivious to anyone's criticism.

Rendezvous with them
Turns out to be a karmic heal
Aromatically enriching
Your soul begins to feel.

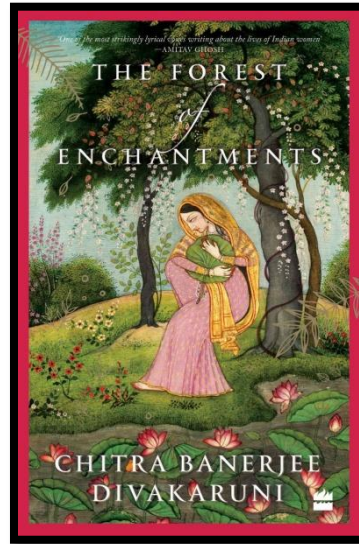


Book Review

'The Forest of Enchantments': Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's

Sitayan

Amrita Satapathy



After the mesmerising and spectacular 'The Palace of Illusions' which released in 2008, we all have been waiting for the internationally acclaimed writer Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, to unravel yet another woman from the Indian mythological pantheon. And the wait has finally come to an end a decade later with 'The Forest of Enchantments'. In fact the 'Author's Note' eloquently justifies the long gap and the birth of what Divakaruni hails her 360 pages saga as *Sitayan*. If 'The Palace of Illusions' was Draupadi's narration of the epic *Mahabharata*, then 'The Forest of Enchantments' is definitely Sita's version of yet another epic, the *Ramayana*. So like Draupadi's persuasive narrative, does this *Sitayan* fill in the gaps in an otherwise patriarchal mythological script? It certainly is a laudable attempt on the part of Divakaruni to try and give voice to someone like Sita, whose prominence only lies in the fact that her name paradoxically figures first in the holy chant-'SitaRam'. Mythology so far has unkindly relegated her to the background by placing her as a paragon of duty - dutiful daughter, dutiful wife, and devout daughter-in-law and devoted mother. Many will certainly agree to the fact that Sita, unlike the more obvious Draupadi has eluded the minds of men and women alike. We know her as Sita as the daughter of Janak, King of Mithila. We know her as Lord Ram's wife and queen apparent of Ayodhya. We also know her as the daughter of Mother Earth and the mother of the twins, Lav and Kush and an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi. But we also now know that she is a healer, a wise counsellor, and adept in martial arts, the daughter of Agni and a lover. We know of her many sacrifices but we are not aware of her sharp acumen. We know her as the dutiful, faithful and modest wife, but we are not aware of her as an intrepid traveller, fighter, nonconformist, and a resilient woman who not for a second regrets her choices or her sacrifices.



Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has drawn a very intriguing character of Sita in her latest. She is unlike the fiery and enigmatic Draupadi who is forceful and exudes dynamism, fierce loyalty, resilience and integrity of character unlike any of Divakaruni's women protagonists - "Was I not, in my own way, as responsible for this war as he (Dhritarashtra)?" (The Palace of Illusions; 254). Divakaruni has tried hard to recondition her reader's mind towards Sita's docility. People have always incorrectly equated this virtue of hers to a meek and mild persona. But Divakaruni uses another word - 'endurance'. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Sita is a fresh take on this woman of yore. Divakaruni portrays her as a thinking woman. Sita of Mithila thinks, questions, seeks, and conjectures- "'It must have been a god that brought it to you, then, and not a goddess,' I said drily. 'For you haven't understood a woman's life, the heartbreak at the core of her joys, her unexpected alliances and desires, her negotiations where, in the hope of keeping one treasure safe, she must give up another.'" (2) She is a woman who stands with her family and withstands all the trials and tribulations that life offers with indomitable strength.

Divakaruni's attempt to unravel this misconstrued woman breathes life into the otherwise clichéd conception of Sita, who had always seemed so one dimensional and submissive. We see layers to her persona that we had either over-looked or not been cognizant of; as Maharishi Valmiki insists- 'You must write that story yourself, Ma,' he said, 'for only you know it.' (3) So 'The Forest of Enchantments' is Sita's story, through and through. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni literally pulls her out of her larger than life husband's shadow and projects her as his equal and a powerful entity in her fascinating book. In fact the beauty of the book lies in the fact that the author cleverly and subtly shows that all of Sita's decisions- be it her choices or her sacrifices or her resentments, were instrumental in building Lord Ram's political, spiritual and social abilities. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Sita is indeed the symbol of endurance. It is not the endurance that is equated with a forced compromise. It is endurance that is equated with spiritual and mental fortitude, courage and willpower that every woman should possess. She is also shown as the ultimate symbol of love in all its manifestations. After all, Ramayan in spite of being Ram's story is also a story of love. It is the story of a father's love for a daughter, the tragic love story of the powerful and handsome Ram and the beautiful and doting Sita, a story of unadulterated sisterly and fraternal love, a story of blind devotion, a mother's love in its myriad forms (Sunaina-Sita, Kaikeyi-Bharat, Kaushalya-Ram, Mandodari-Meghnad, Sita-Lav and Kush), it is also the story of love in its potent and devastating form- between Dashrath-Kaikeyi, Soorpanakha-Ram, Ravan-Sita, Indra-Ahalya and also in all its celestial purity (between Sita and Hanuman). And let's not forget the love for people and justice and the state above all.

Divakaruni's 'The Forest of Enchantments', is exactly what she makes her Sita write- *Sitayan*. It is Sita's retelling of *Ramayana* through the many voices that till now had never been allowed to speak. Sita tells her tale through the voices of Sunaina, Urmila, Kaikeyi, Kaushalya, Soorpanakha, Ahalya, Mandodari- the lost voices which had never been heard



of- ““Write our story, too,” Sita hears the voices of the female characters of *Ramayana* “For always we’ve been pushed into corners, trivialised, misunderstood, blamed, forgotten – or maligned and used as cautionary tales” (4). So she brings to light the many dimensions of endurance that symbolises each woman character- we see it in Sunaina’s intellectual dexterity, in Urmila’s staunchness, in Kaikeyi’s political acumen and battle prowess, in Kaushalya’s unrequited love, in Soorpanakha’s rage, in Ahalya’s stoic silence and in Mandodari’s angst. Through them we know about the sophisticated and peaceful kingdom of Mithila, the grand and intrigue ridden courtrooms and bedrooms of Ayodhya, the domesticity of the royal households, the regressive and patriarchal mind set of the Raghu dynasty, the inflexible notion of duty on whose altar love is sacrificed again and again, the tussle between right and wrong, the philosophy behind ethical and moral repercussions of karma, the opulent Lanka and the hubris of the great Ravana whose only flaw was desiring another woman, the beautiful forests of Dandaka, Panchabati or the Ashokavatika whose enchantments vary from gigantic trees, to rare herbs, the bounteous flora and fauna to mythical or magical beasts and creatures. Each woman questions and breaks the myth behind the blind idolisation of Dharma, women’s rights and their positions in the scheme of things, the repositioning of marginalised societies (Rakshasas, Vanaras, the natural world, the others) and most importantly the relationship between husband and wife.

But the voices seem disembodied that softly echo throughout the pages of the book. The women characters seem like shadows and are not full-bodied, except Sunaina, Queen of Mithila and Kaikeyi, Queen of Ayodhya. The reader, regrettably never gets an answer to Ahalya’s plight. Sita remains unsuccessful in her quest to understand Ahalya or tell her story. This promise remains unfulfilled, where we could visualize, Draupadi, when she said with so much self-assurance - “Perhaps that has always been my problem, to rebel against the boundaries that society has prescribed for women.” (The Palace of Illusions, 343), we find Sita espousing too much philosophy- “I don’t agree with you that the private life must be sacrificed for the public one. And that is the final advice that I leave for my children: my dearest boys, balance duty with love. Trust me, it can be done.” (356). There is a certain dilution in the delineation and presence of the rest of women characters. They are more like stock characters that exist only to carry forward the story. That is the only disappointing factor of the tale. And the character of Sita, though impressively drawn, becomes more watered down as one progresses into the book. Her protests and grievance lack the gravitas, which so much defined Divakaruni’s Draupadi- “The heart itself is beyond control. That is its power, and its weakness.” (The Palace of Illusions, 213). Sita’s pain, though deep and justified comes across as a histrionic that makes the tone of the narrative a bit jarring- ““If you reject me now, word will travel across Bharatvarsha, and men everywhere will feel that they, too, can reject a wife who has been abducted. Or even been touched against her will. Countless innocent women - as innocent as I am - will be shunned and punished because of your act. Is that dharma? Is that what you want?” (243-244). One almost misses the elegiac sadness and grace of Draupadi when she realises as



the great battle of *Mahabharat* is fought- “Was I not, in my own way, as responsible for this war as he (Dhritarashtra)?” (The Palace of Illusions, 254)

Though the narration is from a woman’s perspective it cannot be said to be an overtly feminist reinterpretation of the *Ramayana*. But it certainly is the tale of, by and for the marginalised, the downtrodden, the banished, the ostracised and the disregarded, who have been living their lives in the fringes of our grand mythological narrative arc. It is a story that educates women of the ways of the men’s world- as Suniana, Queen of Mithila pragmatically instructs the naïve princess Sita on the eve of her marriage- “If you want to stand up against wrongdoing, if you want to bring about change, do it in a way that doesn’t bruise a man’s pride. You’ll have a better chance of success.” (46). The story is simplistically narrated through flashbacks by the protagonist, Sita, and there are no biases or prejudices in her interpretation of episodes or characters. She is equally smitten by the magnanimous Ram and awed by the charismatic Ravana. The language is very plain and repetitive at many places. Sita’s words unfortunately lack the power of Draupadi’s in ‘The Palace of Illusions’. Thus a certain banality seeps into the narrative time to time. The narration sometimes seems overbearing or hackneyed, especially the conversations between Ram and Sita as husband and wife or the courtroom scenes. There is over emphasis on the idea and ideals of love, which makes it very stereotypical at the end of it all. In certain places it tends to become a bit melodramatic as well. The pace is neither fast nor slow, though it gets boring and the reader may feel like it is trudging along the difficult terrain of the forests or the mountain slopes. But some of the sub plots are brilliant and bring out the essence of the characters beautifully. Kudos to the author for sticking to the original version of the epic. Though a retelling of the epic there are no contrived or arbitrary plot devices within the narrative to confuse the readers.

We have all been aware of *Ramayana*’s various versions- the Tulsidas version, the Valmiki version, the Amar Chitra Katha version, the Ramlila versions, or the popular 80s serialised version. And here comes Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s version of *Ramayana* in the form of ‘The Forest of Enchantments’ in 2019. The book- this *Sitayan*, comes at a very crucial juncture when the idea of femininity and womanhood is at the crossroads because it informs us all what it is to be a woman- “I bless my daughters who are yet unborn. I pray that, if life tests them- as sooner or later life is bound to do- they’ll be able to stand steadfast and think carefully, using their hearts as well as their heads, understanding when they need to compromise, and knowing when they must not”. This book is for all to read and understand the unsung heroes of *Ramayana*- Sita and her ilk. It is a window into the layered world of femininity.

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Peddakka

Written by Nerella Srinivas Goud

Translated by S. Rajesh Kumar



Thota Vaikuntam's representation of a Telangana woman

Three years had gone since Lachanna left for Bombay. He wrote letters for two to three months, but they stopped after some time. His wife, Peddakka has been writing letters to the address, from which she received the letters, but got no response from Lachanna. Lachanna's father went to Bombay in search of his son. He was unable to find Lachanna's whereabouts and got no information. All came to a conclusion that Lachanna is no more. Peddakka's dreams shattered with the passage of time. Peddakka couldn't dare to imagine a life without Lachanna. She is used to be delighted imagining a beautiful life with Lachanna.

Is that delight going to evaporate? She dreamt innumerable times. Are those countless dreams futile? Are those revelries, chit-chats, lovely talks and affectionate words gone? Peddakka is the eldest of the family. Her father died soon after giving birth to her sister and brother. Mother is a differently-abled woman. Peddakka became the head of the family as the family burden had fallen on her shoulders. Peddakka was married off to Lachanna at the age of ten. Lachanna also belongs to the same village. They played, worked and roamed together since childhood. Are all the enjoyments, countless chats just a dream? Childhood went off happily. Both entered youth. Elders enquired about an auspicious day to present new clothes and a cot on their bedding ceremony as per tradition.

One day

Lachanna said to Peddakka *I wish to go to Bombay.*

Why...? Asked Peddakka.

We need seven to eight thousand rupees to offer food to at least our community folks on the day of removal of nails and presentation of clothes and a cot. So I will go to Bombay to earn,* said Lachanna.

There are a lot of jobs here to do. Why should you go to a faraway place to earn? She asked.

Difficult to accumulate that much of money even you do much work, said Lachanna.



Lachanna turned a deaf ear to Peddakka and went to Bombay. He never returned. Peddakka was engrossed completely in thoughts of Lachanna. What happened to him? Had he gone missing in Bombay? But he is not a kid to go missing. Why didn't he return yet? Dead? She couldn't stop her tears when the word Death came to her mind. Is her life to become solitary? Peddakka has been thinking over it. Days are passing by. Peddakka couldn't forget Lachanna.

One day Lachanna's parents, Ramaiah and Narsamma, came to Peddakka's house. As soon as Narsamma entered, she wept holding Peddakka and her mother for some time. Ramaiah consoled them all. The women wiped off their tears with Saree's end, 'kongu'. Ramaiah said to Muttakka, Peddakka mother. *Muttakka, we will arrange for a second marriage to Peddakka.*

These words felt like a bolt from the blue to Peddakka. What will happen to brother and sister, if I remarry? Mother's condition is pitiable. Who takes care of them? Peddakka with engrossed with the thoughts of concern for her family.

Brother ... I too think the same, said Muthavva, mother of Peddakka. *What is your opinion Peddakka?* Asked Ramaiah.

Peddakka was in a state of confusion and worry. She was unable to speak. Instead of searching for their son, why do they want to marry off their daughter-in-law? Peddakka was confident of her husband's return.

We cannot look into the future. Your life shouldn't be spoiled. Ramaiah said again. Peddakka understood. The old parents were insecure over the safety of a single woman, if she lives in the paternal house.

Why are these people thinking about daughter- in- law instead of their son? *Peddakka, we want to marry you off,* said Narsamma. Peddakka didn't speak. On Ramaiah asking again *I hope that your son would come one day,* said Peddakka.

Ramaiah eyes welled up as soon as he heard his son's name. He wept with his head bend downwards. Narsamma is shedding tears, covering her face with her Saree *I will think over it after waiting for some more days* said Peddakka. Ramaiah and Narsamma went away. The days were passing by.

Lachanna didn't come. All gradually forgot about him. Pressure is mounting on Peddakka for remarriage. Peddakka didn't care their words. She married off her younger sister and sent her to her in-laws house. She also married off her brother Gangadhar. After marriage Gangadhar's behaviour changed. He became a hen pecked husband and started neglecting his mother. The burden of caring for her mother fell on Peddakka.



One day Ramaiah and Narsamma met the village elders and explained Gangadhar's indifferent attitude towards his mother. Village elders gathered and called Peddakka, Gangadhar and Muttakka. They warned Gangadhar, about not taking care of his sister and mother, and handed over the responsibility of taking care of his mother to him. Elders strongly supported the idea of Peddakka's remarriage. Ramaiah urged elders to take the responsibility of marrying off Peddakka. Elders began searching for bridegroom as the onus lied with them. Nobody was ready to listen to Peddakka and no one cared about her refusal to remarry. They decided Chandraiah is the right person to Peddakka. Chandraiah is the eldest of his family. Chandraiah was a divorcee. His first wife was a stubborn lady. She was lazy at work and he divorced her. He had no agricultural fields. They lived as agricultural labourers. One day elders called Chandraiah and his parents and proposed marriage between Chandraiah and Peddakka. Chandraiah and his parents agreed to the marriage.

The wedding took place at the temple which is on the outskirts of the village. Peddakka started a new life. The couple was made to live away from their families. All the family couldn't live under one roof, and there is no room for newly married couple. The new couple built a hut beside their parent's hut. They were living happily, working as labourers in the fields. Some days passed on. Peddakka gave birth to a son and a daughter. Expenses were increasing. Earning was not sufficient. Chandraiah desired to earn more money. He decided to go to Dubai, so that he can earn more money. One day he told the same to Peddakka. She remembered Lachanna when she heard the word Dubai. Lachanna, who went to Bombay to earn money, had not returned yet, What if it repeats in the case of Chandraiah? Peddakka cried. Chandraiah tried to pacify his wife on this issue. She did not accept the proposal. Peddakka told that begging is rather better than going to Dubai. Chandraiah desire was growing gradually as the days passed by. The reason for his growing desire was that some villagers, who went to Dubai and Saudi returned rich. Some earned money and purchased agricultural fields.

Chandraiah's idea is that if he works for 4 years in Dubai, he can build a house and also deposit some money for his daughter's wedding. He met an agent. The agent brought the visa. Peddakka came to know about Visa. She became sulky. She stopped talking and stopped showing her face and stopped eating. Chandraiah was not happy with her behaviour. She didn't give in. Chandraiah and relatives tried to woo her.

If Chandraiah goes to Dubai, you would be the beneficiaries, said relatives. But she was adamant. She argued that Chandraiah should not go to Dubai. Chandraiah went to Dubai, taking loans, despite her unwillingness. Two years have gone by. Her mind settled gradually. He sent some money to the family and cleared loans. Some amount also was deposited. Seeing the accumulated money, Peddakka felt happy.

Some days passed by. Chandraiah came home on leave. He bought sarees for his wife, watch, clothes for kids and some home needs while coming from Dubai. His hut was full



of relatives. Relatives were coming daily. Peddakka was serving Toddy, Mutton to the relatives. Rs 100 worth of toddy was ordered every day. One week passed by.

One day the Sarpanch** came to Chandraiah's hut *Chandraiah! How many years you live in small hut?* He asked.

Till I get the enough amount to build a house, said Chandraiah

Common man is not in a position to build a house if you see the increasing prices, said the Sarpanch.

Again said Chandraiah *I don't need a house Sarpanch.*

Will you live in the same hut? Asked the Sarpanch.

I want to buy agricultural land said Chandraiah.

Chandraiah! First construct a house then purchase land said Sarpanch.

We don't need a house. It is enough if I built a wall to the hut, said Chandraiah.

Building a wall is not less expensive? Said the Sarpanch.

If I build a wall with bricks, it will cost less. Those bricks would be useful when I build a house.

Said Chandraiah.

Chandraiah! Why do you spend money two times? Said the Sarpanch.

Three or four lakhs are needed to construct said Chandraiah

Not that much 1.50 lakhs are enough said Sarpanch.

Peddakka has been listening to their words, rolling beedies. *We don't construct a house even though it costs a small amount,* said Peddakka

Chandraiah said, *we will build a house after a year.*

Chandraiah! You needed one Lakh rupees to go to Dubai for the first time you don't need that now and also the company which you worked is famous. Said the Sarpanch.

These words of the Sarpanch made Peddakka angry.

Looking at Sarpanch, she said with a bit of anger, *Brother! We will not construct now, even if you advise many times.*

Nevertheless Sarpanch tried to woo them in many ways. Chandraiah didn't speak.

Sarpanch left saying *your wish.*

Chandraiah immersed in thoughts. There is a truth in what Sarpanch has said. Anyway we have to construct a house in future. Why not now? If we construct a house now, we may fall in debt but they can be cleared in one year.

Chandraiah said, Looking at Peddakka *We will construct a house.*

Peddakka looked at him angrily. She said angrily. *We don't want a house. We can construct after saving some money.*

Sarpanch is ready to sanction the grant from the government said Chandraiah.

Peddakka said *the grant is not enough to build even the basement. How can you run the family?*

All the loans will be cleared in one year said Chandraiah.

Taking short pause Peddakka said angrily *do as you wish.*

Chandraiah was determined to construct the house. They drew a muggu*** on the plot on an auspicious day. Construction started and finished in a few days. Three lakhs were



borrowed for construction. Peddakka was feeling nervous. But her husband was brave enough to build the house. Chandraiah was confident that he has a visa to go to Dubai. All the debts will be cleared, if he works hard for three years. One year passed since Chandraiah left for Dubai. He is not sending money. Though Peddakka called him up umpteen times.

One year loan period has passed. Interest is increasing on loans. Lenders are pressuring her to pay interest rather than principal amount. Peddakka was passing the time saying *He will send money next month, I will pay as soon I receive.*

Days were passing by. She had been waiting for husband's money. Time passes by. One day in the morning Chandraiah came to village with a small bag on his shoulder. He is now with grown beard, untidy clothes and hair. He is in disheveled state. Peddakka was shocked seeing her husband.

The news of Chandraiah's arrival spread in the village. One by one came to enquire about his appearance. Chandraiah narrated his ordeal. How he searched for job and troubled for food when he lost job in the company after one month. Peddakka couldn't stop weeping. Nobody cared her sobbing. The visitors were mostly money lenders of the village. Lenders felt uneasy and anxious. No one asked him to repay the money. Nevertheless Chandraiah assured them all that he will return the borrowed money with interest.

He started working as a coolie on the sand tractor. Peddakka was rolling beedies. Though they worked hard, they couldn't clear interest. One day Chandraiah while filling up sand in the tractor along with three labourers, put his basket on the ground said he was feeling pain and collapsed on the ground, putting his hand on the chest. His co-workers rushed to him and make him sit up and gave some water to drink. On seeing his condition, they emptied the tractor and took him to the hospital. Doctor examined and declared that he was brought dead. They took his dead body to the village. The village was shocked by the sudden death of Chandraiah.

Suddenly there were loud cries.

Oh ...naa ayya ...O na ayya.. What have you done

Oh ...naa ayya...Oh ...na ayya never thought you do like this.....Oh ...na ayya

Oh ...na ayya..... small kidsOh ...na ayya...

Oh ...Na ayya..... How will the kids grow....Oh ...na ayya

How do I marry off themOh ...na ayya

Have lot debts.....Oh ...na ayya

What do I say to money lenders.... Oh ...na ayya

Oh ...na ayya ... How should I show my face to them.....

Oh ...na ayyayou have made us shame...." Oh ...naayya

It is difficult to express Peddakka's sorrow. Only suffering remained in her life.



Notes:

* Removal of nails: A kind of bridal preparation on the day before wedding.

** Sarpanch: Head of the local governance.

*** Muggu: A pattern drawn with calcium carbonate powder for decorating and marking.

Original Story in Telugu:

<https://telugu.oneindia.com/sahiti/katha/telugu-short-story-peddakka-nerella-srinivas-goud-126878.html>



Callous Attitude

Emmadi Pullaiah

What a wretched and disastrous
 Global phenomenon, the callous attitude
 A scenario grim and gloomy,
 Evident everywhere,
 A decadent trend, intolerable
 Even to listen to
 Callous may be one to
 The tasks public with a sense
 Of no concern, contemplating
 A waste of time and energy
 But how can one be Indifferent to
 When one conceives
 Work-culture, duty-consciousness
 And the sense of responsibility
 Are the words obsolete
 When knowledge-race
 Is marching ahead with
 Jet pace and wisdom
 Lagging behind like a Snail's walk,
 When crores of underfed and
 Ill-clothed are starving in slums,
 When one becomes the victim
 Of the above, losing the empire of peace

Oh! My dears, cast off
 Your drowsiness, arise, awake, rest not,
 Swing in to action against all the odds,
 To tide over the crisis
 Ponder over never,
 "You are a small fish in a small pond"
 What you are, be proud of.
 Make waves translating
 Your vision in to reality.
 "Life means, not just existing,
 But a lively living"





Denunciation of the After-Effects of Partition Violence in Contemporary India in Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy*

Anju Gupta

Abstract

This paper argues that Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy* (2000), the time period of which is the decade of the 1990s, looks at a Muslim woman's rape at the hands of five Indian policemen as a legacy of the partition violence of 1947. Through a critical analysis of the novel, the paper also makes the point Nayak upon the post-Ayodhya communal politics in India as the continuing presence of the partition bitterness. The critique of the legacy affecting the second generation comes from the feminist perspective of the novel's female protagonist whose agency in seeking justice for hapless Sultana looks like strong feminist calls for justice for rape victims in recent years.

Keywords: Meena Arora Nayak, *About Daddy*, rape, legacy of partition, feminist perspective, feminist calls for justice for rape victims

Meena Arora Nayak's *About Daddy* (2000) is a different kind of a partition novel by a woman. It deals with partition and its continuing presence in post-Ayodhya communal politics in India. It projects its female protagonist as not being cribbed and cabined within the four walls of the house but a mobile subject whose agency and intervention come up with a convincing evidence of her father's guilt in Sultana's rape by five policemen: the despicable act comes out as a legacy of the partition violence of 1947.

Here the protagonist, Simran Mehta, has come to India to scatter her father's ashes on the Wagah border according to her dying father's wish, which he sees as a form of atonement for the partition he felt he caused. The scattering of his ashes would be a kind of expiation for his sin of killing innocent Muslims before partition. The first person narration reveals Simran's father's life in a series of flashbacks. On her journey to fulfill her father's last wish, she remembers her daddy saying to her: "I just want you to promise me something. Promise me, that after I die, you will take my ashes to India and scatter them on the border of India and Pakistan" (Nayak 196). Simran attempts to take a photograph at the Wagah border when she eventually lands up in jail. She is released only through the intercession of her American fiancé, Scott Ferrier.

On her futile attempt to capture her father's restive place after death through taking a click, she is taken into arrest of her 'suspicious activity' on the border without permission.



She is even accused of being a spy. This scene is especially gripping and any Indian who has come up against the Police or the State in some form or the other will certainly sympathize with her situation. She is taken to jail where she forms bonds with other inmates and it is here where the problems start. She especially bonds up with a Muslim girl, Sultana, who is raped and humiliated while in jail. After getting released with the help of Scott, Arun and Mr. Mathur, a lawyer, she goes to stay with Sultana's family with the belief that she can heal their scars and wounds and in doing so she stays on in India illegally thereby endangering their lives. Sultana's family is how Muslims are portrayed throughout the book: compassionate and hurt people who now, even after 50 years of partition and its elaborated violence, need to be treated brethren and healed by the Hindus. This was a chance for her to grow as a character. But she does not grow. Sultana and her family are soon dropped for Kalida, a former Naxalite turned peace activist and who also runs a pacifist organization who also funds Sind terrorism in Pakistan. But when she comes to know of his multi-faceted personality, she leaves him as well to head towards Hardwar to merge her daddy's ashes in the holy, the all-forgiving waters of the Ganges with the ongoing belief that the holy water of this river purges one of all their sins and accepts all to eternal rest. It is believed her waters liberate a person from all guilt. She feels an urgency to exterminate her father's soul towards atonement and his liberation from interminable penance. She says:

I weep for my father. I weep for his life. I weep for the death that evolved from his life. I weep for the violence that core him from his life. I weep for him. I weep for the guilt he carried through his life into death. I weep for him for he was a victim not only of one act of terrorism but of all acts ever perpetrated; for each act multiplied his crime and pronounced him a victim of his own guilt over and over again ... I am bereaved. I am orphaned. My father is no more. (272)

But on the way, she is stopped by heavy traffic blockage due to the procession on the occasion of Shivaratri organized by the Hindus which was passing through a Muslim market. Carrying the bag of her father's ashes tight against her chest, she begins to walk among the crowd, seeking escape. But she hears the earth explode; she was herself coated with a thick layer of dust and she realizes that the bag containing her father's ashes are torn from the bottom. She makes a desperate futile attempt to "scoop Daddy's ashes from the ground ...the ashes and the soil and debris and bits of bone and flesh" (290).

The novel ends on a dramatic note with a bloody riot and numerous deaths. She returns to the States and back to her warm milk with Kalhua watching CBS news in her boyfriend's condo, taking in images of the riots she's just been watching at firsthand.

The power of Nayak's message carries the reader throughout the novel as does the character of Simran, who mixes gullibility with courage. The novel shows picture of partition gendered violence for two generations: one that was experienced by Simran's daddy and the other when she herself experienced it in and around her. "About Daddy" describes the effects of partition violence of 1947 on the next generation from a womanist



perspective: Simran Mehta, the daughter of first hand plunger of the communal violence which followed the partition. Without doubt, even today so much part of our lives, many of these histories are linked in the cycle of violence. The passing of all those partition violence stories on to the next generation have contributed to the new kinds of explorations we are seeing. The novel looks at the question of partition memory and the need to lay that memory at rest from the point of view of the next generation represented by Simran Mehta. In this portrayal, contemporary India is “undifferentiated space of hatred, irrationality and communal violence- a portrait counterpointed to an equally ludicrous pre-partition era in which everyone lived with the wonderful secular love, and life” (Beerendra Pandey “Class Notes” 3).

The dynamics of violence are inscribed on bodies, in gender and state, affecting community, producing alienation. Displacements and dislocation are its markers. This is elaborated in the very beginning of the text when Simran attempt to merge her daddy’s ashes at the Wagah border and the police arrest her suspecting her of being a spy. Just when she is about to lay her daddy’s ashes on the ground, she feels “Floodlight descends around me, trapping me like a bug” (Nayak 3). Armed guards line up in a semicircle, their heavy guns pointing at her. She freezes in horror waiting for her body to crumble at her feet. After her arrest, the police authority’s numerous hands seizes her still further: “Hands rough and curt probe everywhere- my legs, my inner thighs, my waist, my arms, my underarms, my breasts. ‘Stop it!’ I scream in outrage, wiggling my body to, dislodge them. ‘Stop it’. I slap away their lingering violations” (5). She is given not only physical but mental torture as well. After her arrest, she is pushed in a small cell in a very pathetic state: “nauseating smell of stale urine hits my nose ... cement around it (the cell) is sticky and discoloured from unwashed urine stains. I turn my eyes in revulsion willing myself not to vomit ... My mind is reduced to the single dimension of being trapped in a nightmare” (9-10).

Simran remembers the agonizing and torturous moments of her father while he and his father were attempting to escape during the riot of Nanowal. She remembers how he was attacked by a Muslim mob:

Daddy bit down on his scream ... Blood poured down his temples, his forehead, into his eyes, blinding him. He felt the heat of a blaze as the truck was torched ... Rubbing the blood out of his eyes, he looked around. The men were gone. In the light of the blaze he saw his father struggling to get up from the ground. His stomach had been carved and the innards had fallen out. The last Daddy remembered was his father picking up his innards from the street and stuffing them back in the gaping hole of his belly. (270-71)

She remembers if it was not for a Muslim friend, her daddy would not have survived. When he lay unconscious on the ground, an ongoer Muslim read “the tattooed name ‘Amjad’ on his arm; he assumed his religion and rushed him to a medical centre” (271). If he had known of his Hindu origin, he would never have been taken for medical



aid but rather left moaning to die. She remembers how his guru, his gym teacher in Lahore, Gajji's head was chopped off: "The tonga rushed towards him as though its horse were being chased by the devil. and there was Gajji, his decapitated body sitting in the driver's seat soaked with his blood, his hands still holding the reins. His head sat staring between his thighs" (110). When Manohar, her daddy, sees his guru being killed likewise, the demon in him overpowered. He galloped down the street, his sword gleaming over his head, he entered the market place with a terrible fire burning in his eyes and then "Severed limbs, decapitated heads fell around him like windfall fruit. Reeling bodies collapsed at his feet. With every blow, blood vessels burst, squirting his face, his hands, his body" (111).

While Manohar performed last rites for his guru, he tried to put the severed head against the body to cremate Gajji in one single piece, but the mutilated head would not stay, it kept rolling to one side. Gajji was an emblem of united India. Just as his body was divided into two parts, the united India was also split into Hindustan and Pakistan. Manohar finally performed the last rites of Gajji. "With each pyre he lit, he set both Hindustan and Pakistan a flame" (111).

While still in prison, Simran sits alone in a far corner of the barracks and writes about ethnic cleansing through communal bloodbaths. She writes about Gajji and Sultana's father, people who "forge paths of communal harmony in this labyrinth of hatred" (112). She also writes of their subsequent heirs, Manohar and Sultana, youth who were lost in blind rage and revenge. She writes about India, the country her father had "lamented in his dreams and loved in his death". She sees herself as an unwilling participant who is now hopelessly involved. The very night, she could see her father's horrifying image replaced by Sultana's. The bloodshed which her father had started has now passed on to the next generation; this time with a change and emblemized by Sultana. This cycle of violence has advanced to the next generation.

In the jail, she develops some special bonding with Sultana who seems to be alienated from the rest of the inmates. Outwardly, she appears to be calm and peaceful. But when Simran begins to talk to her, she can feel the upheavals and the suppressed storm she had within him. She has no regrets of killing two Hindus because they had burnt up her house and killed her father. She expresses her utter rage against them claiming, "If I could kill him again, I would" (106). What she cannot take in is why they, as Muslims, are as yet, even after fifty years of partition and independence, not considered as true citizens of India? Sultana claimed they lived and served this nation all their lives, still they are regarded as enemies, as some kinds of terrorists. Her father was a "school teacher. He used to organize camps for his students and talk to them about secularism ... He loved his students, Hindu and Musalman alike" (103). What excited her anger was why did they torch her house and her neighbour's and kills so many innocent people including her father. Was that the result they were to get after decades of service to this nation? The partition which took place in 1947 has continued ever since. The religious fury which erupted in 1947 still can see its effects. The seed of that division is still in the hearts and



mind of the people such that whenever the embers sought an outlet, it came out with the same fury. Sultana is utterly grieved when she says, "Every time there was tension between the two communities in any part of the country, the Hindus in Karim Gali made us suffer" (102). She holds the Hindus responsible into her brother Iftekhar losing both his hands while attempting to save his father from the burning house. It is due to the communal violence that this happy family was destroyed. They could not fulfill the dreams; of becoming a professor of history and brother Iftekhar's becoming a successful cricketer. The partition of India into Hindustan and Pakistan has led to a variety of other partitions: of secularism, of harmony, of solidarity, of religion and above all of hearts which can, perhaps, now never to be bridged.

Simran compares Sultana's case to that of her father's and sees similarities in Sultana and her father's motive into becoming so violent against the other religion, the only difference being whereby after killing the Muslims, Manohar was filled with remorse and regret whereas Sultana does not seem to regret at all! But what she seems to regret is why they are, as minority groups, yet not accepted as part of India! Now when she is sentenced to life imprisonment, she is exploited and raped by the police authority. When Simran offers her help to file a case against the accused, she rejects explaining, "It's over. I'll forget about it. I have other things to remember" (100). She now seems to have lost interest in her very existence. Thereby rejecting Simran's offer for help against her rape, she laughs away, "the same hollow sound as if she were pushing out a foreign breath from her body" (100). She simply seems to have lost interest in life. Simran views all these as results of the continuing partition.

Into building oneself stronger, one needs to prove the opponent weaker. The novel depicts the Hindus destroying Muslim's honour, faith or even religion thereby attempting to declare themselves stronger and a majority in this secular state. And in doing so, the best tool they adopt is a woman's body which is best displayed through Sultana's repeated gang rape by Hindu police officials till she becomes "hollow" (100) eternally. Simran notes that the hangover of partition violence exists even after fifty years of partition. The more they show brutality on the female bodies of the other religion, the more they are building their State stronger.

Meena Nayak opines that the Hindus in India have strong xenophobic attitude towards the Indian Muslims. And it is this fear that is leading the Hindus to the greater victimization of Muslims as presented in *About Daddy*. The Indian Hindus does not regard the Indian Muslims as natives. Rather, they believe, they have come from other Arabian countries and settled here. The Hindus have developed feelings that they are being dominated and under seize by the Muslims. So, they shower more injustice upon them especially their women. They view every Muslim's act from suspicion. Likewise, Simran is also besieged by the security forces while she tries to lay her father's ashes on the Wagah border. Even after giving explanations, they view her suspiciously. They suspect that she is acting as a spy for Pakistan and that India is under seize. After Simran's arrest when she



is taken for interrogation by a senior police official, she is viewed with suspicion. They believe she is on a “mission” (7). When she tries to justify herself as merely being a tourist, the official states, “‘But you’re not just a tourist, are you, Miss Mehta?’ He sits up again, folding his hands on the desk, still smiling that I-know-your-secret smile. ‘You’re on a mission. How long do you plan to be in India?’” (7). They simply refuse to believe her. She is not even allowed to speak to the American consulate who could help her in justifying her identity.

The novel depicts the weakening of secularism and the rise of Hindutva leading to increasing violence is exhibited in the demolition of the mosque towards the end of the novel. It deals with a very sensitive and important issue i.e. Partition and its continuing presence in post-Ayodhya communal politics in India. This book is important in that it looks at the question of partition memory, and the need to lay that memory to rest, from the point of view of the next generation who help to uncover the violence. The novel gives an attempt to answer to some of the burning questions: how did the victimized families deal with such partition violence in their own midst? What happened to those people, like Simran’s father, who became perpetrators of violence and who then lived all their lives with the regret, the grief and the silence which spoke for itself and the guilt that followed it?

Far more than just being partition fiction, the novel has dealt with the experiences of survivors. Even after half a century has passed away, the hangover of many kinds of violence still persists and has now passed on to the second generation of partition childhood, now adults and suffering a deep sense of rootlessness. *About Daddy* does not just encapsulate its female protagonist's understanding of the noxious after-effects of Partition but it also dramatizes her efforts for securing justice for Sultana—attempts representative of recent strong feminist calls for justice for “innumerable rape victims in India” (8)

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The Ramayana: Epic Retold or Epic Translated?

Ankita Sharma

Abstract

In the list of new genres which have emerged in India in the last three decades, one of the most popular is that of 'retellings'. The Indian epics and legends, although have been told several times, yet never seem to lose their charm. Time and again, they are rewritten to acquaint the readers with the rich culture and heritage of India. These retellings have gained prominence in the last three decades due to translation gaining importance. Translation of the epics has made them accessible to readers across the boundaries of nations and countries. This has aroused the interest of people in knowing more about the Indian legends. This phenomenon in the reading world has allowed writers the space to give modern or contemporary rendering to the epics, thus giving birth to retellings. Authors such as Devdutt Pattanaik, Ashok Banker, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni rose to heights with their retellings of the two greatest epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. At the same time, translations of these epics also gained greater importance, since now a comparison between the retellings and original epic became extremely important. Hence, the translations had to be accurate and more dialogic in nature. This paper attempts to compare a retelling and a translation by using Devdutt Pattanaik's *Sita* and Ramesh Menon's *Ramayana* as its primary texts. It further attempts to understand how both the genres help in contemporising the epic.

Introduction

A long time ago, in the land of Bharatavarsha, the sage Valmiki sat meditating on the banks of river Tamasa when he was visited by the celestial traveller Narada. To him, Valmiki asked the question that had been on his mind for a long while: 'who is the epitome of virtue in the mortal world of men?' In answer to this question, the divine hermit told the sage a story, the story of Rama, the king of Ayodhya.

The sage felt the story of Rama should reach the people to enable them to tread on the path of virtue. And so, the sage Valmiki wrote the Ramayana, the Adi kavya, the first epic poem. Since then, centuries have passed, civilisations have disappeared, generations have come and gone, languages have broken and spread, the epic itself has undergone various changes; but the Ramayana remains mysterious, intriguing and enchanting. It is this aura of mystery surrounding the epic which has led men to deconstruct, interpret and translate it across boundaries of nations, communities and societies. These attempts of man to understand the epic has given it different ramifications which we classify as 'retellings'. Retellings stem from the different points of views and vantage points through which the writers decide to look at the epic. As the times changed, the epic was fashioned out to suit the political and cultural space of a certain community, or society. For example,



the Tamil retelling of the Ramayana, *Iramavataram*, by the poet Kamban, depicts Rama and Sita falling in love before the swayamwara. In *Iramavataram*, Sita doesn't care about the rules of the swayamwara, which requires the man she is to marry to string the mighty bow of Shiva. She has already given her heart to Rama and just hopes that he will be able to fulfil the conditions laid down by her father in order to marry her. This differs from Valmiki's version of events, where Sita never looks up at Rama until he has strung the bow of Shiva and won her hand in marriage. This gives Valmiki's rendition of the story a patriarchal angle where the daughter will never defy her father's wishes and will adhere to the rules laid out by him. On the other hand, Kamban allows Sita to have a free will. Even if, Rama would not have strung the bow, she would have married him since she had chosen him as her husband and her love was not bound by any conditions. Since Kamban is writing in the twelfth century Tamil society, which allows women freedom to choose their husbands, Kamban's heroine of the epic has the freedom to take decisions of her own life.

In contrast to these retellings were the 'translations' of the epic which arrived on the scene in the sixteenth century. The Mughal king, Akbar, had a dream of developing tolerance amongst his subjects who were divided into two groups of Hindus and Muslims. The king, who wanted to propagate brotherhood and peace, decided to use the epic as a unifying factor for his subjects. He thought that if he will appreciate and accept the culture of his people, they will accept the Mughals as a part of their land and will stop looking at them as foreigners. In order to achieve this, he ordered the translation of Ramayana from Sanskrit to Persian. This was the first recorded translation of the epic. After this, although translations were happening, but no major translation is produced until the British arrive on the political front of India. Ralph T.H. Griffith was the first British to translate the epic into English in 1895. With this translation, the epic crossed all boundaries and reached the larger reading audience of English language.

The Retelling:

And so the tradition of telling and retelling the Ramayana began. It is that tradition that Kamban, Tulsidas, Vyasa, and so many others were following. It is through the works of these bards through the ages that this great tale continues to exist among us. If it changes shape and structure, form and even content, it is because that is the nature of the story itself: it inspires the teller to bring fresh insights to each new version, bringing us ever closer to understanding Rama himself.

This is why it must be told, and retold, an infinite number of times.

By me.

By you.

By grandmothers to their grandchildren.

By people everywhere, regardless of their identity.”(Banker XXV)

The story of Rama, after it was told to the sage Valmiki, reached people in the form of the epic Ramayana which has been told and retold, to suit the times and tides, of



humanity. Paula Richman, in her essay *The Diversity of Ramayana Traditions*, discusses the epic and the various faces it has taken since its inception. She describes the various retellings as various stands that authors take in the political space that they are writing.

Ramayana tellings provide a set of resources on which people have drawn in their own way and for their own purposes in order to accuse, justify, meditate, debate, and more. People select particular incidents from the Ramayana to express their view of reality. Such selective tellings, ones which adopt a non traditional perspective on otherwise familiar features of the tale have proved an effective means for conveying political views and for inculcating religious teachings. In Indian exegesis as well as tellings, the diversity of Ramayana tradition make itself known." (Richman 12)

One of the most important examples of this kind of retelling of the epic is Tulsidas's *Ramacharitmanas* which was written in sixteenth century. The epic, till that time was only available in Sanskrit and was not accessible to the common public of India. Tulsidas decided to write the epic in Awadhi, which was the common tongue in those days. He was criticised extensively by his fellow Brahmins for taking this step but Tulsidas was steadfast in his decision and the epic reached even the lowest strata of the society. Tulsidas's *Ramacharitmanas* is categorised as a retelling because the poet did not translate Valmiki's Ramayana into Awadhi, instead he interpreted it and wrote this interpretation. Tulsidas's rendition of the epic differs drastically from Valmiki's. Valmiki does not locate the epic in a certain political or cultural context, so the characters of the epic are very much rooted in reality. For example, Dasaratha of Valmiki is a king who indulges in fleshly pleasures, so the women in the story are depicted honestly and there is no criticism of the old king's practices. Tulsidas writes in the sixteenth century where Rama has become a divine figure, the God in human form. With this knowledge in mind and a consciousness of class morality, he cannot depict Dasaratha, who is an aged king, indulging in fleshly pleasures. The women of the epic are also depicted as fully clad and goddesses like figures. Retellings are therefore, moulded and shaped to suit the times they develop in.

Devdutt Pattanaik's *Sita* is one of the most acclaimed retellings of Ramayana in the twenty first century. It looks at the epic with the point of view of a reader of the present century. The author takes stand as a chronicler and gives the reader an account of the events of the epic. Interestingly, Pattanaik introduces the book as a rediscovery of the epic.

This book seeks to rediscover the Ramayana as one of the many maps of the human mind, an open source document evolved by generations of thinkers, a narration that evokes empathy and affection for the human condition." (Pattanaik xvi)

Through this introduction of the book, Pattanaik's intention of writing the book is clear to the readers. He attempts to understand the ever evolving nature of the epic and its effects on the human psyche. The most important point that we see in this retelling of the epic is the title that Pattanaik gives to his book. He titles it 'Sita', after the female protagonist of the story and not 'Rama'. His epic places the woman of the story in the



centre therefore giving it a feminist angle. In the 2000s, when Pattanaik is writing, feminism is the popular wave in the society. To place his retelling in the present political context, the author gives the story a new vantage point.

Pattanaik starts his account of the epic with a story where Hanuman enters a hole in the ground seeking the ring of Rama and encounters Vasuki, the king of Nagas in the Naga-Lok. To the surprise of the reader, Vasuki asks him to tell the story of Sita and not Rama.

Before long, Hanuman found himself enwrapped by a thousand serpents, determined to pin him down. He gave in and allowed them to drag him to their king. Vasuki, a serpent with seven hoods, each displaying a magnificent jewel.

'What brings you to Naga-loka?' hissed Vasuki.

'I seek a ring.'

'Oh, that! I will tell you where it is, if you tell me something first.'

'What?' asked Hanuman.

'The root of every tree that enters the earth whispers a name: Sita. Who is she? Do you know?'

'She is the beloved of the man whose ring I seek.'

'Then tell me all about her. And tell me about her beloved. And I will point you to the ring.'

(Pattanaik 4)

This conversation between Hanuman and Vasuki depicts the curiosity of the beings to know about Sita. The story can be seen as mirroring the thoughts of many of the modern readers. Indian society, largely being patriarchal in nature, is familiar with Rama's story and his journey but Sita, is an equally fascinating figure in the epic. Pattanaik works on this curiosity of the readers and gives an account of the Ramayana from its heroine's point of view. Therefore, *Sita* is written by Pattanaik keeping the modern society in mind where women have their independent identities and are not always known by their father's or husband's name. Sita, as a woman takes larger space than Rama in Pattanaik's retelling highlighting the era the story is being written in.

Translation:

The sage Valmiki wrote the story of Rama so that it reaches out to all mankind and guide men in the path of righteousness. Rama, is the ideal man, he is *purushottam* (the best amongst the race of men), the benchmark to men of earth. His story was written so that by following him, men will be able to create that kind of world which Rama had created, one which was filled with brotherhood, peace, prosperity and happiness. But Valmiki wrote the epic in Sanskrit, a language which was inaccessible to the common man. Hence the epic did not reach the common people until sixteenth century, when Tulsidas wrote *Ramacharitmanas*. In all this time, the epic had changed faces and had been rewritten in languages like Prakrit and Pali. In 4th century CE, Vimalasuri had written the Jain retelling *Paumachariya* in Prakrit and in 6th century CE, Buddhist rendition of the epic,



Dasharatha Jataka had been produced which was in Pali. All of these were retellings of the Valmiki Ramayana which were fashioned to suit the different sects of the society. An actual translation of the epic was first undertaken under the reign of Mughal king, Akbar in the sixteenth century. In order to appreciate the culture of his people, Akbar ordered a translation of the epic from Sanskrit to Persian. Three hundred years after Akbar, the British translated the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata in English. The scholar, Ralph Griffith was the first British to translate The Ramayana into English. These translations aided the British in developing an understanding of the Indian people hence rendering the translations an extremely academic tone. During the British rule, many translations of the epic were produced but they remained academic in nature since their purpose was to solely help the British understand the Indian way of life. No significant contribution was made to the tradition of storytelling until the late twentieth century. With the advent of television and radio, the art of storytelling took a new turn and some of the first films and television series to be produced in Indian subcontinent were centred around the epics. To give a few examples, films such as Vijay Bhatt's *Ramrajya* (1943), Babubhai Mistry's *Sampoorna Ramayana* (1961) and television series such as Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* (1987) which proved a milestone in television history of India.

These examples can be considered as what Roman Jakobson calls as 'intersemiotic translations' (114). With these kinds of productions on the scene, the storytelling tradition took a leap and the writers realised the worth of translating the epic in its entirety and without attaching an academic purpose to it.

In the recent years, Ramesh Menon emerged as one of the most important translators of this epic. His translation of this epic, which he calls 'a modern translation', is one of the finest translations available to the readers today. Menon attempts to deliver a rendition of the epic which is not just formal in nature but dynamic as well. His translation does not concentrate on conveying the meaning of the translation alone, but also its effect. He begins in a linear fashion, by describing how the Ramayana came to be written. But, the reader does not see him taking any political or cultural stand in the story. He behaves as the omniscient narrator and narrates the events as they come about.

Long ago, the sage Valmiki sat meditating in his hermitage on the banks of Tamasa. The river murmured along beside the dark, gaunt rishi, whose hair hung down to his shoulders in thick dreadlocks. But otherwise the secluded place was silent; not even the birds sang, lest they disturb Valmiki's dhyana. (Menon 3)

This is how Menon begins his translation. Unlike Pattanaik's *Sita*, where the reader knows Hanuman to be the narrator, the reader knows nothing about the narrator here. Menon employs the classic fairytale storytelling tradition here.

The Ramayana is a poem, the *Adi Kavya*, it has a rhyme, a rhythm, a metre attached to it. Menon, although writes in prose, but maintains the lyrical quality of it.



And what can be said about Rama, his father's favourite? Dasaratha lived Rama, he breathed Rama, his every waking moment was Rama; and if one looked closely enough, his dreams as well. He loved his son perhaps more than any man should. It was devotion, obsessive, and a little dangerous. Rama seemed to live for his father's sake, as well, indulging his every wish, anticipating his least whim as if he read the old king's thoughts; at times, even before they appeared in Dasaratha's mind! Those were perfect years, and Dasaratha's pride in his sons grew apace. (Menon 19-20)

Here, he describes the relationship between Dasaratha and his son, Rama. The repetition of the name of Rama has a certain cadence to it which highlights the intensity of need his father had for him. The use of exclamation mark in the later lines seems to stress the almost telepathic connection that Rama has with his father. By employing this style of writing, Menon attempts to bring out the epic in its true nature. He tries to keep the loss to a minimal in his translation and manages to achieve a dynamic translation of The Ramayana. Also, throughout the translation, words of Sanskrit have been retained even though the words have equivalences in English. Words such as 'agni', 'dhanush' and 'hatya' which find equivalences in 'fire', 'bow' and 'murder' are not changed. This has been done to retain the effect of the epic which tends to be lost by the use of equivalences. Therefore, we see that Menon's translation comes out as one of the finest translations of The Ramayana.

Conclusion:

The Ramayana is an ever evolving enigma which changes face with every passing generation. It is a story which is known to all of us but still each person will have a different version of it because of the difference in perception. Retellings are attempts we make to assert our point of views in the society through the epic. When feminists criticise Rama for banishing Sita, by depicting the condition of Sita, they want to take a stand for the rights of women who are suffering in the twenty first century. By telling the story from Sita's point of view, they empower the women of the society by keeping Sita as an example in front of them. A beautiful princess who suffered for her beloved but never went back to him; Sita becomes the icon of independence for the women. She resonates with the message that a woman is strong enough to live her life without a man by her side. More than Sita, it is Rama who needs Sita to be at his side, highlighting the importance of a woman in a man's life.

Translations, on the other hand, are written to continue the tradition of storytelling. They cater to the needs of those who are not familiar with the language of the original thus helping the story to achieve a universal status. They try to present the story in its exactness to the readers and allow them to make their own perceptions of the epic. Translations give the space to the reader and are not assertive in nature.

A. K. Ramanujan highlights the difference between a retelling and a translation.



We read the scholarly modern English translation largely to gain a sense of the original Valmiki, and we consider it successful to the extent that it resembles the original. We read Kamban to read Kamban, and we judge him on his own terms, not by his resemblance to Valmiki, but if anything, by the extent that he differs from Valmiki. In the one, we rejoice in the similarity, in the other, we cherish and savor the difference. (Ramanujan 45-46)

Thus, we can conclude on this note that the retellings and the translations both hold equal relevance in the literature surrounding The Ramayana, since both the forms help in a deeper understanding of this otherwise unfathomable epic.

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Woman and Marriage in Contemporary Indian English Fiction: Reconstructing Identity and Subjectivity

Garima Singh Baghel

Abstract

This article is confined to only within the area of marriage, the area in which most rapid and radical changes have taken place in the society itself. The rebellious attitude to marriage originated with writers like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Manju Kapur, Jaishree Mishra and others. The old issues like casteism, gender discrimination and patriarchal oppression have been carried over from the older generation to the younger generation writers but newer themes and a strongly felt sound of rebellion may be sensed and heard in the novels of Rashmi Kumar, Shriya Garg and Parul Mittal. This writing brings to the fore women with a distinct and sound voice of their own, a voice that had been suppressed for centuries, but now they are endowed with a capacity to make themselves heard. The article traces the paradigm shift where a woman emerges despite all obstacles to hold her own identity in personal and professional life. Woman is no more an accessory to man rather a companion, a life partner who is equal to him in every respect.

Keywords: Women, Marriage, Education, Independent, Confident, Rebellion, Status, Tradition, Identity, Sex.

The times have changed radically, and the Indian woman of today is no longer reconciled to her traditional role as a mere housewife, a mother or a daughter. Today she might be called a liberated woman or feminist. If we examine the emerging new women in contemporary Indian English fiction, we are often confronted with women who are financially independent and they break traditions in sexual relations. They oppose the institution of marriage in one way or the other. They are sexually liberated and feel no qualms of conscience in establishing extra martial relations. In other words, they deny the traditional approach towards marriage. The woman often rejects the moral values associated with sex.

In her book *“Women in Modern Drama”*, Gail Finney describes the New Woman: “One of the primary factors motivating, the typical New Woman is rebellion against the ‘old woman’, described by one member of an 1890s women’s club as ‘bounded on the north by servants, on the south by children, on the east by ailments and on the west by clothes. The conventional Victorian woman is accustomed to self-sacrifice; the New woman pursues self-fulfillment and independence, often choosing to work for a living. She typically strives for equality in her relationships with men, seeking to eliminate the double standard that shaped the sexual mores of the time, and is in general much more frank about sexuality than the old woman. Dismayed by male attitudes or by the difficulty



of combining marriage and a career, she often chooses to remain single, concomitantly, she comes to place increasing value on relationships with other womenFurthermore, the New Woman tends to be well-educated and to read a great deal. Finally, the New Woman is physically vigorous and energetic, preferring comfortable clothes to the restrictive grab usually wore by women of the era." (195-96)

In ancient times, women were denied the right to education. When women became educated, they started asserting their own point of view and women writing emerged as the social movement against their socio-cultural, economic and political discrimination. It soon turned into an organized movement. There is no doubt that woman of modern era is educated, confident and has shown her skills in every field. The article is confined to only within the area of marriage, the area in which most rapid and radical changes have taken place in the society itself. The rebellious attitude to marriage originated with writers like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Manju Kapur, Jaishree Mishra and others. The old issues like casteism, gender discrimination and patriarchal oppression have been carried over from the older generation to the younger generation writers but newer themes and a strongly felt sound of rebellion may be sensed and heard in the novels of Rashmi Kumar, Shriya Garg and Parul Mittal. In the Prologue to her novel *Take One More Chance*, Shriya Garg boldly announces:

"I am ready to fight. I am not going to budge an inch. No matter what happens, I am not going to let my naïve parents destroy my life like they did theirs. So as to satisfy their parents' wishes, each married a partner whom each thoroughly disliked from the beginning. I am not going to fall in that trap. I am not, I am not, I am not." (9)

A case study of the marital relationship in the novels like *Small Remedies* (2000), *Moving On* (2004) and *In the Country of Deceit* (2009) reveals that love marriages have most often failed and the failure has resulted in the subsequent emotional breakdowns, extra-marital relationship or separation. In the novels like *Moving On* and *In the Country of Deceit* the protagonists, Manjari and Devyani respectively have been projected to seek fulfillment outside on even without marriage. This kind of treatment finds a true parallel in the novel of Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises* published in 2000. It appears these narratives abound with portrayed of 'new woman' who have fortitude, courage and indomitable spirit to face life squarely. They know how to go ahead in the midst of difficulties. This view is made manifest in Manjari's relationship with Rajan and Devyani's with Ashok Chinappa. Marriage as a social institution has been undermined.

Manju Kapur's first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) is set during India's independence struggle and is partially based on the life of Kapur's own mother Virmati. During her conjugal life Virmati feels that it would have been better if she had not been married with Harish. After some time, she gives birth to a daughter, Ida. And at the beginning of the novel this girl, Ida, who is the narrator of the novel ponders over her mother's life, "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother" (1). The



daughter Ida does not want to be like her mother as she does not want her voice to be suppressed by anybody. She hates any such attempt which denied her freedom.

Home (2006) explores the complex terrain of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family. This is a revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage and lastly the women's struggle for her survival. In the novel Nisha fell in love with Suresh and had to face many queries. Her brother Raju thinks, Nisha is no trustworthy. So, she rebels, "Who are you to decide whether I am trustworthy?" (198) She desperately wishes to live on equal footing with men and carves for an identity of her own. She refuses to admit any discrimination between men and women. Her rebellious nature arises from time to time. She says her mother, "Who cares about castes these days? What you really want is to sell me in the market she sobbed with indignant emotion. Sell me and be done with it what are you waiting for?" (199) She refuses to adhere to the age-old tradition of marriage.

There is a whole gamut of things that can go wrong in a marriage-starting from skirmishes over finance, inter-personal relationships, extended family relationships, excessive sex or lack of sex, kids, lack of kids, affairs, jealousy, invasion of personal space. Shobha De has discussed it in *Spouse: The truth About Marriage*. She renders the account of her first marriage in a candid manner:

"Marriages disintegrate for various reasons. Sometimes they fall apart by default. As my first one did it may we both entered at a wrong time in our respective lives. Maybe we had not thought of the decisions through. Maybe our expectations didn't match. Maybe we grew in entirely different ways. Maybe I was a bit too headstrong, a bit too impatient. So many years later, there is much regret about the sadness caused." (*Spouse: The truth About Marriage*71)

Marriage is definitely one-time bond since time immemorial at least from the Indian traditional and conventional point of view. As Simon De Beauvoir says, "Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered by society." (445) But how far this statement is justified may be seen exemplified in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises* (2000). The novel starts with Janaki, the protagonist, reflecting over her life on the occasion of the ending of her marriage. The novel begins with this stark statement in an abrupt manner: "My marriage ended today...Ma had said, as we left the court, voice and eyes brimming with sadness, that it had been my fate. I had replied attempting to comfort her, that I thought ending were really only beginnings in disguise." (3) Jaishree Misra, through Janaki and more significantly, through Arjun, also asserts the right of every person to her or his own happiness and the right to create the means to achieve it. This is the central theme of the novel.

The novel *Can Love Happen Twice?* by Ravinder Singh takes up a major issue prevailing in our society; the question of choosing to live abroad, away from family. The



issue in broader sense brings to the fore a woman's perspective, her dream to marry a man of her choice, but by making the love of her life, leave behind his parents and dreams. When Ravin knew the truth about Simar's dream and expectation told by her father he was shocked. Her father said to Ravin:

She is an independent person and want to live her life in her own way. And I don't see a problem in it as long as she is able to live in prosperity...While I move my entire business to Belgium, Simar wants you to join my business. As a matter of fact, she wants both you and herself to take this business ahead. She wants you to leave your job. (182)

It was shocking for him to find out the truth which was revealed by her father this way. When he called up Simar, she asked him a lot of questions:

Will I be allowed to work and lead my life the way I am doing now? There can be chances that you would want me to be a homemaker? Your family is quite religious and conservative. Will I get to wear anything and everything? You had mentioned that we will have to look after your parents. There will be plenty of responsibilities and expectations. And I wish to spend the entire time with you. There will be so many restrictions in a joint family. Will be still able to go late night parties? (185)

At the end she gave answers to all her questions according to her own point of view. She said straight forward, "I won't be comfortable in a joint family, Ravin." (185)Ravin tried to convince her for marriage but at every step he discovered her big dreams and many more expectations.

Being a journalist, Rashmi Kumar shares her observations about a newsroom in her *Stiletto in the Newsroom* (2011). She calls it 'little nuggets from the author's experiences.' The narrative recounts a story of a journalist, Radhika Kanetkar, testing the waters at her first job in Pune. When a foreigner tires to show pity on Indian women, he get a befitting reply from her, "My dear Andro,... we are modern women, independent and hard-working, plus times in India are very different now. Women today are far more self-sufficient." (84)In the novel she frankly writes about her pre-marital relationship with her Boss and boyfriend. This shows that today sex without marriage is not a big issue. It is a common thing for today's generation.

Shriya Garg's debut novel *Take One More Chance* published in 2011. It is a satire on the institution of marriage by a sixteen-year-old girl. She has written this through Naina Kashyap, the persona of twenty-five-year-old girl. It is the first-person account by Naina Kashyap who is an accountant and her parents feel it is the time for her to get married. But she is staunchly against marriage and producing children. She defends herself by saying this, "You make me sound as if I am a baby making machine put on earth for use by the holy species called males. This is the twenty-first century Dad. Today women deliver more



than just babies.” (6) Then her father comes out with some very harsh words and she is left to her own resources, she must go out and find her Mr. Right.

In her novel Shriya Garg raises a very new and relevant issue of adopting children without marriage. Many modern women and Bollywood actresses adopt children without marrying a person. They are happy to be called ‘Single Mother’. In this novel Naina Kashyap wants to adopt a twelve-year-old girl named Laxmi. She says to her father with firm determination, “As soon as I’m married. I am going to adopt her.” (128). When her father says that she must think whether her husband or in-laws would like these extra-curricular activities, she says frankly, “I would not even marry a man who would not like what I am doing.” (128). When she tells about this to Aditya, the person whom she loves, welcomes her plan without any argument. He says, “Naina, I would love any child you give me”. (225).

The contemporary Indian English fiction projects a new generation of women writers who have embraced the changed values. This writing brings to the fore women with a distinct and sound voice of their own, a voice that had been suppressed for centuries, but now they are endowed with a capacity to make themselves heard. The article traces the paradigm shift where a woman emerges despite all obstacles to hold her own identity in personal and professional life. Here, woman is no more an accessory to man rather a companion, a life partner who is equal to him in every respect.

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Indian Contribution to Contemporary English Literature

Jagdish Batra

Abstract

As we know, England is not the only place in the world where literature in English language is produced. India happens to be the third largest producer of books in English. Indians' contribution to English literature is significant considering the fact that post-1980 Salman Rushdie phenomenon; hundreds of writers have written novels in English. Quite a few of them have won awards at the international level. My paper classifies the themes of 327 novels written after 2000AD by Indian authors, residing in or out of India, and apart from underlining the issues taken up by these writers' deals in detail with three works by different authors, covering three important dimensions of Indian society, viz., youth, family and Diaspora.

Keywords: Indian Literature, Indian English Fiction, Chetan Bhagat, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande, Indian family system

This conference proposes to study the different genres of English literature, in particular the contemporary literary process and production in which the cultural interaction moulds the English literary tradition. Now, English literature is widely produced in the world in our times and India is the place whose contribution to the collective English literature has been rising greatly. In fact, it happens to be at present the third largest producer of books in English. Indians' contribution to English literature is significant considering the fact that post-1980 Salman Rushdie phenomenon; hundreds of writers have published novels in English. The objective of this paper is to analyze the major themes and styles taken up and to showcase some key texts representing aspects of Indian life, viz., family, myths, and Diaspora. This is to give this scholarly audience an idea of the scale of contribution of Indian writers as also a brief glimpse of the type of writing that Indian novelists have to their credit.

Early Impact

I must refer in passing to the contribution of early writers and thinkers of India who drew worldwide attention through their writings in English. It is understandable that during the British colonial rule, the master race should view the colony with a biased mind. But if we leave the ruling class out, we find that there had been people in the West, who studied India seriously and admired it. Whether these were the transcendentalists from America, viz., Whitman, Emerson and Thoreau or the German philosophers Schopenhauer and Max Mueller or the French writer Romain Rolland -- they talked



glowingly of ancient Indian spiritual literature. Some Indologists translated secular Sanskrit literary texts like those by Kalidasa into English.

There were many in the West who had been fascinated by the discourses of Swami Vivekananda in the US during the last decade of the 19th century and read with interest his commentaries on Hindu scriptures. There are other writers like Aurobindo who, besides writing beautiful plays and prose, took up western as well as eastern myths and legends to create what he called 'poetry of the soul'. Rabindra Nath Tagore became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his poetry collection *Gitanjali* which is suffused with mysticism. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the well-renowned philosopher President of India, wrote impressively on the ancient philosophical treatises of India. Mahatma Gandhi's prose was simple but pregnant with meaning. His candid autobiography impressed many including Leo Tolstoy.

Current Scenario

Switching over to the contemporary scenario, it is a reality that the genres of poetry, drama and criticism have not registered remarkable performance, but fiction has more than compensated the lacuna in other genres. Salman Rushdie's bagging of the Booker prize in 1981, was a momentous event for Indian English novel because it instilled confidence in the Indian writers. He went on to win the 'Booker of Bookers' prize in 1993 and the 'Best of Booker' in 2008. His fictional art with the 'chutnification' of language and history in *Midnight's Children* (1981) has much to do with his success. His carnivalesque humour, incessant word-play, engagement with the bizarre and the unexpected, juxtaposing highly ornate with the mundane 'Mumbai' language places him in sui generis category. He employs the Indian narratological style with its swoops, spirals and repetitions. Rushdie has written more than a dozen novels till date and continues to interest the readers worldwide.

There are other authors who have won awards at the international level and are well known like the Man Booker awardees Arundhati Roy for her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997), Kiran Desai for *The Inheritance of Loss* (2005), Aravind Adiga for *The White Tiger* (2008) and the Pulitzer awardee Jhumpa Lahiri for *The Interpreter of Maladies* (2000). Here, I shall like to mention some other contemporary Indian novelists whose works have drawn admiration from readers and critics alike. They include V. S. Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Tharoor, Ashok Banker, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kiran Nagarkar, Manju Kapur and Amit Chaudhuri.

While Rushdie is a serious and canonical author, Chetan Bhagat is a writer of the popular kind who is no less important in the Indian context. His first novel *Five Point Someone* (2004) was path-breaking in the sense that he was the first author to achieve high-volume sales in the range of a million copies, whereas before him, no Indian author could sell more than a few thousand copies. (Palande) His novels appeal to the young and the



old alike and the habit of reading English texts has got a spur because of his novels. He is a pioneer because following him; so many young authors from various fields came up and wrote novels of the popular kind. Popular novel today forms the biggest segment of the thousand-odd novels produced since 2000 AD till date, some 844 of which I have been able to document in my books¹.

Contemporary Themes

The various themes that the contemporary Indian English long fiction touches upon can be classified as: family, individual psyche, socio-political problems, diasporic life, history, environment, etc. Besides, the popular category of novel deals with campus life, romance, adventure, crime, myth, career, etc. An analysis of some 327 of these novels published between 2011 and 2015 throws up the following break-up

Sr. No.	Theme	Number
1	Romance	63
2	Thrillers (adventure, crime...)	48
3	Socio-political issues	29
4	History	26
5	Individuals & Relationships	22
6	Myths & Legends	21
7	Multicultural	18
8	Family & Woman-centric	18
9	Science & Fantasy	13
10	Campus	12
11	Bildungsroman	11
12	Space/Region-specific	11
13	Philosophy	8
14	Career	7

Clearly, popular novel comprising of romance, thrillers, chick-lit, myth, etc. is on top. Having said this, I would like to add that it is the serious fiction which brings credit and glory to the genre of Indian or any other category of literature. I shall now like to showcase three texts which represent three different and important aspects of Indian reality; these are: family, youth and Diaspora.

Indian Family

Indian family system is the basic social structure and is a traditional one in which certain values like patriarchy and respect for the elders are highly valued. However, times are changing and the western impact is straining the traditional mores. A well-known name in the domain of Indian English Fiction is Shashi Deshpande, a Sahitya Akademi and Padma awardee and a feminist in her own right. A prolific writer, Deshpande has been known for weaving in great detail the web of family against which she marks the



position of individual women bearing the burden of traditions. In almost all her novels, in addition to the emotional aspects, women's sexuality – within and outside marriage bonds – has been dealt with. Style-wise, her novels form a separate category which can be called 'reflective novel'.

In her very first novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), the narrative portrays the trauma that the female protagonist which Saru undergoes. To bring out the contrast between the external world and the internal one, Deshpande uses different tense forms -- present is in the third person and the past is in the first person – and also stylistic devices like dreams, flashbacks, reminiscences, etc.

Saru is an educated, economically independent, middle-class wife who is made conscious of her gender as a child and whose loveless relationship with her parents and strained relations with her husband lead to her agonizing search for herself. The novel opens with Saru's return to her parents' house fifteen years after she left home with a vow never to return. After being disappointed with her husband, she had to return for some quiet and the chance to think over her relationships with her family members.

As a child, Saru was always ignored in favour of her brother, Dhruva. No parental love was showered on her and she was not given any importance. Her brother's birthdays were celebrated with much fanfare and performance of religious rites, whereas her own birthdays were not even acknowledged. Her mother constantly reminded her that she should not go out in the sun as it would darken her complexion and that would be a negative feature when it came to her marriage. Saru also joined a medical college much against the wishes of her mother thus antagonizing her because the mother, like any ordinary Indian woman, wanted to marry her daughter off at the earliest.

When Saru wants to get married to Manohar, with whom she is in love, her mother admonishes her thus: "I know all these 'love marriages.' It's love for a few days, then quarrels all the time. Don't come crying to us then." (69) It is true that in India, arranged marriage is the norm even though the young, educated people are opting out of it now. Marriage, it is said, is not between two persons but between two families who have to deal with each other. So, the advice of the elders must prevail over the desire of the couple. Now, Manohar belongs to a caste (a kind of hierarchy determined on the basis of birth) that is lower than that of her family, for which crime she is boycotted by her family.

Unfortunately, the relationship between husband and wife too is not on even keel. Saru, a doctor, earns more than her husband who is a teacher. This fact torments him particularly when people around him make him conscious of it. In India, an individual hardly has any privacy. Not only in villages, where a person and his life would be known to others, even in metropolitan cities, voyeuristic pleasure is derived by people through peering into the affairs of others. It's common, as Nirad Chowdhary has mentioned in his



Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, for a bus passenger to demand a sheet of newspaper even when you are reading it and take it without saying 'Thank you'!

The plight of a married woman is no cake-walk. Manohar tries to overcome his inferiority complex through inflicting pain on his wife and raping her at will. Deshpande is against such suppression of women. While talking of the prevalent practice of religious fasting on certain days, it is seen that womenfolk even though fasting themselves, have to prepare meals for other members of the family who are not fasting. In Saru's words: "Going on with their tasks, and destroying themselves in the bargain, for nothing, but a meaningless modestly. Their unconscious, unmeaning heroism, born out of the myth of self-sacrificing martyred women..."(107).

Finally, when Saru visits her father to condole the demise of her mother and tells him about her married life, the father shows his inability to sort out things for her. She realizes that it is she who is responsible for her life and must share the consequences of her actions. "All right, so I'm alone. But so is everyone else. Human beings ... they're going to fail you. But because there's just us, because there's no one else, we have to go on trying. If we can't believe in ourselves, we're sunk" (128). Thus, there is self-realization for her which is a message from the novelist to the womenfolk in India.

Indian Diaspora

It is a fact that the genre of Indian English Fiction is dominated by the Indian writers settled or working mostly in the US or Europe. It is natural for them to write of the plight of the fellow immigrants. Jhumpa Lahiri, a second generation Indian immigrant to US, is praised more for her stories than for her novels. Her Pulitzer Award-winning book *The Interpreter of Maladies* has nine stories most of which touch upon various aspects of married life of Indian immigrants in America, but there are a few which focus on life in India also. It must be said, however, that the stories have the universal humanistic flavour about them.

Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* was a resounding success and was turned into a movie. The theme of the novel is based on the identity crisis faced by the son of an immigrant couple Ashoke and Ashima due to the queer name 'Gogol' given him because it was the name of the Russian author whose stories Ashoke loved. However, the plot has much more than this only. Starting with Ashoke's wedding and leading to the divorce of his son Gogol aka Nikhil, the plot covers a span of 38 years. The story-line sustains after Ashoke's death and the novel takes on a sombre tone with Gogol showing more responsible nature even though there is no end to his misfortunes. The different aspects of immigrant life like maladjustment in the adopted country, concern for and tenuous contacts with the people back in the country of birth have all been touched in a realistic manner with economy of language, which, surprisingly, is successful in creating empathy in reader.



When it comes to naming the new-born, the Gangulis want Ashima's grandmother to "do the honours". In India, the elders in the family are respected and seeking their guidance in such a matter is considered to be obligatory for the young people. Mr. Wilcox, the compiler of the hospital birth certificates, is at his wits' end in understanding the reason for the Gangulis not naming their child themselves.

The racial bias in America finds mention in a fictional incident, which shows how neighbourhood ruffians, driven by prejudices of colour and race, wreak havoc on the immigrants. In case of the Ganguli family, it starts with the removal of the letters 'ULI' from the name 'GANGULI' written on the mail box of the Ganguli house on Pemberton Road, and addition of the suffix 'GREEN' to it to denote 'GANGREEN' -- a dreaded disease.

But the grown-up Americans are different. They love to sound informal even when they are not. So, before leaving house, Judy advises the tenant Ashima to "holler" if she needs anything. (34) As Ashima goes about the market with her infant in the perambulator, she is accosted by many an American who smilingly congratulate her on being a mother and ask about the baby, its name, sex etc. (34). Thus, the American experience is noted minutely by the author.

The young Gogol falls in love with an American girl Maxine. He goes steady with her for a long time and is supposed to marry her. However, Gogol feels at times that "his immersion in Maxine's family is a betrayal of his own" (141) which shows he is not totally apathetic to the feelings of his parents, and moreover, confirms his in-betweenness with regard to the two cultures.

Unfortunately, Ashoke dies due to a heart attack and Gogol has to make arrangements for the final rites. When Gogol leaves Cleveland for Boston with the ashes of his father, his state of mind is described by Jhumpa Lahiri: "He knows now the guilt that his parents carried inside, at being able to do nothing when their parents had died in India, of arriving weeks, sometimes months later, when there was nothing left to do" (179). Gogol is so much absorbed in sadness that his fiancée Maxine wonders if it's worth it, and that becomes the point of their separation.

After Ashoke's death, Ashima is left alone because her son Gogol works away in New York and her daughter too is married off to a French man. She does fix the marriage of her son to a compatriot Bengali girl Moushumi but it fails because the girl is culturally more of an American than an Indian. Gogol is unable to appreciate her libertine ways after marriage. Ashima now decides to divide her time between India and America, spending six months in both countries. Thus, there are various shades of immersion in the culture of the adopted country.



Lahiri's representation of the cultural difference for a diasporic finds resonance in Homi Bhabha, the postcolonial theorist, who believes that "The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (Bhabha 2). So far her style is concerned, it can be said that she economizes on words. Aptly comments a critic, "Lahiri's incisive, detailed prose of small and big tragedies, in the intense minimalist style of Raymond Carver, which lands like snowflakes without leaving traces of water, builds in momentum only as decades go by in the novel" (Lasdun).

Indian Youth

As pointed out above, Chetan Bhagat's novels sell in millions in India. It would be interesting to note that these novels have themes which appeal to youth and have constituents akin to those of the popular Hindi films – the most visible form of popular culture in our times. His novels have simple stories which do not require any mental exercise to reveal hidden layers of meanings – a feature of canonical works. Like a Hindi *masala* (Hindi for spices) film, Bhagat's novels too bring together disparate elements like fancy, facts, idealism, suspense, crispy dialogues, humour, sex etc. that appeal to the youth.

One of the main reason for the popularity of Bhagat's novels is that they take up issues close to the heart of the youth. Thus, his first novel *Five Point Someone* was a campus novel; his second *One Night @ the Call Centre* dealt with the BPO (Business Processes Outsourcing) business that had touched heights and attracted educated youth. His novel *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* dealt with the cricket fixation of Indian people. Likewise, *2 States: The Story of My Marriage* had the issue of love marriage vs. arranged marriage at the core which affects most Indian youth of marriageable age.

Bhagat's novel *Half Girlfriend* (2014) runs precisely along the popular romantic Bollywood (Bombay, the movie capital of India, referred to as Bollywood after Hollywood) movies. It was recently turned into a feature film also. Besides the central love theme, the novel also touches upon the problem of inability to communicate fluently in English which is a common problem among the Indian youth belonging to the rural areas.

The protagonist Madhav, hailing from a backward state of India, Bihar, has come to join the elite St. Stephen's College in Delhi. He is born into a family that once belonged to the ruling elite but has lost money and status with the passage of time. His mother runs a school in a decrepit building in a village in Bihar. Madhav is not qualified on the basis of grade secured by him at school but then he is able to make it through the sports quota because he is good at playing volleyball. Here he meets Riya Somani, a Delhi-based girl who comes from a rich family. She is tall and beautiful and is also a volleyball player.



Madhav faces the problem in communicating fluently in English which is mainly the medium of instruction as also of communication among the young students of the college. Thus there are two lines of division between them – money and language. But there is the common bond of volley ball. Thus the story is set for a romantic trajectory.

Riya is willing to learn more of the game from Madhav. The two come closer. At this stage, Rohan, a rich NRI youth (Non-resident Indian: a person of Indian origin settled abroad, valued in the Indian marriage market for his riches). He also happens to visit Riya in college, where he is noticed as “over the top and a bit of show off” with his Bentley car and suave demeanour. The girls seem to swoon over him. “I think when rich guys say something, girls find it extra funny” (55), comments Madhav’s friend. Madhav is meanwhile declared “sick” in love with Riya, who finally agrees to being his “half girlfriend” (67)! There are the usual hide-and-peek games with the guards of the girls hostels where boys keep track of and manage to meet their girls! Episodes like these resonate with the young readers.

On the advice of his friends, Madhav makes a crass comment in native Bihari language which offends Riya and there is a break-up. In this, Madhav has forgotten Riya’s advice given to him some time ago: “Madhav Jha, Learn about girls, or figure it out. But don’t ruin it” (44). This is something that most Indian young men would have to learn even as they struggle with understanding girls’ ‘mysterious’ behaviour!

Not long thereafter, Madhav gets the invitation to Riya’s wedding with Rohan. Understandably, he is shattered and is changed into the “Silent Saint of Stephen’s”. He passes the exam and is selected for a post in the bank but refuses it in favour of going to his native village Dumraon in Bihar, where he helps his mother to run the school. So, the essential good child’s obedient nature appeals to the moral sensibility of Indian readers.

Over there in Bihar, Madhav tries to arrange funds to help renovate the school building. He learns about the humanitarian project of the software giant Bill Gates who is visiting India. He writes to Gates inviting him to visit school in the hope of getting some help from him. Next, he starts attending English coaching classes in Patna, the capital of Bihar, where he bumps into Riya. It is a happy coincidence for him to know that she is separated from her husband, who turned out to be a tyrant. The two have some good time together (that’s essential for a Hindi movie) and both work successfully for Gates’ visit. Riya also coaches Madhav to improve his English language capability.

There is another twist in that Riya escapes from there leaving behind a letter which says she suffers from terminal cancer and was going away from him. So, the movie-watchers or the novel readers, in this case, have some anxious moments, but then this kind of self-inflicted victimhood is essentially the old moral code which was probably practiced in India at one time. Now, a Bollywood movie also has some scenes picturized in exotic



locations of the West, so here too, the heroine escapes to New York. Madhav is able to find about her in a hard way, and once sure, he loses no time in flying off to the Big Apple.

In New York, he gets help from a compatriot, so that we have a good picture of the Indian Diaspora, different from the fate which the cook's son in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* had to face at the hands of Harry! At this point, Bhagat tries the tested Bollywood formula of prolonging the search period to the extent that the reader might believe in the impossibility of success, but those who have read Bhagat's novels know too well that this cannot happen. After a real filmic chase in snowing night, Madhav runs race against time to reach the bar where Riya, an amateur singer, is now regaling audience as a professional singer. So, the ending is a happy one which finds favour with the Indian audience of movies.

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The Other Side of History: Partition and Repressed Memory

Mahuya Bhaumik

Abstract

The history of Partition has always been fraught with nationalistic fervour, zeal and glory closely linked with the liberation movement. In the post-independence period the entire focus was on the triumph, quite categorically and strategically turning away from the trauma related to Partition, though this traumatic memory was so vivid in the psyche of individuals, sometimes recollected and in most cases repressed. There is a significant gap “between history and memory” and there is an attempt of erasure of the agony and despicable loss involved in Partition from the historiography of India. After a prolonged gap of almost 50 years historical and anthropological researches and feminist historiography have made significant contributions to sensitizing our understanding towards the human dimension of Partition. Partition literature traverses a wide range encompassing tales of communal animosity, rape, mass murder, loss, repentance, courage, cowardice, brutality, remembrance and forgetting. This paper would try to find out how the glorified history of Indian Independence and Partition which celebrates its triumphant jubilation in all its historical records is enmeshed with memories of agonising pain of the loss of home, migration, abject haplessness, brutality and struggle to maintain the basic dignity of a human being. This paper is an attempt to locate that other side of the history of Partition.

Introduction

‘When the riots subsided in the towns and villages of Rawalpindi where more than a hundred villages were involved, this incident took place in one of the villages. It just so happened that I was working in the Congress in a Relief Committee and the health officer of the town was asked by the Deputy Commissioner to go to that particular village and put some disinfectant into that well in which the heap of dead bodies was decomposing. The health officer was a neighbour of ours and I requested him to take me along and he agreed. What I saw was horrendous! It was so full that the bodies had come up to the surface; now that was a very painful experience. It has been very difficult to get over it even today. I still hear anguished voices like someone next to me pointing out to a corpse and saying “That is my wife”, “That child entangled between her legs is my son”’ (Kumar Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas 167-68)- Bisham Sahni’s recollection of the ‘horrendous’ memory integrally associated with Partition is the shared memory of innumerable victims of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, a politico-historical event which resulted in the birth of two independent nation states- India and Pakistan. The history of Partition has always been fraught with nationalistic fervour, zeal and glory closely linked with the liberation movement. In the post-independence period



the entire focus was on the triumph, quite categorically and strategically turning away from the trauma related to Partition, though this traumatic memory was so vivid in the psyche of individuals, sometimes recollected and in most cases repressed.

Body

Historical records pertaining to Partition are saturated with official testimonies and political histories of the contemporary times, but there is a deplorable dearth of personal records and social histories such as oral narratives, memoirs, reminiscences and recollections which might draw attention to different perspectives and dimensions associated with Partition. The state machinery, historiography and archives have consciously suppressed the memories of violence and trauma, both intrinsic to Partition history by referring to those as “an aberration, an accident or a mistake” (Pandey. *Memory, History and the Question of Violence* 26) left to be forgotten. Jawaharlal Nehru’s epoch-making speech on the eve of independence helps us feel the pulse of the political leaders for whom it was convenient to glorify the achievement and thus reduce the intensity of the loss incurred and excruciating pain inflicted upon millions of South Asians at that juncture of history:

Before the birth of freedom we have endured all the pains of labour and our hearts are heavy with the memory of this sorrow. Some of those pains continue even now. Nevertheless, the past is over and it is the future that beckons to us now.... (Daiya 7)

Thus it might be noted that the terms Partition and Independence are loaded with different connotations depending upon whether they were being used by the ruling elites or the humdrum refugee. While Nehru declared dramatically:

At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.... (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tryst_with_Destiny) for filmmaker Supriyo Sen:

The Partition was not just about the Nehrus and the Jinnahs. It was about the people like my parents who had to forget their own identity and remain dissolved in the claustrophobic atmosphere of this city. They needed a passport to go back home and nothing could be more painful than this (Mukherjee & Mandal 81)

or

the gruesome observation of a Muslim shopkeeper of Delhi: “... it was only in the bloodshed of Partition that ordinary people saw the shape of Independence” (Pandey Remembering Partition 125).



Thus we find that there is a significant gap “between history and memory” (Pandey Remembering Partition⁶) and there is an attempt of erasure of the agony and despicable loss involved in Partition from the historiography of India.

The concern about this attempt of ‘erasing’, ‘forgetting’ and thus ‘silencing’ the human dimension of Partition has been raised by writers like Butalia who questions:

Why had the history of partition been so incomplete, so silent on the experiences of the thousands of people it affected? Was this just historiographical neglect or something deeper: a fear, on the part of some historians, of reopening a trauma so profound, so riven with both pain and guilt, that they were reluctant to approach it? (Butalia “Community, State, Gender: Some Reflections on the Partition of India” 127)

Maurice Halbwachs’ theory of collective memory can be cited in this context to seek an answer to Butalia’s questions. While explaining the mechanisms that shape memories Halbwachs argues “it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories” (Halbwachs 38). However, society not only offers memories; it controls how an individual remembers or forgets particular incidents. Memories can be collective which maintain social equilibrium or memories can also be individual that might pose threat to the social equilibrium at a particular historical time (Greenberg “Against Silence and Forgetting” 257). Halbwachs stresses “society tends to erase from its memory all that might separate individuals or that might distance groups from each other (Halbwachs 182-183). This theory can explain the reason for all attempts to suppress individual memories of Partition victims in the South Asian socio-cultural context.

After a prolonged gap of almost 50 years historical and anthropological researches and feminist historiography have made significant contributions to sensitizing our understanding towards the human dimension of Partition. Partition memories, bearing unhealed scars, are often zealously protected by individuals and families belonging to particular communities. Pandey, during his conversation with a Partition victim jotted down his own thoughts regarding the conversation:

“This is just like rape.” How does the rapist, or the raped, talk about the experience of rape? And how does the interviewer ask about it” (Pandey Memory, History and the Question of Violence 31). The questions themselves provide enough reasoning as to why there is a reluctance to share personal experiences of violence both as victims and as perpetrators. To explain the silence palpable while sharing memories of atrocities Pandey recollects one of the interviewee’s plea: “Don’t talk of these things... they are too painful to recall” (Pandey Memory, History and the Question of Violence 28). Butalia shares quite the same experience of memory being suppressed and repressed:



... having begun to remember, to excavate memory, words would suddenly fail speech as memory encountered something too painful, often too frightening to allow it to enter speech. 'How can I describe this', would come the anguished cry, 'there are no words to do so'. At such points, I chose not to push further, not to force the surfacing of memories into speech. Tellings begun thus would be left incomplete (Butalia The Other Side of Silence 24)

While narrating the horrors associated with Partition, Sukrita Paul Kumar pens down:

In the subconscious of our nation, looking at history from below, there lie nightmares, experiences of thousands of men and women as helpless victims, gory scenes of daughters and wives being raped, males running for their lives or digging knives into the hearts of their own friends, mothers killing their babies to save them from something worse than death, dismembered bodies- that was 1947, the partition of the country (162)

This is the reality which the nation had long tried to evade but the true way to understand this watershed of history is not by repressing memory and suppressing facts, but rather by turning to Partition literature, the "literature that reveals the human face and records the experiential history both at the subjective as well as objective levels" (Kumar Narrating Partition: Texts, Interpretations, Ideas. 163).

Partition literature traverses a wide range encompassing tales of communal animosity, rape, mass murder, loss, repentance, courage, cowardice, brutality, remembrance and forgetting. However, Partition literature pertaining to women victims, the worst affected amongst all, opens up a world marked by savagery, barbarity and disgrace.

'Stripping; parading naked; mutilating and disfiguring; tattooing or branding the breasts and genitalia with triumphal slogans; amputating breasts; knifing open the womb; raping, of course; killing foetuses - is shocking not only for its savagery, but what it tells us about women as objects in male constructions of their own honour' (Menon, Bhasin 43). During the time of partition this male construction prompted men to treat a woman's body as a site to display utter hatred towards other religions. Again, patriarchal consensus prompted 'vulnerable' women to be protected from being 'raped, impregnated with the seed of other religion' (Butalia The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India 196) by being murdered by the men of their own community. This kind of gendered violence during the time of partition left an indelible scar on the women's psyche and devastated them both physically and mentally.

This marginalised position of women, their plight of exclusion and loss of identity compelled women writers of Partition to create female narratives focussing upon diverse forms of violence inflicted upon women and handle these issues in subtle and sensitive ways. The horror of Ayah's abduction in front of Lenny's family has been evocatively depicted by Bapsi Sidhwa in Ice Candy Man. Sidhwa, with her feminine sensibility,



narrates the plight and ignominy of Lenny's first Ayah. She is turned into a prostitute after being abducted during Partition. She even loses her own name after being turned into a dancing girl. Lenny, being a woman herself, can understand Ayah's absolute loss of faith on any man being turned a victim by men, both known and unknown: 'They (men) have shamed her. Not those men in the carts – they were strangers but Sharbat Khan and Ice-candy-man and Iman Din ... men she counted among her friends and admirers' (Sidhwa 253-54). Thus even when dressed as a bride, her eyes are 'colder than the ice' (Sidhwa 260) and with abject frustration she declares herself as 'not alive' (Sidhwa 262).

The haplessness of woman can be traced in the character of Lenny, the girl child in Ice Candy Man. She is the helpless witness to all the bestiality related to Partition and reacts vehemently against the madness of communal violence. After witnessing the armed mobs (both Sikh and Muslim) who are the embodiments of religious fanaticism, Lenny goes back home and tries to pull apart the legs of a doll with sheer desperation. When she observes the tattered inside of the doll she starts crying. Her brother fails to understand that this merciless brutality of Lenny is the consequence of what Lenny witnessed outside: 'A naked child, twitching on a spear struck between shoulders, is waved like a flag' (Sidhwa 135). Lenny's reaction suggests the frustration of a girl who has no power to protest against the meaningless violence that is an inseparable aspect of Partition.

Anita Kumar portrays woman as a victim of a different kind of torture when Lalita is forcibly separated from her son Arun as a price for crossing the border in *The Night of Seven Dawns*. Here Kumar shows exceptional sensitivity to highlight the subtle working of violence during the time of partition which left the mind devastated though the body was untouched. The pangs of separation from her son haunt Lalita for the rest of her life and she is tortured by the idea of what actually happened that resulted in the separation. Her husband Veeru becomes a stranger for her 'who lived with her as the father of her son and ... had long ceased to be her husband. The corpse of her living son had lain between them every day. It was not a question of forgiveness' (Kumar *The Night of the Seven Dawns*35). However, whether a woman forgives or not is a secondary question or not a question at all in the patriarchal consensus of the Partition scenario. After eighteen years when Lalita gets the opportunity to meet her son, who is now Lieutenant Arshad, she again has to suffer from the man-son who refuses to forgive her, accusing her of being a Kunti. Her only crime is that 'she wanted her son to live ... she really never had any choice' (Kumar *The Night of the Seven Dawns*6). It is the woman (in the roles of both wife and mother) who has to endure all the pain throughout her life: 'His (her husband's) had been the verdict; hers was the burden, hers the payment' (Kumar *The Night of the Seven Dawns*35). So Partition has a devastating impact upon this woman who is denied the rights of being a woman- in both her roles by men- the husband and the son.

The same agony of separation between mother and child has been dealt with by Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* while dealing with the horrors of abduction of women during Partition. Lenny's second Ayah, Hamida, despite being the mother of two sons and two



daughters, is not allowed by her husband to meet her children since she is considered a fallen woman after being kidnapped by the Sikhs. The shocking reality of abduction of women finds a new dimension in the hands of Sidhwa when she depicts the abduction of Ayah: 'The men drag her in grotesque strides ... men stand pressed against her propping her body upright, their lips stretched in triumphant grimaces' (Sidhwa 183). The same humiliation and abject loss of dignity in the hands of men is delineated when Ranna can listen to the moaning of women inside the mosque, being threatened by a man: 'Stop whimpering, you bitch, or I'll bugger you again' (Sidhwa 203).

Torture unleashed upon woman finds a new dimension when Kusum in Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* has to accept death in the name of honour. She is left with no other choice but to die because her father-in-law takes the responsibility of keeping her purity intact at the cost of her life. He makes her understand that there is a possibility that the 'seeds of that foreign religion' would be planted in her womb' (Baldwin 458) and hence she has no other choice left with her to preserve her honour but to die. Later Kusum's body is turned into the tabula on which Muslims inscribe a threat to destroy all Sikhs by taking the 'womb' (Baldwin 450) of Kusum: 'We will stamp your kind, your very species from existence. This is no longer merely about izzat or land. This is a war against your quom, for all time. Leave. We take the womb so there can be no Sikhs from it, we take the womb, leave you its shell' (Baldwin 450). Hence a woman's body is turned into a language for conducting a violent dialogue between men of different religious communities. Her body is considered to be a site to display hatred and male superiority. Woman's body being treated as a site for communal frenzy is also poignantly portrayed in *Ice Candy Man* where a train from Gurdaspur appears with two bags full of women's breasts. Woman's honour is crushed beneath man's feet when Roop, in *What the Body Remembers*, observes a woman with a bandage at the place where her breasts should have been. Since Partition is a male construct a woman is treated as an object used both by the winner and the loser for either celebrating victories or for expressing wrath and vengeance. Either a woman is killed in the name of preservation of honour as Kusum in *What the Body Remembers* or she is not accepted by her own society and is thrown into a woman's camp for being the victim of kidnapping, without any fault of hers, like Hamida in *Ice Candy Man*.

Conclusion

Thus the glorified history of Indian Independence and Partition which celebrates its triumphant jubilation in all its historical records is enmeshed with memories of agonising pain of the loss of home, migration, abject haplessness, brutality and struggle to maintain the basic dignity of a human being. This other side of the history needs to be told to give respect to those horrifying memories and help "to overcome new fear, to gradually rebuild faith and trust and hope and ... to conceive new histories- and new 'memories' that are in some reckonings, 'best forgotten' (Pandey 15-16)

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Typical Characteristics of Madhubani Paintings

Santosh Kumar Singh

Abstract

Unlike Janakpur art which still verges on the folk tradition, Madhubani painting is oriented more towards fine art and is monopolized more by middle-class higher-caste women whose spotlight on the spiritual eclipses their attention to the secular. There is just the opposite kind of lopsidedness in the painting by lower caste Madhubani painters: their portrayal is largely focused on the secular activity. From commercial point of view too, Madhubani painting differs from its Janakpur counterpart: the former portrays burning socio-cultural and global issues far more than contemporary Janakpur artists.

Keywords: Janakpur art, Madhubani painting, fine art, spiritual, secular, commercial point of view, social-cultural issues, global issues

Introduction

Madhubani painting, also known as Mithila art, is a traditional folk painting mostly practiced by women at ritual occasions, family ceremonies, and annual festivals. Basically, this art form is a kind of graphical-writing (*likhiya*) looked upon as a touchstone of Maithili women's literacy. In Mithila, the art of drawing becomes one of the pre-requisite skills for family life and, therefore, the chances for a girl's marriage maximize if they possess skills for art. Women in Mithila have been practicing the art of painting on the wall and the floor right from their maidenhood since antiquity.

Methodology

Maithili civilization has been founded on the groundwork laid by *Rajrishi* (king plus a sage) Janak, father of Goddess Sita and King of Mithila at Janakpur. The holistic model—king plus a sage—that King Janak embodies is actually the de-hierarchization implicit in the binary opposition between the secular and the sacred (the king represents the secular aspect; the *rishi* the sacred one). King Janak, who was thoroughly grounded in the spiritual and also enlightened by *Advaita* philosophy of Ashtavakra, was one of the busiest managers of the secular world. The worldview emerging from King Janak's blending of his performance of secular duties with his ardour for spirituality has influenced the evolutions of the Maithili society. King Janak, as Yatindra Kaudinya asserts, "was one of the great *tantric* king[s] of Mithila who knew Ratri-puja or technically Nisharcana" (*Brahmavarcas*). About the *tantric* moorings of Mithila culture, Kaudinya further states:

Mithila has developed various tantric cultures. During the medieval period especially from the Oinwar dynasty of Mithila to the early Kharore dynasty up to 18th century, band of tantric



scholar[s] flourished in Mithila and created a history in the tantric world. Shiva and Shakti cult are the main sources of tantric tradition of Mithila. Vidyapati, Mahesh Thakur, Chanda, etc. have their major impact on the tantric culture of Mithila. . Madhuvani art or paintings express the most significant Maithili aspect of tantra. (Brahmavarcas)

In Mithila, the impact of Shiva and Shakti cults is enormous – an influence evident in the popularity of *aripans* or the painted *yantras* on the ground of the courtyard

Two of the first critics to have somewhat understood the tantric underpinnings of Mithila painting are W. G. Archer and Yves Vequaud. As a British civil servant, Archer had found Mithila wall and floor paintings in his survey of the area after the devastating earthquake of 1934. In his pioneering criticism, published in 1949, he construes the socio-semiotic meaning of the two major elements of the *kohbar-ghar* wall paintings – the lotus and the bamboo – as follows:

The most prominent images which loom largest on the walls are the bamboo tree and thering of lotuses, the Kamalban or Purain. Both of these forms symbolise fertility not only because of the speed with which they proliferate but also because they are diagrams of the sexual organs. The lotus circle is not only a lotus but also the symbol of the bride's sex while the bamboo tree is a bamboo as well as representative of a phallus. This latent symbolism reaches its height in the many paintings in which the bamboo tree is depicted not as aloof and apart but as driven through the centre of a clinging circle. (28)

Archer also interprets the tortoises depicted in *kohbar-ghar* paintings as invested with erotic meanings: “...their strange shape is diagrammatic of the lovers’ union. The head and the tail emerging from the shell are the exact counterparts of the bamboo plunging in the lotuses” (29). His interpretation is Western and bereft of the symbolism of the tortoise in Mithila as one of fertility and longevity.

The Frenchman Yves Vequaud, who was the first scholar to produce a book-length study called *The Art of Mithila: Ceremonial Paintings from an Ancient Kingdom* (1977), too, reads the lotus and bamboo as symbols of the vagina and the phallus respectively: “The *kohbar*’s basic design and composition is heavily charged with *tantric* symbolism, and in its centre a lingam, the phallus, penetrates the circular beauty of a yoni, the symbol of the female genitals, often drawn as a fully-opened lotus” (17). Elsewhere in the book, Vequaud gives a wrong impression of Mithila as a sexually free society, but here in the above quote he is right on the money. The lotus and the bamboo along with the intersections of lotus rings as depicted a traditional *kohbar* artwork represents creation in the form of the flowering of the cosmos like a lotus emerging from the sea of entropy – the circle represents cyclicity of life, and the multiple intersections heighten the interaction between God and Goddess, spirit and material, and intensify the *Shri*: authority, affluence, abundance, and auspiciousness desired by Maithili women. Since then most of the natives



as well as foreign intellectuals seem to follow the same trend of interpreting *kohbar* art in terms of the female and male sexual organs.

Discussion/Analysis

Madhubani is one of the districts of Bihar in India. Traditionally, this place is famous for Mithila art and literature. Vidyapati, the famous poet of Mithila was born in this district making the Maithili literature popular among local people. Moreover, Madhubani art came into prominence during the time of economic stress when the area suffered from two natural disasters—the Nepal-Bihar Earthquake in the 1930s and the drought in the 1960s. During this time of crunch, government officers encouraged the local women to expose their artistic designs on paper and sell them. They used the grant funds to provide the women with colours, ink, brushes, and other art-making supplies. The women, according to Jagdish Chavda, later translated “these images to cloth as well” (26). The tragedy-induced impetus to what was once a rural art practiced since antiquity in Mithila on walls what was called *bhitti-chitra-kalā* brought Madhubani painting into international limelight. Madhubani painting has certain distinctive features like women’s participation, use of local products, and sticking upon the same traditional styles. About the domination of Madhubani painting by women, Chavada says that it is “an art of women only, and some 300 women in Jitwarpur (a village near city of Madhubani) practice the art” (26). Mithila art or Madhubani painting has survived so long because of Maithil women’s participation in it: they have been practicing it in their day to day life since antiquity. Traditionally, handing it over from mother to daughter provided it with a family heritage in Mithalanchal. As women used to be confined within household works, they found this art as a means of expression. Inge Baumgarten asserts that this is quite evident in the case of Maithil women (and especially high caste women), “who organize the time and place of their household and everyday lives by paying attention to supernatural beings, deities and forces” (qtd. in Davis 8). In the course of time, Maithil women introduced *Sikia* and *Godana* art within Mithila art. To put it succinctly, Mithila art turned out to be both a medium of the expression of Maithil women’s subjectivity and a living testimony of their artistic skills.

Today, Mithila art is known by nomenclatures of two places—Madhubani and Janakpur. Both Janakpur art and Madhubani art have a common heritage in as much as both of them express the duality between spiritualism and secularism, their recent renditions have taken different valences: while Janakpur art maintains the age-old folk tradition, its Madhubani counterpart seems to be oriented more towards fine art. Similarly, the latter looks to be more caste-marked than the former, particularly in their styles of painting. This essay discusses the distinctive features of Madhuabni painting—characteristics which make it look a bit different from Janakpur art.

The fineness of Madhubani painting makes it different from the very traditional form of Janakpur art which has folk coarseness. Essentially the introduction of commercial



concept in the folk art changed the medium from mud wall to paper but the motive of the painters to be in meditative mood remained the same. This mental leap towards their deities carved for the signature style work where the refined colours from the market like acrylic, oil, poster, water paved the way for minute detail on the part of Brahmin artists whereas refinement in forms like geometrical shapes, torso, angelic look, and ornamentation lifted it as a vibrant mainstream art. This variation is truer of Madhubani painting than Janakpur art. The use of modern painting tools by Madhubani artists help lend their artworks a delicate finesse. The local flavour of Maithili geography seems to find diminishing room in Madhubani painting, which is being tailored to cater more and more to international tastes. For example, the dexterous drawing of lines in Madhubani painting makes it not only an immense commercial success but also speaks volumes of the high professionalism of the Madhubani artists.



Fig. 1: Wedding of Ram Sita

What is most remarkable in the wedding artwork, besides the capturing of the moment of the mutual garlanding (*varmala*) of the about-to-be bride and bridegroom, is the choice of the colour. While Ram's iconography shows him with a dark blue skin and as a well-dressed man, Sita in yellow skin and red dress symbolizes wealth and prosperity. The border of moss-like leaves on her side suggests fecundity.

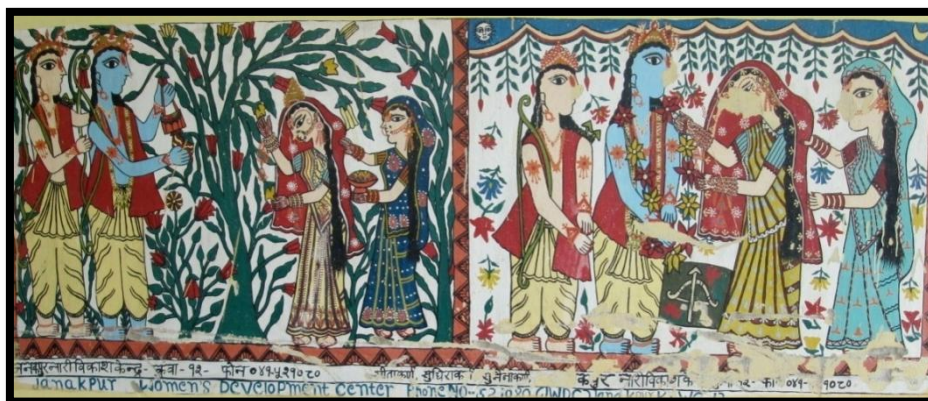


Fig. 2: Janakpur Painting of Ram Sita Wedding

First of all, the vibrant colour of Madhubani painting sharply differs from Janakpur art. In the previous one (*Fig. 1*), the finesse of the artwork looks first class whereas the second one does not have the same bright flourish. The difference in flair is because of the



differing virtuosity of the artists from the two locations. Janakpur art appears to have recently transformed from the mud walls and match most of the characteristic of folk tradition whereas Madhubani painting looks as if it has evolved much beyond the original painting. Although both the paintings are sketched amid the natural vegetation, the Madhubani one appears to have used quality products in terms of colours and brushes whereas the second one still seems to have been using local products. Similarly, not only the quality of paper markedly differs but also the gap between the art and the artist is clearly visible. The gap remains slight in Madhubani painting which seems to have achieved the smoothness of fine art (soothing colours and delicate lines) whereas its Janakpur counterpart looks as if it still sticks to the coarseness of the folk form.

Both Madhubani painting and Janakpur art are caste-marked, but the former has greater caste-deviations than the latter. Due to the confinement within their family compound as a societal sign of prestige in comparison to lower caste ladies, the higher castes women create canvas during the plenty of leisure time that they have at their disposal. Moreover, the motifs of their painting come from their own knowledge of the Hindu scriptures as well as from the inputs from the male members of the family about the outside world. Therefore, most of their portrayals reveal the events of popular epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat*. However, unlike the men who keep emphasizing on the possibility of *moksha* (salvation) through renunciation, higher caste women juxtapose the spiritual with the secular as they are so engrossed with the task of procreating, raising children, cooking, and feeding—a correlation that is also integral to Maithili rites and rituals, which cannot be performed without Maithil women's wholesale involvement. In the paintings by lower caste women, however, the secular is so obviously portrayed (Please look at *Figs.3* and *4* below).



Fig. 3: Mud Wall Brahmin Kohbar



Fig. 4: Kalwar (a Lower Caste) Kohbar

The goddess seen in *Fig. 3* is conspicuous by its absence in *Fig.4*. The higher castes women portray mainstream Hindu religious content whereas lower castes ladies depict their clan deities, Rahu, Ketu and Salhesh. Both of them worship their deities but the former do so with their own ritual style and seems to abide by the Vedic tradition of *yagyopavita* where mostly *panchmahabhuta* are offered with *akshata* and other sacred grains. Similarly, lower caste people chant hymns with *jhal-kartal* in ways that show their sensual,



spontaneous, and emotional aspects of human nature. The above kind of caste-wise difference in thematic emphases is more characteristic of Madhubani painting which has much greater domination of the artwork by the higher caste women (Brahmin and Kayastha); in Janakpur art the difference is not as palpable as its Madhubani counterpart.

Janakpur art comes out as a homogeneous folk drawing freshly translated from the mud walls of their house where the distinctiveness of styles according to castes look blurred and all the styles are used according to the artists' propensity but Madhubani painting markedly differs according to the caste styles like *bharni* (shading), *kachani* (line-drawing) and *tantric* by upper castes and *geru* (saffron-coloured soil), *godana* (tattoo), and *gobar* (cow-dung) by lower castes where each style has its own kind of portraits.



Fig. 5: Intertwined Snakes (Kachani)

The icon of the intertwined snakes represents the sexual energy hidden in the *muladharachakara*. It has both secular and spiritual meaning in Mithila culture. The secular signification is fertility through copulation. The spiritual meaning is related to *kundalini*: when the body is subjected to austerities and purification through celibacy and other practices, the heat generated in the process activates the *kundalini*, and then, like intertwined snakes, it ascends gradually through the higher *chakras* (focal points) until it reaches the highest *chakra*, the *Sahasrara* (thousand-petalled focal point), whereby a yogi experiences spiritual bliss.



Fig. 6: Krishnanda Jha's Ananda Bhairav in Tantric Style



Whether secular, or spiritual, the spotlight of Madhubani art falls on life in all its positive and negative aspects. The commanding figure of Bhairav, who seems to exude negative energy from outside, actually lets flow positive energy from inside. In Fig. 6, AnandaBhairav looks imposing due to the white angular faces, large eyes, and nine stem-like arms on both sides—the whole forming a circle against the pastel green of the background. For the Maithils, AnandaBhairav helps reduce negative energies and instead bestow pleasure on the devotees. The bestowal is suggested by green, the colour of life, and the growth of stem-like arms, suggesting fertility and renewal of life.

Like terrifying Bhairav ironically generating positive energy, terror-striking Kali, too, does the same, as the following painting of tongue-lolling Goddess by Krishnakant Jha suggests. She is depicted as red with intoxication, and in absolute rage, her hair is shown dishevelled, small fangs protruding out of her mouth, and her tongue is lolling in a subversive manner. Dalit Madhubani painters, however, give greater precedence to the subversiveness of Salhesh whom they take to be their God (please look at the following painting on the left side).



**Fig. 7: God Salhesa (right) GodanaStyle by Chano Devi;
Goddess Kali in the Bharni Style by KrishnakantJha.**

For the subaltern Maithils, particularly the Dushadhs, Salhesh is a foil to Kali, Divine Mother, for the upper-caste people. For the Dalit Maithils, the upper-caste Brahmins, who exploit them, are as clever and rapacious as a jackal is (please look at the following piece):



Fig. 8: Hurar, a Local Animal, by Bhagvati Devi, in the Geru Style

Whereas the Brahmins and the Kayasthas follow mythological themes, the scheduled caste artists allow themselves greater freedom of expression by depicting day-to-day life. Jamuna Devi's portrait of a *chamar* (a lower caste) disposing of the carcass of a cow (Fig. 9) is a famous example of a Dalit painting.



Fig 9: Chamars Disposing a Dead Cow, by Jamuna Devi, in the Gobar Style

Another lower caste painting presented below is by Urmila Devi:



Fig. 10: The Tree Goddess by Urmila Devi



Urmila Devi paints this work in the repetitive tattoo style adopted by the early lower caste painters. This piece foregrounds special delight that an onlooker feels when he or she sees the wind rustle the leaves in the trees. The icons of the twittering birds help present this tree of life as a goddess that is singing.

These days Madhubani painting is known less for its traditional authenticity and more for its improvisation with traditional templates with which the artists show their penchant for narrating contemporary cultural-political issues. For example, the following drawing in which Krishna breaks *gopi*'s pot:



Fig. 11: Krishna Breaking the Gopi's Milk-pot by Lalita Devi

Above piece depicts Krishna breaking the milkmaid's milk-pot. It is painted in soft tones using natural colors. Although Krishna teasing the milkmaids is a standard theme in Mithila painting, Lalita Devi gives it a feminist turn by making the milkmaid a much more active player than usual in the scene. Her hold on Krishna's ankles is as much a restraining movement as a pleading one. The feminist strain can also be seen in the following artwork:



Fig.12: Woman in the Role of Mother Nature by Aarti Devi

Aarti Devi has painted this piece (Fig. 12) to depict the importance of the feminine both in daily life and in the cosmos. Despite the patriarchal and conservative nature of



Mithila society, there is a powerful undercurrent of feminism in the work of many of these artists as in the following piece (*Fig. 13*) by Shalinee Kumari:



Fig. 13: Dowry Violence

A terra-cotta lamp seated on the top of a betel leaf and a woman in flames due to the fire from the burning wick made of dowry articles constitutes the vertical top-space of the painting. The mid-space depicts the bride's parents in distress and other hapless parents like them. The bottom-space portrays the bewildered bridegroom and his greedy parents who have insatiable demands for dowry. While the motif here is the dowry problem in Mithila, the message is rectification is suggested through the figure of the bridegroom's mother pictured, in the lower-right corner of the image-field, as emerging from the fearful, gaping maw of material goods, clasp the bride's hand.

Yet another, even more scathing attack on the evils of the dowry system in Mithila is the following artwork (*Fig. 14*) by Pinki Jha:

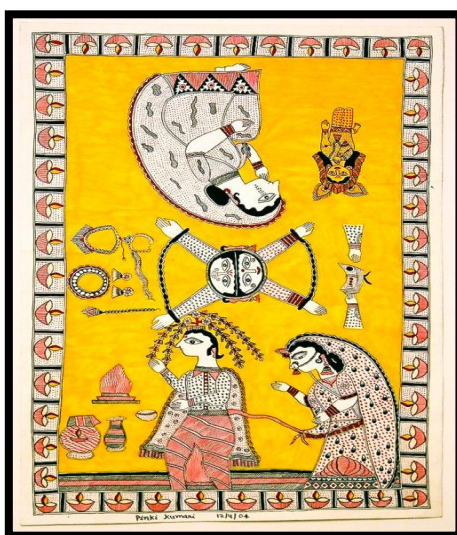


Fig. 14: Pinki Jha's The Dowry

Pinki Jha has painted quite a complicated picture of the dowry practice by showing the participants tied into a system they cannot escape. Although the dowry is technically illegal, it is still expected. Refusal to pay is certain to cause problems with the in-laws and even payment is no guarantee of peace. The upside down figure at the top is the bride



praying to Krishna to free her from the torment of dowry much as he freed Draupadi in the Mahabharata epic. At the bottom of the painting the new couple, ritually tied to one another, circle the sacred fire seven times to assure that they will remain together through seven rebirths. Meanwhile, in the center of the painting the dowry chains continue to maintain their iron grip on all the participants. Madhubani painting increasingly engages with such secular, cultural-political motifs rather than the traditional, ritual ones.

Conclusion

Summing up, Madhubani painting is dominated by women, but the upper-caste women who have greater leisure at home than their lower-caste counterparts and more educated produce artworks with both spiritual and secular overtones in contrast to the latter whose motifs are mostly materialistic. Their paintings also have caste-marked differences in matters of style. Madhubani painting, with quite palpable thematic and stylistic differences and inimitable finesse, acts as a foil to Janakpur artwork, the intensity of which is rather light and the caste differences of which are somewhat moderate.

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Yearning for Identity in Arun Joshi's Novel *The Foreigner*

E. Srinivas Rao

Abstract

Arun Joshi's novel *The Foreigner* is an attempt of the novelist to drive home various fictional themes such as identity crisis, isolation, compromise, existential philosophy, and search for complacence. Arun Joshi's novels delineate the spiritual agony of emotionally isolated characters. *The Foreigner* is no exception. They are intensely perplexed in their search for identity and meaning in their lives. It is a probing for their roots and the resultant failure of their existence on the earth. A scrutiny of the novel reveals Sindi Oberoi's tumultuous journey which emerges from the detachment of his family. Sindi's anguish sprouts from his loneliness and rootlessness consequent upon the unexpected demise of his parents in a plane crash. Notwithstanding his uncle's care in the absence of his parents, he feels like a fish out of water. Nothing seems to be a substitute to his parents. His emotional relationship with women also fails to assuage his ruffled feelings. The demise of June and Babu intensify his sense of alienation. In his quest for self-realization, Sindi treads the path of thorns and is grieved with his mode of life. His quest for meaning of life proves to be a futile exercise. The novel is an indictment of purpose in life and a distorted concept of detachment.

(Keywords: rootlessness, identity-crisis, isolation, quest, agony, ruffled feelings, meaninglessness, failure, frustration, detachment)

Arun Joshi's maiden novel *The Foreigner* is a significant achievement in the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction. The theme of the novel unveils the maturity of the novelist's technical competence. The novel encompasses the protagonist's quest for meaning in his life. It examines the problem of alienation and involvement and the resultant frustration which emerge from the search. Though the novel is a palimpsest of a series of reflections, the whole novel revolves round the theme of meaninglessness in life. Craving for freedom, love, and marriage is a natural phenomenon everywhere. When there is a threat to this desire, ordeals emerge. In his quest for these emotions he undergoes detachment which sets the reader ever pondering.

The birth of the chief character of the novel, Sindi Oberoi is of dual origin. His mother hails from England, where as his father is a Kenyan-Indian. He is the product of the east and the west. Having got disjointed with his parents in the prime of his life owing to their sudden death in an air crash near Cairo, he is urged to be under the protective care of his uncle who is settled in Kenya. He seeks his education in East Africa, London, and America. He is deprived of parental love and develops apathy towards them. Sindi's



reaction to Khemka, a business tycoon's enquiry about his parents, epitomizes his disgruntled feeling. He reacts:

For the hundredth time I related the story of those strangers whose only reality was a couple of wrinkled and cracked photographs.

He is immensely drawn to the world of depression when he is enquired about his birth and parents. When June Blyth enquires about his birth-place, he responds in the same vein. "Everyone always asked the same silly question, 'where are you from?' as if it really mattered a great deal where I was from."

Arun Joshi has carved a niche for himself among the noted Common wealth writers in English. He has added a new chapter to English fiction with the projection of the rootlessness of the characters. He holds a mirror to his own experiences of living abroad. Sindi Oberoi's world is the revelation of a society where man is confronted by the self and the queries of his existence. His endeavour to convey a better understanding of the world becomes in vain. Their uncertainty which is the root cause of their anxiety and despair reigns supreme.

The acquiescence in the personality of Sindi ultimately paves way to the final crisis of his life, where he realizes the folly of his past inaction and indecision. Unable to identify himself with the values of life, he comes to a conclusion that all human beings are essentially alienated. They are caught in the web of expectations which remain unfulfilled and lead to the germination of the idea of death. In this paper, the effort is made to study Arun Joshi's concept and problem of identity in the Novel *The Foreigner*. Therefore his novel will be studied in the terms of existential philosophy. In the following paper, the effort is made to unfold the mystery of man's psyche. The ever-lurking idea of death in the mind illustrates the disgruntled feelings of the character. When his search for peace remains unachievable, he is driven towards a sense of despair. This search makes Sindi struggle to achieve peace. The absence of peace leads to complete detachment from himself. The novel is the study of "an uprooted young man living in the latter half of the twentieth century" who looks out "moorings and a meaning in his randomly drifting life."

Sindi Oberoi is a man without roots, so he feels lost, alien and isolated wherever he is. He fails to perceive any meaning or purpose in life. As he is orphaned at the age of four when his parents meet their end in an air crash he enters a world of agony. His agony is aggravated with the death of his uncle who is a source of solace in the absence of his parents. The only reality for him is "a couple of wrinkled and cracked photographs." Deprived of parental love and affection in his very childhood, he becomes broken and anchorless. He feels having lost his emotional anchor. He feels like a rudderless boat in a turbulent ocean.



The background of alienation and emotional rootlessness, and various incidents of Sindi's life hold a mirror to many incomprehensible incidents. In an attempt to seek reprieve, he moves from Nairobi where he is originated from to London and pursues his studies. He turns to a dishwasher and bar man in Saho. His stay in Scotland makes him work at a small village library and discuss religion, God and mysticism with a Catholic priest. He takes up studies for six years in Boston. He encounters June and Babu there. Ultimately, he is driven to Delhi where he seeks his final settlement, but fails to build a sense of meaningful relatedness with the world. Delhi also proves to be a land devoid of relation to him. He feels homeless, misfit and an alien everywhere physically as well as psychologically. Even after being conferred with the highest degree, PhD, he regrets that no education and degrees can provide a valid ground for learning the meaningfulness of life.

The philosophy of detachment reflected in Sindi's life is not the outcome of pragmatic approach to life but, of his search for unattainable things. This feeling detaches him from involvement and commitment and turns him from crisis to crisis. He has a misconception about the notion of living without desire. It is shattered when his ideal theory of non- involvement contradicts with the reality of life. It is evidenced in his emotional relationship with June Blyth. This gives vent to hypocrisy, timidity and foolishness. Indeed, Sindi wants his love to be reciprocal, but he is belied of it. His experiences with June contradict with his previous relationships with Anna and Kathy. The story of Sindi's relationship with June is a story of the gradual breaking down of the barriers of detachment and non-involvement. For the first time in his life he is caught between two contradictory poles of attachment and detachment. Although he loves June deeply, he tries not to get attached to her for "one should be able to love without wanting to possess"

Though conscious of what is happening he finds himself helpless to resist it. The reality of the situation is that Sindi is deeply in love with June despite his vigorous attempt to avoid the temptation. His desire to remain free and uninvolved is only an illusion. He forms the delusion for himself that he is detached under the circumstances.

June who regards the purpose of her life in being of use to someone, turns to the young Indian student Babu after getting disappointed with Sindi. Both are engaged to be married but, just before marriage the relationship breaks down. Sindi makes love to her when she is terribly depressed due to the failure of her adjustment with Babu. Babu, being frustrated emotionally, due to his academic failure, the fear of his father's roaring image before him and the suspicion that June is carrying on with Sindi, he disputes with her and in a fit of agony commits suicide.

Thus, the false detachment of Sindi drives Babu to death. June accuses him of the crime. Sindi determined to leave America. It is a turning point in his career. His decision to go to India as destiny decides and the way it is made reveals that now careful choice and



thoughtful planning have lost their charm for him. Sindi Oberoi's life is in a state of confusion. He is in a paradoxical state that passes through a process of death and rebirth. Ultimately, he triumphs in becoming oblivious of his isolation accepting his identity. His long journey of life comes to a close with his final destination. He at last realizes that remedy to the life of his anxiety is conceivable within himself. He is now set free from the fear of love and freedom. The novel closes with the contemplation of Sindi over the riddle of life.

In the wake of his past experiences Sindi reaches his destination. He seems to comprehend the purpose of his existence on this planet for which he has been restlessly wandering from place to place. He is now not scared of love, freedom, and attachment. freedom, of growth, of involvement: he becomes himself. He ultimately discovers man's own rootless, Sindi finds a direction and purpose in life. He is not alienated from the society but from himself. Caught between attachment and detachment; love and hate; participation and withdrawal he finally settles down in India to which he truly belongs. From a life of alienation in America and England, he moves to a life of identification in India. Though a direction is discernible in the novel, it is an expression of the existentialist's predicament in general and the protagonist's confused state of mind in particular. As the struggle to grapple with the moments of acute spiritual crisis is witnessed in the present novel, it can be termed as the novel replete with the theme of rootlessness. His protagonist's serious search for meaning and definition of life through a process of active experience leads to the realization that only love, compassion, sincerity, courage and fidelity to one's own self can counter-balance the sense of meaninglessness and barrenness in modern life. Arun Joshi's constant faith in the possibility of positive affirmation sets him apart from some existentialists whose search for ethical values remains open ended. There is adequate justification in stating that the novel holds a mirror to the tormented and conflicting self of the contemporary man which has added a new dimension to the Indo-English novel.

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War and Women in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Vaishnavi. P

Abstract

Khaled Hosseini is an expatriate American writer. Hosseini through his works presents the rich and varied Afghan culture and exposes the negatives like the discrimination of women authorized by religion. In the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Hosseini presents the dejected position of the two women, Mariam and Laila which is worsened by war and an unstable government. Like V.S. Naipaul Hosseini gives an objective view of his society - the double standards, victimization, and the inherent destruction.

Keywords: war, women, victimization, Afghan, patriarchy

Khaled Hosseini an expatriate writer from Afghanistan lives in The United States of America. Khaled portrays the rich topography and varied culture of Afghanistan. He through his works brings out the diversity and culture of the Afghan landscape and people. Khaled Hosseini also exposes the negative elements of their culture through his works. He brings out the inequality between the Pashtuns, Turki's and other people. He gives a vivid picture of the lower status and the predicament of their women in a patriarchal set-up that seeks religion to support its discriminatory practices. According to Shahira Banu Hosseini's goal is to lay bare the soul of his country, which was hitherto not ventured by any other writer. (Discrimination and War 2)

Khaled Hosseini through his three works *Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *The Mountains Echoed* brings out the varied and rich landscape, customs and culture of the Afghans; at the same time exposes the discriminatory society that creates waves of resentment among the readers. *Kite Runner* is about the discrimination between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras through the characters of Hassan and Amir respectively. The feeling of superiority instigates Amir to behave inhumanely towards his friend Hassan. Hassan meekly accepts all the insults because he believes that caste determines his status. The novel *The Mountains Echoed* is about a fraternal relationship between Abdullah and his sister Pari. Pari is given away for father adoption highlighting the inferior status and 'Otherness' attributed to women in general.

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* brings out the discriminatory status met to women in the Afghan society. This ill-treatment is supported by religion and carried devotedly by a patriarchal society that is strewn by war. Hosseini while exposing the inferior status of women shows how war-struck Afghanistan brutally impoverishes and mutes their women. "...they fired on Massoud and Rabbani forces at the Ministry of Defense and the Presidential Palace....The streets became littered with bodies, glass, and crumpled chunks of metal. There was looting, murder, and, increasingly, rape, which was



used to intimidate civilians and reward militiamen. Mariam heard of women who were killing themselves out of fear of being raped, and of men who, in the name of honor, would kill their wives or daughters if they'd been raped by the militia." (132) Nana, Mariam, Laila, Aziza, Fariba are some of the women characters in the novel who are deeply affected by war and an unstable government. If men lose lives in the battlefield women are made helpless in a war infected country.

Nana warns the young Mariam who is sunk in the effervescent and selfish love of her father thus: "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always..." (6) Nana a servant in Jalil's house is impregnated by him and given birth to Mariam. She is accused of cheating Jalil and leads the life of a harami throughout her life. She tries to educate Mariam about the patriarchal world and the discriminatory status of women. Mariam fails to understand her mother's warnings but undergoes indescribable torment in her life because of Jalil's fear of society and Rasheed's idea of the family. Jalil does not allow Mariam to enter the house and later marries her off to Rasheed, 30 years older to her. Rasheed insists Mariam wear the traditional burqa and states "From where I come from, a woman's face is her husband's business only." (70)

Mariam suffered because of the patriarchal society but it was worsened because of war. She had to listen to Rasheed and give in to his pleas to marry Laila when he states: "Don't be so dramatic. It's a common thing and you know it. I have friends who have two, three, four wives. Your own father had three. Besides, what I'm doing now most men I know would have done long ago...There is another option...She can leave...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?..." (115) Laila forces herself to marry Rasheed as she believes that there is no other way she could protect herself and her child. Caught in the quagmire of patriarchy, worsened by war, both the women are objectified when Rasheed compares them to luxury cars. He introduces Mariam as a harami (outcaste) and compares it to a Volga while he compares Laila to a Benz.

Laila, on the other hand, belongs to a forward-thinking family where her father Babi took a special interest in educating her. He often said to Laila "And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more.... a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated...no chance (114). She is also lucky to have a wonderful friend turned lover, Tariq. It is the war that separates both of them. Tariq leaves Laila for his parents. Laila is unable to join him because her mother wanted to live in a place where her sons died. Finally, it is a bomb that hits Laila's house that kills her parents, renders her homeless and destines her to become Rasheed's prey. Hosseini contrasts the intercourse of Rasheed sans love to the passionate love between Laila and Tariq.



When Laila and Mariam save money and try to escape they are caught by the police. She is reprimanded by the police and is accused of committing while the police neglected murders, rapes, lootings and innocent killing. Laila is forced to live with Rasheed and is tortured by his suspicions. When Laila condemns him of being despicable he states “Half the women in this city would kill to have a husband like me. They would *kill* for it...What turned Laila’s stomach the rest of the night was that every word Rasheed had uttered, every last one, was true.” (146)

The Taliban rule was most disturbing and it crippled women indoors. Laila and several other women faced untold difficulties due to lack of proper medical facilities. Laila and Mariam face many problems and Laila even undergoes a cesarean without anesthesia to save her child. The gynecologist is forced to do her duties wearing a burqa. “You think I want it this way?... They (Taliban) 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.” (150)

In 2001 Massoud’s appeal to the world to free Afghanistan from the Taliban rule was a period of drought and destruction. Hosseini connects Laila’s own life with that of the blasting of the two-thousand-year-old Bami Buddhas “They had chanted Allah-u-Akbar with each blast, cheered each time the statues lost an arm or a leg in a crumbling cloud of dust...But when she heard the news of the statues’ demise, Laila was numb to it. It hardly seemed to matter. How could she care about statues when her own life was crumbling dust?” (161) All this reveal the enormous difficulties of the women during the war. Aziza, Laila’s daughter is left in a detention center because of famine and war. Aziza meekly obeys her father’s orders and spends a few years at the dilapidated center. She being a woman takes the brunt while her brother is well fed and gets the lion share to everything Rasheed could afford.

Aziza is never treated well by her father while her brother is pampered with a VCR when they did not have enough to eat. Laila and Mariam Jo have a tearful parting at the detention camp. Laila undergoes hardships to meet Aziza as Rasheed refuses to accompany her and women were not allowed to travel without a male. Laila undergoes torture physical and mental on her way to meet Aziza. She even wears two or three sweaters beneath the burqa for padding against the beatings. Aziza is not very happy in the home although she receives some education. Aziza tries to cover all her problems and receives her parents with cheer. Laila broods at the changes in Aziza. “She thought of Aziza’s stutter, and of what Aziza had said earlier about fractures and powerful collisions deep down and how sometimes all we see on the surface is a slight tremor. (170) This war had a tremendous effect on women.

Laila’s mother Fariba undergoes mental torture as she lost her sons in the war. Fariba is unable to come out of it and she spends most of the time brooding on the bed. This has a negative effect on Laila as Laila is deprived of her mother’s love and care. It is



only because of Fariba's wish to stay back that Laila loses Tariq and falls prey to Rasheed. We find that although men fight in the war and lose their lives the women stay back and are exposed to the negative effects of the war which the author wonderfully brings through the novel.

While the crimes committed by Rasheed on his wives are unnoticed Mariam is imprisoned for killing her torturer. She is worshipped by the women in the prison for her daring feat as most of them were imprisoned for just trying to run away from home. These women had no security or respect in the prison and they wore a burqa the whole day. The young Talib arrogantly states "God has made us differently, you women and us men. Our brains are different. You are not able to think like we can....This why we require only one male witness but two female ones." (191) During Mariam's trial, the Mullah states that although Mariam is not a wicked woman she has killed her husband and so must be beheaded. Thus war and religion turn the tables against the women in a society infected with unreasonableness.

Khaled Hosseini brings out the effects on the war on common people and proves that the worst affected are the women of that society. However, he does give a message to women to be strong and decide for themselves. When Laila comments about the movie Titanic she states "Everybody wants Jack to rescue them from disaster. But there is no Jack. Jack is not coming back. Jack is dead..." (170) However, it is later that Laila and Mariam oppose their husband to fight against him that leads to his death. Mariam hits him with a shovel to prevent him from strangling Laila. Hosseini describes her individual and bold decision thus "As she did, it occurred to her that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her own life." (183). Thus although Mariam is dying she is absolutely satisfied. "...as she closed her eyes, it did not regret any longer but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her...she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back...A person of consequence at last. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings."(195) towards the end of the novel, the Laila rejoins Tariq and they build a school for the children. Although Mariam loses her life she lives in the memory of Laila. Disturbed Afghanistan continues to change hands but people continue to live their lives and go on.

Khaled Hosseini is an outstanding expatriate American writer who has produced the sufferings of the Afghan people especially the Afghan women in a war-torn country, in his works. The women are victimized and kept ignorant as they are deprived of education. Their dependant position is worsened due to war. Abisha in her work states that the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is an incredible chronicle of Afghan history during the Soviet invasion and the Civil war under Taliban dictatorship. (Sanctuary and Resistance 2)



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Subaltern Cartography in Major Works of Salman Rushdie

Zeba Tanveer

Abstract

In Rushdie's novels history has been envisaged from different perspectives which blend together in his narrative accounts. He purports to re-vision history in all its forms. At times the grand master narratives are juxtaposed with a common man's subaltern version. This essay revisits this aspect of Rushdie's argument to offer an alternative vision of subaltern agency through a close study of narrative voice.

The brief study will focus on the critical reception of the major novels of Salman Rushdie to inundate the problems of representation and critical interpretation within metropolitan cultures.

Key words: Subaltern, narratives, black humour, postmodernism.

Salman Rushdie's prolific, multifarious, oeuvre epitomizes contemporary literatures. His works, often described as hybrid and cosmopolitan can be read from various perspectives.

The paper will look at how colonial writing helped to establish the inferiority of the 'other' through the use of binary oppositions and stereotyping and ambivalent portrayal of the female in colonial reasoning and writing. We will see that women were victimized by both western imperialism on one hand and local patriarchy on the other hand forming a double oppression. The use of stereotypical binary oppositions contributes to the maintenance of the difference between 'self' and 'other.' This stereotyping can also be found in the age old patriarchal tradition in which women are represented as the 'inferior gender.' The upper-class women became symbolic for the magnificent and mysterious. As an unfortunate consequence, the existence of lower class women was neglected in colonial writing and remained a forgotten subject for a long time even in post colonial texts.

The study will investigate how Rushdie's representation of women, is a narratorial strategy in providing a subaltern, marginalized view of modern India. The women who are highlighted within the novel are seen in a state of constant fluctuation and in an ambivalent light. The women, in spite of being upheld as *Bharat Mata* within the novel are represented less as individuals in their own light and more as concepts. Saleem recounts the versions of history to Padma, taking recourse to language appropriated from her subaltern, feminine experience and "Hindlinglish," as Padma cannot read. The fact that she cannot read, importantly raises her above being ideologically fixed, or being subjected to predictable patriarchal power. The women characters within the novel, lack identity, as they are not ideologically fixed.



Analysing further, *Midnight's Children* fits into the space of historical narrativisation because the novel presents the reader with a number of historical facts from independence and post-independence times. Those facts have been embedded in Saleem Sinai's words 'pickled' in a larger narrative. History is therefore narrativised. Through the fictional envelope of characters we can access historical data about post-independence India.

Rushdie's narrative has the potential of voicing the subaltern more fully and thoroughly in what that can be called 'magical.' *Midnight's Children* could be seen as a subaltern rewriting of India's modern history. Salim is actively resisting alienation by buying into 'someone else's version' of the history in which he is protagonist. He is fiercely opposing being decentred from his-story thus embodying the empowered' subaltern who has become the subject of history.

Thus *Midnight's Children* can be read as a piece of subaltern history. In the discussion of 'Shame' we will see the story of the murder of a young girl in mind; she was killed by her father for having an inappropriate relationship with a white boy, for "she had brought such dishonor upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain." (Rushdie 119)

In 'Shame' the two aspects will be discussed. Firstly, representations of each of the female protagonists individually all of whom are clearly represented as victims of patriarchal oppression. The Shakil sisters, Rani Harappa, Bilquis Hyder, Arjumand Harappa, Naveed Hyder and especially Sufiya Zinobia. All the women in the novel are in some way or another victimized by the men; but still try to find a way to deal with their oppression.

Rani is a victim of male oppression as Iskander Harappa exiles Rani to the countryside because she cannot give him a male heir. The dry land surrounding the estate, symbolically refers to Rani's bareness. Moreover, he takes Pinkie Aurangzeb as his mistress. Rani keeps hoping that one day Isky will want her back, but resigns herself to her fate when she learns that "he only wanted her to stand on election platforms." (Rushdie 182)

In her state of oppression she starts embroidering eighteen shawls which depicts the truth about the murders and crimes her husband committed.

Similar to Rani, Bilquis Hyder is victimized by her husband. Raza becomes heartless towards his wife because she is unable to give birth to a male heir; their first born son dies, strangled by the umbilical cord. When the second child turns out to be a girl Raza causes a fuss in the hospital blaming his wife for the disgrace of having a girl. As if the humiliation of her son was not already enough, Sufiya also catches a brain fever which causes her to be mentally retarded. Bilquis feels like she has failed her husband and



projects her shame onto her daughter. In one of her phone conversations with Rani, Bilquis complains:

'Rani, a judgement, what else? He wanted a hero of a son; I gave him an idiot female instead.(...) a simpleton, a goof! Nothing upstairs. Straw instead of cabbage between the ears. Empty in the breadbin. To be done? But darling there is nothing. That birdbrain, that mouse I must accept it: she is my shame.' (Rushdie 101)

Unfortunately, Bilquis is so traumatized by her experience that she increasingly suffers from nervous breakdowns, sometimes even bordering on insanity. Consequently, Raza sees no other choice than to place her "under a kind of unofficial house arrest" (Rushdie 171) for it would have been a shame and a scandal if any outsider had seen her in that state. Being locked up and neglected by her husband, Bilquis gradually fades away, turning into "a shadow hunting the corridors for something it had lost," "a mumbling in the corners of the palace," "a rumour in a veil" (Rushdie 209)

In other words, Bilquis' story is a typical example of how the 'other' becomes silenced by patriarchy. Another victim of male oppression is Naveed, Hyder Raza and Bilquis' second daughter. She is supposed to marry Haroun Harappa , but having fallen for the polo player Talvar Ulhaq, chooses to marry him instead. Bilquis is successful to prevent Raza from killing Naveed for having had a disgraceful affair, and makes him agree to marry the man she loves: "a whore with a home" Raza admits, "is better than a whore in the gutter" (Rushdie 167). Talvar on the other hand marries Naveed because of her capacity to bear him a large number of heirs.

(.....) Naveed Talvar, the former Good News Hyder, proved utterly incapable of coping with the endless stream of humanity flowing out between her thighs. But her husband was relentless, insatiable, his dream of children had expanded to fill up the place in his life- previously occupied by polo(...) he came to her once a year and ordered her to get ready, because it was time to plant the seed, until she felt like a vegetable patch whose naturally fertile soil was being worn out by an over-zealous gardener, and understood that there was no hope for women in the world, because whether you were respected or not the men got you anyway, no matter how hard you tried to be the most proper of ladies the men would come and stuff you full of alien unwanted life. (Rushdie 207)

Through the story of Naveed, Rushdie criticizes local patriarchy for aligning itself with the colonial idea that women are objects rather than human beings. Through the powerfully tragic portrayals of Bilquis, Rani and Naveed , Rushdie definitely succeeds in encouraging the reader to reflect on the terrible situations in which subaltern women end up because of patriarchal oppression.

Undoubtedly, the paper explores certain patriarchal norms and social injustices towards subaltern and leaves us with a thought at the miserable plight and incessant struggle of the latter towards liberation.



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Demotivating Factors in a Teacher-development Program

Jimalee Sowell

Abstract

Continued professional development is an important part of teacher education. However, a keen understanding of teacher development is important in designing effective teacher training programs. Teacher development programs that are not executed properly can result in demotivated teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine potentially demotivating factors in light of teachers' experiences in a particular teacher training program. The study was conducted through a survey of 69 primary and secondary teachers required to attend a certain training program. The overall findings revealed that there were a number of factors in this program that led to overall teacher demotivation.

Key words and phrases: teacher training, teacher-training programs, motivation, demotivation

1. Introduction

I had been hired as a teacher trainer for a government-funded project. Working on this particular project seemed like a dream job. However, when I met the teachers and began working with them, that dream began to fade as I realized that rather than improving their teaching pedagogy and English language skills what they really needed was a shoulder to cry on. Over the year that I spent with these teachers, I began to understand why many of them were resistant to attending the course I was teaching and how many of them had become severely demotivated and no longer interested in learning or improving their skills. I realized that these teachers' voices needed to be heard. This paper serves to bring to light their experiences and the reasons for their demotivation so that organizers of teacher-training or teacher-development programs and the institutions that require them can be cognizant of factors that can lead to demotivation in training programs. In other words, an understanding of some of the problems and challenges with this particular program can help organizers create more successful future training programs focused on positive professional growth.

For the protection of the research participants and the institution involved, pseudonyms have been used. LeapsAhead substitutes the actual name of the teaching program. TopTest substitutes the name of the test trainees were required to take before the start of the program and after completing it.



2. Literature Review and Background

Assessment Validity

In order for an assessment to be sound, it must be valid. Test validity means that a test measures what it is intended to measure (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2018; Cohen, 1984; Crusan, 2010; Henning, 1982; Hughes, 2003; Hyland, 1996; Nation, 2010). The course objectives inform the content of the course, which should be reflected in the assessment, i.e., the skills tested should be the skills that were taught (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2018; Henning, 1982; Nation, 2010). Therefore, if the assessment instrument measures language ability, then the instruction and materials used must relate to the language ability measured by the given test. One of the most problematic aspects of the LeapsAhead course was that the syllabus did not match the assessment. While the materials for the LeapsAhead course were primarily focused on teaching methodology and pedagogy with modules with titles such as *Teacher Development* and *How We Learn Languages*, and lessons on topics such as classroom management, and good instruction giving, the only assessment was the TopTest, which is a standardized test of language ability.

Incidental Learning Is Not Enough

Krashen believed that learners of English do not need explicit instruction as to the rules of language, that learners are able to 'naturally' acquire grammatical forms by exposure to comprehensible input, that errors in a learner's repertoire can be noticed and corrected by exposure to more comprehensive input rather than a focus of repair on faulty forms (Krashen and Terrel, 1983). However, numerous studies have shown the positive impact of grammar instruction on L2 proficiency (See Cadierno, 1995; Carroll and Swain, 1993; Doughty, 1991; Fotos, 1993; Lightbrown, 1991; Lightbrown and Spada, Master, 1994; 1990; Nassaji and Swain, 2000). If exposure were the only factor necessary for language learning, exposure would smoothly translate into uptake. However, in spite of a great deal of input over a long period of time, even very advanced learners typically have an aggregation of errors, some of which might never be repaired. It is simplistic to believe that input effortlessly translates to uptake. One example of the inadequacy of 'input only' can be evidenced by the fact that language learners sometimes make inferences based on their current knowledge of the L2 that can lead them to make alterations to correct language forms. For example, I gave LeapsAhead trainees several email samples. Each sample had a closing followed by the name of the writer of the email. The majority of trainees, when practicing writing their own emails, put a full-stop following their names in the closing. From 'exposure,' the students would have seen that no end punctuation is needed after a name in the closing of an email. However, these trainees were not simply following the input, but basing their production on their current ideas of correct use of the L2, which were perhaps influenced from the first language, overgeneralization of a language rule, or use of an archaic language rule.



Fossilization as a Concern for Higher Score Expectations

Fossilization refers to the phenomenon whereby learners become stagnated in their language progression and fail to progress significantly or to correct failed language utterances, i.e., they develop fossilized patterns that are impervious to correction or change in spite of additional input or instruction (Ellis, 2015; Gass, et al., 2008; Lightbrown and Spada, 2013; Zhaohong, 2004). Washburn (1987) theorizes that fossilized learners may not be able to adapt or correct language that has been incorrectly internalized even when presented with models and guidance. Higgs and Clifford (1982) identified a type of student they referred to as a terminal 2/2+; the terminal 2/2+ student reaches a plateau where they cannot progress, even with additional time living in countries where the target language was the L1 or undertaking intensive language courses (Higgs and Clifford, 1982). Thus, in effect, for some fossilized learners, a year of LeapsAhead or even several years of LeapsAhead or other instruction could have little impact on the learners' ability to progress. While the demand of achievement for the LeapsAhead course was attaining a Common European Framework (CEFR) score of C1 or C2, for fossilized LeapsAhead participants, this very likely was an unrealistic aim.

Acquisition Does Not Take Place in a Linear Sequence

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has shown that learners do not acquire grammatical structures in a linear fashion, acquiring grammatical features one-by-one (Ellis, 2015; Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Lightbrown and Spada, 2013) although this is how grammar is typically presented in a textbook syllabus or curriculum. Instead, learners usually follow an irregular pattern of acquisition, and order and sequence of acquisition varies among learners (Ellis, 2015). Input does not automatically lead to acquisition, and even when it does, such acquisition might be delayed (Ellis, 2015). For instance, learners are typically exposed to third person -s early in the instruction process, but acquisition might come much later or not at all. Language is complex, and language acquisition cannot be regulated to habit formation or rule formation (Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 2016). This means that a certain number of hours of instruction or a certain number of instructional units does not necessarily lead to mastery of a certain grammatical item or items, and with fossilized items, instruction might result in little to no uptake.

Over-training Can Lead to Burnout

Teachers in my LeapsAhead course had already taken other teacher training and development courses. All teachers had gone through some initial training in university or teachers' college, and some had already taken part in other in-service development courses. Some teachers in my LeapsAhead course were also enrolled in degree programs – bachelor's or master's – at the same time they attended LeapsAhead. Some of the teachers were teaching full-time, attending full-time degree courses, and attending LeapsAhead, which requires six hours of face-to-face instruction and six hours of online



work per week. If regular teaching and related work obligations are estimated at 40 hours per week, course work for a degree program at around 20 hours of study per week (including in and out of class time) in addition to 12 hours of LeapsAhead, the total comes to 72 hours. Few employees could sustain this kind of intensity. Continuing professional development is important for all teaching professionals, but more is not always more – there is a point at which teachers can reach burnout. Teaching is a demanding profession—teachers not only teach, they also prepare lessons, grade papers, attend meetings, facilitate extracurricular activities, sit on committees, meet with parents, and various related tasks. Requiring teachers to undertake too much professional development at one time can be counterproductive because it can result in work overload, which is a common factor in professional burnout (Da Silva, et al. 2017; Friedman, 2000). When I informed my students that I would be the one to decide whether they would be allowed to sit for the TopTest or not, following the directions of my superiors (teachers with poor attendance and performance could be banned from sitting the exam), one teacher replied by saying that she would be happy to bow out of taking the final TopTest exam as she already had many other commitments with finishing a degree, working full-time, being in charge of a sport at her school and, of course, her personal commitments.

The Negative Effects of Labelling

Although in some cases, labelling students is critical for getting them needed assistance, once a student is labelled as having an intellectual disability, an emotional disturbance, or a learning disability of any sort—in other words, of being less competent or capable than other students in any way, the label stays with that student and often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, following them throughout their school career and even life (Dittrich and Tutt, 2008; La Salle and Johnson, 2018; Johnson and La Salle, 2010). Therefore, it is important to avoid labelling students except when absolutely necessary in order for them to get assistance and accommodations. The negative effects of labelling also hold true for teachers, but the effects of labelling could even be more damaging as teachers are viewed as knowledge-givers and leaders. If teachers are labelled as not competent enough to perform their job duties well, they might not only suffer self-efficacy disbeliefs and resulting demotivation, but also might suffer a loss of credibility as professionals within their schools and communities. Only teachers who scored below a C score on the CEFR (Common European Framework) were required to attend LeapsAhead. Once some teachers were required to attend LeapsAhead based on test scores, a division was created.

Monetary Reward as Motivator

Teachers who were required to take the LeapsAhead course were told that a score of C1 or C2 on the CEFR would be rewarded with a financial bonus: approximately 900 USD for a C1 score and approximately 1,500 USD for a C2 score. The question is whether money is the best motivator. Should teachers or students receive financial rewards for good performance? In their research on the internal motivation (behavior motivated by



internal rewards) and instrumental motivation (practical or pragmatic reason for performing a certain action), or extrinsic (behavior motivated by outside rewards) motivations of West Point cadets, Wrzesniewski et al. (2014) found that strong internal motivation was an important determinate for success. In fact, cadets with strong internal motivation and weak instrumental motivation outperformed those who had both strong internal and instrumental motivations. In another study, Cho and Perry (2011) found that employees who were intrinsically-motivated were significantly more engaged in their work than those who were primarily motivated by external rewards, such as money. Deci, et. al. (1999) found that extrinsic rewards often served to suppress instead of enhance intrinsic motivation. Since the best performers have strong internal motivations, program organizers should focus on helping employees understand the meaning and impact of their work rather than on extrinsic motivators, such as financial bonuses (Wrzesniewski et al., 2014).

Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development refers to both teacher training, which is the training pre-service teachers receive, and teacher development, which is the ongoing learning teachers engage in once they have started teaching. Professional development can be formal or informal with the ultimate aim of improving teacher learning (Richards, 2015). Professional development in teacher education is usually intended to lead to some kind of change and is often imposed from a higher authority. Many professional development programs are designed to change teachers' knowledge and beliefs about teaching, which ideally will result in better teaching and henceforth improved student learning. However, many professional development programs see the process as changing teachers' knowledge and beliefs, which would lead to changes in practice, which ultimately would lead to changes in student learning (Murray and Christison, 2011). Even though most teachers naturally want to be more knowledgeable and better teachers, a primarily knowledge-based model does not take into account teachers' lives and identities (Murray and Christison, 2011). Training approaches that focus only on knowledge development are largely ineffective and generally result in little uptake with few real changes to teaching practices (Bartles, 2005). Murray and Christison (2011) recommend what they call 'sustaining professional development' that is ongoing, coherent, and continuous. In other words, teachers cannot just attend a training or development program and then be finished. Rather than focusing on helping teachers obtain a certain amount of knowledge, sustaining development aims to help teachers understand their own context and practice (Murray and Christison, 2011). Research has shown that in effective professional development, "teachers learn by doing, by reflecting, and by working together in a supportive environment" (Yates and Brindley, 2000, 1). This learning might relate to new concepts or teachers' current practices. While some governments or other institutions require certain numbers of hours of professional development, like language acquisition, professional development cannot be tied to a



certain amount of time spent but hinges more on the quality of the process (Murray and Christison, 2011).

3. The Study

3.1 Research Questions:

Through this study, I set out to find out the following:

- A. Did teachers in the face any ill-treatment from superiors or colleagues because they were required to take the LeapsAhead course? (Questions 1 and 2)
- B. Did the teachers find the materials and criteria for evaluation of the LeapsAhead course problematic? (Questions 3 and 4)
- C. Did the teachers feel that money was a good motivator for a teacher-training program? (Questions 5 and 6)
- D. Were the teachers currently attending other training programs, or had they attended other training programs in the past? (Questions 7 and 8)
- E. What were teachers' attitudes toward professional development? (Questions 9 and 10)
- F. Did teachers feel that the expected test score on the TopTest exam was a realistic goal for achievement? (Questions 11 and 12)

3.2 The Context

In the given country where the study was carried out, English is considered the second most important language. English is currently taught as a compulsory subject and considered an additional language in the education system.

3.3 The Participants

Data was collected from 69 English teachers currently teaching at primary and secondary schools, all of whom attended a course called LeapsAhead, which was a government-sponsored, 40-week training program for in-service primary and secondary school English teachers. Teachers who had received a score of less than C1 on the TopTest pre-test were required to take the course. All teachers attending the course in my sections had scored a B1 or B2 on the TopTest pre-test. The expectation upon completion of the course was that each teacher would move up at least one band on the CEFR; if a teacher came in to the course with a B1, they were expected to achieve a B2 or higher – if they start with a B2, they were expected to at least achieve a C1.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected from course participants through a survey. The survey was given to course participants during a workshop toward the end of the 40-week course.



Participants were told that completion of the form was voluntary, that choosing not to take part in the study would in no way affect their relationship with their instructor nor their performance in the course. Participants completed the form anonymously.

3.5 Survey and Results

This section includes the questions used in the survey along with participants' responses.

Attitudes towards Teachers Who Attend LeapsAhead:

Q 1: Have you faced any kind of ill-treatment or negative attitudes from your colleagues, superiors, or people in your community because you are required to attend the LeapsAhead course?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	25	36
No	44	64

Those who responded that they had faced some kind of ill-treatment or negative attitude mentioned the following:

1. They said that the LeapsAhead course is for the failure only.
2. The community says teachers who are not good in English and didn't pass TopTest are not fit to teach English.
3. We are labelled not good enough to teach English, that we are not up to the standard.
4. One of my colleagues looks down on me because I attended this course as she thought I am not qualified to teach English. I am a local graduate in our panel not oversea graduate like others.
5. My school colleagues thought this LeapsAhead course for those teachers who are not capable in teaching English (most of them who make rumours are not English teacher).
6. They said that the LeapsAhead course is for the failures only (very shameful).
7. They felt pity toward me and my headmistress mocked me for my low ability in English level.
8. My colleagues had bad expectations about me attending the LeapsAhead course. They felt that I did not do very well and they also doubted my capability and ability.
9. They thought we are not good in English.
10. People are being judgmental because they think an English teacher should not take another test because they are qualified to teach English.
11. My colleagues' perceptions. They assumed TopTest and other examinations are the same format. So, they were quite quipping me all over the time.



Q2: Are there any teachers at your school who scored a C1 or C2 on the TopTest?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	42	61
No	27	39

Q2A: If you answered yes to 2, did their attitude toward you change when they found out that you didn't achieve a C1 or C2?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	7 / 42	17
No	35 / 42	83

2B: If yes, please explain: _____

Those who gave an explanation about a change in attitude from those who had achieved a C1 or C2 wrote the following:

1. We are not fit enough to give answer or hold position over them.
2. Some of them think that I am not competent in English and some of them look down on me.
3. They asked how can a teacher, especially an English teacher score B1 or B2.
4. Only one person assumed that those who got C2 is always better than teachers who got B2.
5. Only three persons assume that those who got C2 is always better and excellent than those who got B2.
6. They thought that when we attend this class, we are not really good in teaching this subject.
7. They look down on me. (Some of them graduated in United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Singapore, and even have Master's Degree.)

Materials and Evaluation:

Q 3: The evaluation for the LeapsAhead course is the TopTest exam, and yet the LeapsAhead course was primarily designed as a teacher training course with module content focused on teaching practices and pedagogy. Do you think this mismatch of course materials and assessment is problematic?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	34	49
No	35	51



Q 4: The evaluation for the LeapsAhead course is solely the TopTest exam. Do you think you would be more motivated if your facilitator had some part in evaluating your performance in the course?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	68	99
No	1	1

Financial Rewards as a Motivator:

Q5: Is the possible reward of approximately 900 dollars for a C1 or 1,500 dollars for a C2 a motivator for you to get a score of C1 or C2 on the TopTest?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	45	65
No	24	35

Q6: Do you feel that becoming a better teacher (in terms of teaching skill and language skill) is a better reward than a financial reward such as a bonus?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	62	90
No	7	10

Other teacher-training Programs:

Q7: Prior to starting the course, did you participate in any other government- funded teacher-training courses?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	23	33
No	46	67

Q8: Other than LeapsAhead are you currently attending any other courses or degree programs?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	14	20
No	55	80

Attitudes toward Professional Development:

Q 9: Do you believe that continuing professional development (on-going learning through courses, seminars, lectures, workshops, independent study, etc.) is important for teachers?



Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	68	99
No	1	1

Q 10: Do you think you would feel more motivated regarding professional development if you had some choice of what you do for professional development? (For example, you are told that you need to do five hours of professional development a week, but you can decide what kind of professional development you prefer: i.e., you can decide to attend a course, read educational books or articles, attend conferences or seminars, attend workshops, etc.)

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	66	96
No	3	4

Two participants that said yes to the question above indicated that in order for them to complete some kind of professional development, their workload should be reduced.

Realistic Goals for Achievement:

Q 11: Do you think that a score of C1 or C2 on the TopTest is a reasonable goal for all English teachers in your country?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	45
No	38	55

Q12: Do you feel that C1 or C2 is a realistic goal for you?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	28	41
No	41	59

4. Discussion and Analysis

Attitudes toward Teachers Who Attend LeapsAhead (Q 1 and 2)

Only 36 percent of respondents indicated that they faced some kind of ill-treatment or negative attitude from their colleagues because they were required to take the LeapsAhead course. The majority, 61 percent of respondents, indicated that there were teachers at their school who had scored a C1 or C2 on the TopTest exam. Among that 61 percent, only 17 percent noted a change in attitude from colleagues who had received a higher score on the TopTest pre-test. Nonetheless, from the comments given, such as *Some of them think that I am not competent in English, Some of them look down on me, and They felt*



pity toward me and my headmistress mocked me for my low ability in English level there is a strong indication that by virtue of having to take the LeapsAhead course, participants had been labelled as not competent to do their jobs as English teachers.

Materials and Evaluation (Q 3 and 4)

Only 49 percent of respondents indicated that the mismatch of course materials and assessment was problematic. While this accounts for nearly half of the participants, it's surprising that more respondents were not upset by the difference between materials and evaluation. The reason behind this is hard to ascertain, but, perhaps, the respondents were used to a system where standardized tests dominate as assessment practices – assessments that do not always match instruction. A near complete majority of ninety-nine percent of respondents believed that they would have felt more motivated in the LeapsAhead course if their instructor had played a part in their evaluation. While just over half of the respondents indicated that they were not disturbed by a syllabus-assessment mismatch, the majority did recognize the value of a more personalized assessment as at least part of the total assessment.

Financial Rewards as Motivator (Q 5 and 6)

The majority, 65 percent of respondents, said that a potential financial reward motivated them to get a high score. However, 90 percent indicated that becoming a better teacher was more rewarding than a financial incentive. It's hard to understand this contradiction, but, perhaps, many respondents believe it is best to indicate that are more motivated by the possibility of becoming a better teacher than financial gain, when in fact, money is a strong motivator for them. Nonetheless, that ninety percent of respondents indicated that the possibility of becoming a better teacher was more rewarding than a financial reward was an indication that many of teachers value genuine professional growth over a financial bonus.

Other Teacher-Training Programs (Q 7 and 8)

Thirty-three percent of attendees had already participated in another mandatory teacher-training course prior to LeapsAhead while twenty percent were currently enrolled in another course or degree program at the time of LeapsAhead. This is an indication that organizers of LeapsAhead did not take into account teachers' previous and current involvement in training programs.

Attitudes toward Professional Development (Q 9 and 10)

Nearly every participant in this survey, 99 percent, recognized continuing professional development as important for teachers. An overwhelming majority, 96 percent, however, felt that they would be more motivated to pursue professional development if they had some choice in the activities they do for professional development, which a strong indication of the importance of the role of independence and autonomy in pursuit of professional development.



Realistic Goals for Achievement (Q 11 and 12)

The majority of teachers, 55 percent, did not believe that a C1 or C2 score was a reasonable goal for all English teachers in the country, and the majority, 59 percent, did not believe that a score of C1 or C2 on the TopTest was a realistic personal goal.

5. Recommendations

Assessment Must be Valid

In whatever way teachers in a training program are assessed, the assessment must relate to the materials and instruction. If the assessment is related to language ability, then the study materials must be tied to that. If the assessment relates to teaching techniques or knowledge of teaching techniques, the assessment must reflect that. If both language ability and teaching techniques are course goals, assessment must relate to both elements. A teaching methods and techniques program should not be assessed by a language test. Assessing learners on skills that do not match course content is not only incredibly demotivating, it is also unethical.

Financial Rewards Should Not Be Used as a Motivator

Financial rewards to increase motivation are usually only good for short-term productivity. Although many teachers in the study indicated that they were motivated by a potential financial bonus, in reality, the financial bonus set up a system of posturing and jealousy whereby some teachers who received a bonus felt entitled and paraded their achievements so that other teachers who did not get the same results felt jealous. Development programs need to focus on methods that spark internal motivation and should work to avoid award systems that create competitiveness.

Overtraining Should Be Avoided

Continuing professional development is important for all teaching professionals, but requiring teachers to do too much professional development at one time can be counterproductive, and could, in fact, have a detrimental effect on a teacher's performance in the classroom. Teachers should not be required to do more than one training program at a time.

Teachers Should Be Given Some Choice Regarding Professional Development Activities

Teacher development is not one-size-fits-all. Some teachers might be interested in reading journal articles; others might enjoy attending seminars, lectures, or workshops; some might be taking an online course or certificate program, and some might be interested in conducting classroom research. Teachers should be given some choices and parameters, and development programs should relate to each teacher's particular context. For example, teachers might be given a list of professional development choices that they are required to execute within a certain time frame, or they might be asked to dedicate a



certain number of hours to professional development each week, month, semester, etc. In this way, teachers can take control of their own development and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in their professional growth and development. When development is required for subject-matter knowledge or pedagogical expertise, training should be required across the board, i.e., all teachers should be required to take part. When only some teachers are required to take part in a certain professional development or training program, they are perceived as being the only ones who need to learn a certain subject or need improvement. Programs that label some teachers as good and others as not good enough, even inadvertently, lead to demotivation.

Standardized Tests should be given (if at all) Before a Teacher Starts Their Teaching Career

There is no doubt that those who teach language should have a certain proficiency in the language they teach, but if standardized tests are to be required to make sure teachers have attained a certain level of proficiency, they should be taken before teachers start their profession, not after they are already engaged. When in-service teachers fall below a certain bar on a standardized test, the results can be damaging. Automatically, their level of language proficiency and, hence, their ability to teach the language will be called into question; these teachers are perceived by other teachers, school administrators, and people in the community as not skilled enough to do their job well, which is extremely demotivating.

Teachers Need Realistic Goals for Achievement

One way to certainly be set up for failure is to have unrealistic goals whether self-imposed or imposed from the outside. Before setting goals, program organizers need to make sure that they can realistically be achieved. Organizers need to take into account the potential fallout for teachers who do not succeed. When teachers do not succeed on meeting the goal of a training program, they are likely to be even more demotivated than before they started the course.

6. Conclusion

Teacher professional development is important for continuing to develop and enhance teacher effectiveness. While teacher development programs should help teachers obtain improved knowledge and skills, they should also serve to encourage and motivate teachers. Unfortunately, in many ways, the LeapsAhead program has had the opposite effect, whereby teachers who were required to attend the course felt they are failures who were not good enough to do their jobs well. Additionally, unrealistic goals for achievement further undermined their motivation. Well-intended teachers who do not feel supported by the institutions they work for will not be able to perform to an optimum level. Program administrators of professional development programs need to consider methods of training and supporting teachers that serve not only to improve knowledge and skills but that also work on an affective level, nurturing and uplifting teachers.



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Internet Based Web Quest in Teaching Literature

G. Karthiga

Abstract

Internet technology acts as the backbone of a global society which seems to be unprecedented. The Internet achieved its giant leap through free resource for achievement in English language teaching and learning. Information and communication Technology also has the great influence to transform teaching by bringing out a new sculpt of connected teaching which links teachers to their students through resources, and systems to help widen horizon of their own instruction and personalize learning. Online learning opportunities accelerates the rate of learning which helps for better utilization teacher time. Internet acts as a platform for teaching literature in English. Teachers can use it for gathering information for their classes, including teaching plans and materials for classroom. They use it in an organized way. Teachers teaching literature should take up the modern tools of teaching for effective teaching of English Language especially while teaching English literature. Internet is being one of the best resources for today's kids who effectively use internet in their routine work of the day. Web Quest provided through internet is a desirable tool for English Literature learning students. English teachers can use Web Quest for formalistic analyses, such as the exploration of character, theme, mode of living during different period and setting by student themselves during English literature classes. This paper will explain the effective use of web quest through internet in teaching English literature.

Introduction

The computer has become the primary tool and medium of writing in the home and institutions. The Internet can provide real audiences and contexts for students where they can create web pages or engage in e-mail discussion or chat about a topic in literature. They can even contact the authors of work and have answers for their questions. There is also a synergistic process that can occur in developing ideas collaboratively when students use networked computer mediated communication. They help each other come up with some amazing ideas for projects and papers through collaborative brainstorming in electronic environments. Internet today provides students with access to millions of sources of information through google, whatsapp, youtube, Instagram, blogs. Internet based classes provide interest to a great extent and help develop four important skills of communication (LSRW). The important factor that enables success in a web-based classroom depends on teachers who effectively use it and engage students without monotonous effect.

According to a definition given by Tech Ease, "A WebQuest is a web-based learning activity. It was developed by Bernie Dodge, a professor of educational technology at San



Diego State University". Teachers can create their own plan to execute the activity in the classroom through various activities involving students at all levels. These WebQuests can be executed with the help of ICT. Classrooms should be well equipped with internet infrastructure to be used by entire classroom.

Internet and English literature

The Internet is proving to be a new medium to boost up literature. Literature is a form of art; it is capable of bringing about different emotions and a general sagacity of wellbeing. It is a great challenge to use internet as a tool to explore studying Literature. Different opinions of a particular topic can be accessed through websites where different readers interpret a particular work from poles apart with wide criticism. The idea of collaborating across cultures and national boundaries on text help to increase the effectiveness of the discourse by bringing more people into it. Internet contains various writings, criticism, reviews, and interpretations from all parts of the world. It helps to analyze our research. Students spend more time in internet to access books. Internet features like archive website helps to get more books than that are available in library. Internet sites are very convenient in studying English Literature. There is no other source that can be easily accessed like the internet.

Web quest

In traditional English Literature classroom, teachers occupy the stage for their own presentation and students are not prepared to get involved in classroom activities due to fear of question and answer. In teaching history of literature, teachers teach students with all necessary information provided in the text with line by line paraphrasing and meaning. There is no place for individual analysis. Students from basic class develop rote memory method of learning to barf in examination what they memorized, hence critical and creative thinking lacks to a great extent. Droning learning can be overcome by the use online web quest method. Today's students are engaging themselves in technological practices at unsurpassed rates. Therefore, the need for student-centered activities which are challenging and also increase student's proficiency in the field of technology is of great plea. Web Quest, an inquiry-based learning process, is designed to lead students through a web-based lesson that can range from one class period to one month in depth and duration. However, Web Quest is more than simply exploring information related to one's content area on the internet.

WebQuest can be explored at the beginning of the unit. This exploration will allow for students to activate and expand upon their prior knowledge about a topic and to prepare students for the teacher's coverage of a text. Web Quest can also be used to explore more in-depth or provocative issues of a topic. This type of Web Quest can be introduced at the beginning of a unit and continued throughout the completion of a lesson or text. Web Quest is prepared so that student gets intuition about answers at the spur of



the moment. It would be in-depth analysis because students are exploring more complex questions that cannot be easily answered.

WebQuests initiates guided learning through co-operative activities in English classroom to promote interactive learning through internet resources. Web Quests allow students to build unique and community knowledge. This is a boon for teachers who feel that their teaching is uninteresting. They can involve more student- centered learning activities into their classrooms.

Parts of web quests

Teachers can seek help through internet or subject expertise to plan the activity. Web quest can be taken from websites with activities for literature lessons. It should contain

1. Introduction- Introduction part should contain information about Web Quest and what is expected from the students.
2. Task- The task that students are asked to do should depend on selection and gradation according to the levels of the student.
3. Information Sources- standardized Web Quest models will be available in the internet or books for easy access of the teachers.
4. Process- WebQuest should have steps for easy understanding of the students. It can also contain warm-up activities, motivation, activity, analysis and reinforcement.
5. Guidance- Guided learning can be done with the help of teachers to perform the activities.
6. Conclusion- Recapitulation can be made at the end to recall the information learnt.

It is also important to remember that WebQuests should be student centered. It should be written for students and in the language of students keeping in mind the class and age of the students. Visual materials, text, and other components should be appealing, interesting, and at the minimum level of the students.

Guidelines for teachers before introducing WebQuest to the students

Web Quest overview: It can explain the process of the Web Quest working. Teachers can take the help of OHP and VHP to reach out the entire class. The display screens should best explain about the process of the WebQuest. It can be provided with backdrop about the steps to be followed, information about the topic or lesson and assignments.

Tools and technology: Teacher should decide about the technology that is needed for the WebQuest activity for a successful environment. If the number of students crosses 30, activity can be done using a data projector or large-screen monitor. If students are less than 30, clusters can be made using computer in small group. Five students can use one computer to solve the quest.



Timesavers: When the institution has limited access to internet facility, teachers should be aware about the time period for activity and hence prepare Web Quest with limited and narrow activities to be finished within the stipulated time. Instructional time consciousness is essential. Teachers can also explain everything in the preparatory class to avoid time consumption in thinking about execution.

Student teams: Students can group in small numbers to solve the WebQuest's using by individual critical thinking. Each group can have different topic to be discussed.

Literature-Based WebQuests

Web Quest mainly focuses on books. Any subject can be considered to prepare Web Quest such as English, Social Science, Science and many more. English literature learning can be made easy and interesting using technology to bring learning alive for students whereas literature is a lively subject. Literature Web Quest can include pictures and drama in the form of movies. Internet is filled with exciting materials that can provide insight into the theme, plot, setting, or characters of a particular text.

Characters: Students ask different types of questions like the place of war, clothing of women and the language they speak when reading a novel. The Internet provides quick and easy access to resources that can help students learn more about the time and place where the characters live. WebQuest guide students to know the experiences, frustrations, and relationships of the characters.

In The prologue to Canterbury tales by Chaucer, there are different characters, each character has a specific feature. Students can learn about the ecclesiastical aspects from the website. Students will identify who is a Friar in a church during the period of Chaucer. One student of three in a group can learn about English period, another can read about Chaucer and others about characters. At last web Quest can be summed up with the gathered information.

Theme and plot: Students will have the anxiety to know about the historical events that would have taken place before the book presented while taking class, the legal and moral issues and the causes for the conflict. Questions depend on the students' reasoning and critical thinking. The Internet can provide evidence and information to address students' questions. Through WebQuests, students can also investigate how a change in characters or setting might change the outcome of an event or problem.

In Julius Caesar, Student will learn about the background reason for conflict between the kings and the consequences that the king faces. They also learn about war.

Settings: Some students in a class may have seen beaches, deserts, mountains, cities, or farms, while some other students might have learnt about it and does not visual picture will gather real time information through WebQuests.



Through, Tom Jones and Robinson Crusoe Web Quest, students can visualize the settings of nature through pictures.

Connections: WebQuests can be framed that focus on features of single book or in connection with multiple books with the same theme or topic, or by the same author. Background details of All for Love and Antony Cleopatra may be same. Students can access common features through Web Quest. Multicultural Cinderella Folk Tales, for example, explores different versions of the same familiar story. Many teachers prefer these sorts of WebQuests, because they rely on a range of materials that can meet students' individual reading levels and interests.

Limitations and Values of using WebQuest in the classroom

- Teachers should consider the use of WebQuest in their classroom to explore the essential steps for creating a WebQuest and to give students a focused and clear task to complete.
- Teachers can use Kiddle browser for safe and clear information viewing.
- They should be particular when selecting web-sites and online resources.
- Teachers need to make sure that the WebQuest is placed well with clear pre requisite
- A WebQuest allows students to participate in collaborative learning and to explore and internalize information on their own, making it more valuable.
- The WebQuest is a great tool to provide background knowledge as an entrance to a text, for students to explore various features throughout the novel as an investigation of a text, or for students to widen their learning through expansion of their knowledge of the text.

Conclusion

WebQuests can engage students through inquiry-based learning in an effective way. Students connect text to real life through technology. Literature can be learnt in virtual environment. Literature provides meaningful activities by connecting resources with internet. Students today learn through Ipad and android phones which make learning easier through Web Quest. Web Quest acts as effective communication tools. Associations among language arts, math, science, social studies, and other content areas is best made using Web Quest. Literature-rich WebQuests provide teachers with an effective method of promoting inquiry-based learning, organizing resources, and managing classrooms. WebQuests can be valuable technology tools.



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Communication, Collaboration and Learner Autonomy: Promoting 21 Century Skills in the ESL Classroom

Kshema Jose

Abstract

This paper reports the framework used for an explicit strategy training intervention programme designed to improve reading comprehension of ESL learners. Using data-based evidence to support its conclusions, the paper delineates best practices and implementation possibilities for using think alouds as a tool to develop critical awareness of reading strategies one uses, and collaborative reading as a means to increase one's strategy repertoire. The paper also describes how students benefitted from opportunities for critical engaging with technology tools and use of mother tongue in the strategy training programme. By demonstrating how web 2.0 tools can be integrated into activities like think aloud and collaborative reading, the paper proposes that students ought to be given training in digital literacy skills in the ESL classroom. Benefits of the strategy training programme was observed in terms of willingness for peer interaction, confidence to read, improved cognitive awareness, and higher levels of reading comprehension.

Introduction

Across centuries, education theorists and practitioners have attempted to forge strong links between education and freedom. Prominent education philosophers have debated why education should lead to independence, and centered their discourse on the power of freedom of choice of the individual. Most educational methods have endeavoured to evolve practices to help the individual achieve independence, with Montessori pointing out the redundant and restrictive influence of teaching "any unnecessary help is an obstacle to freedom." Many of these views seem to equate the idea of freedom with a concept that seeks to reduce and gradually withdraw teacher control, and inculcate self-directedness and independence. Autonomy in this case suggests responsibility, a pre-requisite and a predictor of personal growth and societal development. In the long run, autonomy in education and learning is all about progress of the nation.

Autonomy in learning

Described as the ability to control one's learning processes, autonomous learning, self-directed learning, or independent learning is considered to be the goal of all education. By giving learners the ability to take charge of their process of learning, autonomous learning enhances motivation to learn; makes learning more focused and purposeful, thereby more effective; and above all, helps transfer one's capacity for autonomous behaviour from learning to other areas of interactional behaviour, making



one a better and more efficient member of society, and contributing to a stronger economy (Holec, 1988; Dickinson, 1995; Benson, 2001; Aoki, 2002; Chik, et al.; 2018).

Several self-regulated learning environments have been attempted, and are being promoted by many educational institutions. Reasons cited are several: independent learning practices work best for all students, including remedial readers and students with special educational needs; teaching practices that impart independent learning use a wide range of activities in classrooms making them more interesting and personalised; they give teachers more time to focus on students who require focused attention; and above all, independent learners are also balanced and productive citizens. Best-practices in developing autonomy vary from teacher-less learning, use of self-access materials, technology-based learning, self-reflective practices, etc.

Strategy training programmes and learner autonomy

This paper looks at strategy training programmes as a means to promote student autonomy by facilitating reflective practices. For decades, education researchers and practitioners have sought to identify ways to develop independent learning habits through strategy training programmes. Strategies are plans or activities that one uses to achieve a goal. In language learning, learner strategies are actions consciously or unconsciously deployed by learners to learn or use a language effectively (O'Malley, Chamot, and Uhl, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Heath, 2012). These actions are employed every time we interact with language, for instance, we employ strategies to gain information from a text, present our ideas to a listener, learn for a test, remember information from a speech, etc. Strategies used by a second language learner can include those transferred from the first language (L1) or mother tongue (MT); newly created for learning the second language (L2); acquired from others; or those that are explicitly taught for learning purposes.

The primary goal of all strategy instruction programmes in second language learning contexts is to help learners become self-directed and autonomous by improving their ability to learn and use the language independently. These programmes assist students to think, reflect, and become aware of the strategies they use, which in turn help them employ strategies consciously, manage their use effectively, and transfer their use to other contexts (Brown, 2001; Tseng, et. al 2006).

Reading strategies and strategy instruction

This paper describes a strategy training programme that was devised to help ESL learners with their use of reading strategies. Reading strategies are techniques or activities that readers use to comprehend a text. These activities can be mental or behavioural in nature. (Mental strategies include cognitive strategies like identifying word meanings, locating important points in a text, making notes, underlining, using a dictionary, Volume 8 Issue 2



guessing word meaning, writing summaries, etc. while meta-cognitive reading strategies are strategies that help one identify problems in one's reading process, reflect on how much one has comprehended, choose remedial actions, evaluate one's learning process through control and monitoring, etc.

Behavioural strategies include social strategies or techniques used to work with others like seeking and giving help to peers; and affective strategies that are employed to manage feelings, gain satisfaction in one's achievements, motivate oneself, control one's negative feelings like anxiety, and fear, etc.)

A good reader is one who has a large repertoire of strategies, and is capable of manipulating his use of strategies to meet his purpose of reading. This would mean that an efficient reader is able to monitor his reading process, deploy strategies as required, check efficacy of strategies employed, and address comprehension deficits. Another thing about reading strategies is that what is used successfully in a context by one reader may not be the same as those used by another reader in the same context.

Traditionally, classroom strategy instruction, especially reading instruction has emphasised the development of only one component of reading strategies – the mental activities (cognitive and to a certain extent, meta-cognitive strategies), and has not focussed sufficiently on social behaviours that can help widen one's resource of mental activities, and contribute greatly to the development and effective use of mental activities.

Elliott (1999) argues that successful acquisition of lifelong learning practices requires social and political shifts and therefore educational practices that hope to inculcate lifelong learning habits in students should create opportunities for learners to engage and re-engage in learning activities with their peers and others. Since others and peers play a crucial role in scaffolding one to grow beyond what one can do without help (Vygotsky, 1978), it might be advisable to create opportunities for social learning or learning in groups/ learning with others, in order to promote learner growth and learner independence. Lifelong learning practices that promote social learning can nurture intra-personal and inter-personal development leading to development of learners' use of affective and social strategies respectively. Teaching patterns that attempt to promote independent learning should include activities that help students to acquire an understanding of their own learning, and also learn from peers. Typically considered best are activities that raise awareness of one's cognitive processes, scaffold self-directed learning, demonstrate self-monitoring, encourage collaborating with peers and teachers, and provide constant feedback.

Strategy researchers have claimed that an awareness of one's strategies, an understanding of the nature of language learning, and an appropriate repertoire of language learning strategies will lead to effective learning and consequently independence in learning (Wenden, 1991; O'Malley, Chamot and Uhl, 1990). However, this researcher



felt that awareness raising is an essential but not sufficient requirement for developing independent reading habits, since awareness raising would only mean recognition of strategies one uses. Awareness of strategies helps one recognise problems in one's comprehension, but does not prepare a learner to address deficits in one's comprehension. However, if a reader is given exposure to a wide variety of strategies, he can perhaps choose an alternative strategy, or adapt, modify, adopt, or even create a new one to match his learning style, address his reading requirements, and eventually use it confidently to achieve his purpose of reading.

Description of the study

This paper reports an intervention study conducted to raise reading achievement in ESL readers by developing independent reading habits in readers. This study was designed based on a previous strategy training programme conducted by the same researcher (Jose, 2000) to test the hypothesis that providing exposure to alternate strategies could encourage readers to choose and use those strategies which they find efficient.

It was hoped that the new design would successfully address two drawbacks that affected the implementation of the previous strategy training programme, viz., difficulties involved in helping learners reflect on reading strategies used, and obstacles faced in getting students to work in groups.

Variouly referred to in this paper as independent reading, autonomous reading or self-directed reading habits, this study operationalises and identifies independent reading as manifested through increased self-awareness and self-monitoring; increased motivation to read; demonstration of greater awareness of one's limitations in reading; confidence in one's ability to manage one's reading process; willingness to interact with peers; and above all, an increase in the product of comprehension.

Methodology

The study that extended over a period of three months, was conducted with eighteen ESL learners, all school dropouts, and aged 17 -23. Learners' level of English varied from low (seven learners), medium (five learners) to high levels (six learners) of proficiency based on a standardised reading test administered at the beginning of the study. During the programme they read a maximum of 24 texts in English and answered comprehension tasks, the scores of which helped determine their level of reading comprehension at the two different stages of the study. Readability score of texts ranged from 5 to 12 on Flesch-Kincaid grade level. Texts at level 5 and 6 were given for practicing think alouds (TOLs). Students were also encouraged to read texts of their choice in their mother tongue (MT) to practice think alouds and identify reading strategies used while reading in MT.



During the first stage that extended to six weeks, each student read eleven texts – three easy texts to help practice think alouds, followed by five moderate and three difficult texts to help understand strategies used by each learner.

In the second stage (six weeks duration), students were put in groups of 3 – 4, with each group having a low, mid and high L2 proficiency learner. During this stage, each group performed collaborative reading, group think alouds, and discussion of reading strategies using 13 texts – eight moderately difficulty level and five difficult texts.

Interpretation of the efficacy of the strategy training programme was primarily concluded through learner performance in reading comprehension tasks, and analysis of think aloud protocol was used to arrive at listing reading strategies used by learners. To facilitate better understanding of data collected, the researcher also used learner observations, retrospective semi-structured interviews, and informal discussions.

Except for two significant additions delineated below, this study adopted the same framework as the previous one (Jose, 2000).

After a pre-test that was administered to identify students' levels of reading comprehension, the first stage aimed to raise awareness of reading strategies used by students. This was achieved by the researcher demonstrating models of behaviour by performing think alouds (ToL) to articulate her use of reading strategies, and to initiate students to the practice of thinking aloud. Students were then given practice in using TOLs using texts in L1 and low difficulty texts in English (Flesch-Kincaid grade level 5 – 6). They were also given a strategy checklist for reference (Oxford, 1990), and a metacognitive response sheet (Jose, 2000) to prompt and scaffold the think aloud process. Doing a think aloud in L2 is a daunting task for most ESL learners; use of L1 is preferred by many. However, TOLs in L1 would have posed a problem for both the researcher and the students, as there were as many as five Indian languages represented in the classroom. Identifying reading strategies by analysing TOLs would have been a problem for the researcher, and later in group discussion of strategies, a problem for other students.

To devise a way to scaffold students to perform TOLs in L2, the researcher first assisted students to perform TOLs in English using low level texts, and analyse them for reading strategies used, with the help of the strategy checklist. After this, students were introduced to voicethread, (www.voicethread.com) a web 2.0 tool, using which they could record think alouds performed in L1 while reading texts in English. Students were also encouraged to read texts in L1 and record their TOL using the same tool. They were then asked to listen to their TOLs and identify strategies used (while reading in L1 and English), and draw a list of strategies used by each person. This was done to make them aware of the similarities in strategies used while reading in L1 and L2.

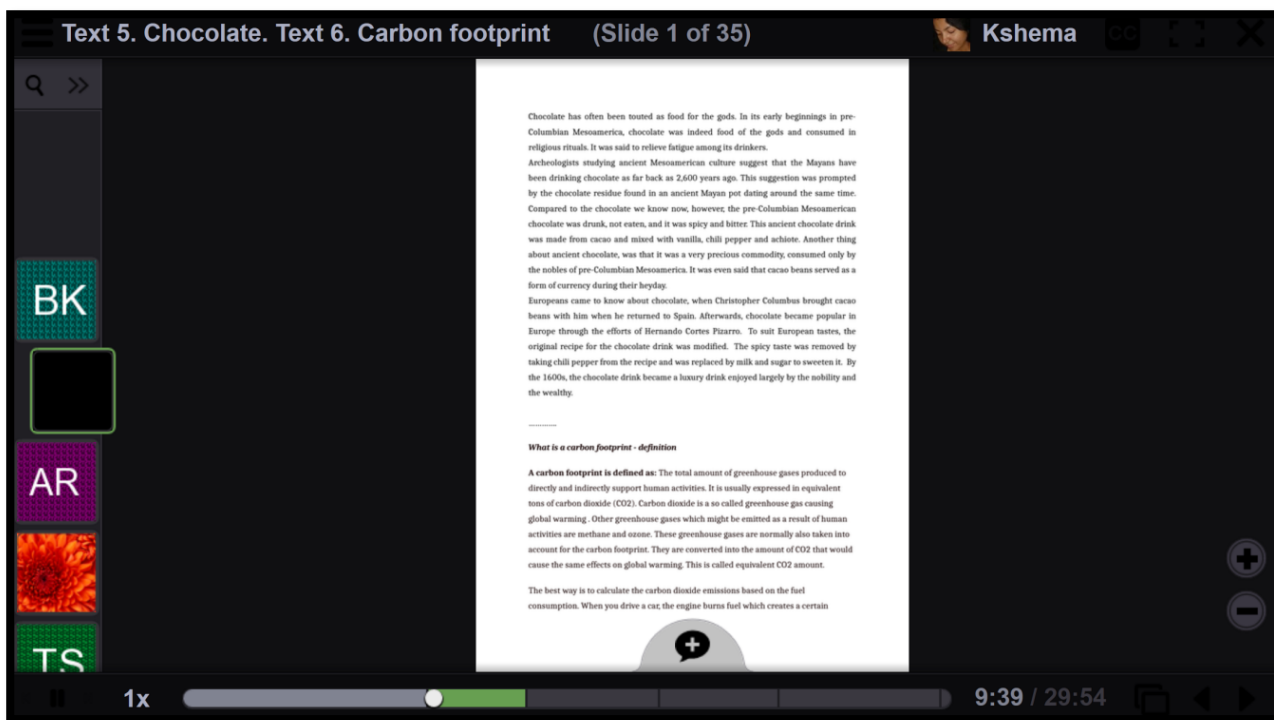


Image 1: Screenshot of Voicethread page used for TOL for texts 5 and 6

Voicethread was chosen because it worked better than a stand-alone audio playback. When TOLs were recorded on using an audio-recording feature on mobile phones and played back to learners, they found it difficult to understand and analyse as the sentence/ paragraph of reading text corresponding to TOLs was hard to locate. The researcher felt that the doodle and play-back features of the Voicethread tool would help students notice how they employ reading strategies while reading specific parts of a text. For instance, underlining a part of the text using the doodle feature when analysed along with the corresponding TOL throws new light on why that part was underlined. Voicethread also highlighted the cyclic nature of reading by making it clear to learners how and why they revisited different parts of the same text.

Use of texts in L1 and the web tool for self-recording and analysis, contributed significantly to the betterment of the strategy training programme.

In the second stage, the study used collaborative reading and group think alouds to encourage learners to learn from peers and gain exposure to strategies used by peers. However, the first group reading activity itself showed reluctance on part of some students to interact with others – indicators were diffidence to speak and/or think aloud in front of peers. It was also observed that oral discussion of reading strategies did not show sufficient retention – most students paid little or no attention to reporting of reading strategies by group members. It was to address this obstacle that the second modification to the original design was made.



A second web 2.0 tool called spiderscribe (www.spiderscribe.net) was used to initiate students into collaborative reading. A text was shared with 3 – 4 group members who were asked to comment on their understanding of different parts of the text and also mention the strategies they used to comprehend. This collaborative platform offered opportunities for sharing comprehension problems, receiving feedback, and exchanging strategies, and became the initial medium for interaction between learners.

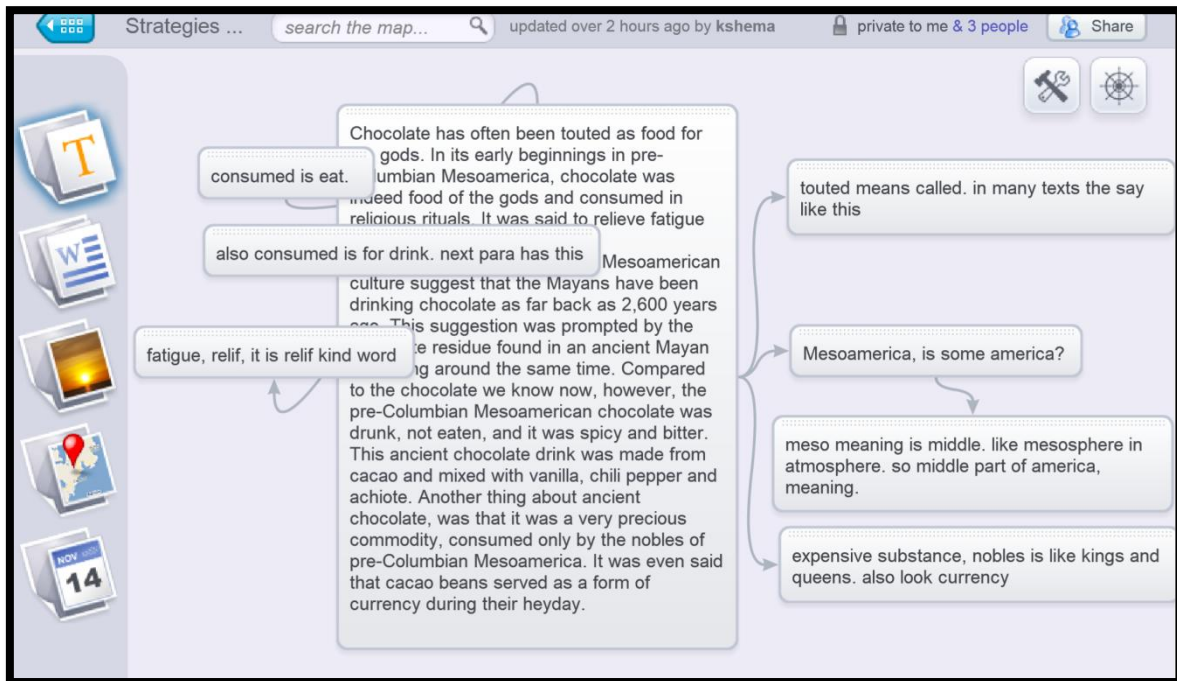


Image 2: Screenshot of spiderscribe used by group 3

Spiderscribe helped as an “ice-breaker” to gain familiarity of peers, reduce language anxiety, and build confidence to speak in front of others.

Another advantage of this tool was that it encouraged diverse student voices in terms of variety of strategies, to be heard. Students noticed that multiple strategies used by many of them were equally effective in addressing the same comprehension issue. This co-construction of knowledge gave them a feeling of inclusion and ownership of collaborative learning practices. Another advantage that contributed to the success of the design of the programme was that spiderscribe allowed students to type in their responses. ‘Reading’ about strategies used by peers (seeing in print) allowed better noticing (Schmidt, 1990) of strategies, and acquiring metalinguistic knowledge regarding strategies, than when strategies were discussed orally. This helped them pay more attention to strategies, generated better awareness of strategies, ensured retention and use of new strategies.

During stage 1, it was observed that there was no significant changes in comprehension scores of low, medium or high proficiency learners. During this time low-proficiency students also exhibited unwillingness to read higher grade level texts.



However, stage 2 showed the exact opposite; there was improvement in comprehension scores, as well as willingness and ability to read difficult level texts by medium and low proficiency learners. This was regarded as empirical evidence that awareness of one's strategies alone does not help build a better strategy repertoire and improved comprehension ability. It is suggested that exposure to alternate reading strategies through co-operative learning activities like collaborative reading, social think-alouds, and peer teaching activities, might be strong facilitators of independent reading habits in ESL readers.

Observations

The following were the main observations made during both stages of the study:

1. All learners, regardless of levels of L2, showed improvement in their levels of comprehension. Average of comprehension scores of high proficiency learners reading texts at FK level 11 and 12 showed an increase. While scores of medium and low level learners who read texts at levels 9 to 11 showed an increase, there was no significant difference in scores of the low proficiency learners. However, what needs to be mentioned was their readiness and confidence to read texts that were at 11 and 12.
2. All learners showed evidence of increased strategy repertoire, and later TOLs showed use of newly acquired reading strategies. There were use of at least two new strategies reported by every learner. All low proficiency readers adopted different types of word-meaning strategies, (with translating to L1, using mental images, and guessing from context being the most preferred) and high proficiency learners expressed their liking for meta-cognitive strategies of self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies. Summarising in one's own words at the end of every paragraph was the strategy adopted by most number of students, both high and low proficiency, who reported that it enabled them to comprehend the text better since it helped them with an overall understanding of the text.

Any training programme to have sustained effects should promote changes in attitudes and beliefs of its participants. This strategy training programme recommends three ways to empower ESL students in the classroom: giving space for all student voices to be heard, building confidence with the use of learners' L1/MT, and teaching digital literacies in classroom.

Empowering under-engaged student voices

Through retrospective interviews and semi-structured discussions, it was observed that the use of web tools resulted in building confidence of mid and low proficiency learners to interact with peers and attempt reading high difficulty level texts. Learners reported that use of English to communicate with peers posed a problem at the beginning



- they were worried and anxious about face-to-face speaking in English with members of their group. However, communicating in English using technology made them “feel like one group” since everyone felt proficient in use of computers. Some even reported that since wrong grammar and spelling is not a problem when communicating online, “talking through a computer” gave them the confidence to speak face-to-face. The use of spiderscribe made all learners aware that strategies used by mid and low proficiency learners are as effective as those used by high proficiency learners. Use of web tools helped transcend limitations of tradition learning and empowered learners by giving all an equal space for interaction.

Creating spaces for use of mother tongue

Language used in training programmes plays a large role in determining the efficacy of the programme and retention of its learning outcomes. World all over, educationists, researchers and teachers are trying to form an understanding of the interdependence of mother tongue (MT) and second language (L2) in L2 development. Many agree that mother tongue-based multilingual education helps students develop learning strategies, thus promoting educational and professional success. When the local language/ MT is used in formal classrooms, it gives students a sense of empowerment, engages students in active classroom participation, ensures high teacher-student interaction, increases self-esteem and confidence in students, and gives them the motivation required to attend classes (Pinnock, 2009; Eslit, 2017). In this study, it was observed that the use of Voicethread helped students realise the potential of their L1/MT. The awareness that strategies they use in L1 could be used to help understand L2, gave them the confidence to attempt reading difficult texts independently.

Usually, use of MT in schools and classrooms is supported by creating and printing learning materials in MT, training teachers to raise their awareness, designing supporting tasks and course books, etc. making initial years of mother tongue-based multilingual education quite expensive. The strategy training programme reported here identifies a quicker and easier way of starting use of MT in ESL classrooms. Encouraging students to read texts in their MT and to think aloud in their MT to recognize strategies used made it easier for learners to analyse their comprehension processes and identify strategies they used. Use of MT thus allowed for a more learner-centric strategy training programme and helped promote cognitive development in students.

The biggest takeaway of this research then is that developing digital literacy in the ESL classroom by English teachers could empower learner voices in the classroom.



Integrating digital literacy into ESL tasks

This paper is as much about facilitating independent reading habits as it is about developing digital literacies in the ESL classroom. Digital technologies are integrated into our everyday lives, that learning how to use them is essential for personal, professional and social development of students. Most of what we traditionally consider literacy skills are now taking place using technology – it is no longer enough to know how to read the printed word and write notes. Nature of texts is evolving, and so are processes of writing/composing. Texts are increasingly becoming multimedia and hypertextual in nature. Writing is growing to be less individual and more collaborative in its composing; is growing hypertextual and multimodal in its nature; and interactive in reception by its audience. What all these mean is that the parameters of being literate is being constantly redefined by digital tools – literacy is deictic in nature. Digital literacy does not mean just the skill or technical competence to work a computer or operate digital tools; it refers to a broad range of skills, the entire gamut of situated practices that one engages in to communicate, collaborate, think critically, and create using digital technologies. Digital literacy can be roughly defines as one's ability to search, access, evaluate, utilize, communicate, share, and create content using digital technologies and the Internet. Approaching the end of 2010s, with easier access to computers and internet, digital divide is no more the gap between those who have access to digital technology and those who do not – it is the gap between those who have the skills set and literacy to use digital tools to their full potential and those who do not (Warschauer, 2004). It is the gap between those whose voices are heard in the digital space and those whose are not. By allowing critical reflection, collaboration and communication, all constituent components of digital literacy, via web 2.0 tools like Voicethread and spiderscribe, in this training programme, students were not only given training in using digital tools but were also empowered by helping them make their voices heard.

Conclusion

The immediate need for autonomy as perceived by this researcher is that learners must be capable of comprehending level-appropriate texts on their own. A strategy training programme of the type implemented by the researcher enables and supports independent learning through activities like reflection through consciousness-raising, use of mother tongue, and collaborative learning. The success of such explicit strategy training instruction programmes depends on teacher modelling, creation of rich peer learning environments, teacher feedback to support small learning gains, and gradual withdrawal of teacher control. The paper also pushes researchers and practitioners to rethink their assumptions about use of other languages in the classroom to evolve better teaching practices.

The paper advocates that as ESL teachers, we have to find ways to integrate use of digital technology into literacy tasks. This paper describes two instances of use of web 2.0



tools for facilitating digital literacy skills in the ESL classroom. Considered an essential gate skill that ensures success in the 21 century, digital literacy skills help in personal success, professional growth and social development. More and more educators are now interested in bringing digital literacy into the classrooms because sustained engagement with digital tools can help build a broad range of skills that help our students grow into effective participants of society. Illustrating use of web 2.0 tools for facilitating development of two digital literacy skills, viz., communication (sharing information using digital tools) and collaboration (working together on a digital platform to achieve a common goal) this experiment affirms how technology can be used to promote autonomous learning practices. In short, this research opens up several possibilities to uphold and put into action what Montessori said about developing autonomous learners, ‘The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, “The children are now working as if I did not exist.” ’

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Human Values: A Fundamental Covet

T. R. Shashipriya

Abstract

To understand the need, basic guidelines and process of Value Education is a must in the present scenario. For this Self-exploration, continuous happiness and prosperity, right understanding of relationship is also a necessity. Understanding human being as a co-existence of 'I' and the 'body', is a way of highlighting the harmony of human being. Further harmony in family and society, and also in nature brings a perception of healthy interaction, mutual relationship, trust and respect as the fundamental values of living. One has to accept the fact that by visualizing a harmonious order in society by making it undivided, we can have a universal order from family to world family. And this leads to good accord in the nature which paves way to holistic acceptance of all levels of existence. Self, family and society play a role in making the life valuable. Goals set lead us to our destinations. But they need aspirations, knowledge of values and skills, evaluation of beliefs. To achieve all these education that has real value is necessary. Further this makes life harmonious with society and nature. This includes of self exploration, peace, happiness and bliss of life. They have to be worked upon by every individual to reach the ultimate end or means.

Full Paper

Human life is always targeted towards happiness. It is the centric point of every living being. Happiness means being self sufficient also. To have happiness one has to explore oneself, understand his or her value in the view of larger scheme of things that we encounter in life. As man is a social animal, his value counts as per his role and participation with other living beings and the society he lives in.

Every human being takes in four levels of life with his own self, family, society and nature. Whether we know or understand all these, we continue being and living. Added we try to recognize what are our choices, thoughts and desires which will help us to know what we think and what we want. Wants are multifarious, but we have to recognize them right. This helps us to realise the human relationships and the expectations. That also brings in the problems that can be addressed. Then we care for the society we live in as it facilitates us to achieve our goals. Finally the nature in which we exist enables us to see what is wrong and to be modified in it that helps our living comfortable. This is the role of participation in totality.



Every person sets some goals in his life to fulfil. Before this is planned there should be the correct identification of one's aspirations, understanding of human values to fulfil the aspirations, knowledge of values and skills, evaluation of our beliefs and how does technology guide us to know human values. Human beings' aspiration for a happy, fulfilling and a successful life calls for a need of good education. The education creates a value domain for them and along with it a skills domain that makes their values conducive. Therefore the education becomes 'Value Education'. This makes the beings understand their needs and think about goals. Value Education makes all knowledge universal, rational, natural and verifiable, all encompassing and leads to harmony.

A person must always think "what I am?" and "what I really want to be?" It is how one focuses on himself, his beliefs and aspirations. The inner strength makes us resolve the challenges that he faces. So through self-investigation one can self evolve, know one's relation, have ethical human conduct, character, living style and harmony. Desire must be such that it should lead to continuous happiness and prosperity. But the individual should try to understand what is happiness, unhappiness and prosperity. He has to have aspirations but they should be given right priority. Right understanding is the basic and important one that further leads to good relationship that brings mutual happiness with fellow beings and it should also have physical facilities that fetches prosperity with the nature. If priority is given to physical facilities only it is considered to be animal consciousness. Therefore when right understanding of things becomes top most priority, there will be a makeover from animal consciousness to human consciousness and helps to have a value-based living.

We can find two types of persons when happiness and prosperity comes to consideration, one who is deprived and unhappy due to deficiency of materials and the other who is unhappy and deprived even though he is affluent in materials. In the present scenario maintaining ecological balance and harmony with Nature is the most asked question. One has to be aware that wants are unlimited and resources are limited. In such a situation is it possible to have a peaceful and harmonious co-existence of human beings? Because individually we face problems of depression, anxiety, suicides, stress, insecurity, health problems, lack of confidence and conviction. Along with these at the family level we face breaking up of joint families, mistrust, disharmony in relationships, divorce, dowry deaths and negligence of aged people. Further at the society level we find violence, terrorism, communalism, racial and ethnic struggle, corruption, adulteration, sex-crimes, exploitation, wars between nations and production of lethal weapons. These are a real threat to the society from all angles of vision. We also find weather imbalances, global warming, reduction of mineral and energy resources, deforestation, soil degradation etc. Whatever may be the problem, they are the outcome of misunderstandings, wrong notions about what is happiness, prosperity and their stability. Therefore the survival of human beings on the planet has become a threat. To rectify this, a need and must of right understanding of and living with nature, society, family and individual himself is to be made.



To reach the goal of harmony with one's self, family, society and finally with nature, human being must be the real struggle towards happiness. At the individual stage there will be the want of happiness and physical facilities. Happiness is continuous but not the physical facilities. We get happiness by desiring, thinking, selecting good ones, eating healthy food and breathing smoothly with exercises. This leads to knowing, assuming, recognition and fulfilment. Assumption based on good knowledge will pave way for perfect recognition and strong fulfilment. Yet both happiness and good facilities cannot replace each other. An individual, when he finds harmony through his self exploration, will have a perfect realization and understanding. Through these his imagination of things will be based on good analysis and selection of wanted things only. In other words he gets self-organized which leads to happiness. Happiness makes way for prosperity. This is in a way an appropriate assessment of physical needs and their availability in more than required quantity.

Family is a way to have proper recognition for self. This makes us build relationship where interaction is possible and which further leads to fulfilment, evaluation and mutual happiness. In a family the individual finds relationship and feelings that pave way for mutual happiness. There is an abundance of trust, respect, affection, care, guidance, reverence, glory, gratitude and love in a family. We all cherish to have an undivided society with a Universal Human Order where there is an existence of reasonable living of human beings with plants, animals, air, water, soil and every other unit of nature. Along with it we want a society that must not be divided on basis of caste, creed, sex, race and beliefs. This is possible only when we can have synchronization between family and society. For a harmonious society there should be right understanding in every individual, prosperity in every family, trust in every society and co-existence in nature. Then only we can ensure happiness in a holistic way.

Nature consists of four orders namely material order, plant order, animal order and human order. These include soil, water and air in the material order, plants order, animals and birds in animal order and human beings in human order. Material is conserved as it is. Plant order has existence as well as growth and even animal body has will to live like plants. And human body has the will to live with happiness. But humans have a higher level of existence. We can find the characteristics like composing, decomposing, wretchedness, cunningness and cruelty in plants and animals respectively but in human beings perseverance, bravery and generosity are the prevailing ones that make the life more assured. Nature is recyclable, self-regulated, interconnected and has mutual fulfilment. Things get transformed and regain the same stature, plants and animals get regulated and breed continues and based on feelings and emotions human is related to others.

Human being as is the super living being must have Values as they are essential in mutual relationship. The knowledge of ensuring nutrition and protection to the body along with the right utilization of the body is necessary. Human values must be accepted



naturally but not by fear, enticement or through blind belief/faith. The process of self-exploration helps in getting good harmony in the society or organization. Therefore at the individual point happiness, peace, contentment and bliss in self is a necessity. At the family level mutual fulfilment in relationships, prosperity in family, sustenance of joint families and family playing a major role in building a societal order is a must. At the society level fearlessness, holistic systems of education, health, justice and the whole world being a family is necessary. At the level of nature co-existence of all units in nature, suitable entity, balance of seasons, proper development of plants and animals, availability of natural resources is essential. In totality a proper harmony in an individual leads to a happy family that makes an undisturbed society, furthermore makes nature serene and thus the entire existence will be pleasant. This makes an appropriate Universal Human Order possible.

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