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~Editor's Note~

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Welcome to the October 2022 issue of IJELLS.

This issue is a unique compilation of established academicians and young budding scholars. It is heartening to witness the scholarship of young writers and is a testimony of their passion and hard work. On the one hand you will find soothing and enjoyable research from the well-established professionals and on the other hand burst of energy and enthusiasm from young writers.

One article stands apart in challenging the boundaries of the field. Ms Sanjukta Chakraborty's and Mr Dhritiman Chakraborty's joint research explores the fields of Nanotechnology and English literature revealing some of its magic.

Prof Margaret Pachuau invites us into Mizo literature and the unexplored knowledge of songs in its culture.

If you have a suggestion for improvement, kindly mail to, dr.mrudulalakkaraju@gmail.com

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Happy Reading and Happy Sharing!

Dr Mrudula Lakkaraju
Chief Editor

~ Chief Editor~

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

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~English Literature~

Purple Hibiscus: A Reformist-Feminist Analysis

A Madhavi Latha

Abstract

The feminist movement has not gained widespread recognition in Africa, and women who identify with it are viewed as extremists in different parts of Africa. The present study explores the exploitation and oppression of women in detail, demonstrating the subjugating situations that occasionally reduce women to bouts of depression. The research also highlights the significance of institutionalizing societal reforms to enhance the status of women in male dominated societies. The findings of the study reinforce the notion that there is necessity of men and women working together to adapt to the changes in the modern society. As a theoretical foundation for this academic endeavour, a reformist feminist analysis is chosen. Even though women are oppressed and dehumanized by males, this feminist perspective nevertheless acknowledges some aspects in the patriarchal systems which are positive that help men and women co-exist peacefully. Therefore Reformist-Feminism employs positive male characters to challenge the other dominant male characters and make them realize to treat women equally. The study also reveals that men's treatment of women as subordinates has negative consequences within the family and society.

Key words: Exploitation, Societal Reforms, Feminist Perspective, Patriarchal systems

Introduction

African women are often viewed as "second-class citizens" because of their gender roles. Their lives are centred primarily on procreation, motherhood, and assimilating into the male-dominated environment without raising any objections and “brainwashed into accepting their slavish status” (Fonchingong 136). Acholonu (217) opines that the African woman is “trapped in the claws of the taboos and the restrictions that only help to propel male chauvinism.” Katrack (163) has further stated that “as a female child grows from childhood to womanhood to motherhood, she is controlled and owned by her father, her husband, and then her sons”. As a result, the patriarchal society will continue to subjugate women for the foreseeable future.

While attempting to free themselves from the oppression and dominance of men, women have formed political and socio-political parties. Feminist movements sprang out of this. The feminists hope to achieve emancipation and parity with males in terms of social standing and access to resources through this movement. In *Purple Hibiscus,* which is the debut novel of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, women's repressive and suffocating social situations are graphically portrayed. A Feminist-Reformist theoretical stance is taken into consideration in the analysis of the novel which aims to focus on positive male characters and transform the mindsets of men who are oppressive towards women and help them see women as valuable contributors to society's progress.

According to Judith Astellara, quoted in Azuike (2002), “Feminism is a proposal for social transformation as well as a movement that strives to end the oppression of women.” (3) It means that a passive and submissive woman should be transformed into a fearless and diligent woman. Within this constantly shifting context of societal consciousness, women reject to be "someone else's appendage" (Palmer 39).

The famous Nigerian writer and critic Molara Ogundipe Leslie's who coined the term ‘STIWANISM’ which stands for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa, attempts to restructure society in such a way that women are completely integrated into the process of transformation. In this process, Gender discrimination and inequality are two issues which are found and needed to be addressed to change and reshape the thoughts of people, particularly men for the betterment of the society.

The position of women is a major issue for female writers, thus they seek to modify any beliefs, practices, or ideals that are harmful to women's well-being. In other words, there is a need for reforms that can transform men's attitudes towards women and their preconceptions of what they are capable of. Women's oppression, which causes them such misery and despair, will be lessened and eventually eliminated as a result of the reforms and implementation of these measures.

Reformist feminism disapproves “the patriarchal-molded attitudes, norms and conventions that hinder their self-realisation” (Arndt, 362). They acknowledge that the patriarchal viewpoint is ingrained in society, thus they do not challenge the foundations upon which the patriarchal society is built. If reforms are instituted and the organization's members make an attempt to improve their attitudes, the movement believes in the notion that that menovercome their despicable behavior and realize themselves. It is envisaged that societal shifts will occur as a result of the triumph of the good over the evil.

Even though the Reformist feminists are of the opinion that there are such things as happy marriages, in which husbands genuinely love and care for their wives, they insist that women must be freed from authoritarian and abusive partnerships in order to achieve equality. Despite the fact that the male antagonist of this book is killed, it is to be noted that any literary works which apply Reformist-Feminist approach do not always have a happy ending involving the elimination of male antagonists. This is due to the concept that individuals who have engaged in negative behaviour can undergo a transformation in their personality, values, and actions, which, in turn, will result in an improved and better society. It means Reformist Feminism does not encourage criminal activity or promiscuity. Individuals are made to experience the repercussions of their deeds, as depicted in the text.

Violence against women and children is a multifaceted problem that includes everything from physical assault to unsanitary widowhood practices. Women are left defenseless and uncertain within patriarchal societies. The facts are broken down and discussed below in the order that they appear.

Physical Assault

In the novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, the instances of Domestic violence is revealed through the character, Beatrice, Eugene’s wife who suffers torture in silence at the hands of her husband. Beatrice is physically abused by Eugene, but she never informs anyone. The scar on Beatrice’s forehead, the swollen eye, and the miscarriages she endures are the evidences of Eugene’s torture. Besides this, Beatrice has a practice of dusting the figurines on the étagère after every incident of beating from her husband, Eugene. Kambili used to wonder why she polished them each time I heard sounds from their bedroom, like something being banged against the door (10*).* Following the Sunday Mass, Eugene takes his family in the car to Father Benedict, a white priest at St Agnes church. Beatrice communicates her wish to stay in the car by stating that she does not want to get out due to nausea and dizziness she is experiencing. This, in Eugene's opinion, is an offense. When Beatrice senses a shift in her husband's demeanour, she decides to accompany them. However, she is subsequently viciously beaten by Papa Eugene at home for her act of disobedience which results in miscarriage of a baby. And in another situation, when Kambili gets menstrual cramps and in order to overcome the pain she has to take the Medicine, Panadol which should not be consumed with an empty stomach, so Beatrice instructs her to take cornflakes and then medicine but Papa Eugene does not consider this and he punishes Beatrice with a heavy metal belt for witnessing their daughter, Kambili "desecrate the Eucharistic fast" (100-102).

Child Abuse

The depictions of child maltreatment in *Purple Hibiscus* by Ngozi Adichie are the subject of this section. Kambili and Jaja live in constant terror of their father, Papa Eugene's violent attacks. Besides the harsh punishment he administers at the slightest provocation despite his claims of love and care for children, Eugene's actions speak louder than words. Papa Eugene scalds Kambili and Jaja's feet with hot water from a kettle after learning from Kevin, his car driver that they stayed back for a longer time which is against his instructions at Papa Nnukwu’s house, his father. According to Papa Eugene, his father, Papa Nnukwu is a heathen since he does not convert to Christianity. Before Kambili leaves for Enugu, she receives a picture of Papa Nnukwu from Amaka, the daughter of Aunty Ifeoma. Since Kambili brought the portrait of Papa Nnukwu from Nsukka to their house in Enugu and attempted to protect it from being destroyed, she was subjected to a vicious attack by Papa Eugene. She ended up on the floor as a result of Eugene kicking her. Kambili says,

> Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy…More stings. More slaps. A salty wetness warmed my mouth. I closed my eyes and slipped away into quiet “(210-211*).*

As a result of her father's vicious assault, Kambili is admitted to the hospital after remaining comatose for several days. Papa not only uses violence on Kambili but also on his son, Jaja. It is clear that Eugene assaulted Jaja, as evidenced by the deformity of one of his little finger.

Kambili, the narrator of *Purple Hibiscus* tells the readers about Jaja:

> When he was ten, he had missed two questions on his catechism test and was not named the best in his First Holy Communion class. Papa took him upstairs and locked the door. Jaja, in tears, came out supporting his left hand with his right, and Papa drove him to St. Agnes hospital' (145).

Difficulties of Widowhood

Ifeoma, a widowed teacher working in the University who lost her husband, Ifediora is an outspoken, fearless, powerful, and diligent sister of Papa Eugene. She is a mother of two sons and one daughter. She is accused by her family members of murdering her devoted husband, Ifediora. They claim that Ifediora had left money when he was alive and Ifeoma is concealing the information. Ifeoma disregards this assertion because she is aware that she cannot 'orchestrate a car accident in which a trailer rams into your husband's car' (74).Ifeoma is brave, has a strong will, is highly educated, and is aware of her rights; as a result, she is not fazed by the pressure that comes from her in-laws. Her three children, Amaka, Obiora, and Chima, all depend on her completely for their financial support. She compensates for the things she cannot afford by loving them unconditionally. She works as hard in order to provide for her elderly father, Papa Nnukwu with the meager amount she earns. She does not accept Eugene's gifts, despite the fact that he would alleviate some of her financial strains. During a Christmas occasion, Aunt Ifeoma recalls an incident between her and Eugene and tells Beatrice:

> Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car?… But first he wanted us to join the Knights of St. John. He wanted us to send Amaka to convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing makeup! I want a new car, *nwunyem*, and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new freezer and I want money so that I will not have to unravel the seams of Chima's trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things" (95).

With her current predicament in mind, she turns down Eugene's generous offer of widow's help and Papa Eugene declines to assist her.

Victimization in Marriage

> Women are at a greater risk of entering into marriage due to early marriage, violence, and poverty. They are not self-assured enough to turn down an abusive partner. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Beatrice's fear of life outside the marriage is revealed. After another thrashing from her husband, Eugene, Beatrice

> informs Ifeoma: ‘Where would I go if I leave Eugene’s house? Tell me where would I go?…Do you know how many mothers pushed their daughters at him? (123).

Fear of the unknown exacerbates Beatrice’s predicament, increasing her vulnerability to life-threatening attacks. In spite of the fact that following Eugene's orders is detrimental to her health, she does not question his authority. She refuses to talk about the humiliation her husband inflicts on her. Beatrice only weeps and uses a mixture of salt and cold water to treat Kambili’s scalding feet. The fact that she is financially dependent on Eugene paints a picture of her as a weak and vulnerable lady.

Cultural Invisibility

Traditional beliefs and myths ensure that women will always hold a subordinate position. It doesn't matter how successful a woman is, her father or her husband still has ownership over her.

In *Purple Hibiscus,* Papa Nnukwu regrets allowing his son Eugene to pursue the missionaries. He is also dissatisfied with the fact that although Eugene is quite wealthy, he does not supply him enough money and sends a small amount through Kevin, Eugene’s driver .When Papa Nkukwu tells Ifeoma that he would not have allowed Eugene to follow Missionaries which led Eugene not to take care of him, Ifeoma reminds her father that she has also joined a missionary school but she has no tdeserted her father as her brother, Eugene did. Despite Ifeoma's hardship to accommodate her family's and her father's needs, Papa Nnukwu states, ‘You are a woman. You do not count’ (83) He is unaware that the quality of the accomplishments of men and women are identical.

Beatrice is insecure because of the phallocentric belief that a woman must have many children in order to be accepted by society. People in the village think that Eugene, who is wealthy, should have more than two children. Beatrice's sadness after her second miscarriage is caused by this assumption.

The alleged religiosity of the men who commit these atrocities against women is a distressing aspect of the problem. As a fervent Catholic and philanthropist, Eugene advocates for human rights through his newspaper, The Standard. Despite these virtues, he is an authoritative to his family. Although he is widely regarded as a courageous, and generous, he is the cruelest tyrant in his own land. His religious fanaticism and heavy-handedness have resulted in the imprisonment and incapacitation of those he claims to love the most. The presence of positive male personalities who have contributed to the well-being of women should not be overlooked at this stage.

Despite his father Eugene's harsh and despotic authority, Jaja takes care of his mother, Beatrice and his little sister Kambili. Unlike Eugene who is a violent and dictatorial ruler, Jaja does not treat women in an inappropriate manner. On Palm Sunday, Jaja does not attend the communion, so Eugene throws the missal at Jaja but it misses him and instead breaks several figurines that are displayed on the étagère. Jaja is concerned about his mother who is picking up the parts of the figurines and helps her in collecting the pieces and says, "Careful

Mama, or those pieces will cut your finger' (8)." On learning about Beatrice's pregnancy, Jaja shows concern for the unborn kid. He says that he protects the unborn child from the severity of his own father.

When Eugene notices that Kambili has brought an unfinished picture of Papa Nnukwu from Nsukka, he gets engaged. He demands for an answer, wanting to know who was responsible for the 'abominable' act. Aware of the severe punishment that will befall anyone found guilty, Jaja claims blame for Kambili's action and saves her from his father's disapproval. Kambili is hospitalised when Eugene viciously beats her for guarding the painting from destruction. The truth is that Jaja prefers to carry the burden of the repercussions for his sister, Kambili.

Jaja observes how Obiora, helps his mother, Ifeoma following the death of their father during their visit to Nsukka. He tells Kambili: 'Look at how Obiora balances Aunty Ifeoma's family on his head, and I am older than he is. I should have taken care of Mama' (289).

Jaja takes up the responsibility for his mother's potentially lethal conduct when Beatrice adds poison to Eugene's tea every day in an attempt to end his servitude and subjection. Death comes to him one day as he is slumped over a desk at work. The cause of his death is discovered through an autopsy. Jaja gets incarcerated for his altruistic deed of taking responsibility for his mother's acts when the police try to arrest the suspect. Jaja gives up his comforts so that Beatrice wouldn't have to endure the terrible jail conditions following her harrowing experiences in her marriage, As a result, Kambili holds Jaja in great regard and refers to him as "my hero"(305).

While defending women and providing them with mental and physical support, Jaja also shows regard for the sentiments of men, thus being generous and kind to everyone in his path. During Papa Nnukwu's family's Christmas celebrations in the village, Eugene allows Jaja and Kambili to spend fifteen minutes with him. In spite of his father's animosity towards Papa Nnukwu, he had a strong wish to see the elderly man smile which is demonstrated by a visit to Abba during Christmas. He inquires about the health of Papa Nnukwu. When Papa Nnukwu offers them soft drinks who know that his son, Eugene will never allow Kambili and Jaja to consume anything at his house, they kindly decline Papa Nnukwu's offer. But Jaja is aware of their grandfather's gloomy speaking tone. In an effort to make him feel better, Jaja responds, "Papa Nnukwu, we just ate before we came here…if we're thirsty, we will drink in your house."(66) Papa Nnukwu's face lights up when he hears such a thoughtful and pacifist response.

While at Nsukka, Jaja and Kambili join their cousins in displaying affection and concern for Papa Nnukwu while mourning his grandfather. Due to his father's antipathy against Papa Nnukwu on religious grounds, Jaja had little time to spend with his grandfather, Papa Nkukwu. Father Amadi demonstrates the same selflessness and concern for the wellbeing of his people as Jaja does for his immediate family. Because of his altruism, he is liked by everyone around him. He reveals a lot about himself through his interactions with Aunty Ifeoma's family. In times of need, he helps Ifeoma's family and spends quality time with them which the members of Aunt Ifeoma's family also adore. Because of her father's mistreatment, Kambili's potentials have been repressed, but his father Amadi's gentle and supportive words allow her to discover them. Kambili recognizes her ability to play volleyball and compete in athletics. Her relationship with her cousins and her classmates improves as a result of Father Amadi's guidance and support.

It is clear that Papa Nnukwu still loves his son even though he has been subjected to years of abuse. The following is the prayer he offers for his lineage: ‘Chineke…Bless my daughter, Ifeoma, and give her enough for her family…Bless my son Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him’ (168).Kambili was astounded that he prayed as fervently for her father, as he did for himself and Aunty Ifeoma. Papa Nnukwu refuses to avenge himself by doing wicked deeds; instead, he sets a good example for others to follow in his footsteps. Papa Nnukwu, the 'heathen,' is therefore the true believer in God, whilst the zealotry and indifference with which Eugene treats his own father expose him as the person who most fundamentally rejects the idea that there is one God who rules heaven and earth.

Self-Assertion and Self-Affirmation

In most male-dominated countries, women are viewed as submissive, passive, and weak. By expressing themselves and proving their mettle, the women in this novel fight hard to dispel this long-standing misconception.

Ifeoma, the sister of Eugene, is courageous, diligent, financially independent, physically robust, and aggressive. She is not unhappy despite the fact that members of her late husband's family have exerted pressure on her for a variety of reasons. She does not give in to the bullying and threats of her relatives. In addition to this, she possesses the bravery to confront Eugene about the cruel treatment he has shown to their father. Despite her low resources, she assumes Eugene's responsibility for her father's care. Eugene refuses to organise Papa Nnukwu's funeral after his death since he was a heathen according to him. Ifeoma makes certain that their father's funeral takes place in a traditional way. She asserts herself to demonstrate that a woman may play an essential role even when men forsake responsibility.

Mama Beatrice's character has likewise undergone some sort of metamorphosis. After another miscarriage at a hospital, she goes straight to her sister’s -in-lawhouse in Nsukka rather than going back to her husband's house in Enugu. This indicates that the brutal beating that her husband inflicted on her, which resulted in the loss of her pregnancy, seems to have inspired a new level of bravery in her. In addition to this, the fact that she addressed Sisi in a booming voice after the storm is another indication of her growing independence. Another instance where Beatrice chooses to assert herself is when “she did not sneak Jaja’s food to his room, wrapped in cloth so it would appear that she had simply brought his laundry in” (257).

In traditional African communities, trousers are considered men's attire, and Eugene makes sure that Kambili is appropriately dressed and her finger nails are kept at an excruciatingly short length. But when she visits Nsukka, she experiments with a lipstick and also a pair of Amaka’s shorts. She eventually becomes accustomed to her new physical look, despite the fact that at first she is uneasy about it. Ifeoma and Amaka still express their uniqueness by wearing shorts and lipstick in spite of Eugene's insistence that the only way he will help them is if they quit wearing lipstick and pants. According to Opara (105-107), ‘clothing is a gauge of female assertiveness … and emblem of docility and femininity.’

Transformation

One hallmarks of reformist feminism is the notion that it does not support people regardless of gender, to engage in criminal activity or oppression. This segment of our discussion examines the ramifications of male oppression on women and girls, as depicted in the text, *Purple Hibiscus*. However, inasmuch as Beatrice resorts to murdering her husband as a method of gaining her independence in the end, her actions have major ramifications for both her family and society as a whole in general.

Beatrice is certain that her desperate and extreme deeds are preferable to the oppression that she has to endure at the hands of her husband, Eugene but she is wrong. On the other hand, she is detached from the children whom she adores, which is an unpleasant turn of events. Beatrice is not incarcerated because Jaja gladly accepts responsibility for her misdeeds, but she is mentally unstable and depressed.

Jaja is imprisoned when he is a teenager and is housed alongside dangerous criminals during his time there. This has a bad impact on his personality. A result of the tough jail conditions, 'the skin on the back of his neck has developed scabs that appear dry until he scrapes them, at which point the yellowish pus below comes out’’ (304-305). Through the activities of her father and mother, Kambili is forced to take on the obligations of her family and their multiple business operations when she is still quite young. Unfortunately, despite her best attempts to keep everything running smoothly, she lacks the requisite expertise to deal with such complex issues.

Conclusion

Reformist feminists have taken a look at Purple Hibiscus in an effort to change men's negative views of women. Feminists in Africa are sometimes misunderstood as radicals who are embracing a Western lifestyle that is incompatible with their own culture. Instead of condemning the patriarchal society which mostly includes men, the reformist feminist perspective focuses on men who exhibit oppressive tendencies. Feminist reformers in Africa do not want to usurp men's positions; rather, they recognise that men and women work together as equal partners in society's growth. They are not confrontational.

In addition, the reformist-feminist position acknowledges that patriarchal society provides women with opportunities for intellectual, social, and political development. Consequently, this discourse examines the elements militating against women in patriarchal society with the goal of alleviating their condition or ending women's oppression entirely. Although there is a great deal of effort to ensure that women have equal access like men, they remain underrepresented in the workforce.

However, the portrayal of Father Amadi, Ifediora, and Jaja's good attitudes toward women will be beneficial to women in society. The world will be a better place if men with repressive inclinations see women as partners in progress and actively work to change their bad attitudes. The incorrect conduct of their parents will not result in the creation of orphans and the exposure of children to societal vices.

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Song and its Significance in Mizo Perspective

Margaret L Pachuau

Abstract

This article shall focus upon the aspect of songs in Mizo tradition. It shall in the process examine both folk and cultural dynamics that have made an impact and it will reflect upon significant marker in terms of locating identity within the Mizo perspective.

Keywords: Mizo, Songs, Identity, Religion, Mizoram

The song tradition of the Mizos has largely sought to express and examine the conditions or the cultural grounds on which both natives within Mizoram as well as the Europeans missionaries lived and understood each other. Mizoram was the last state in Northeast India to be reached by the Christian missions, in the year 1891.The most fundamental concepts in terms of tracing the dynamics of the song tradition within the postcolonial parameter will be that of Christianity because, it is this factor that had been and still is in many ways integral to the psyche of the Mizo and their song tradition. The term Mizo is the generic name for the whole of the related ethnic groups in Mizoram and the adjoining areas of the Chin Hills, Manipur, Chittagong hill tracks, Arakan and Tripura. Regarding the origin of the Mizos there seems to be a common theory which the Mizo sub-tribes invariably share ‘The Chhinlung legend’. ‘Sinlung’, sometimes called ‘Chhinlung’, is culturally regarded to be the ancestral home of the Zohnahthlak, (of the communities of the Zo people) even though interpretations to the name and its veracity are debatable.

It appeared from the very beginning that the pioneer missionaries had recognised the Mizo instinct for music and singing. Williams refers to his first two-hour meeting with the Mizos when they sang several tunes. He notes that the latter listened with open mouths and although he failed to persuade them to sing along momentarily, they tried to sing one of the tunes while his party was leaving by boat. On the other hand, the pioneer missionaries William Frederick Savidge and James Herbert Lorrain found the Mizos extremely unmusical before they embraced Christianity. However, it may be mentioned here that an immense amount of material on the song tradition of the Mizos had already been collected and the development in terms of the Mizo composers and their songs did visibly exist even before the arrival of the Christian missions. Lorrain and Savidge have however been credited of rendering the first Western hymns to the Mizo people. The duo had composed a song which was based upon the life of Jesus, and it depicted instances relating to the incarnation up till the ascension and it was set to the tune of JJ Rousseau’s “Come ye sinners poor and needy”. The smooth flow of the song made it easy to sing and was later placed in the Mizo hymn book which contained a dozen hymns. Some of those hymns were familiar ones that had been sung in many places even before the missionaries themselves had set foot there. The hymns and songs were very important instruments in removing Mizo apprehensions about the ‘alien religion’ and played a significant role in the later revival movement when the new Mizo hymns based upon traditional tunes emerged. The Welsh mission immediately developed the ministry of music by adding six more hymns to the already existing twelve that had been contributed by the Arthington mission. Subsequently, they also printed a new hymn book in 1899. Surprisingly, when the mission inaugurated an evangelistic outreach in the villages, there was no objection or rejection. The villagers rather began to sing Christian hymns in the 'Zawlbuk' which was the traditional hamlet where young men gathered and this itself was a significant indicator that the hymns as well as the missionaries themselves were well accepted within the local domains. Songs became inherently central for the people even as there was a continued acceptance of Christianity and this has been indicated especially in terms of the revival movement, when the missionaries were making headway in the various villages amidst opposition and indifference. Even as there arose significant pandering towards the Christian hymns, there arose a cultural movement that was centred on a genre called 'Puma Zai' and this movement flared up during the year 1907. The songs that stirred the controversy were composed around a double-lined refrain of any number of verses and had the appellation of puma at the end of the line.

Mizoram and its inhabitants, the Mizos have predominantly located the aspect of song within their sensibility. Song has been central and well embedded in the Mizo ethos. Mizos have been portrayed fond of song and in the wake of this aspect; there has been a spate of song compositions which were secular as well as non secular by nature. The Mizo community has based its developments upon arenas which are predominantly central to the development of the community, namely the pre-missionary as well as the post-missionary period. The advent of the missionaries to Mizoram in the year 1889 was a landmark for Mizos. Prior to this however there were many songs that were composed and offered especially to the various elements of nature that were around. While there are arguments that specify that songs were central to the Mizo existence there are critics who argue that there was a time especially when the Mizos who occupied the area that lay to the west of 'Lentlang' had no significant song culture to speak of at all.

Chronology has become not merely complicated but suspect especially with regards to the origin of song and thus, rather than dwell upon the chronological parameters it has always made better sense amongst the cultural critics to trace the 'song types' as represented within the Mizo community. Within the song tradition of the Mizos there are inherently three categories of songs that are popularly acknowledged. These are

i. Piputehla (songs of the pre missionary era)
ii. Sakhawtharhla (songs of the missionary era)
iii. Tunlaihlate (songs of the contemporary era)

Amongst these classifications Piputehla is actually the oldest in terms of the genre and at times it is also referred to as Hmanlaihla or songs of old and they are believed to have had ample bearing upon Mizo oral literature. However their underlying significance still remains very central. These songs were usually of two lines and later on there were songs that contained three lines as well. In terms of what could possibly be termed as coherent chronology, this song type can perhaps be classified under three distinct divisions:

i. Songs originating from inhabitants who migrated from the East of the Tiau River
ii. Songs originating from inhabitants who migrated after crossing the Tiau River
iii. Songs originating from inhabitants who migrated after the nineteenth century

While the Mizos were located within the east of the Tiau river, they composed various songs and these were, classified under categories such as Dar hla, Nauawih hla, Bawh hla, Hlado, Pi Hmuaki hla, Chawngchen zai and Chai hla to name but a few, and these refer to songs of war, dance, and songs sung in accordance with the times. There were also consistent changes that were made to these songs from time to time. Song composition continued even after they migrated from the Tiau river, and thus there were songs that were composed, and based upon various individuals. Some of these were Darmani hla, Mangkhaia hla, Lianchhiari zai and Saikuti zai and these songs were named after the composers and the genre advocated by them. With the advent of Christianity, literacy also was established to a tremendous extent and it enhanced the composition of song. Various types of song were composed and some of these were Awithangpa zai, Puma zai, Tlanglam zai .There were also genres such as Dar hla, Bawh hla and Hlado, found within the Mizo song tradition. Dar hla were song that was rendered to the accompaniment of the ‘dar’ or traditional Mizo gong. The darbu or set of gongs were used to accompany these songs. This category of songs was actually deemed to be amongst the oldest of Mizo songs and the lyrics were very simple and they were actually composed in order to be sung in accompaniment of the gongs.

Apart from these there were also songs that were known as Hlado and Bawh hla. These were in fact often regarded to be almost one and the same thing. However there were songs that were used for both the animal as well as human race. Hlado especially was used at the time of hunting and it was a chant that was rendered by the warrior. This cry was rendered by the hunters at almost every place they rested in, and thus it was regarded to be of especial significance. The warrior rendered this cry over the dead body of the slain enemy, and this chanting of the cry was dependent upon the general atmosphere, in that, if the conditions were still very tense the chant could go totally un-rendered. If such a circumstance took place then the warriors would render this cry as lustily as possible when they were about to enter their village. It was also chanted on the celebration of the heads that had been hunted down. Bawh hla however was not as chanted as often as Hlado. However, both Bawh hla and Hlado were verse that celebrated the bravery as well as the successes of Mizo heroes.

Apart from this, there was another genre that was classified as Thiam hla. This type of song was especially chanted only by the priests. It was regarded to be sacred verse and it thus was inaccessible to the public at large. So sacred was this verse that even the relatives or the children of the priests had no access to them. The verse was also learnt in secret and the song itself was of two types (just as there were two types of priests). One category comprised the religious aspect and the other category comprised the medicinal aspects and the verses were specifically composed for occasions associated in terms of animal sacrifice or with regards to the spirit world. There were various aspects to the sacrifice, and thus, there were as many songs that were rendered for the same.

Puma zai was another genre within the Mizo tradition that was actually rendered in times of mass gatherings. It was actually song that originated at the time when there was a significant transition between the old and new religious order within the Mizo society. There was therefore, a distinct difference in terms of the composition of the song and Puma zai by itself created significant controversy amidst the Mizo society as well. The advent of the Christian missionaries and the subsequent impact of Christianity as a religion within the society created a hurdle for the people at large. As a reaction to the massive impact of the Christian mission, the village chiefs and various other Mizos composed verse in reaction to the same. The missionaries had brought about a significant change in terms of the already, coherently established song tradition of the Mizos and songs were translated and rendered into harmony by them from the original Western compositions by the Welsh missionaries. These songs managed to replace the traditional verses of the land and as a result, a significant majority amongst the Mizo community rose up in retaliation against the new song order. The move was supported by the local chiefs, who were determined to keep alive the older song tradition and significantly it was at this time that Puma zai came into existence. It was regarded to have originated from the Biate community during 1830-50, (but however there are no coherent aspects to the same with regards to accurate chronology).

The genre was actually very popular within Mizoram during 1880 onwards and apart from other verses; the song would end with the term Puma at the end the song. Puma meant God in the Biate dialect. The songs were regarded to be a beckoning to the old traditions and because it was interlaced with yearning and cultural sentiment, it managed to gain immense popularity amidst the masses. It had significant appeal amongst the chiefs and the commoners, old as well as young people within the community.

There were also songs that were composed after certain individuals. These were songs such as Pi Hmuaki zai, Lalvunga zai, Darthiangi zai and they were usually three lined verse. All these songs within the pre missionary period were very simple songs in composition and there was nothing that was inherently moralistic or significantly complex in them. Each song however was unique and each had its own lyrical connotations. The period saw the rapid composition of songs that were usually of two or three lines only and in fact it was regarded that two lined verse were of a prior origin than the three lined verse. There were songs that incorporated a number of words from other languages as well and these were undoubtedly much more complicated by nature. Most of the songs incorporated themes that were related to contemporary life and as a result of this, they were very popular.

Christianity however brought about a significant shift in stance. The composition differed immensely and there was a marked paradigm shift as well. All the songs were initially translated, and had but one theme, that of celebrating the love of God. These were dimensions that were markedly different from the original Mizo verses. The latter decades of the nineteenth century saw the development of song in terms of a Christian tradition. Apart from changing the face of the Mizo song tradition, Christianity has also brought about a significant change in terms of an all round development within the Mizo sensibility. A majority of the compositions of songs were translations from the English versions and thus translation too was rendered in terms of a coherent dimension. By the end of 1899, the missionaries had published the first Christian hymnal, and it was four and half inches in length and it had thirty six pages to it, with as many as eighteen songs to the same. The first hymns were, as earlier mentioned in translation and the first song was called ‘Isua vanah a awm a’ (Jesus resides in heaven) and this translation has been roughly attributed to the year 1894. Christian hymns were increasing in terms of composition and by 1904 the Mizo hymn book was reprinted and as many as forty four songs were added to the same.

Apart from the aspect of Christianity there are various dimensions to the song tradition of the Mizos that deserve coherent mention. A genre entitled Hnam hla or songs pertaining to culture and nationalism were also composed, within the twentieth century. As Mizos had always been under the rule of different chiefs under various villages, there was not much to unite them into aspects of oneness or even nationalism at any point of time. However by 1908-1911, there arose a feeling of unity and nationalism in the hearts of the young Mizo men. Thanga, a young Mizo, while studying in Shillong thus penned songs such as Mizoram, Mizoram ka thlahlel che (Mizoram, I yearn for you). Similarly, with the advent of political parties such as the Mizo Union in 1946 which incidentally was the first political party to be setup, there was a rapid feeling of unity. Songs by Rokunga, a talented composer, were also sung to a great extent and it has been regarded that from his songs greatly influenced the Mizo National Front, and it was regarded that his compositions promoted Mizo unity and solidarity. Some of his songs, such as ‘hmangaihna hi chakna ani’ (love elicits strength) depict aspects related to nationalism. The song celebrates the fact that youth should stand for the land. He also propagated the idea of zalenna’ or freedom and in the same vein he urged youth to rise and take a stand. Laltanpuia also was another prominent composer and in 1964, he composed songs such as Zoram hi kan ram ani (Zoram is our land) and Independence kan Zoram tan (Independence for Zoram)’. With the advent of the insurgency in 1966, there was mass destruction of Mizoram and especially the village of Sialsuk, where he hailed from was destroyed, and his sentiments have been especially recorded in the songs that he specifically composed on the basis of this aspect. Kaphleia, a young man who hailed from Tachhip, also composed many songs to the cause of unity and integrity in Mizoram and his compositions have explicit references to the fact that the things that are rendered by men “must be rendered for God and the state”. His appeal is often to Zoram ka ram (Zoram, my land). Mention must be made here of composers such as Captain L Z Sailo who composed ‘Insuihkhawm lehzai I rel ang u’ (let us strive towards unity)

To denote that culture is dynamic is very common place. Transition has inherently been integral to the human experience, even though the rates of change may differ one from the other. However, despite this culture is also in various ways ‘stable’ even as there are threads of continuity that run through every culture. As such, while there have been underlying changes in terms of the song tradition of the Mizos, it must also be noted that the changes have occurred in terms of representing the dynamics of change within the Mizo society. Ethno musicologists often make frequent references to the fact that music is considered to be one of the most stable elements of culture. Similarly within the Mizo tradition, this remains true to a large extent. Even as there has been transition from orality to the written perspective within the Mizo society, and it must be observed that song and its accompanying music have remained a factor of stability within the Mizo community.

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The Role of the 'Shaman' in Rishab Shetty's Film *Kantara*

Mrudula Lakkaraju

Abstract

Traditional cultures were designed to survive as a living organism. The modern terminology is 'sustainability'. These pre-colonial and pre-technology communities were microcosms of life and ritual which evolved and perfected over the centuries. These self sufficient circles of coexistence survived on barter system, eco-friendly practices, collective sharing and a sense of Community spirit. Some of these practices can still be found in spaces that are remote from the cyborg of urban existence. The spirit of the Community helped in designing some of the best practices of humanity. The indigenous modes of punishment, the checks and the balances helped the Community deal with any anomaly that challenged the existence of its organic being. In this design the role of 'Shaman' is very important. Rishab Shetty's *Kantara* explores the role of Shaman in this period film and weaves a narrative to showcase it. *Kantara* is a film that celebrates the role of 'Shaman' in the well being of the Community and this paper is an attempt to explore this theme.

Keywords: Traditional Society, Sustainable, Microcosm, Collective Good, Shaman, Coexistence

Introduction

Every traditional Community across the globe has the concept of a 'Shaman' embedded into the fabric of their society. Oxford Dictionary defines the word as 'a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits. Typically such people enter a trance state during a ritual, and practise divination and healing.' A Shaman is called Hmong in China, Dukun in Indonesia, Miko in Japan and Mudang in Korea. This concept can also be found in Malaysia, Mangolia, Philippines, Siberia, Russia, Africa, Alaska, Europe, Vietnam, India, Nepal, other indigenous communities of America and Australia.

A Shaman can be a man or a woman who takes up the job as a hereditary occupation or through designation, by the Community. S/He dons the role usually at Community gatherings to perform a ritual. A mask and an elaborate costume are used to construct this image representing a Shaman. The human being disappears and the performer appears. The ritual starts with the Shaman invoking a God or a Goddess. It is believed, that this invocation and the diminished human personality of the performer connects her/him to the deity. Once a connection is established, the performer no longer exists. S/He becomes a vessel for the God. The God speaks through the Shaman. This event is the most interesting. The Community's knowledge and understanding of the performer is commanded over by the voice of God. This hybrid God representation becomes an entity which is connected to the Community, understands the working of the Community and possibly understands what the probable solutions are. S/He uses the authority to speak with the Community offering them viable remedies and corrections.

Chindula Yellamma, in her ‘Biography’ recounts how she had dedicated her life to this performance and this dedication requires her to be celibate and therefore deemed as pure for the Goddess Yellamma to integrate with her. Chindula Yellamma also reminisces on how during the performance where she becomes a vessel for the Goddess to speak through, she would also use the opportunity to correct some of the wrongs in her Community.

Roland Barthes uses the reference of a ‘Shaman’ in the context of a writer who becomes the medium for the voice of literature to originate and end with the writing. The performative element is recalled as something that cannot be repeated. As a onetime performative which then ultimately leads to the figurative ‘death of the author’.

> Nevertheless, the feeling about this phenomenon has been variable; in primitive societies, narrative is never undertaken by a person, but by a mediator, Shaman or speaker, whose “performance” may be admired (that is, his mastery of the narrative code), but not his “genius”. (Barthes, DOTA)

Akira Kurosawa in his trailblazing film *Rashomon* uses the device of the ‘Shaman’ to retrieve the dead samurai’s account from the other world. Shaman is an engaging narrative device in all forms of storytelling.

The film plotline

Directed, written and acted in by Rishab Shetty, the film is a narrative that revolves around a small Community living nearby a forest, in this case a mystical forest, i.e., Kantara. The plotline jumps three timelines from 1847 to 1970 to 1990. The timelines document the beginning of the unassuming event and how it metamorphoses into a ritual for decades to come and finally transitions to corrective action. Any ritual in traditional societies originates and revolves around the phases of a day, the seasons in a year or the stages in a human life. The communities that are dependent on the forest produce for their survival opted for sustainable methods with utmost reverence to this resource. So, the bond between the people and the forest is organic and respectful.

The King of the land, who seeks peace, travels the world to find it and finally does it in the presence of the Community’s God. He offers a large tract of forest land in exchange of the deity’s idol. The God then speaks through their ‘Shaman’ and the deal is sealed between the king and the Community. This deal, in a pre-colonial era, like most of the transactions, was conducted with trust and honour, and did not require a legal document. The ‘Shaman’ shouts out a cry, so powerful, that it travels through a vast tract of land, which is then donated to the Community. This unique cry of the ‘Shaman’ is a powerful motif resonating throughout the film.

The descendants of the king become greedy and attempt to retrieve this donated land. The first attempt to retrieve the land jumps in timeline from 1847 to 1970. There are a series of unfortunate events in this conflict, between a promise made by a king, and the legal righteousness exercised by his heir. The King's heir is mysteriously killed and the Shaman who confronts this greedy heir, to prove the presence of God, in his pronouncements, turns into an avatar of the God Vishnu ('Varaha' avatar) resembling a pig. The conflict is resolved. The man disappears and the God is born.

The next jump in the timeline is to 1990, where most of movie's action takes place. The devious 'Dora' (Master) uses softer measures to ease out the land from the control of this Community. The denouement is when the 'Shaman' not just prophesises but acts on his word and the issue is resolved.

The Cinematic Elements

The film originally a 'Kannada' film, dubbed into 'Telugu', draws upon the regional sentiment of south Indian traditions. The racing of ploughing bullocks in a field, the authentic sets, the makeup, the void of technological advancements, the coherent and cohesive narrative and the representation of social strata are very well portrayed. There is a cultural common denominator in the five south Indian states and hence the film seamlessly migrates to reach out to Telugu audiences.

The actors are new but the context is extremely familiar. The fight of the Community dwellers with the establishment exposes the Marxist ideology. The conflict keeps escalating, as the new forest laws are being imposed in order to protect this natural resource. But the new laws tamper with the lifestyle of communities who were dependent on the forest. These two opposite warring sides finally come together to fight the common enemy, who was all this while was exploiting the discord for stealing the king's donated land from these hardworking people. The tenor of the fight takes on the archetypal fight between the 'Good' and the 'Evil'.

The belief of the Community on having the ability to connect to God is central to this narrative. The worship to this God in form of a pig brings into play the dynamic of treatment of flora and fauna alongside people referring to a sustainable form of life. In Indian religion, each God or Goddess has a favourite animal and a favourite flower. This inclusivity in worship has deeper commitment to this fine balance between man and nature.

The mother and son relationship, the love story of the protagonist Shiva and the forest officer are necessary to build the complexity of the central character. He belongs to a family of Shamans in that Community. He, as a child watches his father disappear during a performance. During the performance, one of the King's heirs confronts the performer and accuses him that the person performing 'Kollam'(the ritual), has more interest in the lands than the God. To disprove this accusation, Shiva's father submits himself to the God, turning into a Wild Boar. This episode can be understood as the divine intervention to establish the belief of God in the Community.

The young Shiva, watching his father disappear is traumatised by it. He keeps dreaming of his father attempting to communicate with him. He resists it as a Defense mechanism against the trauma. The visions are a representation of repressed emotions when he sleeps. He is constantly reminded to take up his role as a Shaman after his father's disappearance. The latent desires manifest themselves when Shiva becomes unconscious in a fight and the thorough understanding of his father's performance, embedded into his impressionable mind, finally finds expression.

The visuals are spectacular. The Mise en scene is effective and is filled with authentic and well researched detail and powerful performances. The viewer is glued with the spectacle on the scene. The soundtrack is mastered to rivet the audience to the action on the screen. When the Shaman cries out to bring his Community members attention, the audio is designed in such a way that you cannot forget it. Isn't it the whole purpose of a pronouncement by a Shaman, that we all have to listen carefully to the words of God spoken through her or him? This cry, from the film, stays with us, the audience for a life time.

The Evolving Role of Shaman

We encounter four different kinds of Shaman in *Kantara*. The 'First Shaman' is of the 1847 narrative. He is like everybody else, one among them. He is somebody with a deep insight, to the issues, that this exchange between the King and his own Community, would bring in the future. Somebody who has witnessed the exchange closely will be the one to narrate the story first. He designs a unique cry and prophesies that the whole of the land, which could hear his cry, should belong to them. To this, the King agrees, because for him, the peace of mind the Deity offered was worthier than the land. The first Shaman then is the one who records this event memorably for the posterity to remember and hold fast.

The 'Second Shaman' is from the 1970 narrative. More than a century has passed since the exchange between the King and the Community has taken place. The narrative has been perfected for the Shaman to chant. In a country with a ubiquitous presence of Oral Histories, we get a crash course on how narratives develop in oral traditions. A shrine is built, a series of events are designed around it, the event is accepted by the Community as important and they agree on a need to celebrate it every year at a particular time. The performer is from the same family, who listens to the narrative and narrative references from the father, internalising the event, helping the smooth transformation into the trance for the God to speak through the performer. The elaborate costume and make up that enhances the performance, also distances the audience giving the performer a sense of dignity to give the God's pronouncements. Shiva's father is the strongest Shaman, within the traditional context. He morphs into a Vishnu Avatar to consolidate the supremacy of God. His spirit is a constant reminder of the original event which has now become a legend. His strong ideals shape Shiva's consciousness. Shiva refuses to act on his instinct because of the trauma he suffers.

The 'Third Shaman' is the weakest Shaman. Guruva of 1990 narrative does not belong to the performer's family. He only steps in as a substitute. Though he is revered by the Community, he does not own the legend. He is seen as pliable by the 'Dora', the King's progeny, and he attempts to bribe him in returning the King's lands. On refusal Guruva is murdered. Guruva's death sets the stage for Shiva's return to the ritual of Kollam.

The 'Fourth Shaman' is Shiva, the protagonist. He is the initially reluctant Shaman. His life and his struggles is his Kollam, we as audience do not recognise it yet. Every ritual is inspired from life and nature. Whilst the previous Shamans have all being 'talk', Shiva is introduced as an athlete, man of only action. He acts first and thinks later. His mindless action leads to his collapse. He is revived by the thought. As he lays unconscious in the fight between the bad and the good, the father's spirit calls to him and he responds. The split between his personalities is resolved. The imbibed knowledge and the conviction of his father's legend come together and the Kollam (Performer's dance) that Shiva performs kills the enemy and restores order to his world. He becomes the embodiment of a ritual that has learnt to evolve with times. The wisdom is not just in the knowledge but in its application to resolve the challenges of its time.

Conclusion

Shaman ties the community together. S/he is somebody who offers solutions to the struggles of the community. S/he is the repository of the community's stories. The role is not limited to entertainment of performance, it has far greater implications. Shaman is also indigenous, a member of the community with no vested interest but the well being of his people. Rishab Shetty presents to us a solution to the modern day greed and commercialisation. The rooted wisdom of our indigenous communities needs to be revisited. Our perception of God has divorced the human element. As humans change and evolve, so should ritual and tradition. If it does not it becomes dehumanised and leads to the crumbling of our communities. Rituals have to evolve with people who perform them, and this is the finally essence the film conveys to us.

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Yeats' "The Indian upon God": A Posthuman Analysis

Preeti Priyadarshini

Abstract:

The paper focuses on exploring Yeats' poem "The Indian upon God" using the theme of posthumanism. The objective would be to make an analogy between humanism and posthumanism and concentrate upon the shifting of focus or decentering from the human to the other non- human entities and study through different perspectives other than the human. The persistent shifting of borders to include a greater number of beings in the network or web of existence is the key matter running throughout the paper. The ever plying transcendence towards the frontier or periphery and no concrete demarcation between the ontological boundaries is the aspect that we need to give light to and make our subject of study. How Yeats' pantheism does so even without making use of the very term posthumanism is to be looked upon with an amazing sense of wonder. What draws more attention is how schools of thought resemble highlighting a similitude and cutting borders.

Keywords: Human, Posthuman, Analogy, Shift, Deviant

The objective of this paper is to study "The Indian upon God" in the light of posthumanism, to show how modern writers like William Butler Yeats expanded the scope of the 'human' by including people and ideas that transcend the "human". I shall try to explore and show how Yeats portrays a 'posthuman' world. Most critical thinkers find the category of 'human' to be in a way outdated and limiting and insufficient to explain the world. They state that we are in a postmodern world where the 'posthuman' condition is the reality and the new principle.

It is pertinent to elucidate the distinction between humans and animals and the efforts to differentiate the two from each other. Since Medieval times, most organised endeavours or systematic attempts to define the human were chiefly devoted to distinguishing humans from all other worldly, mortal life. The prior apparent difficulty was one of vocabulary. No medieval term in French, English, or Latin conveyed precisely like the modern English or French words "animal". The medieval genre of the bestiary – natural histories frequently lavishly picturised, loaded with didactic commentary – invariably treated lions, dogs, wolves, eagles, sometimes stone; but they sometimes considered humans as well, understanding them to be, at least for the purpose of the genre, an animal like any other. In old French, "animality" is simply the set of faculties any given living thing possesses, while the closest etymological derivative of "animal", "almaille" or "aumaille" means only "livestock" or even just "horned livestock" rather than all nonhuman life. A 'Middle English' encyclopaedia explains that "all that combines flesh and the spirit of life," that is, the anima, "is called an animal, whether it is an airy beast like a bird, a watery beast like a fish, or those that go on the ground, like humans or wild and tame beasts". Another text speaks of humans and "other beasts".

For its part, ‘Medieval Latin’ literature tended to divide non-human fauna into either domesticated animals, or wild or dangerous animal. The term “animal” could include a number of possible groups. For example, the entry on “animal” in the Alan of Lille’s twelfth century dictionary of theological terms neatly assembles several quite distinct meanings as describing humans or any creature whatsoever having a soul capable of sensation (that is, non-vegetal living things); or only “brute” animals used in the Bible, as when Noah and his sons go into the ark with all animals, and surprisingly, only rational animals. In Psalms the category includes only humans since none but rational creatures could fulfil the tenets of the category.

According to Andy Miah, “Post humanism is the study of the collapse of ontological boundaries”. (Posthumanism: A Critical History) (15) What exactly do we mean by the term ‘Post-human’? Etymologically it would mean something that comes ‘after’ humans or can be expanded to an entity that represents things ‘beyond’ humans. The term ‘Human’ is a closed notion and does not reflect who we are anymore. We inhabit a postmodern world today. Human experience, understanding or interpretation is not enough. The world has moved beyond the indices of humans, to the realm of machines, robots, clones, etc. The population today is more inclusive with humans as well as “humans” with added appendage of certain sorts. The pre-existing and so-called notion of the idea of the ‘human’ is to be expanded and substituted with a more inclusive term. Yeats’ poem revolves on this very inclusivity by presenting beings other than the ‘human’ namely moorfowl, lotus, roebuck and peacock as occupants of various trophic level in a web of existence. The fact that is of utmost emphasis that needs to be highlighted here is that these beings are a part of a rather open and multi-directional web rather than a unidirectional flow in a chain. The term ‘Post-human’ has become a requisite to locate ourselves in this vast network called existence. Post-human is an umbrella term that is defined by multiple schools of thought in myriad ways. The essence of posthumanism lies in working towards reversing universalisation or rather against the amnesia of numerous entities in the vast network of existence. Here, in Yeats’ “The Indian upon God” each being visualises its creator as a glorious version of itself.

Humans and their humanity are historical and cultural constructs rather than transcendental concepts free from ideology and they therefore have to be placed within larger contexts like ecosystems, techniques or evolution. This approach only becomes posthumanist when the human is no longer seen as the sole hero of a history of emancipation, but as a (rather improbable but important) stage within the evolution of complex life forms. The second approach cares about the other inhuman, about the other inhabiting the human, which constitutes its singularity but also its indeterminacy. This could indeed be called a psychoanalysis of humanness, a kind of anamnesis aimed at working through the repressed which were lost on the way towards becoming human. Posthuman and posthumanist thus also means this: to acknowledge all these ghosts, all those human others that have been repressed during the process of humanisation: animals, gods, demons, monsters of all kinds. Thus comes into picture Yeats’ “The Indian upon God” which grounds itself on the concept of pantheism. This exhibits how the Indian perception of God incorporates the principle of posthumanism long before the term came into vogue.

> Posthumanism is neither a one-directional leap into the future, nor is it a one-directional unfolding of time from past to future (and thus a perpetuation of an evolutionary continuum that 'ends' in an ideal of human perfectibility) rather it is to move simultaneously forward and back, to the future and the past. (3)

In this way the human species has never/has always been 'posthuman'. Thus, post-humanism is not limited to a particular time frame as the meaning is usually attributed to on the basis of its etymology. Both humans and posthumans exist simultaneously if there is something that can be cited as the standard or normal human. If humanism and posthumanism are presented on a number line to specify the time period with the integer zero as the starting point of the representation of humanism then the integers or rather the decimals or irrational numbers both before and after zero even present post-humans. This is more vividly highlighted by the fact that the post-human figure in Yeats' "The Indian upon God" is necessary to establish the idea of the human. Humans and post-humans are not completely distinct beings. They are integral to the survival of each other. The moorfowl, lotus, roebuck and peacock are representations of the posthumanist thought and the Indian in the poem is a characteristic representation of the term 'human' and thus, the 'human' and the post-human exist simultaneously and that too without any hassles.

Posthumanism as a school of thought find the 'human' to be in a way outdated, limiting and insufficient to explain the world. They state that we are in a postmodern world where the 'posthuman' condition is the reality and the principle. According to Jeff Wallace, "I maintain that post humanism is a theoretical construct, a way of thinking the human, whose emergence in the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of 21st century does not disallow its application to the earlier periods."Yeats' poem "The Indian Upon God" is themed on the dramatisation of the Biblical concept that God made man in his own image "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created he him; male and female created he them" (King James' Version, Genesis 1:27). Mutants or deviants from these norms are studied in the realm of posthumanism. This is where Indian pantheism comes into play. As the moorfowl, lotus, roebuck and peacock are deviants from the standard image of the normal they can be considered to be posthuman. Any being that does not conform to the prescribed portrayal of humans is deemed as posthuman. If man correctly discerns that God created human beings in His image, then God, in fact, created everything else that exists in his image. If all things are reflections of one Creator, then each thing can rightly assert that it is made in the image of the Divine. It can be emphatically stated that had history been written down and propagated by some being other than the humans then humans would not be the hero in the discourse. The poet elaborates on how the same Creator who made us in His image has also created the moorfowl, lotus, roebuck and peacock. This idea carries within it the kernels of thoughts of posthumanism. Certainly, some beasts could be treated well: like the moderns, medieval people kept pets, favouring lapdogs and other small animals, like squirrels, dormice, or even the occasional badger. Elites admired and even mourned their horses, dogs, and hawks; the latter, for example, were sent to the shrines of saints to be healed, and those who mocked this saintly solicitude for mere beasts tended to find themselves blinded or paralysed. And being compared to a beast, even behaving like a beast, was not necessarily a moral or political catastrophe. Chivalric literature and heraldry frequently and favourably likened knights to lions, boars, bears, or eagles. The avidity of the hungry Charlemagne looks like nothing so much as the bestial appetites of the giants and monstrous boars of romance, or the barbaric carnivorousness of the Scots or Mongols. Thus, posthumanism inherently merits comparison between humans and animals.

It is worthwhile to underscore that the speaker in the poem always encounters one being at a time each at a little distance further from each other. This spatial and temporal separation is of utmost significance. It is extremely interesting to frame a speculative scenario of the encounter where the Indian, the moorfowl, the lotus, the roebuck and the peacock would be present together. Not only is the mode of communication or the language in which they interact with each other, that is if they communicate with each other at all, of tremendous curiosity but also the embodiment of the very Creator of all these beings now incorporated into one. It is the ultimate incarnation of the Supreme epitome of all these human and posthuman entities that draws our attention by being the hallmark. The paramount figure visualised would be an amalgamation of all the species confronted in the poem. The blend is a fascinating conceptualisation in the aftermath of its ideation. This resulting commingle is reminiscent of the ‘Spiritus Mundi’ in Yeats’ “The Second Coming”. It is engrossing to personify the coalescent image of the myriad beings in “The Indian upon God” having a merger of wings and petals and juxtapose the novel manifestation with the creature ‘slouching towards Bethlehem to be born’ apparently with the ‘shape of a lion and the head of a man’. The ‘Spiritus Mundi’ of the posthuman era is the quintessential archetype of the concocted being. The prominence here is not only on the manifestation of the evident Creator but also on the medium utilised for interaction that should have come into play but which is conveniently not brought into the fore. Therefore, it is in the realm of conjecture that it is left for us to surmise why there is no interaction between the different human and nonhuman or to be more precise posthuman entities. And had there been any transmission of knowledge at all what the channel could possibly have been. The sheer importance of the language, other than gestural or non-verbal conveying, brings us to the sphere of post-colonialism or at least rings a bell in its wake. “The Indian upon God” opens the debate for a posthuman scope drawing a parallel with post-colonialism.

Yeats’ peacock, however, verges on being boastful with its portrayal asserting that the “monstrous peacock” or the more glorious version of himself, also made grass and worms. The speaker darts to a little extent and the peacock is audible "*Who made the grass and made the worms and made my feathers gay/He is a monstrous peacock and He waveth all the night/His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots of light*" The peacock implies that his Creator has made these other creatures or worms for the sake of the peacock. Here the selfish trait of humans can be brought into the picture, symbolising not a great difference or variation between posthuman and human mentality. And the peacock also likens his beautiful tail and feathers to stars hanging in the skies. This attribute is also not very discrete from humans. Both the human and the posthuman exhibit the indistinguishable tendency to occupy the foremost position and make everything subservient to them. An analogy between pantheism and a certain strand of posthumanism comes into play through Yeats’ poem. Pantheism implies a lack of separation between people, things, and God, but rather sees everything as being interconnected. Here, comes into play Critical Posthumanism. Posthuman critical theory proposes to resist any foregone conclusion about the transition the "human" and "humanity" is going through and to focus instead on the ongoing processes of transformation or interconnectedness. The moorfowl, lotus, roebuck and peacock are all a part of this very interconnection that imbibes posthumanism.

Even though a clear linguistic division was absent humans were a uniquely special form of life. When Marx says that "man can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like," there would be no disagreement with him. His "anything else you like" sounds like nothing so much as a slight adaptation of Saint Augustine of Hippo's assertion that humans surpass "brute beasts" by "his reason or mind or intelligence, or whatever we wish to call it". For the strain of medieval thought that Marx inherited and, it might be said, automatically repeated, humans alone among mortal creation had reason, language, free choice, an immortal soul, the capacity to laugh, the upright posture that was itself the physical manifestation of their unique capacity to analyse things "as such" and so on. Here, the Indian in the poem is an archetypal representation of the 'human' figure that possesses and exhibits thoughts and agency. The contradiction of the other creatures' Creators juxtaposed with the human Creator is a matter of prominence. The degree of variation is always perpetuated with the 'human' manifestation as the touchstone. The poem begins with 'I' with whom the poet identifies himself. Every other fauna in the poem is contradicted by this 'I' and can be technically categorised into the nomenclature of the animal, beast or brute. The latent comparison comes to the fore and the civility in the 'human' and the savagery of the animal is highlighted.

A few examples will suffice to give a sense of what will likely strike moderns or supposed postmoderns as all too familiar. Here, again standing for Christian doctrine as a whole, Augustine affirmed that "the human mind when judging visible things, can recognise that it itself is better than all visible things." Here, representing secular thought, the thirteenth-century political theorist Marsilius of Padua affirms, without any reference to ethology, that "man alone among the animals is said to have ownership or control of his acts," that is, we alone have free will. From these jealously guarded possessions followed a set of rights and obligations: chiefly the right to be treated as an object of direct care (while, as in Kant, nonhuman animals could only be indirect objects of care) and the concomitant right not to be treated as merely a thing.

Within this reasoning, humans could demonstrate their rational particularity more directly, not only through displays of rational behaviour – writing poetry, building churches, generating philosophy, and the like – but rather by dominating animals, for, according to this reasoning, no rational creature would allow itself to be so debased. The Abbot Ratramnus of Corbie's ninth century "Letter on the Cynocephali" finally determines that these dog-headed monsters are human and therefore deserve a missionary outreach, not on the basis of their political organisation, nor from their use of clothing, itself evidence of their shame or modesty but rather because they domesticate other animals: no animals but humans, reasons Ratramnus, keep livestock. The category of human has always endangered certain humans. Posthumanism does not follow humanism but rather it is inherent in its own claim. As soon as the Indian in the poem claims that he is made in the image of the Divine there is a window for questioning the authenticity of this assertion. The other creatures can correctly discern that each is made in the image of the Divine.

All statements about the posthuman taken together (understood as the inhuman, nonhuman, all-too-human, etc.), even including the ones that negate its existence, constitute posthumanist discourse. The texts are linked with each other and share at least one goal and one effect, namely that they presuppose a discursive object called the ‘posthuman’. Even a statement like: ‘any talk about posthumanity is nonsense’, within the context of the discourse, paradoxically, contributes to the legitimisation of its object, ‘posthumanity’. Through its discursive creation the object eventually reaches a certain ‘reality’. One could thus argue that discourses are inherently teleological – which means that, ultimately, any subject that is part of the human species somehow might be affected by this posthuman object. Even ‘subjects’ who are or would not be members of the human species contribute to this process as soon as they become participants of the discussion and thus to the legitimisation of the discourse which in turn, invents them as subjects by ‘positioning’ or ‘addressing’ them. Even ignorance can be a discursive positioning. Discourse ‘contains’ its own subjects because it offers prefabricated positions from which the discursive object can be ‘observed’ and statements can be uttered about it. The positions can be rejected, contested, negotiated or accepted but only after they have been inhabited or taken up even if playfully. Louis Althusser famously called this process ‘interpellation’’: posthumanism and the posthuman (which in this case play the Althusserian role of ideology) interpellate me as ‘human’ but in the form of a question, namely: Do you really know what it means to be human? Posthumanist discourse thus creates, on the one hand, subject positions ‘within’ humanism even while questioning its traditional values, on the other hand, it also creates (hypothetical and , increasingly, factual) ‘posthumanist’ or ‘posthuman’ subject positions from which subjects may articulate their newly found posthuman(ist) knowledge. Posthuman has come to represent or has become synonymous with Freud’s ‘uncanny’ or Bhabha’s ‘unheimlich/unhomely’. (1,6) Giorgo Agamben’s ‘Homosacer’ also reflects a similar concept where its elimination is not liable for retribution legally. This draws a parallel with slaves (not so human) owned by ‘humans’ could be done away with without inviting any accountability. There is a clear comparison between animals and certain ‘types’ of humans.

Deleuze and Guattari only merit one brief mention in the main body of N. Katherine Hayles’ classic text ‘How We Became Posthuman’. (13) Nonetheless the reference is a useful point for us to start thinking about the links between Deleuze and Guattari and posthumanist thought and how posthumanist thought is in tandem with Yeats’ poem. Hayles enumerates various discourses that have sought to subvert what she terms the ‘liberal humanist subject’ – or the belief that the human stands free from, and in many respects against nature, and that the human is unique and distinct from the rest of life on earth because the human has a brain separate from the body, a brain endowed with consciousness, with consciousness itself being the phenomenon that allows the human to become a ‘subject’ in the first place. Feminist theorists have challenged the ‘liberal humanist subject’ for being shorthand for the ‘white European male’, while postcolonial theorists have challenged its universalist claims along similar lines, especially for being European. Postmodern theorists, meanwhile, of whom Deleuze and Guattari are, for Hayles, exemplary, ‘have linked it [the liberal humanist subject] with capitalism, arguing for the liberatory potential of a dispersed subjectivity distributed among diverse desiring machines they call "body without organs".

The 'body without organs' is a concept that recurs consistently in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. (10) Broadly speaking, the body without organs needs to explicated. What Deleuze and Guattari mean by this is that the body without organs has no fixed location in space and/or time (it is 'immanent' or in Hayles' term 'dispersed'); furthermore the body without organs exists as a state of potential, in that being everywhere and everywhen ('immanent'), means that it is not concrete and fixed, but in a state of possibly being/becoming; and finally, being in a state of potential, the body without organs is thus permanently becoming, in that this potential is consistently realised as we lead our lives – we consistently become fixed in a specific time and place – rendered as a subject with a specific identity. Deleuze and Guattari play with the Enlightenment 'I', throw its basis for producing truth, facts, knowledge, into doubt, pluralise it, and multiply it. They do so, they state, 'not to reach the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says 'I'. The 'I' they posit is imminent to the social field, world and nature. This 'I' is, an intensity, an affective meld, a convergence of forces, always unstable, mobile, emerging, becoming. There is no cogito to centre and stabilise this I as it gets plugged into temporary assemblages, themselves composed through heterogeneity and multiplicity. This 'I' does not reproduce itself by constituting binaries, divisions, hierarchies or any distinctions that separate out human/other. This 'I' is, instead, detachable, reversible, open and connectable. It makes maps not tracings of the terrain; that is, it does not seek to copy and reproduce what is already there but works via creative 'experimentation in contact with the real'. The knowledge this 'I' produces does not require succour from a system of logical, objective rationalism with its linear and root-based presumptions that the 'right' research methodology and methods will disclose the 'truth' of the subject under inquiry. Instead, it unpicks the Enlightenment package of teleology, progress and development, operating instead with an idea of knowledge as a machinic network for knowing, replacing aborescent, lineage- and root-based images of thought with rhizomic modes of knowing characterised by non-linearity, multiplicity, connectivity, dimensions (rather than a pivot), flatness (rather than depth) and ruptures which may (or may not) tie unforeseen things together so that they work. The rhizome as a-centred image of thought shifts the focus from knowledge 'about', procedures for producing knowledge, and concerns about what knowing 'is', to questions about what knowledge does, how it works, and how its effect may generate more (not less) of life. Yeats' poem displays a related model of a rhizome where equivalent validity is provided to all creatures' thoughts of their Divine builder. There is no hierarchy with the moorfowl, the lotus, the roebuck and the peacock all perceiving their own producer in their mind's eye in their very own configuration. Thus, the aborescent notion is done away with as is unlikely prevalent in the "Great Chain of Being".

When Deleuze and Guattari proclaim that 'the self and non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever and that we make no distinction between man and nature', they are suggesting that the body without organs is a 'true' version of ourselves, whereby we do not exist as subjects (with jobs/functions/identities – in short as machines), but instead that subjectivity/identity is, as Hayles says, dispersed. It is a condition of potential, one that is open for/to all manner of possible becomings.

Deleuze and Guattari's appeal to, and influence on posthumanist thought, then, is as follows: posthumanism stands in contrast to humanism in arguing that humans are not the epicentre of existence, in suggesting that there is indeed no distinction between man and nature, and in positing that humans do not exist as individuals isolated from the world, but are in fact part of the world (the self and the non-self no longer have any easy distinction). Yeats' "The Indian upon God" portrays how humans have in part come to realise simultaneously their diminished centrality in and their entangled nature with the universe. Posthumanism here signals not so much the end of humanity, then, but an evolution in how humanity understands its 'embodied' place within the universe. The poem suggests that we do not exist in isolation from the world – but that the self extends into the world as the world extends into the self.

Rosi Braidotti reconciles posthumanist thought with Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of becoming animal and her own concept of becoming earth in order to elaborate the way in which 'as embodied and embedded entities, we are all part of nature, even though academic philosophy continues to claim transcendental grounds for human consciousness' (i.e. humans 'transcend', or are apart from nature/the world in general). (7) With a turn that distinctly fits into the 'ecological' thinking of the early 21st century, Braidotti suggests that in the 'anthropocene', the age in which the humans are the biggest influential factor in shaping the planet, it is urgent that humans come to realise their enworlded, rather than separate nature. Pantheism subsumes this interconnectivity. This philosophy is amply made use of by Yeats in his poem.

N. Katherine Hayles states that "What we make and what (we think) we are co-evolve." The speaker in the poem parallels the Eastern spiritual tradition of pantheism to dramatise the full truth of that venerable concept presented in Genesis: humankind is created in the image of God. The speaker finds himself by "the water's edge below the humid trees." He meditatively muses that his "spirit rocked in the evening light." He spies some birds pacing about and begins to consider how the moorfowl would elucidate his existence if he could do so in words. The moorfowl conceptualises its Creator as a refined incarnation of itself. As per the moorfowl's idea its Creator possesses a "bill" and a "wing" and the rains drop from His wings, while the moonbeams shoot from His eye. The speaker then strides a little further to overhear a lotus "talk". The lotus also happens to be holding forth a more or less similar view of its creator in whose image it has been cast. The lotus too portrays his Creator as an embellished incarnation of itself. Its creator "hangeth on a stalk", just as it does, and He also causes the rain to fall. But unlike the moorfowl's concept that the rain drips from the Supreme Moorfowl's wings, the lotus' Creator lets the rain "slide" between His petals.

The speaker continues his gait further and sees a roebuck, which "raised his eyes/ Brimful of starlight." The speaker hears the roebuck illustrate his maker: "He is a gentle roebuck; for how else, I pray, could He? Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like me?" The roebuck infers that his Creator has to be like himself in order to have been able to fashion his unique features of melancholy, gentleness and softness.

Anything that "posts" the human is raising the stakes much higher than the postmodern, but even something as drastic as the posthuman (the "figure") and posthumanism (the "discourse") is subject to the temporal logic of the "post", maybe even more so. It is in this sense that posthumanism or the posthuman cannot just be understood as the follow-on, the suppression or the "outcome" of the postmodern and postmodernism. Instead they should be seen as co-implicated and entangled in their respective critiques of humanism. One simply cannot post one postism with another one – one just accumulates ghosts and increases the haunting. All figures repressed till now are brought into limelight moving the glare away from the centre. Yeats in his poem "The Indian upon God" does so exactly by moving from the central heroic figure of the humans to the posthuman border. This shift to a more inclusive frontier forms the base for studying Yeats' poem in the realm of posthumanism. Thus, decentering or moving from the centre to the periphery or the margins and fringes is the key to posthumanism.

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Irony in the "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid

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Abstract

This paper makes an attempt to understand deep written feelings of Jamaica Kincaid and her use of irony in her short story named 'girl' which was published in issue of The New Yorker 1978. Kincaid introduced two characters in this short story. A mother appears to be pouring a list of instructions on her almost silent daughter. She also made a clear distinction between gender roles and makes soft discrimination under a tag called 'Perfect Woman '. Kincaid urges the reader to go beyond what was actually written and understand the dark truth what she wanted the reader to be aware of.

Keywords: Irony, Girl, Gender Roles, Soft Discrimination

Introduction

Jamaica Kincaid was born on 25th May 1949 as Elaine Potter Richardson. She has remained one of the Caribbean's most influential voices. She was born on Antigua Island to her mother Annie Richardson. While her father Roderick Potter has abandoned the family, her mother married David Drew not too long after Kincaid's birth. By 1973, she had changed her name to Jamaica Kincaid to write anonymously and reflect her Caribbean heritage. The first piece of literature Kincaid published was 'Girl'.

'Girl' is a short story and poem that follows conventional rules, but reads like prose. It is one of the short stories from the volume of Kincaid called *At the bottom of the River*. It appeared in the June 26 1978 issue of The New Yorker. This short story is ironic in nature. It is clear that Kincaid wants the reader to find out the hidden intention in her short story. First reading of it astonishes the reader and the reader is curious to know the actual purpose of Jamaica Kincaid writing the long flow of text separated by semicolons. One guesses, may be the purpose of Kincaid using this style is to overwhelm the reader in the same way the girl in this story gets overwhelmed by all the instructions given by her mother. Critical analysis of this short story makes it clear that the mother is mocking the society by giving a long list of unrealistic instructions to which girls are expected to be bound without questioning.

Irony

Figurative language is one of the major features of literature. Often, figurative language is used to demonstrate a contrast between the true meaning and what is said, such as a Hyperbole, Metaphor, Irony, Personification, and Simile. The purpose of irony in literature is mostly to teach moral lessons to the readers since it lets the readers see "a disparity between what the characters think is possible, should happen, and actually occurs" (Thompson, 2014).

Di Yanni (2002, p. 93) also notes that the contrast may exist between the meaning and the words of “what is said and what happens”.

The two main types of irony are verbal irony and situational irony (Reyes, Rosso, & Buscaldi, 2012). As stated by Colston & Gibbs (2007, cited in Reyes, Rosso, & Buscaldi, 2012), verbal irony occurs when a speaker uses words that contradict what he or she actually says. A person may express the contrast in reality by saying "What an easy paper" when it's actually tough, as s/he couldn’t attempt any question. The situational irony is a contrast between the purpose and result of a particular action, or a contradiction between what one expects and what actually happens. This paper discusses the irony used by Jamaica Kincaid in her first collection of short stories, *At the bottom of the River*, and the reasons for her choice.

Analysis

> Wash your white clothes on Monday and put them on the stone heap; wash the colour clothes on Tuesday and put them on the clothesline to dry

The narrative begins with the mother instructing her daughter about washing different clothes on different days, with this; Kincaid sets the tone of the story by establishing the fact that how few instructions being given to the girls are completely of no meaning but yet to be followed. This particular instruction of washing specific clothes on specific days has nothing to do with Jamaican culture or tradition. This would be an age-old practice of the character called mother, and she wants her daughter to follow the same. In this verse, we can see that the instructions are not literal. However, the mother resonates with society in the sense that restrictions for girls are sometimes illogical but should be followed. For instance, in South India, a girl standing still on the threshold is considered a bad omen for the house. Therefore, girls are not permitted to stand still on the threshold. The societal norms relating to women are similarly mocked by the mother's instructions throughout the narrative.

> Don’t walk bareheaded in the hot sun

Understanding the author's background and the setting of the narrative in Jamaica is crucial in analyzing these lines. In an interview with Tenement Talks, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said, "Hair is not just a hair for women." Hair's length, color, and texture have intricate relationships with professionalism, femininity, and beauty. In her novel *Americanah,* Adichie illustrates the harsh realities of straightening the naturally curly hair of Jamaican women. Adichie depicts the difficulties Jamaican women face due to their densely curled hair through a fictional character called Ifemelu. With this reference it is obvious that the mother does not want her daughter to walk bareheaded in the sun because the sun makes hair curlier. Considering that hair is used to judge character as well as sexual appeal in women, the mother orders her daughter not to go out bareheaded.

> This is how to hem a dress when you see the hem coming down and so you to prevent yourself from looking like the slut.

The verses are not literal instructions for hemming but rather show the significance of clothes in determining a woman's character by society. The mother uses ironic instructions to demonstrate how a loosened hem can make a girl responsible for someone calling her a slut. For instance, there is a common misconception that sexual violence victims are responsible for their own assaults. In 2011, police officer Michael Sanguinetti advised a group of college women not to dress like sluts to avoid being victimized. A response to this statement led to the first ever "slutwalk" in protest against victim blaming and slut shaming. Sexual violence crimes are not reported as a result of the dialogue that questions a woman's role in her own assault. According to psychotherapist Beverly Engel, we tend to blame victims in general in our culture. An individual may decide not to sleep with a man after going home with him. Women who wear miniskirts on dates don't have to go home with their dates if they don't want to. In a bus, a woman wearing a flirty t-shirt who does not wish to be touched is permitted. Except for affirmative, continued, willing consent, there are no circumstances that imply consent. Even today, when only a handful agree with this, hemlines still have an important role to play in women's respect and security.

> This is how you smile to someone you don't like at all

What makes someone smile at a stranger? There are no literal meanings in these lines, but they are ironic in nature. According to Mary Wollstonecraft's essay, "Vindication of the Rights of Women," girls' traumatic experiences are because they are always caught up between two different extremes of opinions. Women are called flowers, as they are considered to be attractive and gentle, not aggressive, or rude, besides this not talking to strangers is part of women's security manual, then how to deal with a stranger when the natural instinct of ignoring them is not the case, if she talks more she herself is responsible for being victimized if she completely ignores she might be referred to as rude or aggressive in this tone of helplessness, between these two extremes mother ironically tells her daughter to softly avoid stranger.

> This is how to make a good medicine to throw away a child before it even becomes a child

In a couple, each spouse is equally responsible for the pregnancy. Nevertheless, women usually bear the entire responsibility of giving birth to and caring for their children. When adolescent females adhere to traditional feminist ideologies in maintaining sexual abstinence, they may be encouraged to be passive in their sexual knowledge. It is more likely that adolescent males will indicate birth control is the responsibility of women, particularly if they hold traditional masculine attitudes. Kincaid provides a strange topic of discussion between a mother and her daughter; in its literal sense, the instruction seems to ask her daughter to kill a baby. In several secondary materials about "girl", we learn that her mother expects her to grow up as a woman and not approximate the slut image. She, therefore, did everything she could to protect her daughter from that image, but if we use irony to figure it out, it is ironic humor at keeping girls solely responsible for conception and miscarriage. In light of gender roles, a mother feels cooking and taking care of the family is an everyday occurrence; at the same time, it is also normal for a girl to be aware that girls are being blamed for being pregnant but not boys for causing it. Among American Indian youth, a study on Understanding Gender Roles in Teen Pregnancy Prevention found that girls feel like victims when they become pregnant away from wedlock, but responsible boys do not feel that way.

> Always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; But what if the baker won't let me feel the bread? You mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of women who the baker won't let near the bread?

In this final line of the story, the mother interprets the baker's potential refusal to allow the daughter to touch the bread as a sign that the daughter has become a social outcast, undoubtedly a slut. Kincaid uses the words 'feel' and 'squeeze' to turn the act of buying bread into a metaphor for sexuality and the bakers refusal is therefore a sexual rebuke.

Conclusion

The narrative "Girl" holds a unique position in feminist writings. With a flow of instructions from a disappointed mother to her daughter, Kincaid presents the narrative in a literal manner. Although the instructions seem hard and unrealistic at first, rereading these lines with figurative language makes it clear that the fictional character's "mother" symbolizes patriarchal society in its entirety. With her ironic lines, Kincaid gave dual meaning to each line of narrative. On the surface, the instructions echo society, but on a deeper level, by giving voice to this age-old soft discrimination against women, she shows how these expected behaviors are bizarre and unnatural, and although current rhetoric portrays "mother" as cruel, irony allows us to view this fictional character as the ideal parent with gender-sensitivity.

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The Nano-Myth: Magic in Classical Literature Explained by Science and Nanotechnology

Sanjukta Chakraborty & Dhritiman Chakraborty

Abstract

In classical literature and epic magic, sorcery and witchcraft was often used to describe characters and situations otherwise inexplicable to a rational person. Ancient myths and bygone legends rose from factors and events that could not be classified into definitive categories of existing contemporary knowledge. As scientific temperaments emerged and rational thinking percolated into contemporary literature, "magic" was used as an overall term to describe "undiscovered science." Now, with the further development of science and technology we witness an intriguing and widespread phenomenon, where magic in ancient literature is being explained by writers using examples from scientific discoveries – particularly in the field of nanotechnology.

This work examines this increasingly popular phenomenon, where more and more writers explain attributes associated with mythical weapons, objects and creatures with the help of modern nanoscale engineering and technology. Trans-humanism and supra-human capabilities are also "explained by understanding" of advances in medicine and nanotechnology. We examine recent literary examples to explore how science in general, and nanotechnology in particular, is used to bridge the dichotomy of the "mythical" versus the "scientific", and foray further onto "super-human transcendence" in contemporary fiction.

Keywords: Classical Literature, Epics, Magic, Science, Nanotechnology

Introduction

Classical literature and epics are rife with examples of events and characters which were inexplicable to the reader of the contemporary period. These powers and occurrences were instead left, presumed to be magic, witchcraft or arcane powers beyond the scope or understanding of the author or that of the reader. There is a myriad of these examples in the works of Homer or Sophocles – be it through the Gods in *Iliad*, Destiny in *Odyssey* or Prophecy in *Oedipus Rex*. As times changed and rationality, tempered with scientific thinking, gained a greater foothold in the public consciousness, tales of magic gained the ignominy of witchcraft.

The end of 19th century, however, saw magic and science slowly intermingle to create fantastical worlds which might be *reached* by science. The works of Jonathan Swift, Jules Verne, Lewis Carroll and CS Lewis brought new light to the concept of the supernatural or the 'otherworldly'. However, mentions of magic and sorcery remained more implied that explicit. As the new millennium drew closer, public acceptance once again saw the rise of stories with magic and witchcraft. Books grew into series with works of JRR Tolkien, JK

Rowling and Robert Jordan, to name a few, establishing themselves as classics of an evolving genre. The newfound acceptance, appeal and even adulation of these stories by the public at large allowed many works to catapult onto the silver-screen, first as one-off movies, then series, as seen with written works earlier. However, even at this stage with superhuman powers and characters being sensationalized across writing and television the mechanics of these miracles and the magic employed therein were kept estranged from attempts at rational explanation.

Recently this trend has changed. One of the better, if not earliest, examples of this comes from authors like Brandon Sanderson. There were inherent rules to the fantastical worlds they built, which had to be self-consistent, if not fully explicable, as perhaps best explained by Sanderson. Rather than starting stories in *medias res* without much explanation as to the background, there was an attempt at explanations of “how” and “why” of situations. This consciously constructed a framework and slowly deepening the mechanics behind the magic, as explained by authors in this new millennium. Audience’s curiosity and drive to delve deeper into the supernatural further led to the modern-day phenomenon of trying to explain the old myth or magic by the use of novel and rational science. Many examples can be seen, such as the literary works of Rick Riordan, Neil Gaiman and Eoin Colfer and in the televised works such as *Now You See Me*, *Practical Magic*, *The Prestige* and *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*. This intriguing new direction in modern fiction and literature has also developed into a field of active research (Devaki et al., 2022; Henry, 2020; Chandra et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2016; Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidouet al., 2001; Tambiah et al., 1990).

Yet, when modern-day and established scientific practices prove unequal to the task of explaining the fantastical elements of some of these stories more and more writers have now begun to turn to the ever-evolving and advanced field of nanotechnology.

Nanotechnology is an advanced and diverse field of science that is at the cutting edge of modern technological horizons. Every day we find more examples of the use of nanomaterials to deal with problems and challenges of today and the days to come. This can be in the field of energy, water, medicine, forensics, sustainable development, Artificial intelligence and much more (Chakraborty *et al*. 2015, Chakraborty *et al*., 2020). With such diverse applications and limitless potential development, nanotechnology has often become the ‘go-to’ explanation of the mechanics of magic hitherto unexplored. In this work we examine how magic is now explained in literature as just ‘advanced science’, particularly nanotechnology. We also look at previous examples of research into this area with the works of (Devaki et al., 2022; Henry, 2020; Chandra et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2016; Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidouet al., 2001; Tambiah et al., 1990). Finally, we also explore how these trends translate onto contemporary television before concluding.

Magic and Science in Literature

There has always been a fascination toward the occult and supernatural. The human species as a whole continually strives to find explanations to what cannot be explained, to discover reason within the unreasonable. As mentioned before, the works of Homer and Sophocles stretched the common man’s imagination to new heights. With allusions to grandeur and sophistication entwined with the magical, there was a proliferation of literature entailing sorcery and divinity. However, the magic and enchantment of the classics were replaced by rationality and cold, hard logic. There was a search for the meaning behind the toil and the reason of existence itself. Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* are some examples of the answer to the search. Nevertheless, these works also contained in them some element of the magical and supra-human. Even the 'Stream of Consciousness', a style of narration in literature mostly considered to be scientific in nature, has elements of the magical or can be deemed as possessing a supernatural tone of narration.

However, the Renaissance brought with it a mixture of magic as explained through the era-specific lens of science, which were extensively explored in the literature of the time. Ben Jonson in his *The Alchemist* portrays a character who is constantly trying to create the Philosopher's Stone through alchemy. Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is similarly a man of science who sells his soul to the Devil, creating a beautiful mixture of fact and fiction throughout the play. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* also shows Prospero using his sorcery to create a storm which both he and his daughter call "art" (Shakespeare, 1611: 1.2.31), having no other specific term for it. The Witches in *Macbeth* describe Malcom's parentage as "[not] of woman born" (Shakespeare, 1606: 4.1.78), which modern medicine describes as a Caesarean delivery (Companion, 2017).

In more contemporary literature the explanation of magic and myths as advanced science is often seen. The *Kingkiller Chronicles* by Patrick Rothfuss comes close to the scientific explanation of magic when it embraces the laws of thermodynamics in its writings. The works of Brandon Sanderson often describe a "source" of creating magic, which can be akin to an energy source like batteries. Indeed, Arthur C. Clarke wrote in his *Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible* that "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" (Clarke, 2013).

Riordan, in his *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, uses a large myriad of weapons and tools, most of which are described as magical. Most notably is a retractable sword called 'Riptide' which changes shape and becomes as small as a pen. Subsequently, Riordan, in his novels, rightly raises the question of science in relation to the spectrum of the creation of the world in the lines when the protagonist says,

> 'But they're stories,' I said. 'They're – myths, to explain lightning and the seasons and stuff.'
> 'They're what people believed before there was science.' (Riordan, 2005).

According to Riordan, however, until a few decades ago, whatever could not be explained by science was said to be "magic" (Kieckhefer, 2021; Henry, 2020; Tambiah et al., 1990; Riggs et al., 2005). Whatever could not be explained by magic was classified as "fantasy" and before that "myths" and "legends". In other words, just because there is a limited number of things in life which can be explained by "science" today, it does not mean that there is a limit to the things that actually exist (Kieckhefer, 2021; Henry, 2020.). If the concept of "science" did not exist before a particular time, there is no way to prove or disprove the existence of

Gods or Ethereal Beings as they were there during the very conception of the Earth and, by relation, time itself.

More modern literature also focuses on various facets of technology, particularly nanotechnology to explain ancient myths and give new possibilities in science fiction. In his novel *Nano*, Cook examines the possible role of nanotechnology and nanomedicine in human physiology and sports enabling supra human capacities. Hopkinson's novel *Midnight Robber* uses nanotechnology as a basis to examine the "historical triangulation of slave, machine and labor" in Afro-Caribbean characters (Leong, 2022). Thus literature, both ancient and modern use advanced science as a prop or a mechanism to explain the unexplainable and define the unfathomable.

Magic and Science in Research

This intermingling of magic and advanced science has seen some interesting research developments. Some research argues that evolution of science is at times guided by myths and legends (Bazopoulou-Kyrkanidou et al., 2001; Chandra et al., 2018). Others like Cambel and Saniotis suggest that "science is entering the role of myth in breaking new grounds into understanding the mysteries of the universe." (Saniotis et al., 2008)

Nanotechnology in particular has been extensively appropriated to explain myths and literature regarding ancient myths and legends especially in alchemy and medicine (Devaki et al., 2022; Chandra et al., 2018; Sharma et al., 2016). Others attribute scientific dimensions to characters, techniques or devices in antiquity, be it the use of nanotech in Lycugurus Cup of ancient Rome (Freestone et al., 2007), in the steel of ancient Damascus (The Guardian, 2012), applications of organometallic ethno-nanomedicine in Indian Ayurvedic Bhasma (Sharma et al., 2016) and medicine in ancient Greece (Chandra et al., 2018). Nanotech today is used to explain myths and legends from, as some authors put it, pre-historic to modern times (Sharon, 2019).

Magic and Science in Television

The power to heal through potions, impenetrable armour, and unparalleled strength are all elements portrayed on the silver screen. Characters are seen to possess these devices and abilities in many films and shows over the years. The eponymous character Merlin, in the popular British series, makes use of a number of "magical" potions which are seen to heal other characters, sometimes even creating lost limbs for them. These potions and appendages are now being examined through the lens of modern medicine and nanobiotechnology.

When Isaac Asimov envisioned missions to the moon or when Jules Verne hypothesised travelling around the world in a mere 80 days, these were treated as fantastical approaches for their contemporaries. These were called science fiction rather than exact science. As technology and engineering evolved, rockets and airplanes became a common phenomenon, thereby giving weightage and scientific backing to the "fictional" and sometimes "magical" ideas of Verne and Asimov.

A vast majority of the most popular films today – namely the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) and the Detective Comics Extended Universe (DCEU) – rely heavily upon this principle of explaining myths, miracles and magic as “advanced science.”For instance, previous iteration of the character Spider-Man in the MCU is seen to have nearly unbeatable strength and impenetrable skin through means unknown. The more modern rendition of this character sees him don a “nano-suit” which thereby gives the character the same strength and protection. Similar is the newer adaptation of DCEU character Batman, which shows him wearing a suit made of ‘nano-carbon’ that protects the character from most of the damage dealt to him.The MCU movie Thor makes the point more poignantly, when the movie’s lead and a primary character, who is also a scientist, discuss the similarities of magic and science and how both could lead to superhuman powers and space travel. The movie *Transcendence* examines the possibility of eternal life using nanoscience as its basis.

Thus, in television too we see the use of advanced science to examine fantastical possibilities guided by myths. The technological and engineering marvels shown in movies like *Ex Machina, Minority Report, The Paycheck, Source Code* all showcase advancement in science and nanotechnology that would once have been called complete magic.In other words, what was magical in the years bygone is now oftenexplained by writers through very advanced science.

Conclusion

In this work we have examined the increasingly popular trend in contemporary literature where authors explain attributes associated with mythical objects, subjects and characters with the help of modern technology particularly nanotechnology. We have shown in this work that in modern fiction, magic is explained in as “very advanced science” and alchemy as “ancient nanotechnology.” Transhumanism, medical advances and suprahuman capabilities are also “explained by understanding” of advances in medicine and nanotechnology. We examined recent literary examples to explore how nanotechnology is increasingly used to bridge the dichotomy of the “mythical” versus the “scientific”, and foray further onto “super-human transcendence.” Complementary research also claims that advances in science itself may be guided by literature – stories and myths of ancient remedies and devices that refuse to extinguish with the passage of eon. This phenomenon also bears research, perhaps in a future work.

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From Colonial Realities to Postcolonial Experiences in the Indian English Novels – An Overview

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Abstract

At the turn of the 20th century, the British Empire covered a vast area of the earth that included parts of Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean and Ireland. At the turn of the 21st century, there remain a small number of British colonies. The phase "The British Empire" is most commonly used these days in the past tense, signifying a historical period and set of relationships, which are no longer current. In short, the 20th century has been the century of colonial demise, and of decolonisation for millions of people who were once subject to the authority of the British crown.

Yet, at the start of the 21st century, British remains a colonial power, with several possessions in (for example) the Caribbean and the South Atlantic. In addition, the material and imaginative legacies of both colonialism and decolonisation remain fundamentally important constitutive elements in a variety of contemporary domains, such as anthropology, economics, art, global Politics, international Capitalism, the mass-media and as we shall be exploring in literature.

Keywords: Imperialism**,** Colonial Realities, Postcolonial Experiences, Indian English Novels

Imperialism, Colonial and Post colonialism in Indian Novels

Colonialism has taken many different forms and has engendered diverse effects around the world, but we must be as precise as we can when defining its meaning. This can be gauged by thinking first about its relationship with two other terms: ‘Capitalism’ and ‘Imperialism’. Colonialism was a lucrative commercial operation, bringing wealth and riches to western nations through the economic exploitation of others. It was pursued for economic profit, reward and riches. Hence, colonialism and capitalism share a mutually supportive relationship with each other.

‘Colonialism’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘Imperialism’, but in truth the terms mean different things. As Peter Childs and Patrick Williams, (An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997) argue, imperialism is an ideological concept which upholds the legitimacy of the economic and military control of one nation by another. Colonialism, however, is only one form of practice which results from the ideology of imperialism, and specifically concerns the settlement of one group of people in a new location. Imperialism is not strictly concerned with the issue of settlement it does not demand the settlement of different places in order to work. Childs and Williams define imperialism as “the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal, and military controls”. Note how imperialism does not require the settling of communities from the imperial nation in another location. In these terms, colonialism is one specific experience of how imperialism can work through the act of settlement, but it is not the only way of pursuing imperialist ideals.

Thus, as Benita Parry (Problems in current theories of colonial Discourse, oxford literary review, 9(1-2), 1987, P.34) puts it, colonialism is "a specific; and the most spectacular, mode of imperialisms' many and mutable states, one which preceded the rule of international finance capitalism and whose formal ending imperialism has survived."

Colonialism is a particular historical manifestation of imperialism, specific to certain places and times. Similarly, we can regard the British Empire as one form of an imperial economic and political structure. Thus, we can endorse Elleke Boehme's judicious definition of colonialism in the book [colonial and postcolonial literature; of oxford university press, 1995] as the "Settlement of territory, the exploitation or development resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands "(P2). In this definition (a) the emphasis on the settlement of land, (b) the economic relationship at the heart of colonialism, and (c) the unequal relations of power which colonialism constructs.

Boehner's Phrase "The attempt to govern" limits at the ways in which British colonialism was not always fully successful in securing its aims, and met with acts of resistance from the outset by indigenous inhabitants of colonized lands, as well as members of the European Communities who had settled overseas and no longer wished to defer power and authority to the imperial "motherland".

As regards the imperial ventures of the British Empire, there are three (3) district periods of decolonisation when the colonised nations won the right to govern their own affairs. The first (1) was the American Colonies and declaration of American independence in the late 18th century. The second (2) period spans the end of the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century; and concerns the creation of the "dominions". This was the term used to describe the nations of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. The "settler" peoples of these nations agitated for forms of self-government which achieved as dominions of the British Empire. Yet, as a "dominion" each still recognised and pledged allegiance to the ultimate authority of British as the 'mother country'. The third (3) period of decolonisation occurred in the decades immediately following the end of the Second World War. Unlike the self-governing settler dominions, the colonised lands in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean did not become sites of mass European migration, and tended to feature large dispossessed populations settled by small British colonial elites. The achievement of independence in these locations occurred mainly after the Second World War. Often as a consequence of indigenous anti-colonial nationalism and military struggle. India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947m Ceylon (now Srilanka) in 1948.

There were of course, as many reasons for decolonisation as there were once-colonised nations. One fundamental reason was due in many ways to the growth of various nationalist movements in both the "settler" and "settled" colonies which mounted resistance to British Colonial authority. In addition, particularly after the Second World War Britain's status as a world economic owner rapidly declined, while America and the Soviet Union became the military superpowers of the post-war eta. The British Empire was becoming increasingly expensive to administer, and it made economic sense to hand over the costly administration of colonial affairs to its people whether or not the colonised people were prepared [economical or otherwise] for the shift of power.

One important antecedent for post colonialism was the growth of the study of common wealth literature. "Common Wealth literature" was a term literary critics began to use from the 1950's to describe literatures in English emerging from a selection of countries with history of colonialism. It incorporated the study of writers from the predominantly European settler communities, as well as writers belonging to those countries which were in the process of gaining independence from British rule, such as those from the African, Caribbean and South Asian nations. Literary critics began to distinguish a fast growing body of literature written in English which included work by such figures as R.K. Narayan (India), George Lamming (Barbados), Katherine Mansfield (New Zealand) and China Thebe (Nigeria). The creation of the category activity, and to consider via comparative e approach the common concerns and attributes that these manifold literary voices might have. Common Wealth literature, then, was associated exclusively with selected countries with a history of colonialism.

‘Commonwealth Literature’ may well have been created in an attempt to bring together writings from around the world on an equal footing, yet the assumption remained that these texts were addressed primarily to a western English-speaking readership. The ‘commonwealth’ in a commonwealth literature was never fully free from the older, more imperious connotations of the term.

Many agreed that the novel ideas and new interpretations of life in commonwealth literature owed much to the ways that writers were forging their own sense of national and cultural identity. Many critics were primarily preoccupied with identifying a common goal shared among writers from many different nations that went beyond mere “local” affairs. Just as an idea of a commonwealth of nations suggested a diverse community with a common set of concerns, commonwealth literature- whether produced in India, Australia, or the Caribbean – was assumed to reach across national borders and deal with universal concerns. Commonwealth literature certainly dealt with national and cultural issues, but the best writing possessed the mysterious power to transcend them too. As Shirley Chew (The Commonwealth: Pedestal Or Pyre?, New Statement and Society, 21 July 1995, P.32) has explained, “a paradox sits at the heart of the Commonwealth: describes as a free association of equal and mutually cooperating nations. It is nevertheless drawn together by a shared history of colonial exploitation, dependence and interchange”.

G C Spivak suggests that in the essay “Three Women’s Texts and A Critique of Imperialism” the celebratory readings of the novel as politically subversive are flowed in their attention to the fact that “imperialism, understood as England’s social, mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English”. Spivak’s reading of the novel returns it to its colonial contexts, and ultimately urges new strategies of reading which take colonialism into account when approaching not only this novel, but 19th century literature in general.

Colonialism, as a Socio-Political force was continually contradicting the very moment of the inception of modernity. The Post-Colonial precisely reminds the place of the colony as an aftermath, as part of the construction of Western Capital. The colony was never elsewhere it was much internal to the construction of Western ideals, Western Capital, as anything else. But, was not a collusive insidedness, rather a contending, conflicting insidedness.

Now the term "Post Colonial" is obviously problematic in all kinds of ways, particularly to those who think the term "post" means we have passed the effects of colonialism. It is a useful term and it reminds of two things. One that a certain kind of cultural and economic dependency and dominations, that is neocolonialism, exists. But while neo colonial suggests that it is the same old colonialism in a new form, postcolonial suggests that there is a much greater agency, whether we like it or not, and in the hybridization, there is an absorption of many of the hegemonic ideas by the third world is not just a positive object upon which a whole kind of umbrella or nuclear cloud of cultural and economic dependency is being imposed.

There are sections within postcolonial societies that are themselves implicated in the process. Indeed the products of that kind of fusion under a general political rubric may seem to be dominating. But on the other hand they also have other lives. So, people will are certain kinds of western ideas about secularism through India's own history and struggles for secularism. The very nature of secularism as an idea will change, will hybridize.

Imperialism was more than economic exploitation and political domination. Colonialism and imperialism are relationships that have had a cultural intellectual and social impact which is even more insidious than the naked fact of political Imperialism was more than economic exploitation and political domination. Colonialism and imperialism are relationships that have had a cultural intellectual and social impact which is even more insidious than the naked fact of political domination. As the term 'postcolonial' suggests, the fall out of colonialism is still very much with us. In a post colonial society the colonial past is inextricably linked to the present. The themes very often figure in postcolonial discourses are difference, contingency and hybridity.

In fact, the postcolonial discourse is more closely related to these two discursive areas than to the earlier prominent commonwealth studies because there is vast difference between the conception of ex-colony s represented in the commonwealth studies and the glimpse of post-coloniality that we get through the cotemporary discourse on colonialism.

Like the novels of 1980s, the novels of 1990s possess the same formal and linguistic experiments such as dexterous, de-toxic use of language, the irreverent tone, the defiant and vigorous challenge to the power of history and received traditions. One of the continuities is the engagement with the history, both national and personal, history of lives and institutions, family sagas, the freedom struggle, gender discriminations, the history of socialization, past accounts in different perspectives and the need to review happenings and roles and to deconstruct knowledge structures legitimised by the imperial discourse. Engagement with reviewing and replaying of past events lacks romanticism. It is not a search for identity in the existential sense of the term but a search for the hidden layers of meaning for the little narratives which if placed together may yield a new meaning. The family sagas- Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, David Davidar's *The House of Blue Mangoes* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* shows a concern with genealogy and heredity. Genealogical histories are in direct contrast to the kind of individualistic existential novels of Sahgal and Anita Desai which came up in 60s and 70s.

The novels of the 1980s exploded the Hindu male world view of Raja Rao, R K Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, whereas the novels of 1990s foreground and represent the notion of a Non-Hindu female/minority world view. Like the 1980s novels, the 1990s novels draw upon characters from different world countries. They are also metro-centric and experiment with reading against the grain with the intention of turning received truths and traditions on their head and making double readings possible. They, like the 1980s novels, present multiple perspectives and fragmented identities. They are Rushdies *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromozome* and *The Glass Palace* and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Novelists like Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Bharathi Mukherjee exhibit a movement towards internationalism by consciously avoiding looking backwards. Rushdie privileges international writers as they alone possess the dual ability to look at their own culture and at other cultures with equal objectivity. They claim that they belong at once to “nowhere’ and 'everywhere' and that their works are complex in range. By being NRIs they have questioned the notion of Indianness and rather celebrated homelessness as a state of mind. They, like other postmoderns, see the notion of Indianness as a composite of many identities and debunk the idea of an exclusively Indian identity. In The Moor's Last Sigh it is difficult to conclude if Moraes Zogoiby is Spanish, Indian, Christian or a mix. The blood of many races runs through his veins. The 1990s novels open up one's thinking about one's real identity. One is many-selved representing molded international identity. Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music*, Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* and *The Ground Beneath Feet* are examples of this notion. This movement away from the original centre of location is called centrifugal tendency.

In certain novels, the themes of internationalism and subaltern criss-cross in the same novel, also shares the voice of assertion. The religious and linguistic minority protagonists, not contending to live in the shadow of the Hindu majority, demand to be respected and so is the case with the women who are no longer contented to be contained in a universal or patriarchal world-view. The feminist fiction of Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Jaishree Misra and Anita Desai stand the best example. With the growth of womanist/ feminist protagonists, there is the fall of male characters. The voice of assertion and self-dignity is the biggest contribution, of the novels of 1990s. No doubt, the texts of the 1990s are writing the stuff that the West wanted to read. Both the texts reveal the deeper inner anxieties through different formal experiments and they have tried to cope with the complex psychological issues and realities.

Indo-Anglian fiction is firmly located in a double tradition---the linguistic tradition and the cultural tradition. Boundaries between class and castes, between the personal and the political have collapsed as seen in Ghosh's The Glass Palace. Intertextuality is yet another trend in which a great deal of Indo-Anglian fiction refers to a particular kind of British literature the literature that deals with Raj or the category of Children's Literature, Kipling, Forster, Lewis Carroll, Tennyson and the others. Intertextual references to Indian literature, in contrast to this, are to structures, epics, myths and legends to the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Replacing English with Indian languages and their equivalents appears just a part of the Indo-Anglian novelist's struggle against imperialism. As regards the profession of Indian writing in English the real fact of Pico Iyer's words cannot be forgotten. The Indo-Anglian fiction writers are "a new breed of people, an intercontinental tribe of wanderers whose sensibilities and experiences are cosmopolitan, and their mind sets comfortably close to those living in the west, even while they write of India"1. They are situated on a bridge between the two worlds of East and West dealing with both the themes. A new trend of blending as well as co-existence of East and West motifs and values has set in, which at times-, seems to disprove the words of Rudyard Kipling: "East is East and West is west/And never the twain shall meet." Pankaj Mishra's *The Romantics*, Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*, Gita Hariharan's *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and Ghosh's another novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* reflect the East-West theme. The East-West collision, sometimes, projects symbolically through an ideological conflict between tradition and modernity, faith and reason, scientific knowledge and intuitive knowledge.

Rushdie's says that literature is a means of holding a conversation with the world. Better we reach out to the world with global literature in this age of globalisation. The study of English literature is slowly losing its status as a colonial relic, reverting ever so grudgingly to its Indian roots. It has found its lost constituency among all those who love the power of a distilled imagination.

Hybridity is inherent in the middle-class Indians as exemplified in *A Suitable Boy, The God of Small things*, *The Glass Palace* and some such novels. In the novels of 1990s such as *An Equal Music* and *The Ground beneath Her Feet* metro centricity is exhibited due to the shifting of locations to Paris, London and some American cities. Identity within the Indian Diaspora is predicated upon a variety of historical processes and participating writers encompass a multiplicity of religions, languages and cultures. Among the many possible features of Diaspora, the feature of the dynastic conception of the family is found in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children, The Moor's Last Sigh*, David Davidar's *The House of Blue Mangoes* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*. In all these fictions, the narrative of the family reaches backwards into a past of power and privilege arrives in a present, marked by decline, decay and death, if not sexual depravity and mental degeneracy.

The diasporic writers present their protagonists with a typical American reverence for the freedom of the individual. Vina Apsara in Rushdie's *The Ground beneath Her Feet* is the best example. The diasporic writers not only engage our 'attention towards the immigrant, feminist and existential sensibility but also unravels their characters' struggle for freedom, survival and self-realisation in a multiracial society. The characters such as Ormus, Vina and Rai considered America their dream world and merged into its culture. Though the diasporic writers tend to show their bias towards metropolitan and cosmopolitan fiction there has been a genuine attempt to encompass the rural and the urban Indian realities. Despite the presentation of India's radical secularism, its religious self is everywhere found in the fiction. The Indians of all Diasporas have sought to record the manner in which they have adopted to their new environment and how they have experienced both identification with and alienation from their old and new homelands. The bonding of culture, religion, literature and language is especially strong in a Diasporic situation but where it provides ethnic identity and a sense of self, it can also alienate from the host culture. It is this displacement which gives the Diasporic writing its peculiar qualities of loss and nostalgia. The diasporic writers have provided a fragmented worldview whether they write of their new homelands or their old. As Rushdie has said in Imaginary Homelands, they are obliged to "deal in broken mirrors some of whose fragments have been lost."

A significant aspect of the diasporic discourse is the leitmotif of ‘journeying’ which is also central to most Diasporic writing. Most of the characters in Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace* do journeying for survival, happiness, fortune-making and Continuity of existence. The two most important motifs of suffering and death that are found in the diasporic discourse find expression in Rushdie' s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*.

Cosmopolitanism/Internationalism is found in the recent novelists. Rushdie says "Literature has little or nothing to do with a writer's home address"…"loss of home, happens all the time. We are all un-housed in the world. The native house (country) is always in one's heart”. He abandons national specificity. For him the distinction between inside-outside has obliterated. He reflects "I am conscious of shifts in my writing. There was always a tug of war in me between 'there' and 'here', the pull of roots and the dream of leaving. He further reflects, "Now I have come down firmly on the side of those who by preference, nature or circumstances simply do not belong. This un-belonging-disorientation, loss of the East-is my artistic country now. Rushdie's *The Ground beneath Her Feet* is one such example in a globalised world.

It is humanity that is center staged in most of the novel. They reflect Rushdie’s words: “My material is not Indian/English or family/loss/migration cosomopolitan. It is simply to try to respond fully to the human movement that I find myself in”. Bikhu Parekh says that the characteristic typical of the average Indian migrant operating within a largely non-assimilationist Diaspora is: "Far from being homeless, he has several homes and that is the only way he has increasingly come to feel at home in the world”. He suggests that the Indian diasporic subject can share and co-exist in several homes simultaneously and that distances need not necessarily lead to a sense of fragmentation and loss.

Both the novels of 80s and 90s seek to repossess history and unravel the tangled threads of race, ethnicity, and religion and gender which bind and separate peoples from one another. The multitudinous voices in the discourse such as Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* and Gita Hariharan's *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* signal challenge to the hegemonic Western world view and demand a place for alternative visions through the themes of resistance and subversion and by the crafting of older pre-colonial narratives.

Of late some focus is given to the ordinary experiences of life---the preoccupation with the small and the trivial, the movement away from the grand and the heroic has been a characteristic practice. Unlike Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh, writers like Amit Chowdhuri and Upamanyu Chatterjee focussed on trivial subjects such as boredom, the routine and the mundane experiences of ordinary lives. As regards the plot some observations are made. The real-story, with its beginning, middle and conclusion, does not exist. Such conventional narrative is not to be found as the narrative is unfolded from the eyes of children in novels like *The God of Small Things* and *The Blue Bedspread*.

Everything in the narrative unfolds with quiet deliberation so much so that the end of the novel seems more like a pause than a culmination. The grand epic narratives such as Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy,* Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* and Rushdie's *The Ground beneath Her Feet* are unconventional in their plots. The structure of the modem Indo-Anglian novel reflects the metaphor of the banyan tree as presumed by Amit Chowdhuri: "It sprouts and grows and spreads and drops down branches that become trunks or intertwine with other branches the structure is held by the supporting trunks". The other examples are Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* and *The Glass Palace*.

In the contemporary novels, a great change has occurred in the attitude towards time and space. Ghosh uses the concept of time in a very innovative manner. The constant shifts between the present and the past events as time lived' and 'time remembered' in *The Shadow Lines* are further developed in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. There is blurring of images which further helps in dissolving the distance between past and present and future. Hence, there is a space-time continuum where myriads of impressions from different periods of one's life and experience coalesce.

Shifting of scene of action to different parts of the world has become a common feature of the novels of both 80s and 90s. This technique of continuous time and place shift goes beyond the accepted stream of consciousness techniques and take within its scope more than the space of one life, one generation, one experience and one event. It is no doubt that blurring of past, present, and future is an innovative, experimental touch to the novels of the day. Contemporary novelists bring different languages into comic collision celebrating linguistic diversity meeting the requirement of the Indian context which is explicitly stated in the very beginning page of Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August*, "Amazing mix Hazaar fucked. Urdu and American nowhere else could language be mixed and spoken with such ease". John Mee quotes Anita Desai's works on the advent of the use of Spoken English beginning with Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, “it was only after Salman Rushdie came along that Indian writers felt capable of using spoken language, Spoken English, the way it's spoken on Indian streets by ordinary people".

The novelists of 1980s and 1990s demonstrate that the Indian 'taang' is not a pure essence, but a masala mix of a culture that has always been to appropriate influences from outside of the subcontinent. From this point of view English is implicated in the polyphony of Indian languages, its colonial authority relativized by entering into the complexity which it describes. Playfulness of the language used in recent novels is spoken in nature and appears an abrogation of Standard English, a sign of certain cultural weightlessness, the deracinated insouciance of elite college boys or the alienation of those who have lost touch with the national community.

The consolidated idea of nation and a pull towards a homogenization of reality have been felt in the latest novels. In the genre of the novel, Meenakshi Mukherjee says, “there has been a greater pull towards a homogenisation of reality, an essentialising of India, a flattening out of the complicated and conflicting contours, the ambiguous and shifting relations that exists between individuals and groups in a plural community". This Indian reality is meditated in the English language in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and David Davidar's *The House of Blue Mangoes* leading to evolve a national imagined community. Such pan-Indian themes as nationalist movement and disintegration of joint families that were dealt With by RK Narayan have again been dealt with in the novels of both 80s and 90s. Though nationalism is a major concern, the fractured consciousness of the characters does not entitle them to conform themselves to a particular national identity. As Meenakshi Mukherjee puts it, "human lives spill over national boundaries refusing to stay contained in neat compartments". So, there has emerged the sense of universality and humanity in the novels of the day. As we moved towards the close of the century, the gap between writing in Indian languages and the kind being done in English is narrowing down and the concerns of one are reflected in the other. The Indo-Anglian novels of both 80s and 90s exhibit a blend of multiple themes and techniques.

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Ethos of Ecofeminism in the Selected Poems of Mamang Dai

Sharada Chigurupati

Abstract

This paper discusses issues and themes like deforestation, imbalance in nature by unwarranted interference of man, killing of rare birds and animals thereby leading to distortion in biodiversity as reflected in the selected poems by Mamang Dai. This paper examines the poems “An Obscure Place”, “The Voice of the Mountain”, “This Summer – The Cicada’s Song,” “Remembrance,” “The Wind and The Rain,” “Small Towns and the River,” “The Missing Link” and “Rivers” from the perspective of Ecofeminism to focus upon the ideas of eco consciousness and awareness embraced by the poet.

Keywords: Ecofeminism , Post Colonial Feminism, Ecocentricism, Dualism

Introduction

> In what does man’s pre-eminence over the brute creation consist? The answer is as clear as that a half is less than a whole, in Reason. For what purpose were the passions implanted? That man by struggling with them might attain a degree of knowledge denied to the brutes. Consequently the perfection of our nature and capability of happiness must be estimated by the degree of reason, virtue and humanity that distinguish the individual and that from the exercise of reason, knowledge and virtue naturally flow.
> -Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

The view of Mary Wollstonecraft on how man has been proclaiming and establishing his pre-eminence over women and also over the other creatures on the planet flows seamlessly and merges with the ideas of Mamang Dai, a poet from Arunachal Pradesh, nestled in the North East part of India. Mamang Dai has stirred up the hornet’s nest by way of her reason, enquiry, critique and criticism on issues like identity crisis, environmental degradation, oppression and exploitation of both women and nature by the man. She instils her verses with issues concerning the environment, ecology and the earth.

She plants her oeuvre on the foundations of critical theories like feminism, eco feminism and post colonial feminism. As she leans over the steely scaffolding, her stentorian voice echoes over the hills and dales of Arunachal Pradesh. Her resounding voice reaches out to many readers as it rends and reverberates across the world. Her ringing voice rekindles the waxing and waning spirit of the environmental ethos and earnestly awakens the apathetic nature of man towards ecology. She sings to stir the souls of the humans to their sagging surroundings and to knock down the callous approach of the human towards his environs.

Mamang Dai is a poet, a novelist, an activist and a champion for the cause of infusing breath into the decaying body and dying spirit of nature through her body of work.

> Indian English poetry from North-eastern part of India is rich in enshrining various aspects of the ecology, of the region. It has been a fashion with the poets of the region to celebrate the ecological glory of the region and their ecological awareness. The ruthless act of deforestation and oppression upon the Mother Nature in various ways by destroying the serenity of the nature, obliterating the natural environment, killing rare birds and animals and distorting the landscape and biodiversity, have been sharply reacted upon by these poets." (Chandra and Das 2007, 35)

This paper reflects the views of the above critics, N. Chandra and N Das as Mamang Dai discusses the above mentioned issues in her poems. She embraces the theory of Ecofeminism, to hoist the ideas of eco consciousness, awareness and sensitivity. This paper attempts to read the poems from the perspective of Ecofeminism and portray the ideas of the poet that literature serves as a platform to sensitise the mankind towards ecological balance. The selected poems for this paper are: "An Obscure Place", "The Voice of the Mountain", "This Summer – The Cicada's Song," "Remembrance," "The Wind and The Rain," "Small Towns and the River," "The Missing Link" and "Rivers".

Eco feminism in the poems of Mamang Dai

Ecofeminism believes in the idea that since the beginning of human civilization man has been exploiting both nature and woman to fulfil his never quenching thirst for comforts and pleasures. Within this framework of patriarchy, the suppression and oppression of woman and nature have been running parallel. The advocates of Ecofeminism believe that the cause is a conglomeration of academic movement and activism. This movement can be traced back to 1970's as an outburst against nuclear waste disposal and environmental degradation. In the mid 1970s, the second wave of feminism created ripples in the intellectual, political, cultural domains, whereas the green movement questioned the environmental destruction, degradation created by man in the ecosphere. Ecofeminism challenged both the patriarchal ideology and ecological concerns. In the words of Mary Mellor, *From the Introduction to Feminism & Ecology*:

> Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women" (1)

As a child, Mamang Dai, grew up in the lap of nature by receiving emotional nourishment and spiritual succor from it. She was the darling daughter of the beautiful and pristine landscape. She paints the landscape of her state, Arunachal Pradesh as an epitome of serene surroundings and as a quintessential bowl of bountiful natural resources. The images of the clouds hanging over the stately mountains and the rivers gushing through the deep ravines are described in vivid hues. The indigenous people, who have been living in the hills and forests of this state have been in close contact with nature and also believed in the theory that ecology should be in tune with man's heart. They "practice an animistic faith that is woven around forest ecology and co-existence with the natural world" (Dai, 2006). Dai seems to be echoing the ideas of Sherry B Ortner, who discussed the relationship between nature and women *In her Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?* Here, she points out that nature and women are always associated with some cultural symbols (Ortner, 1974). In the poem, "The Wind and the Rain", Mamang Dai reflects the ideas of Ecofeminism.

> Come, let us listen to the rain.
> All that we had is going—
> or already gone,
> just like a life,
> so intimate and incomprehensible.

Dai employs the images of rivers, forests, and mountains that are a hallmark of her state's landscape to ring in the difference between the celebrated past and the degraded present status of the assaulted and ravaged land by the greedy man in the globalised world. In the glorious past, the auditory senses were aroused through the whistle of the wind, sweet songs of the birds, the sound of hail stones hitting the hills and the gurgling rain running down the ridges. In the present days, the rain seems to have vanished; the sweet smell accompanying the rain no longer twists and turns the noses in ecstasy. Today, she earnestly calls her people, to listen to the painful cry of the dying rain as it starts receding from the earth. She sings a requiem to the dead landscape as she philosophizes over the human being's transitory life, which is so intimate yet unfathomable.

> The night has no more songs.
> What will it sing
> now that the moon has drowned
> and the song birds with it.
> And our dreams have been stolen
> by the hunger of men travelling long distance,
> like bats in the dark

Mamang Dai seems to be seconding the thought of Emilie Hache "Because people and especially men feel superior, the environment, animals or women can be exploited." Dai mourns that the nights are lonely and morose, as the moonless sky doesn't ring the sweet songs sung by the birds. The birds have vanished with the destruction of trees. She accuses the hunger and greed of man that has devoured the dreams of the people of the hills. She uses the metaphor 'bat' to describe the clandestine approach of man under the cover of dark to carry out his nocturnal, illegal, unethical and unlawful means to plunder and pillage the earth for his selfish motives. Her idea that the night is now devoid of songs of the birds echoes the carnage and rampage that the swooping ‘bats’ have unleashed upon the earth.

Soft fruit, flesh, blood.
There is a war and directly now
it must be about guns, metal, dust
and the fear that climbs the trees every night

The poet runs the images of jubilation and celebration of nature in the past with the jaded and jarring ruins of the present landscape simultaneously. She brings in the different issues and challenges that the indigenous people of the forest and hills have faced during the insurgency. The innocent lives have been nipped, blown to dust by the mindless massacre and mayhem. The images of the dread and horror that the tribesmen underwent every night, as they sat atop the trees for cover seem to be haunting the people even now.

Yes, the rain is pouring down on my homeland.
The old men are saying they can see
fields of darkness and fields of light.
One day, they say, the wind will sing
songs of slaughter, and tenderness.

The poems of Mamang Dai reflect her spiritual and emotional connection with nature. The natives of Arunachal Pradesh have an uncanny affinity with their surroundings. They maintain a mystical kinship with nature. The lives are in perfect balance as long as there is balance in ecology. Once the scale goes lopsided, their lives topple down, they feel orphaned and abandoned by Mother Nature. The degradation and destruction of the landscape by the violence spurred by the insurgents, the damage caused by the infiltrators have left a huge chasm in the bulwark bordering the natural surroundings. Through these bleak, dark days of hopelessness, the wise men of the community can still see a vision; a speck of bright spot that illuminates the dark domains of destruction. They can even listen to the cries of slaughter and songs of tenderness at the same time. The poem doesn’t end entirely on a pessimistic note, she sees a ray of hope, a dot of bright light to blur the dull and dreary future and rekindle hope within the younger generation. The philosophy of Ecocentricism that Dai propagates through her works highlights her outlook and approach to life around her. She believes that the earth is home for every creature and the natural resources are to be used and not to be abused by the humans. She then reinforces her vision of Ecofeminism through her lines:

And our dreams have been stolen
by the hunger of men travelling long distance,
like bats in the dark

The views of Maria Mies in her book, *Ecofeminism* echo with the ideas of Dai through the above poem: “Now, after the material resources of the colonies have been looted, their spiritual and cultural resources are being transformed into commodities for the world market.”

What makes man place himself above all the other creatures on the planet? This outlook of his superiority stems from the idea that he is intellectually superior and has been endowed with a faculty to think. This consideration that he is morally and intellectually supreme over the other beings threw him into a misguided idea called anthropocentric approach, where man measures himself at the centre of all the beings and controls other species. It is imperative here to bring in the words of — Rachel Carson from *Silent Spring*

> How could intelligent beings seek to control a few unwanted species by a method that contaminated the entire environment and brought the threat of disease and death even to their own kind? Yet this is precisely what we have done. We have done it, moreover, for reasons that collapse the moment we examine them.

Through the following lines from the poem “Obscure Place”, Dai painfully portrays the anthropocentric approach of the man.

> See! They have slain the wild cat
> and buried the hornbill in her maternal sleep.

In this context, it is important to cite the view of Val Plumwood

> I see more and more reason to stress our failure to perceive vulnerability, (and) to realize how misguided we are to view ourselves as masters of a tamed and malleable nature

Dai bemoans over how man has embarked upon a spree of slaughter of the wild cats for his personal gains. The state of Arunachal Pradesh is home for four major cats namely tiger, leopard, clouded leopard and snow leopard. Man, on a mission to meet the deeds fueled by his greed, has put the cat on the endangered species list. Greed has blurred his vision; the insatiable hunger blinded him to the consequences he may have to reap in the future. Prospects of money made him merciless towards the lives of the animals and birds around so much so that a few animals are on the verge of extinction.

Man has fallen deaf to the cries of the hornbills as he pitilessly plucks the plumes and picks the beaks, kills them in their sleep only to adorn himself with colorful headgear and other accessories made of hornbills feathers and beaks. The headgear is a cultural symbol of the natives of the state of the Arunachal Pradesh. Ironically, in his passion to prove his loyalty towards his indigenous culture, he is heading towards being dispassionate towards nature. In the poem, “The Missing Link”, she bemoans the killing of hornbills

When the seven brothers fled south
Disturbing the hornbills in their summer nests.

As per a report in the daily Newspaper The Hindu, Illegal logging is causing habitat loss, and the forest cover around 29 hornbill trees is reduced from 38.55 sq km to 21.94 sq km. The lines from the poem, “Rivers” reflect the pollution and environmental crises in the backdrop of industrialization, globalisation, modernisation and privatisation.

Once you sprang clean
Washing boulders
Clearing streams.

It is not just the physical environment that got damaged beyond repair. In this process, the landscape of the human mind also got transformed into an unrecognisable space. In this context, she recalls rather in remorse, the beautiful memories of crystal clear rivers that infused life into the landscape, about the mountains that bordered and guarded their state from enemies, the birds that sang along with them in summers, the forests that sheltered many living beings. Dai’s poems are replete with the images of rivers, mountains, hornbills and forests as she celebrates the beautiful past and on the same lines , she laments over the present reflecting the words of Greta Gaard:

> Ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature.

The following lines from the poem, “This Summer – The Cicada’s Song”, reflects her regret, repentance and remorse over the reckless attitude of the man towards the other beings on the planet. Man poaches the animals and birds for his business and enterprise. He ‘prospers’ and ‘progresses’ through unethical means and strips the birds and animals off their homes. As Mamang Dai witnesses the empty forests that no longer reverberate with the songs of the birds and flutter of the butterflies; she begs for forgiveness of the birds and nature for having destroyed them towards paving path to human progress.

Now I can sing the bright, crackling words
in the memory of songs
begging forgiveness of butterflies,
and beauty that we destroyed in our hunt for life.

Through the above lines from the poem, “This Summer – The Cicada’s Song”, Dai seems to be echoing the views of Rachel Carson

> Until we have courage to recognize cruelty for what it is - whether its victim is human or animal - we cannot expect things to be much better in the world.

> There can be no double standard. We cannot have peace among men whose hearts find delight in killing any living creature. By every act that glorifies or even tolerates such moronic delight in killing, we set back the progress of humanity.

These lines bring to the surface, the dual nature of humans. The idea of dualism plaguing the human world has damaged the fabric of the social and cultural order in terms of its lopsided approach to life. The discrimination between man and woman, between man and nature pose serious threats to the health of the society and environment. Western tradition places man above the woman within the cultural and social hierarchical framework, and man above nature in the ecological pattern. Val Plumwood reinforces her view on Ecofeminism through the following lines in her text '*Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism'.* The following lines are taken from the poem, "Rivers".

The river has a soul
In the summer it cuts through the land
Like a torrent of grief. Sometimes
Sometimes. I think it holds its breath
Seeking the land of fish and stars

Through these lines, Dai is only reinforcing the views of her community. They always believed that every creature and aspect of nature is endowed with a soul. The souls of these beings (both animate and inanimate) transmigrate, transcend, traverse and travel along with the human life by reaffirming their omniscient, indispensable and ubiquitous disposition within the template of nature thereby to maintain a perfect balance in ecology. But, the western philosophy has always believed in the anthropocentric approach and has enforced this idea on the indigenous communities. As a result, the sacred spaces have been exploited by the greedy man and the groves of the gods are stripped off their souls leaving behind spiritually denigrated and degenerated surroundings. On such a parched waste land, the summer rain cuts through like a deluge of grief hoping to provide succor and nourishment for the spiritually deprived beings. In this context, the view of Val Plumwood is to be reiterated

> As Ecofeminism points out, Western thought has given us a strong human/nature dualism that is part of the set of interrelated dualisms of mind/body, reason/nature, reason/emotion, masculine/feminine and has important interconnected features with these other dualisms. This dualism has been especially stressed in the rationalist tradition. In this dualism what is characteristically and authentically human is defined against or in opposition to what is taken to be natural, nature, or the physical or biological realm. This takes various forms.

Conclusion

The poet, Mamang Dai is envisioning a future which would pave way for the compatible spaces where the human world would coexist with the ecological spaces around. A space, where there is no scope for oppression and subjugation of one group over the other. Nature, in its manifold manifestations is now reeling under the heavy-handed and narrow- minded nature of man. On the same lines, woman is being marginalized and suppressed within the patriarchal framework wedged firmly in the social, political, economical and cultural realms. The emancipation of environment from the manacles laid by man and the liberation of woman from the hegemonic and demonic patterns of patriarchy operating within the society should now be broken. Through her poems, Mamang Dai seems to be testifying the view of Greta Gaard:

> Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. Its theoretical base is a sense of self, most commonly expressed by women and various other nondominant groups - a self that is interconnected with all life!

Through the lines from the poem, ‘Remember’, Dai is echoing her optimistic spirit that, though all is changing, transforming in the surroundings, the world has not ended, there is hope and belief that one day the earth would breathe easy and dance in full spirit.

> Remember, because nothing is ended
> but it is changed.
> And memory is a changing shape
> showing with these fading possessions
> in lands beyond the great ocean
> that all is changed but not ended

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Psychoanalysis of Elizabeth Keckley's novel *Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*

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Abstract

This paper is an analysis of the infamous novel by Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*' through the lens of Psychoanalysis. It tries to bring to light the understanding of the psyche (Id, Ego and Superego) of the author, Elizabeth Keckley and the conflict between her mind and body caused by many factors, predominantly slavery. It also attempts to understand the use of Defense mechanisms by the author from being constantly exposed to the environmental stressors and triggers. These cause excessive emotional, psychological scars and trauma that give rise to various complexities at a later stage of her life. Another important objective of this paper is to understand the lives of the blacks and the impact of slavery on them especially women. Therefore, the work by Keckley is one of the many slave narratives voiced on behalf of her black community. Her slave narrative (memoir) dwells on the author's veiled past, sufferings but primarily focuses on the time spent in White House under Lincoln's presidency. It also documents in detail a descriptive journey of a strong black woman from an enslaved childhood to a rich life in the pockets of aristocratic white society. It is one of the pioneer feminist novels that set the bar for the future generations.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Defense Mechanisms, Slave Narrative, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Keckley, Black Voices

Introduction

Over the years, there have been a lot of great black female writers that have come up and helped pave the way for black literature. Autobiographical spiritual narratives pioneered black literature and later gained popularity through slave narratives. It was a predominantly male-dominated field and only in the 18th century did women like Phillis Wheatley, despite all odds, establish themselves as writers and trendsetters for generations down the lane. This brings focus to my paper on 'Psychoanalysis of Elizabeth Keckley's novel *Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*. The work by Elizabeth Keckley is a memoir; it talks about the journey of a former slave into a well-known modiste in the pockets of rich white folks. It is therefore known as an early Reconstructive-slave narrative.

This infamous work by Keckley documents her life from a young enslaved girl to her life of freedom and her work as a modiste. It focuses on the strained American society, mainly the conflict between the Union of the North and the Confederates of the South under Lincoln's presidency. As it is set in the backdrop of pre-civil war and continues till abolitionist movement, it portrays the difficult lives led by enslaved and freed blacks. The author also primarily brings to light her relationship with the Lincolns, especially with Mrs. Lincoln. This underappreciated work by Keckley adds historical value from the perspective of a black woman. But they sadly banned it from the eye of the public due to the outrage of the white society caused by racial tensions.

The ‘Psychoanalysis of Elizabeth Keckley’s *Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* is perused using the Freudian perspective of “Psychoanalysis”. Freud initially proposed the Psychoanalytic theory; it talks about the concepts of Defense Mechanisms and Electra complexes. These defense mechanisms are behaviours or strategies that people use or employ to separate themselves or cope with unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts.

In Keckley’s work, she undergoes a lot of traumatic nerve-wracking incidents mainly in her enslaved childhood that pushes her to suppress certain behaviours, and employ defense mechanisms that give rise to complexes like Electra’s complex which she ultimately tries to resolve towards the end. Thus, through the Freudian lens, we can understand the autobiographical text and her cathartic journey from an enslaved little girl, and overcoming her profound dislike for Mary Todd Lincoln, mother figure, by becoming a mentally confident woman.

Analysis

The memoir by Elizabeth Keckley *Behind the Scenes- Thirty Years a Slave and Four years in the White House* is set during the transition of the abolition movement and set in the year 1868. It brings into light the dynamics between blacks and whites. We observe this as the author herself mimics the colonizer and accepts reality and rationalizes it. The intention behind the writing was to help Mrs. Lincoln get financial aid and also to counter the criticism she gained after the President’s assassination. Though it never delivered as intended, it received a lot of hate and backlash for being a work by an African American “woman” writer. And, invading the privacy of the first lady didn’t sit right with the public. I have divided the memoir into three parts and it comprises ofKeckley’s life: as a slave, in the White House, and after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Keckley’s recollections of the enslaved childhood are the recollections of a forty-year-old woman. She compressed just three chapters from her childhood to a free black woman into the entire slave narrative. She opens the preface by claiming her life “may sound like a dream”, and on similar lines announces in her first chapter that her “life has been an eventful one”, possibly to downplay the seriousness of slavery. The contrasting take hints at her centrist views by painting both the dark side and the bright side of slavery. The tone taken is rather dull and devoid of any emotion, preferably to undermine the seriousness of her life. And, we can interpret these inconsistencies in her narrative as her repression of the traumatic events. There are a few incidents that strike a chord with her, which forces her to employ defense mechanisms unconsciously.

The narrator employs self-actualization while narrating her first experience with slavery at the age of four. The work required Keckley to take care of her master’s baby but was beaten black and blue for being careless. This incident makes her believe that slavery is a “hardy school” and it taught her to be self-reliant. Her separation from her father, which is described in excruciating detail, followed this event. The pain her family felt is too horrifying, which leaves herself and her mother heartbroken. She describes her anguish in jarring words, using biblical language and figures of speech like “the solemn prayer to Heaven” and “The shadow eclipsed the sunshine, and love brought despair.” She employs sublimation to forget her harsh reality by relying on God, ironically, the colonizer’s religion. And also intellectualizes the separation with positive hopes of reuniting again. The auction of a young boy at a later stage pushes her to regress into which reminds her of her separation from her father.

The prime incident which completely had shaken author to the core is the non-consensual rape at the age of eighteen by a white man that completely shatters her. She writes, “... for four years a white man—I spare the world his name—had base designs upon me. I do not care to dwell upon the subject, for it is one that is fraught with pain. Suffice to say he persecuted me for four years, and I—I—became a mother.” The narrator employs denial, repression, and isolation of affect, as she does not indulge in graphic detail. This incident ignites a spark in her as she starts questioning her life and slave rights and freedom. It plays a pivotal role in attaining freedom for both herself and her son.

The central part of the story caters to the primal aspects of the author’s life as a free black woman, and a new life of independence. Here, arises a Defense mechanism which Keckley employs called as fixation. The fixation on the male subjects is intense, as observed initially in the biased narrative praising Mr. Jefferson Davis and Mr. Lincoln in the latter half while undermining the authority of female subjects, Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Lincoln. This fixation is a Defense mechanism that is used by the narrator because of the trauma of her childhood. This becomes more prominent when she starts working at the white house under the Lincoln’s.

This comparative can be observed as she gives into her passions of Id portraying the leading lady as spendthrift, unlovable which the critique by Andrews justifies by stating, “Her characterization of the First Lady, on the other hand, suggests that among the many burdens the fallen president had been obliged to bear was marriage to a jealous, opinionated, self-important, mercurial and a petulant wife.”

On the other-hand idealizes and places Mr Lincoln on a higher level which occasionally borders on hagiography (xiv, Andrews, BTS) This clouds her narrative and leaves it open to many speculations and underlying connotations. She employs biblical language when describing Mr Lincoln like, “Christian eagerness”, “I almost imagined that I could hear the Lord speaking to him from out the whirlwind of battle…” (p.53, Keckley, BTS) and “a Demi-god” (p.78, Keckley, BTS) to stress her devout Christian belief, and idol worship.

This fixation stems from a need for love and admiration of the father figure which was lacking in her life. She further employs a Defense mechanism called personalization, where she attributes exaggeratedly positive qualities to others or self. This thus becomes a pivotal nexus of connection between Mr Lincoln and Keckley. As she identifies with Mr Lincoln’s morals and ethics, she puts him on a high pedestal. This only increases her love, admiration, and attachment as she yearns for his approval.

This intense fixation gradually increases, giving rise to complexities like the Electra complex Keckley. And, according to psychoanalytic theory, is a desire for possession of the father, and have a rage against their mother. We observe this in writing style and as an example she portrays Mrs. Lincoln as uncouth and vulgar, stone cold for using language like, “that deceitful woman” that is improper for an aristocratic lady but alternatively portrays Lincoln as kind, animal lover, friendly also elevates his status using biblical imagery like “a light”, “star” and comparing him to “Jehovah.” These symbolic images speak volumes about the narrator’s mental status and her obsession with the male subject is jarring. Though throughout the work she employs isolation of effect as a Defense mechanism, with Mr Lincoln she connects emotionally. It is so strong that she feels his death on many levels and mourns for the same.

But there is a shift in the narrative after the assassination of Mr Lincoln. It reels Keckley back to reality as she pushes past her obsessions to resolve her complexities. The visible change is her loyalty to tend to Mrs. Lincoln and nurse her broken heart. The focus shifts to Mrs. Lincoln, whom she portrays in a positive light.

Though Keckley treats Mrs. Lincoln throughout the work as a friend, we see the genuine bond developing between them in these chapters. She views Mrs. Lincoln as a distressed friend in need of help rather than as a competition. The tone towards Mrs. Lincoln seems to have mellowed down and also appears sympathetic. She occasionally remarks on the missing father figure fondly rather than with the earlier child-like glee. She remarks that Mrs. Lincoln is a good mother figure, condemns those who disrespect her, and even helps with her pecuniary embarrassment by sacrificing her livelihood.

The narrative by Keckley further noticeably transforms the earlier conflict with Id vs. Ego into an ego-superego model. This is visible in her attempt as she resolves her Electra complex by employing reaction formation by treating Mrs. Lincoln excessively nicely as opposed to her initial tone. This change within Keckley is partially due to the similarity of challenges between herself and Mrs. Lincoln in the hands of the patriarchal society. She sympathizes with the mother figure and looks at it in retrospect. An event where the author identifies is by describing the childhood of Mrs. Lincoln. This helps to form a connection between past and present. To establish and also to quench the curiosity within, Keckley dedicates an entire chapter to Mrs Lincoln’s childhood. We observe her inquisitiveness, and she lets the reader acquire necessary insights about Mrs Lincoln’s life, brought up and her charming personality. The observable change in her narrative is at the end after the closure of Mrs Lincoln’s affairs and losing Keckley’s business, she comments, “Though poor in worldly goods, I am rich in friendships and friends are a recompense for all the woes of the darkest pages of life. For a sweet Friendship’s sake, I can bear more burdens than I have borne.” (p.146, Keckley, BTS) This final statement that she values sweet friendships relating to Mrs Lincoln underlies the final change and acceptance of her.

Conclusion

Elizabeth Keckley’s through this work tries to voice the new life of a free black person living in a white society. It is a pioneer slave narrative written by a woman, therefore psychoanalytical framework chosen to analyze gives a detailed understanding of the psyche and the conflict of the Id, Ego, and Superego.

This can also adhere to the title of the text, *Behind the Scenes-Thirty years a slave, and Four years in the White House* as Keckley ironically does not delve into the thirty years of life as a slave but focuses on her time in the white house. We can perfectly dissect this obscuring of her reality through psychoanalysis. Therefore, the key findings of my work are about the evolution of Keckley’s narrative using psychoanalysis.

I have tried to observe the many defense mechanisms she employs in the first half of her narrative to downplay the trauma. And in the second half, discuss the Id’s fixations and complexities on the male subject, Mr. Lincoln that arise due to the repressed emotions and also highlight the dislike the author displays and describes towards the female subject, Mrs. Lincoln. Finally, the last half is about the author’s attempts to resolve these complexities and regain her balance of herself by accepting the many realities.

The writing style has a dramatic flair. The use of exaggerated language is present to provide a detailed perspective of her life. It is extensively inconsistent and, at times, heavily fictionalized. The flitting emotions embedded and woven into the text speak volumes about the stability of the writer. But, despite all its flaws, the work is a marvelous feminist piece of writing as it documents her road to a life of hard-earned freedom from slavery. Keckley’s loyalty towards the Lincoln family, especially towards Mrs. Lincoln, after the President’s assassination, devoting herself completely, is one of the moments from the text that struck a chord with me.

Overall, this analysis is a roller-coaster of emotions, but it tries to bring to justice to strive for a sense of identity and a battle against one’s self: a battle against the mind. Keckley overcomes the battles against herself as she attempts to resolve her fears and fixations and is a pioneer for future generations to come.

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‘Dalitization’ of Narrative: Githa Hariharan’s *I Have Become the Tide*

Supriya M

Abstract

More than eight decades after the publication of Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935), Gita Hariharan has come out with her novel, *I Have Become the Tide* (2019), centering on the same social reality of casteism. It is a pointed reminder that into 75th year of its independence, India has still a long way to go to materialize the constitutional ideal of a casteless society. Two narrative strands, separated by centuries, run parallel in Hariharan’s novel. One is the narrative of the Dalit saint-poet Kannadeva (circa 1150-1180), and the other that of three Dalit students pursuing their higher studies. Even as the novel takes on a tone of helpless inevitability about the prevailing social situation, the ending of the novel with Dalitbahujan Revolt led by Bhim Sakthi Association reaffirms the awakening of the ‘Dalit Consciousness’ born out of centuries of repressed Dalit anguish. Githa Hariharan’s ‘dalitization of narrative’ sets a new literary ethos, in order to create that egalitarian society as envisioned in the Indian Constitution.

Key Words: Casteism, Untouchability, Dalitization, Dalitbahujan, Dalit Consciousness

“No god is needed to rescue the Untouchables, no vows of self-sacrifice and abnegation on the part of more fortunate Indians, but simply and solely – the flush system. Introduce water-closets and main-drainage throughout India and all this wicked rubbish about untouchability will disappear (7)” wrote EM Forster in his Preface to Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable*. This statement might be dismissed as the optimistic remark of an English man, who was hardly aware of the grim social reality of India. But the fact that more than eight decades after the publication of Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935), Gita Hariharan has come out with her novel, *I Have Become the Tide* (2019), centering on the same social reality is a matter of grave concern. It is a pointed reminder that into 75th year of its independence, India has still a long way to go to materialize the constitutional ideal of a casteless society. Even though untouchability was abolished when the Indian Constitution came into being in 1950, it continues to hold its sway, both overtly and covertly, as evinced in the intolerance of the upper castes towards the self-assertion of the Dalits, and in the continuing atrocities targeting them. *I Have Become the Tide* is a faithful portrayal of the underlying prejudices and fears of an apparently casteless society.

Two narrative strands run parallel in Hariharan’s novel. One is the narrative of the Dalit saint-poet Kannadeva (circa 1150-1180), and the other that of three Dalit students pursuing their higher studies. The novel shuttles between two time zones separated by centuries, but casteism continues to spread its grim shadow. Like Mulk Raj Anand’s Bakha, no longer does a Dalit have to ritualistically announce his approach – “Posh, keep away, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming!” (42). But

Bakha's rankling pain as expressed in the words – "For them I am a sweeper – Untouchable! Untouchable! Untouchable! That's the word! Untouchable! I am an Untouchable!" (43) – is a festering wound for Hariharan's characters as well.

The novel begins with a 'disclaimer' about the realistic nature of the characters and the specific events, but an acknowledgement that much of the novel may "bear resemblance to reality, both past and present". And that 'reality' Hariharan specifies, is the "cruelty of discrimination, bigotry and violence … and the bravery of those who dissent." The readers are at once introduced to Chikka running hard, holding a drum close to his chest. Chikka, the son of a cattle-skinner, is running away from his village, consequent to his father's death, carrying with him the legacy of both the drum, which his father uses to beat for funeral processions, and also his father's song, "Where is the land/Where water flows free/ /Tell me. Tell *me.*"(9) With the sound of the beating drum and the song ringing in his ears, Chikka runs away from the village, where he will remain forever as a cattle-skinner's son – a job which he resents and refuses to take up in spite of his father's persuasion. Hardly does Chikka realise that as he is taken away from the village by Elder Brother and Puttanna – who come from nowhere as it seems to him – he is being led to that land which his father had always dreamed of – 'a land where water flows free'. Chikka, who henceforth becomes 'Chikkaiah', settles down as a washer man at Anandagrama – which literally turns out to be a 'village of happiness' – living always in proximity to that river of his father's dream. And the songs that spring out of him are addressed to the "river of a thousand faces" (19) – a line which runs like a refrain in many of his songs. Later when Mahadevi walks into his life, she too has a repertoire of songs to complement his songs– songs which go into making of their life story. At Anandagrama, Chikka inhales the air of freedom untouched by humiliations of caste. The one word which he hears repeatedly in Anandagrama is the word 'equal', and the people show him what this 'equal' means, not only in words, but in how they live with each other. Anandagrama turns out to be a utopian casteless society where potters, cobblers, toddy tappers, weavers, sweepers, shit-carriers and farm workers live hobnobbing shoulders with city officials, scholars, poets and even Brahmins who have walked out of their community. What Chikka hears there is a concept totally alien to him, "The world belongs to all of us, the God in me, and the God in you. In Anandagrama, we live what we believe" (70).

Past and present get interwoven in the narrative as Professor Krishna, a much revered scholar and teacher makes it to the headlines because of a research article he prepares on the mystic poet Kannadeva. Professor Krishna has unwittingly called to question the poetic talents as well as the mystic aura about Kannadeva, through his observations. Krishna detects some "intriguing inconsistencies" (18) in Kannadeva's poetry, which lead to his hypothesis that more than one person was at work in the composition of the poems, whose authorship is mistakenly attributed to Kannadeva. Even more blasphemous proves his statement that saint Kannadeva has not attained '*jalasamadhi'* as his devotees uphold; it was an act of suicide by drowning in a river. The professor's findings were strongly grounded on textual proofs, in analysing the tone of what is considered as the signature line of many of the Kannadeva's poems – 'O river of thousand faces'. Some of the songs, Krishna argues, sound like a washer man's compositions, as in the verse "I too sing when cloth slaps stone" (19), whereas some others have a definite mystic aura around them. This makes the professor conclude - "It was almost as if Kannadeva was several people. Sometimes he was one person or the other. Sometimes he was all of them at once. There was more than one person speaking here" (20). Professor Krishna's quest to reach at the kernel of truth lying hidden and deep inside a shroud of misinformation and the halo of hagiography leads him to some palm leaf manuscripts, which corroborate his theory that the songs attributed to Kannadeva are actually the collective voice of a host of people who lived in absolute camaraderie in Anandagrama – a society way ahead of its times to be a reality. And its collapse at the hands of those who wielded power was inevitable.

Kancha Ilaiah speaks of 'sanskritization' of Dalit names to Brahmanical names as an attempt made by Dalits to assimilate them into 'upper' caste culture (69). Krishna realizes that in order to appropriate Kannappa into their fold, he has been rechristened as 'Kannadeva' by the 'caste-Hindus'. The Dalit ancestry of Kannadeva gets revealed to Professor Krishna when he comes across a bio-line in one of the manuscripts – "Cattle skinner and father of Chikkaiah of Anandagrama, Chikkaiah the washer man and lover of the drum, husband of Mahadevi, father of Chandra and Kannappa–Kannadeva" (89). As the puzzles are put in place, the picture unfolds itself before Professor Krishna, and the undeniable truth stares hard at him – "Caste lived then; it still flourishes. But it has been whitewashed so Kannadeva can be a 'saint', a 'Hindu saint'" (89).

Even as Professor Krishna has set out to demystify the aura around Kannadeva, the self-proclaimed champions of the Hindu saint are hell bent on perpetuating the halo around him. The professor is unaware that his academic research is hurting the sentiments of the religious fanatics who have gloriously added one more Hindu 'singer-saint' to their pantheon of saints. They have taken up cudgels against the professor, whom they believe is out to vilify the saint. They set up a website devoted to Kannadeva, with the picture of the saint sitting in a half-lotus position on the bank of a river. Overnight, Kannadeva, who was just a minor saint-poet, becomes a legendary figure – celebrations are planned for Kannadeva's 900thbirth anniversary; a statue of Kannadeva is to be erected in the middle of the Sagara Lake. The self-appointed guardians of Kannadeva are not ready to forgive Professor Krishna for desecrating the image of the great Hindu-saint by portraying him as 'Kannappa', the son of a washer man whose father skinned cattle. As Githa Hariharan reserves that inevitable fate to Professor Krishna – he falls victim to a bullet shot at the hands of the religious fanatics – she is holding a mirror up to the contemporary social reality.

"Dalithood," Ambedkar, defines, "is a kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of the lower castes by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahminical order" (qtd. in Basu xxvi) – a 'life condition' which, Hariharan realises, continues to prevail 900 years after Kannadeva's story. "Hundreds of years later, how much has changed?" (112) – Professor Krishna's misgivings get addressed in the story of the three Dalit students – Satya, Ravi and Asha who aspire to "go into the big world and be part of it, studying, working, earning, loving, marrying, and making families. Living like everyone else"(26). They realise the wider implications of their achievements – it means not just securing their future, but that of their families and by extension the status of their communities and castes as well. Satya makes it as a medical student, Asha as a nursing student, and Ravi doing his graduation in Zoology.

The badge of being reservation students marks them for others to underestimate their merit as undeserved achievements or as a concession granted to them by a condescending society or the generosity of reservation policy. However, they are not to be bowed down by the jibes and jeers around them, because they have a goal to become “regular people with regular lives, not people with name tags that set them apart – below or behind everyone else” (33). They are conscious that it is the name tag that told the world that they were not part of the ‘general public’ but ‘particular’, as in “particularly handicapped” (39).

Raj Kumar in his *Dalit Literature and Criticism* points out the contrasting opinions on the project of “Englishing Dalits”. He quotes M.Dasan, a Dalit intellectual and activist:

> In fact, many of the English-educated Dalits have become Dalit elites, and have been able to negotiate power with the bureaucracy and political leadership. . . . Now they not only know how to curse the oppressors, but also how to articulate their voices in a better and stronger way to a larger audience (both national and international). Yet, despite their improved ability and proficiency in the English language, they are still discriminated against. . . . Arguing for Englishing Dalits as the only way to liberate and empower them would be too reductive. (120)

Raj Kumar further cites Chandra Bhan Prasad, a strong advocate of ‘Englishing Dalits’ who opined that “English is the only agency that can connect people around the globe to the Dalit experience” (120). As for Satya, Ravi and Asha, who dream of making it big, mastering English seems to be a passport to that world. Hence the three of them try to practice conversation with each other in English. They study new English words, but are confused as to how to put them together to make sentences and say them “like those other people do, the rich ones, or the upper caste ones” (30).

Article 17 of the Indian Constitution states that – “Untouchability” is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “Untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. ‘Untouchability is a sin. Untouchability is a crime. Untouchability is inhuman’ – slogans are writ large all over. But they at best remain as slogans in black and white, hardly practised or realised. This realisation very soon dawns on Satya, who is branded the “audacious Dalit, studying to be a doctor” (34). The sense of loneliness felt by Satya in the college is so great that he fears he would forget “the sound of his own voice” (90). However, Satya is happy that the ‘injustice of centuries’ is being rectified, when he is considered eligible to become a doctor. So he is determined to work hard, survive the loneliness and the “hundred pinpricks a day” (91) to get a medical degree. Satya has to silently put up with different kinds and degrees of humiliation – he is made to wait at the back of a queue while verifying his certificates; he has to occupy a corner room near the toilets carefully avoided by others; the seat next to him in the class is left vacant, as though he has a contagious disease – “a life style disease handed down from generation to generation, a disease that hovers over him like a racial memory to become his second skin” (93).

Analysing how Dalit lives have been circumscribed by rigid caste rules, Raj Kumar poignantly remarks how apart from being 'untouchable', the Dalits "were also 'un-seeable', 'unapproachable' and un-hearable' by most castes" (1). This gets best exemplified in the treatment meted out to Satya in the class, when the professor refuses to acknowledge his raised hand to answer a question, as though his hands are invisible. Satya can hardly ignore or wish away the silent hostility of the fellow students towards the "lazy people living off quotas" (94) and depriving the 'merit students' of their 'legitimate seats'. But what he cannot endure with fortitude is the open hostility of the anatomy professor, Dr Sharma, who always pretends that there is a blank space where Satya sits. When Dr Sharma, who simply refuses to address Satya by his name, other than the obviously dismissive pronouns 'you' or 'he', asks him to occupy the last bench for the class test, his silent resentment makes him all the more determined to prove himself before the world. But Dr Sharma's ominous words haunt him as a nightmare even in the broad daylight – "You've just passed this time. Next time you will fail"(136). Satya can very well decode the meaning of the disdainful look that crosses the doctor's face every time he casts his eyes on Satya – "Let me see how you get your MBBS" (138), or even worse, "suppose you get your MBBS . . . how many people would agree to be treated by you" (185). Satya's scholarship is withheld, alleging that his attendance is poor. Unable to cope with his "pad-dalit" (Ambedkar) existence of being "completely crushed under the Hindu caste order" (Basu xxvi), Satya poisons himself to death. Satya's death is written off by the college authorities as yet another instance of a Dalit student committing suicide because of his inability to cope with academic pressure.

The two narratives get interlinked as Ravi sends Satya the book on Kannadeva written by Professor Krishna. Satya finds himself identifying with the characters and the songs in the book, especially those of Chikkaih's– "Every word of his speaks to Satya. Speaks for him. How is that possible? Chikkaiah, a man from long ago, was a man who may or may not have actually lived, putting together words in lines, singing them just for Satya?" (199). Like Chikkaih's 'river of thousand faces', there stands a peepal tree outside Satya's window – 'his tree of thousand faces', a silent witness to his humiliating existence. Satya pours his heart out into the blue notebook, gifted by Asha. One of the poems scribbled in Satya's notebook says, "My invisible father… where is my story, my own history?" (270), very nearly echoes Chikkaih's word "Where is my land where water flows free?" (272).

Arjun Dangle defines Dalit literature as "one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India, its appalling nature and its system of exploitation. In other words, Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society" (Mambrol). It is this predicament of Dalit lives that Hariharan presents in the stories of Satya, Ravi and Asha. Ravi is doing his graduation in Zoology in a Government Science College. As he studies zoological classification of animals into different domain, kingdom, Phylum and so on, he wonders where exactly the different scheduled castes and tribes of India fit into the four-tier caste taxonomy of *chaturvarna*. Ravi is aware that caste, as Ambedkar has put it, is the monster that walls in people like him, Satya and Asha in settlements, colonies, quotas and traditional occupations. Ravi is hell bent on fighting that monster. Ravi rebels, "We have to explain why all these are at the bottom steps of the ladder – no, why they are off the ladder.

We are protozoa – the only cell we have is caste or tribe, official names SC and ST" (103). What sustains him is the hope that one day he would become a college professor or a scientist, which would ensure a better life for the next generation. He is determined that things should no longer be as it is now. It is with this intention that he joins Bhim Shakti, a students' association. If it is dream of equality that resonated in Anandagrama which once attracted Chikka, it is the assertion of rights that reverberates at the Bhim Sakthi meetings. Ravi feels mesmerised as he listens to his Dalit physics professor Senthil – whom he calls Senthil Anna – speak at a meeting – "We are not here because of someone's kindness, or some god, or some quota. We are here because we have the right to be here" (134). Asha's story as a nursing student too is no different. She finds no reason why she is singled out to clean the sanitary annex, the bed pans and the urinals, while all the other nursing students are allotted more 'respectable' tasks of inspecting the kitchen or the ward. Asha is left to wonder, "Was this a quiet way to let her know that caste lived even here, among the sisters of mercy?" (141).

'Dalitbahujan', a term coined by Kancha Ilaiah, to refer to 'people and castes who form the exploited and suppressed majority' (ix),which he believes would bring about a collective consciousness, a kind of unity among oppressed communities, and pave way to a social revolution which will give birth to a new social order. In this new social order, as Ilaiah believes, the oppressed Dalitbahujan majority will be able to "exercise the power which has been denied to them by the Hindu upper-caste minority over millennia" (9). At the Bhim Sakthi meetings, as Professor Senthil refers to 'Bahujan', Ravi feels "it sounds bigger than Dalit" (134). Senthil Anna's song resonates all over, "Just yesterday I read their history/and found that I was missing / Today I tell you: /Your history has too many missing people. My words, my history, will break your walls, / My people will break your walls" (134). But the very next day, the rancour against Senthil comes to light as his qualification as a professor is called to question; his knowledge in physics is put to challenge. Social media is inundated with abusive messages against him – much like the response generated by Professor Krishna's article on Saint Kannadeva.

The suicide of Satya and the murder of Professor Krishna give the novel a tone of helpless inevitability about the prevailing social situation. The professor's murder can very well be considered a re-enactment of Chikkaiah's murder hundreds of years back at Anandagrama at the hands of the caste-Hindus who resented the "unholy mixing of castes" in the village. Asha becomes a mouthpiece of her creator when she muses – "From the washer man poet Chikkaiah to the medical student Satya, born an outcaste, dying an outcaste. Has anything changed in all the years in between?" (272). But Hariharan does not want to end her novel, leaving this rhetorical question to the readers. Because, as she mentions in the beginning, the realty around which the novel is built is as much about the 'cruelty of discrimination, bigotry and violence . . . and the bravery of those who dissent'.

In his article, "Aesthetics for Revolution: Dalit Literature and Art," Sanjoy Saksena registers his opposition to the tame ending of Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* which ends with Bakha who "merely thinks after listening to Gandhi" (Randhawa 49).Saksena objects to the twin ideologies of Marxism and Gandhianism upheld by Anand to redeem the future of the Dalits “both of which the Dalit indigene rejects”. He then goes on to present the alternative ending:

> Such a solution is not enough because the Dalit writers and aestheticians want that literature should be used as a fire-ball and that if Bakha had been a true dalit protagonist he would have spoken harshly against the upper castes, attacked them, used violence and fought like a gladiator. It is such a resolution of the problem that would have satisfied them emotionally and given them aesthetic pleasure, for it depends on the historical circumstances one finds oneself in together with one’s own situation in life. Pleasure, whether aesthetic or otherwise, cannot be the same when the psyche of the people itself is seared and suffers from a deep sense of social injury. (Randhawa 50)

Bakha’s ‘thinking’ of the three different solutions to his problem, and not shown accepting a particular one is justified by M. K. Naik in his article “Humanitarianism in Mulk Raj Anand” writes “The ending of the novel also shows how the artist in Anand does not allow the social reformer in him to overpower the artist” (Reddy 207). Sanjoy Saksena is insistent that Dalit literature should ‘provoke’ the Dalits to “think and dream of a new future, understand themselves in fresh light and galvanize them into action” (Randhawa 50). It is exactly on this note that Hariharan ends her novel, as Bhim Sakthi is mobilizing a huge rally to protest the murder of professor Krishna. Ravi joins the protest march armed with his great grandfather’s drum – the drum reserved to his community to be used during funeral processions. His grandfather has reminded him of the power of the drum – “You can call people gather where you want when you beat this drum” (140). Ravi is elated as he realises that the voice of the drum is strong; and it speaks of power, not shame – thus turning a caste signal into a weapon of resistance. Asha too joins the march to protest the death of “the Satya she knew and all the Satyas she doesn’t know” (318).

Sharankumar Limbale in his *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature* points out the importance of rejecting caste system by revolting against the unequal social order which has exploited the Dalits for years together. And that revolt, Limbale warns, will be “like a flood, with its aggressive character and an insolent, rebellious attitude” (qtd.in Raj Kumar 10). The ‘Dalitbahujan revolt’ led by Professor Senthil and Ravi is nothing but an awakening of this ‘Dalit Consciousness’ born out of centuries of Dalit anguish fighting towards a social order grounded on equality, liberty, fraternity and justice. Hariharan describes how the multitude who joins the Bhim Sakthi rally makes it virtually “a sea of arms, legs and voices” (319), and as Asha becomes one with the “river of living bodies”, a voice within her echoes, “I have become the tide” (320) – the tide with an immense power to inundate and wipe out a cast-ridden society of all its evils. Gone are the days of passive resistance or silent suffering of a Satya or the wistful longings as encapsulated in Chikkaiah’s songs – Hariharan’s message is explicitly loud and vehement.

The emergence of Dalit literature as a distinct genre is an outcome of the Dalit liberation movement which challenges the hegemony of the upper castes. Dalit literature/aesthetics is the product of Dalit ‘Chetna’ or Dalit consciousness, which is “unique, separate and different from the consciousness of other writers," which Limbale considers as the most essential attribute of Dalit literature (Babar). Tarach and Khandekar describes Dalit writings as "letters of their own blood"(Raj Kumar 68), which implies that only a Dalit by birth can have the sensitivity and experience to be a genuine Dalit writer. Non-Dalit writings on Dalit life have been criticised as not being authentic representations, which either glorifies caste-Hindu characters, or their change of heart towards the end. As for the depiction of lower caste characters, they "will be able to rouse sympathy in the mind of the readers but will never have a voice of their own and even if they are portrayed as strong characters, they will be romanticized and portrayed as larger than human" (Kumari& Kapoor). Hence, 'Caste Hindu' literary reproduction about Dalits was not strictly considered to be Dalit literature. Anticipating this resistance, Githa Hariharan specifies in her *Acknowledgements* thus:

> Finally, an acknowledgement of another sort. No privileged person in terms of caste or clan can, despite choices made as an adult, really 'know' the lived experience of those who have been historically oppressed. *I Have Become the Tide* has been written with this awareness. But it was also born out of the conviction that no writer can engage with life in India today without taking a stand, in some modest way, on the terrible inequalities that continue to ravage the lives of so many of our fellow citizens. (322)

It is the same sentiment that Hariharan puts into the mouth of Professor Krishna as he walks out of the seminar hall after a talk on 'Kannadeva's Real Voices'. He is accosted by a young woman who questions his authority to talk on Kannadeva's Dalit ancestry, "You are not a Dalit. Isn't this another form of appropriation? I mean, you're talking of a cattle skinner. Can you ever understand his life?" Professor's reply is very well Hariharan's own justification as well as assertion of her moral commitment – "You're right. I can never directly understand – in the sense of experience – the day-to-day life of a cattle skinner, his sufferings, his fears and dreams. But I can listen to his voice. I can read what is written about him. I can translate those words, study them. In fact, I must." (244)

In his essay "Dalitization Not Hinduization", Kancha Ilaiah argues that, "We must dalitise our entire society as Dalitization will establish a new egalitarian future for Indian society as a whole" (115). Extending the statement, it can be said that Hariharan's 'dalitization' of narrative is essential to create a new egalitarian literary ethos, where the label 'Dalit literature' is not pigeonholing or ghettoization of a particular genre written by a particular class of society, but speaks of an integral strand which goes into the making of so-called 'mainstream literature'. Hariharian's novel is a clarion call that when "time is out of joint", it speaks of the moral responsibility and social commitment of every writer to "set it right", in order to create that egalitarian society as envisioned in the Indian Constitution.

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~ Author Profiles ~

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