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## Editorial

### (Remembering Dr. Kulbhushan Kushal)

The departure of a human soul from this world is always painful and leaves us with a sense of void. However, there are certain people whose absence in this world is more than just that. Their contribution to the cause of humanity and the human world makes one realize the loss more intensely. The one pious soul whose departure has caused a great loss to the world of literature (particularly poetry) and education was, and will be remembered as Dr. Kulbhushan Kushal. Born in a remote border village, now a small town, Narot Jaimal Singh, Dist. Gurdaspur, Punjab, he became a popular teacher of English at a famous College, Baring Union Christian College, Batala, and after serving this institution for more than two decades joined the DAV setup and rose to the position of Regional Director DAV Institutions, Maharashtra and Gujrat. Despite his administrative engagements his love for poetry remained intact. His poetic acumen found expression in four of his books, 'Shrinking Horizons', 'Rainbow on Rocks, Whirlpool of Echoes', 'Songs of Silence' and the poems that appeared in different National and International journals.

Kushal's poetry bears witness to different aspects of his versatile personality, rich experience, concern for humanity and poetic sensibility. The poetic self in Kushal's poems is the configuration and amalgamation of different experiences, acquired thought patterns and culture engendered value patterns. It also informs the sensitivity under stress grappling with the emerging patterns of life lost in the labyrinthine designs of technology savvy world. His poems repeatedly talk of a self engaged in its attempt to find footholds in the slippery and elusive ground of new found glory of romantic ideals projected through media. Throughout his poetic venture his whole concern has been to make people realize their plight. Here the poetic self's concern for the beguiling nature of contemporary reality and its impact on man reveals the responsive nature of the self that seeks to embody everyone and everything. It therefore extends the poetic sympathy to

(i)

the level of empathy that makes the poet identify himself with all the people adversely impacted by the emerging patterns of life. In a way the poet, while speaking for others or about others, speaks for and about his own self also. For him the dictum 'Aham Braham' of the Indian philosophy and religion becomes functionally significant in expressing his feelings and thoughts through poetic constructions. This nature of the Self projected in some of his poems can be ascertained from the following lines of the poem 'Mirror':

I am a mirror, I hope  
You have seen your faces  
Lost in my faces  
You have heard your words  
Lost in my ears  
You have read your gestures  
Preserved in my eyes (Whirlpool p 72)

The highly sensitive and responsive nature of the poetic persona in Kushal's poems, particularly the poems included in *Rainbow on Rocks* and *Whirlpool of Echoes*, marks the poet's awareness of the nature of the subtle ways in which almost invisible powers of technology are exercised to control human life. The poet's concern for the fast crumbling of traditional values under the weight of romantic illusions of success created by new orientations is evident from different poetic creations. Kushal's poetic achievement, lies in his expression of the new form of life with all its nuances through corresponding images. Instead of making direct statements, he presents fresh images that capture slices of life in carefully selected words that match the crudeness of the life that neglects feelings and emotions:

No wonder—  
With trade barometers in our hands  
We measure the beat of relation pulse  
Swing of status sensex (W.E. p.20).  
.....  
In the wasteland

(ii)

We are the protagonists  
We have soiled the souls  
Ravished the innocence  
We pray to holy ghosts  
But live not with them (R.R.p 34)

The celebration of traditions and the values of the past uncorrupted by modern developments marks the tradition oriented nature of Kushal's poetic sensibility. This celebration is, however, not a blind adherence to obsolete norms or religious dogmas. Tradition in the sense of cultural heritage that makes a community's choice for the 'good' forms the central concern of the poet.

The repeated references, though very subtle and indirect, to the history, mythology and ethical framework related to traditional Indian ethos marks the Indian sensibility groomed nature of the poetic self. It makes the self celebrate the life based on these values. In these poems the rejection of the comforts provided by modern technological developments that lack spiritual orientation is ultimately related to Indian philosophical thought that awards priority to spirit over matter.

However, the self's skeptical attitude towards the life informing sterility and lack of humanistic concerns resulting in blind pursuit of meaningless achievements does not inform of utter despair and irrevocable nature of this fall. There always runs a strain of expectation of something which is yet to be visualized and achieved. The poet is, no doubt, pained at the present state of affairs yet his belief in the existence of an ideal goal for life makes his poetry sound a positive note:

Beyond our sky  
There are other skies  
More skies ( Shrinking Horizons p. 38)

The sense of being exiled from the ideal world of happy co-existence to the world of competitive capitalism and individual progress marks the feeling of nostalgia in the poetic self. His constant yearning

for the romantic world of his past and the awareness of his inability to go back marks a mental conflict that keeps on nagging his soul.

Related to the poet's understanding of life and his faith in a cosmic vision of life that forms an endless stretch is the treatment of death. It has received different treatment in different contexts created in Kushal's poetry. Death forms an awareness of the ultimate reality of life that constantly reminds us of transitory nature of human affairs:

Clay said Kabir  
Is our destiny  
Our mother eternal  
Blessed are those  
Who have the feet of clay (p. 45).

And a lack of awareness of this aspect of life marks us embrace, 'Barren successes, Mock satiations, Proxy fulfillments'.

Despite all his concerns for finer human feelings, he is more concerned with the aesthetic aspects of poetry and the magic of words. As a writer, he constantly believed that poetry has a charm of its own and it carries value more as an art form than a propagation of ideas.

Poetry is  
A trick of a magician  
Sculpted in words  
Poetry is a collage of colors  
Singing symphonies (95)

These aspects of Kushal's poetry bring out his maturity as a writer and reveal how he had a deep love for humanity and a philosophical mind that could bring out multiplicity of human experiences on this earth.

With his sudden demise, we have lost a gentle and pure soul, a man of humility, simplicity, sincerity, sympathy and love for others, and a potent poetic voice that has enriched Indian English poetry.

**‘We Won’t Die Secret Deaths Anymore’: Anamnesis  
of Forbidden History in the Fourteenth Dalai  
Lama’s *Freedom in Exile* and Rahul Pandita’s  
*Our Moon Has Blood Clots***

**Dr. Khem Raj Sharma\***

**Abstract**

The literary genre of autobiography offers an inimitable window into the process by which individuals attempt to negotiate their history through memory making. It is a ‘retrospective narrative’ about structuring self-representation viz. the author’s own life, or a substantial part of it, seeking to reconstruct his/her personal development within a given historical, social and cultural framework. The ‘past within’ and ‘the difficult past’ resurfaces in the form of autobiography which embodies the ‘ruptured histories’ for representation and identification of the people who have become fugitives, refugees and nomads in the globalised world. In addition to a reconstruction of the past, these autobiographical accounts are also the ‘sources for historical understanding’ via actuality as well as fictionality of events. Thus, autobiography and history share a structural formulation that invites the reader to read them in conjunction, and decipher the nuances inside them in varied ways. This research paper engages with autobiographical texts by two writers of forced diaspora viz. the fourteenth Dalai Lama’s *Freedom in Exile* and Rahul Pandita’s *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, as historiographical sources. These texts underscore the contesting nature of the history of their respective homelands, which literally stand bereaved of their pristine history by certain hegemonic forces.

**Keywords:** Anamnesis, History, Exile, Autobiography, Tibetan diaspora, Kashmiri Pandits,

The discourse of exile rests entirely on the idea of a nation and the history concerning it. The traumatic experiences in scattered

locales compel the exiles to form a homogenized community devoid of any local, tribal or sectarian identities, and to re-write their history that has been fabricated by their perpetrators. “History is truth and fear. And some lies” and it literally permeates into “struggles over truth, lies disguised as truth, and the fear that induces secrets and silences.” (MacGranahan, 570) It is through this approach of truth and fear that forced diasporas translate their unrepresented, unacknowledged, and forbidden history. For Tibetans and Kashmiri Pandits in exile, the history is caught between what ‘really happened’ and the ‘epistemic murk of historical memory. ‘In this context, Walter Benjamin’s famous statement holds ground: “To articulate the past historically . . . means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.” (255) However, thinking of history and historical production as composed of fears and lies, as well as of truths, demands attention to the processes whereby pasts may become history. The histories of Tibetan and Kashmiri Pandits’ resistance movement have been silenced because they present moments of danger challenging the status quo of these communities in exile. Although any historical narrative could be said to be a bundle of silences, but the autobiographical ones confirm and contest all such silences a la by scripting the actuality as well as the possibility of truth in them.

Owing to the age of globalization and postmodernism, where the idea of high and low cultures is considered a fairy tale, it, surely, would be a difficult task to narrate something that the cosmopolitan and multicultural society may entertain. However, the Dalai Lama and Rahul Pandita have taken this exigent assignment, and have ascertained in their autobiographies the actuality and factuality of respective histories of their homeland via carrying out the anamnesis of their collective consciousness. Undertaking ‘anamnesis’ is unlike ‘emotions recollected in tranquility’, but is a ‘politically correct’ weapon in the hands of writers to deconstruct all such ruptures in history that divide man from his fellow beings on social, economic, political and geographical basis. It uncovers oppression, and constitutes a form of resistance; and is a “political necessity of taking a stand, of strategically essentializing a position from the perspective of those who were and

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are victimized and continue to suffer in various ways from an unequal, capitalist, patriarchal, and neocolonial world order" (Chowdhry, 281). Anamnesis thus entails working through a paradoxical structure of time that has explicitly been associated by Lyotard with literature. It is the narrator's recollections to present that which is forgotten. Whereas "history tries to testify to what happened, Anamnesis tries to testify that it happened." (Gaillard, 83)

In postmodern age, relying heavily on post-truth where "objective facts are less influential in shaping the public opinion [but] appeals to emotion and personal belief" (Khetal 12) autobiographies certainly score rationale while projecting truth and untruth to identify the larger truth of acceptance, integrity, as well as for a voice to cater to their concerns. To record and sustain their unrecorded and unaccepted history, the forced diasporas also come up with rationales for a little tempering with truth so as to dissemble guilt-free. Autobiography as a literary form thus embarks on anamnesis by bringing the history of personal, socio-cultural and political contexts to the level of an objective discourse. The memories of the narrators may or may not falter, but their respective communities are on unending journey of lost home. It is not one sided pain of being uprooted geographically, but they also long for an integrated pattern of their cultural legacy. Therefore, their texts are records of such migration which has become a sore of their fragmented consciousness. Sometimes it mixes up with political agencies of the world, and at other, it also remains unheard and unresponded by the same world.

## I

*Freedom in Exile* (1990) is a witness narrative written through an English translator in His Holiness, the fourteenth Dalai Lama's voice wherein he shares the story of his life and people in a truthful, humorous, and insightful manner. The autobiography comes with a lesson for life on every second page, and although published in 1990 it is still relevant today as nothing much has changed for Tibet ever since. It also gives a history of Tibet and an overview of Buddhism. It depicts a society that has long been relying on demonstrating orally and lacking continuity of a genealogical past. Fully accomplishing his

stated motivation for the work, the author shares interesting details and confessions of his childhood, together with picturesque descriptions of Tibetan terrain, flora and fauna, and sets history straight in sharing as many facts as possible regarding the situation in Tibet since the early 1950s.

Remembered past has no direct connection with present Tibet, and the past, in a sense, has nothing to do with the present, yet the author's autobiography is immensely replete with telling about old Tibet emphasizing their ways of living, dressing and eating. So, the narrator's domestic story is raised up to the level of a distinct national identity of Tibetans' past. Therefore, the Dalai Lama obviously writes back to the empire. His textual discourse becomes a means to protect Tibetan-culture consisting of language and Buddhist philosophy. The author asserts, "And whilst Tibetans are by nature quite aggressive people and quite warlike, their increasing interest in religious practice was a major factor in bringing about the country's isolation. [. . .] However, as Tibetans' enthusiasm for Buddhism increased, Tibet's relations with her neighbors become of a spiritual rather than a political nature" (FE 10). The author openly talks about Tibet as separate nation of the world as it has been brought up with different history of idealism maintained by different language, geography and mannerisms.

The point of distinct identity is a critique of hegemonic construct emphasizing upon self-recognition and articulation. Such identity politics involves representation and misrepresentation of somebody's worldviews. Tibetans' identity is fabricated by the West and People's Republic of China. For the West, it is a spiritual landscape having some sense of metaphysical entity of Buddhism. On the other hand, China defines this land by communist ideology. Consequently, Tibet does not exit by itself as hegemonic powers of the world have provided lopsided assumptions about Tibetans' culture. These reductive notions of identity politics have distorted their actual mirror of socio-cultural reality. Accordingly, the Dalai Lama's book takes credits to re-define Tibet in its innovative and modern style where 'contexts' are updated through Buddhist aesthetics. Therefore, the narrator

does not emphasize political freedom through the concept of distinct identity, but also demands socio-cultural freedom compromising with other spheres of modern human civilization. When scholars see problems in assimilating localism with cosmopolitanism, then the Dalai Lama's claims for distinct identity and its mixing in global democracy provides a new perspective on forcefully exilic community of Tibetans.

Tibet is replete with mystery, ambiguity and several anecdotes of its oral past. Immensely prohibited from public communication, it has been unable to write and share its socio-cultural history across the world. Present autobiography is a clear expression of Tibetans' minds whose feelings are controlled and manipulated. Their thoughts are strategically re-shaped in the process of displacement. Additionally, people are immensely persecuted by PRC within a closed territory. "Beijing has mobilized a campaign to accuse the Dalai Lama and Tibetan activists of splitting the country. Nobel Laureate, the Dalai Lama, whose struggle has come to symbolize peace and non-violence to people worldwide, has been labelled by Chinese officials as a "wolf in monk's robes," a "serial liar," and a "slave owner," to name just a few examples" (Davis 125). Ironically, he calls it his homeland.

The Dalai Lama portrays at ease his interaction with Mao, Nehru and other world leaders. This gives readers a great insight of the political equations that existed during that period. One can empathize with the helplessness of the Indian rulers who feel touched by atrocities on Tibetans yet couldn't do anything substantial for fear of their motherland's security compulsions and due to the policy of PanchSheel, where India and China cannot interfere in internal matters of each other. Yet India's generosity results in the 1962 Sino-Indian war, thereby shattering Nehru's dream of a war-free Asia. Here, while Jaya Prakash Narayan, one Indian politician, "had promised on some future appropriate occasion to raise India's voice in support of Tibetan Freedom" (FE132), the attitude of world superpowers like Britain and America is debatable as they pretend to be protectors of human rights. However, here, the Dalai Lama with shrewd astuteness reveals half truths about them so as not to mar the future prospect of help and friendship from any country.

The writing of the autobiography has in fact identified the Tibetans to the people of the world and has also solved the riddle of

Tibet and the myth of 'Shangri-la' thereby solving the enigma of survival for Tibetans-in-exile. Furthermore, giving the insights into the psyche of the Dalai Lama, the narrative is important historically considering the situations under which it is written and the position of the Dalai Lama in the contemporary world politics. During its publication, the majority of the world's people know very little or nothing about the plight of the Tibetans in exile. It conveys "the message of peace, and opens a debate in the world about ignoring Tibet historically through its simple yet insistent diction and universal messages" (Hardesty, n. pag.). Being from the lineage and reincarnate of the institution of the Dalai Lama, the narrator is a witness to the entire course of Tibetan history, and makes his countrymen, scattered across the globe, aware about their history, polity and religion. The autobiography also acts as a ploy to counter the Chinese juggernaut for their presentation of wrong history of Tibet, and to register a strong resistance to them. Therefore, through this autobiography, the Dalai Lama presents a sympathetic yet complex picture of the Tibetan people and nation thereby making it a catalytic text for the extensive understanding of the Tibetan people, their religion, their plight, and their independence movement in the whole world.

Thus, the Dalai Lama's *Freedom in Exile* (1990) gives a socio-historical account of Tibet that has been affected by imperialist strategies of the People's Republic of China. As a witness narrative, it counters the arrested Tibetan history thereby telling the entire world about the situation of Tibet. In this, the author evidently shows how China's assertiveness and ideological madness has destroyed their indigenous socio-cultural praxis. Apparently, forced exile has produced irrecoverable loss to Tibet utilizing natural resources and expelling people outside from a unified living standard. The narrator is highly nostalgic about his homeland in the beginning of the book, but his consciousness is not akin to local perspective on Tibet. On the contrary, he touches wider aspects of belongingness and returning. Hence, he has neither prejudices nor fixed socio-cultural memories towards Tibet. His narrative shows a blatant resistance against his own tradition critiquing hegemonic apparatus of China simultaneously. Broadly speaking, the narrator himself becomes critic and scholar of his life narrative that turns into a re-discovery of new land with a critical introspection of the past. He is aware of the sad reality of

Tibetans and hence have taken recourse to the metaphor of “freedom in exile” to non-violently assert that freedom is more of a state of mind than a geo-political ambition, realization of which seems far-fetched in view of aggressive and violent stance that China has always taken vis-à-vis Tibet. Also, boundaries are not at fault, but misrepresentations of unharmonious human faculties are always dangerous and harmful in the course of life. Providing a constructive approach to religion, politics and history is a major task of the author’s consciousness in exile. It does not mean that the author has obsession with dead past but he has also opened a new space for thinking and living in the present.

## II

Rahul Pandita’s *Our Moon has Blood Clots: The Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits* (2013), traces the entire history of love-hate relationship of the majority Muslim community and the minority Hindus of Kashmir. As a counter-narrative, it is the first book by any Kashmiri Pandit since twenty-six years of their forced expulsion that narrates almost the entire history, whether real or imaginary; reflects the geography of the so-called paradise on earth, or of the well-created hell for humans living there or outside it; and ponders on the whole politics both historical and contemporary. These memories underscore the continuum of incidents of victimization of Kashmiri Pandits and their exodus in 1990 within the Indian State when the majority Muslims conspired to get rid of an erudite, enlightened Pandit minority to establish the independent Islamic state there. The most important part of this ‘witness narrative’, concerns the day of fear Pandita spends as a 14-year old in the winter of 1990, along with some incidents preceding it, which contextualize his sense of fear, shock and horror. Thus, Pandita has ‘remapped’ the history of his people to prevail upon the majority Muslims to acknowledge that hidden in their stories of victimization are the stories of these victimized Hindu Pandits also. The author records the history dispossession of pre and post exile period where his community has been culturally subjugated and forced to live a life bereft of a decent identity; and attempts at reclaiming the cultural identity of his people lost in time and space.

For Pandita as a diasporic writer, autobiography has come to operate as a field where issues about ethnic identity, group memory,

and minority subjectivity can be addressed. The fictional element in it becomes a useful tool as it is both intimate and more than a personal story. In *Acts of Narrative Resistance*, Laura J. Beard characterizes the fictionalized autobiographical genres as, “created at the nexus of political discourse and artistic practice” (1). As a personal narrative as well as a historical document, Pandita explicitly probes his personal and societal position from a marginalized site, where he makes the exiled Pandit’s silences to speak. After their exodus, the pundits have been forced to face an aura of powerlessness, helplessness at a place which definitely is a ‘no place’ for them. The one time prosperous Hindu families have been driven out of a Kashmir where “call to prayer at the mosques was accompanied by bells from Shiva temples” (OM77). And then “it was decided by a militant minority that there could only be one God in the Valley” (OM58). All those Pandits, who have been living in the chilly heaven of Kashmir, are now exposed to the scorching hell of the refugee camps in Jammu.

Even living in Delhi, the writer “felt very vulnerable. I thought this city would suck me into its dark underbelly; it would swallow me whole” (OM7). The very thought of the existing hate at home, that blood-spattered night of exodus and the consequent life in exile have made him think that he and possibly all his people are in perpetual exile. The slogan “Hum kya chaahte –Azadiiiii!” (OM8) of the Kashmiri Muslims, who had ironically snatched the freedom of their neighbours, haunt them persistently. Also, the preceding history of Kashmir compels them so. Leaving aside the two golden phases of Hindu rulers Lalitaditya and Avantivarman; and Muslim rulers Akbar and Shahjahan, the entire history is replete with cruelty against Pandits. The practice started with fanatic ruler Sultan Sikandar (Known as Butshikan—the idol breaker), who with his cruelty made the hapless Pandits cry: “Na Bhatta Aham, Na Bhatta Aham! (I’m not a Pandit, I’m not a pandit!)” (OM15) Aurangzeb persecuted them for a long time which even caused the martyrdom of the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur while helping the Pandits. The time of Afgan’s rule for seven decades brought terrible misfortune to the Pandits.

The mass conversion of Hindus had horrific influence on Pandits: “The Afgan rulers would surround a group of Pandits with naked swords and ask them to convert. Those who did not comply would be put to death immediately. For the rest, a calf would be slaughtered,

and they would be fed its meat and their sacred thread would be snapped" (OM17). The Dogra rulers afterwards subjected the Muslims which caused discontentment amongst them against the Pandits, who had been the privileged lot at that time. The Indian independence and the consequent attack on Kashmir brought tension again in the valley. India's victory over Pakistan even in a cricket match would infuriate the Muslims, and they would, in sheer frustration, snort at the photo of goddess Sarswati. This gravity of hate has been such that even the renovation of the author's house draws brows of his Muslim friend: "Why are you wasting your money like this? . . . Tomorrow, if not today, this house will belong to us." (OM62) Hence, the entire history both past and present has the record of continuous 'hate' existing in the Valley. However, in the valley of mist, the continuing war between nations has pained only one community i.e. Kashmiri Pandits. They have been decimated in the paradisiacal valley as punching bags only.

In 1990, it was Benazir Bhutto's speech that ignited the call for Kashmiri Azadi. Kashmiri Muslims "wanted to turn Kashmir into Pakistan, without the Pandit men, but with their women." (OM77) The author recounts tales of depression and nervous collapse amongst parents, wives and children who senses the impending violence after the menacing call. The situation terrifies even the reader in which Pandita's mother, finding the family surrounded by militants, declares: "Ma rushed to the kitchen and returned with a long knife [. . .] 'If they come, I will kill her,' she looked at my sister. 'And then I will kill myself. And you see what you two need to do'" (OM77). The incidents that followed after the outbreak of violence have been more heartrending. In one case where a Hindu girl, after being raped by four men in a moving taxi, recognizes her Muslim neighbour, they put her on "a wood-processing unit and cut her alive on a mechanical saw. This was what the seekers of freedom were doing to the religious minority." (OM118) After the black night of January 19, 1990, these onetime wealthy and most learned people of the Valley had "lost everything—home, hearth, and all [the] worldly possessions, which had taken generations to build" (OM101). Some of them have been dying 'homeless, away from their home.' In the enormity of their tragedy, however, it becomes more painful for them to think that their exile is within their own country.

While reminiscing about Kashmir, Pandita accentuates that his ancestors had taken the pursuit of knowledge in the natural bounty of Kashmir. It is in this land where they have developed the philosophy of life in coexistence: We held that the world is real, as opposed to the other Hindu philosophy of the world being *maya*, an illusion. For us, everything in this world is a manifestation of this consciousness. We rejected the otherness of god. We evolved a way of life that was distinct from the bell-ringing, hymn reciting popular religion. We believed that the world was essentially a creative expression of Shiva, or consciousness. Thus, everyone could become Shiva, irrespective of caste and gender. (OM12) The land and this philosophy had produced such poets and their works i.e. Kalahan's Rajatarangini; Abhinavagupta's Tantraloka, Abhinavabharti, Natyashastra etc.; Kshendra's Brhatkathamajari; Somdeva's Kathasaritsagara; Bilhana's Chaurapanchasika etc. Historically, even the Buddhist scriptures were written in Sanskrit in Kashmir for the first time. It is this land which Jehangir desired while dying: "Kashmir, nothing else" (OM16).

The memories of historical incidents continue in the text as Milan Kundera suggests: "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" (OM223). Pandita himself says that "Sometimes, memory has a mind of its own. It takes off on autopilot, and flashes small incidents in front of you—incidents one has not remembered for years" (OM227). Carrying all these memories of the past and travelling from one place to another as a journalist, Pandita has recorded almost the entire history of upheaval in the Kashmir Valley that caused their exodus and the consequences of such exile. This is the result of his fear for the exiles and the displaced Pandit community: I began to worry that the story of our community would be lost in the next few decades. It was only because of the previous generation that our customs and traditions were kept alive. [. . .] They created mini Kashmirs wherever they settled. [. . .] We are losing our tradition, our links to the place where we come from. (OM211).

Rahul Pandita's memoir is a record of the history and politics of Kashmir that is abounding in tension, hate and cruelty. The forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from their beloved homeland is a conundrum to which Pandita's work is a positive beginner of posing

resistance. His chart on the historical underpinnings of their victimization and exodus into perpetual exile is not an expression of ethnic or regional chauvinism, but one of survival of a community on the verge of extinction. It also questions the "series of untruths . . . [which] have become the truth" (OM219) of those Kashmiri Muslims, who constantly rumors that the migration has been a conscious attempt by Pandits on the guidelines of the then Governor of the State, Jagmohan. The author counters all those Kashmiri Muslims, who articulate this idea without an attempt to debate why a financially and professionally successful community i.e. Pandits's would willingly leave their homes in the exotic Kashmir Valley to live in shanty refugee camps. Thus, the autobiography records Kashmiri Pandits as victims of the ethnic cleansing, who are reviving the courage to redefine their identity through the construction of history. Both as a witness and an investigator, Pandita has recorded the history of his people thereby contesting the injustices of his times in Kashmir.

To conclude, it is reiterated that the fourteenth Dalai Lama and Rahul Pandita has created/ re-created such 'arrested histories' in their respective autobiographies that could not be erased, or forgotten but are archived for future use. These personal life stories "stand as a strong testimony and a more authentic access to a truer history." (Ismond 42)The unofficial ban on telling a reliable history has percolated into such narratives that have become official texts of their cerebral pasts for the whole world except the perpetrators. As a result, telling resistance histories is the most radical step towards challenging historical arrest, with a hope and belief to benefit Tibetans and Kashmiri Pandit's cause. These narratives serve as counter-narratives to the arrested histories and thus, solicit ethnographic inquiry into the conditions of possibility for reliable history. They hold the promise of locale recognition, thereby affirming that they 'won't die secret deaths anymore.' For Tibetans, it is about restoring Tibet, while for Pandits, it is an attempt to reclaim, and voice for their entire life course history that stands bereaved from them. The anamnesis of their forbidden history in their life narratives not only translate their everlasting resistance and physical return of their respective communities to their homeland but also necessitate their furtherance and adjustment in the contemporary world.

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## 'Sharing the Continent' Reading Northrop Frye as a Canadian Critic

Dr. Pooja Joshi\*

### Abstract

Although Frye has written extensively on the European literary tradition, he is no less concerned with Canadian background and society. All of his writings reveal a peculiar Canadian aspect in him and his theories nourished by Canadian culture and sensibility. The ideas reflected in *The Modern Century*, *Divisions on a Ground*, and *The Bush Garden* help us probe into the national consciousness and multi-dimensional awareness of a thinker who is not just a teacher and a liberal humanist, but a social, cultural, theoretical and a scientific critic as well. Frye's 'Canadianism' is as significant as his literary criticism because both are inseparable. The impact of Canadian landscape, its menacing geographical setting and terrifying climate has all been recorded in his attitude and thinking. The study aims further to bring to light how Frye is absorbed into Canadian soil, its historical past and cultural development. He is the hallmark of Canadian multiculturalism in the true sense and his writings are the clearest expression of his critical vision as a Canadian product. His contribution to Canadian literature and imagination makes him a role model and a national hero in true sense. It is both illuminating and interesting to read Northrop Frye as a regional and a universal figure at the same time.

**Keywords:** Canadian literature, identity, Canadianism, Society, Culture.

The most reputed twentieth century Canadian theorist Northrop Frye once observed: "Canadians are conditioned from infancy to think of themselves as citizens of a country of uncertain identity, a confusing past, and a hazardous future" (186). Frye's fundamental question about the problem of Canadian identity is also concerned with locale as he wrote in his conclusion to the first edition of the

Literary History of Canada 'where is here?' instead of 'who am I?' (*The Bush Garden* 220). He was born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, raised in Monton, New Brunswick and educated at the University of Toronto, where he lectured from 1939 until his death in 1991. Except for several years as an undergraduate at Oxford, and extended lecturing appointments in other countries, chiefly the United States, he resisted living elsewhere because he said, 'I found, as I grew older, that my roots were going deeper and deeper into the Canadian Society and that I couldn't really pull out of that' (*A World in a Grain of Sand* 273). A strongly accepted notion is that Canadian literature occupies a comparatively minor place in Frye's writings. Yet we feel that he is not untouched with the concerns of Canadian sensibility when we come across the opening remark of *The Bush Garden* that his writings have been 'mainly concerned with world literature and has addressed an international reading public and yet has always been rooted in Canada and has drawn its essential characteristics from there' (1).

The present paper is an attempt to examine what are these roots? and what are the 'essential characteristics' that have been drawn from there? In this regard Wallace Stevens's observation, 'when we are in Spain everything looks Spanish' can be extended to Frye also (*Hamilton* 309). When we realise that Frye is a Canadian, somehow his criticism too seems Canadian. No doubt he could not be confused with the distinctively American or English critics as Harold Bloom and Frank Kermode, though all three share certain general characteristics: White, middle class males writing within Western Culture at much the same time. Northrop Frye's claim in *Divisions on a Ground* that 'scholarship, no less than poetry, grows out of a specific environment and is in part a response to it' (35) can be justified when we perceive how his own criticism grew out of his specific Canadian environment and is in part a response to it. There is no such thing as a 'true' Canadian (*Hamilton* 309), which is definable through a set of essential characteristics. Frye himself admits that there doesn't exist something as hundred percent Canadian. In fact Canada is a mosaic created out of two founding nations, French and

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English, in addition to two native nations – Indian and Inuit and also the people from all countries in the world who have largely maintained their ethnic identities. Frye has observed in the essay 'Culture as Interpretation' that Canada 'has passed from a pre-national to a post-national phase without ever having become a nation' (Divisions on a Ground 15). The consequence is that it is a country politically split by a separatist movement, economically bound with the United States, socially fragmented into many regional solitudes, and psychologically shaken with guilt by the sufferings of its native peoples. In an attempt to define and locate itself on the map of the world, Canada seems to have turned to creative writers and artists, poets, musicians, novelists, dramatists, painters, film makers, scientists, philosophers and literary critics such as Frye - who through their writings and activities are trying to assert their presence as a Canadian.

For Frye, Canadian literature is characterized by a disharmony between its inherited European culture and its North American environment. This kind of 'topocentric criticism' is in opposition to those who do not assume a mystical discontinuity between the Canadian imagination and its European roots (Surette 45). Frye shows the precise points where local creation becomes part of the civilized discourse which he speaks of as criticism and creativity. Eli Mandel's remark is noteworthy here: "Frye's writings on the Canadian culture take us through history and literature - wedding a Laurentian theory of Canadian history with a romantic myth of a descent to the interior, through cultural history - ranging across the folk-culture theories of nation to modernist internationalism" (289). The fact is that Frye, more than anyone else, has put into perspective the question of Canadian cultural identity. His approach is unique and wide in the sense that he understands the difficulties that confront such environment and conditioning. In Frye's thought the Canadian question rises not only to the question of the social relevance of art, but to questions about the religious and mythic reach of art. Works such as *The Bush Garden* (1971) which includes his "Conclusion" to the first edition of *The Literary History of Canada, The Modern Century* (1967) and *Divisions on a Ground*

(1982) have been among the clearest expositions of his theories about Canadian literature and cultural origin.

Culture is the product of a region rather than a country. In 1943, Frye reviewed A. J. M. Smith's *The Book of Canadian Poetry* which later proved to be initiation of his critical career. In connection to that review Frye wrote in "The Critic and the Writer": "ever since then I have been very deeply aware of the kind of soil that I am rooted in and of the impossibility of my having developed as I did under any formative other than those which I encountered in Southern Ontario" (6). Actually, Toronto was the region that nourished the critic Northrop Frye and more specifically, Victoria College was his spiritual home. Two types of attitude regarding 'distinctively Canadian' qualities are discernible in Frye. Firstly, he protests that 'a great deal of useless yammering has been concerned with the "truly Canadian" qualities of our literature, and one's first instinct is 'to avoid the whole question'. In the second place, Frye doesn't seem to dismiss the question completely as he adds: 'no one who knows the country will deny that there is something, say an attitude of mind, distinctively Canadian' (*Bush Garden* 131).

Frye was aware of his cultural conditioning by two writers earlier in the formative stage of his literary career. Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* exercised enormous enthusiasm in Frye towards his readings of Western Culture. Spengler believed that culture inscribes its characteristics on everyone born within it, everything they do expresses its essential nature. Each part of a culture interpenetrates every other part, and therefore may be identified both with it and with the whole. This concept of the organic wholeness of a western culture informs Frye's major critical concept: that the 'mythological universe' in which we live provides a common identity for all literary works and roots them in a specific society and at a specific stage of its culture (*Divisions on a Ground* 185). The second writer is William Blake from whom as Frye clearly acknowledges, 'I have learned every thing I know' (*A World in a Grain of Sand* 285). Frye was brought up by his grand parents, and because of his grand father he was attracted to the ministry simply because he took it to be the

central sort of cultural symbol. Later he came to identify his grandfather 'with Blake's Thunder God with a beard in the sky and reactionary political views' (328).

In 1925, the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches united to form the United Church of Canada; and in 1936 Frye was ordained as a United Church clergyman. Although Frye repudiated Methodism's fundamentalism, he retained its evangelical and non-doctrinaire faith, as he recounts in *The Double Vision: In Methodism, even of the episcopal variety to which my family belonged, there was an emphasis on religious experience as distinct from doctrine and on very early exposure to the story element in the Bible. Such a conditioning may have helped to propel me in the direction of a literary criticism that has kept revolving around the Bible, not as a source of doctrine but as a source of story and vision* (3). This kind of a reading of the Bible gave Frye his major area of interest in myths or stories as they form a mythological universe within the framework of the Bible. He came to believe that there is only one human race and society's primary concerns incorporate our environment as well: including water, air, land and every thing which we share with all human beings and all other living species because we share their identity. Henceforth, Frye's religious background plays a vital role in governing his specific Canadian identity. But there are other factors too.

Nature, the area of the land and its geographical location – all these elements are highly significant in studying the "Canadianism" of Canada. When Frye was asked, 'Is there is such a thing as "Canadianism" in our literature?' he replied no: 'there are a number of poets working within a specific environment with a specific kind of historical background.' Yet the idea is not totally dismissed as Frye moves on to say that 'insofar as Canada is a distinctive environment, with dimensions both in time and space, that is, in both history and geography, it does possess certain unique qualities' (*A World in a Grain of Sand* 217). Canada's geographical situation and its historical background become significant in order to examine if any of these 'unique qualities' are shared by Frygian Criticism. Canada is best understood when we look for a strange kind of combination of certain features it presents. The most distinguishing one about the land is

that there is so much of it; secondly to one's utter surprise its emptiness – which renders the country as largely unknown to rest of the world, even to most of the Canadians. The third fact is its rugged, character forming climate solely determined by its geographical location.

Frye feels that Canada appears alien due to its vastness, emptiness and so much cold in winters, that there is a lurking feeling in addition to it that 'if anything did speak to the poet from nature it would speak only to condemn' ('Haunted' 29). The land of Canada suggests its characteristic feeling of withdrawal tinged with futility rather than commitment and this can be one reason that heroic action or revolutionary element though remains possible for Canada but shifts towards images of denial and defeat than those of fulfilment and victory. It seems that Canada finds the environment less impressive than oppressive. Hence, the feeling that human life has no harmony with nature on this earth: It is a country in which nature makes a direct impression on the artist's mind, an impression of its primeval lawlessness and moral nihilism, its indifference to the supreme value placed on life within human society, its faceless, mindless, unconsciousness, which fosters life without benevolence and destroys it without malice (*The Bush Garden* 146). More powerfully the response to the landscape is recorded in Canadian poetry. The Canadian environment had an imaginative impact on Frye and that is why he claimed it had on writers and poets of Canada. According to him, Canada's huge, unthinking, menacing and formidable physical setting led writers to adopt a 'garrison mentality' to defend themselves against it, with the consequence that 'everything that is central in Canadian writing seems to be marked by the imminence of the natural world' (*The Bush Garden* 225, 247).

'There would be nothing distinctive in Canadian Culture at all', Frye remarks in *The Bush Garden*, 'if there were not some feeling for the immense searching distance, with the lines of communication extended to the absolute limit, which is a primary geographical fact about Canada and has no real counterpart elsewhere' (10). What Frye terms 'a primary geographical fact' echoes a primary critical fact about his criticism – his imaginative insight was stretched to the absolute limit by his effort, which is uniquely Canadian because no other critic of any country has attempted it, to map literature as a whole by demonstrating the way to organize all literary works into a

total schematic order or one body of literature, what he calls 'an order of words'. Frye's inter-connected system is a Canadian reaction to a Canadian situation as Margaret Atwood has aptly pointed out in 'Northrop Frye Observed':

Stranded in the midst of a vast space which nobody has made sense out of for you, you settle down to map-making, charting the territory, the discovery of where things are in relation to each other, the extraction of meaning. The poets were doing it with their own times and spaces, Frye was doing it within literature as a whole (405). A self-conscious artist will always sound provincial inspired by his cultural milieu; for instance, the more intensely Faulkner concentrates on his unpronounceable County in Mississippi, the more intelligible he becomes to readers all over the world. Therefore, Frye comes to the conclusion in 'Culture as Interpenetration' that 'there is no such thing as a hundred percent Canadian' and that Canada is becoming 'culturally visible through painters and writers who belong, as creative people, less to Canada than to the prairies, the Pacific Coast, the Atlantic coast, Southern Ontario or Quebec'. The 'provincial' aspect of Canadian culture is going into reverse, 'from inarticulate form to articulate content' (25) since about 1960, a great upsurge of creative power has happened to English Speaking Canada, both within the conventional forms of poetry and fiction and outside them. The culture of Canada is progressing towards a national consciousness, the nature of which is decentralizing one. In the past years, the tone of Canadian literature has gained its essential rhythm which is of little difference with other literatures of the world.

Canadian sensibility asserts its presence in whatever Frye has written and though he writes fondly of Western literary tradition with a high reverence, still the comparison of Canadian poetry, painting, music, films and theatre to it every where completes the picture. It was one of the most satisfying aspects of Frye's life to see Canadian literature, which was still a provincial backwater when he began, flower into the magnificent literature that we have now- a development that arguably owes something to his efforts. Jean O' Grady recalls that Frye once defined the Canadian genius as the ability to produce strange hybrids, such as the University of Toronto in education, the United Church in religion, and Confederation in politics. She perceives

some of this Canadian characteristic of contrasting entities strangely combined in Frye too: "the local teacher and the world celebrity, the committed Christian and the man who didn't know whether Christ ever existed and didn't think it much mattered, the believer in community and the shy introvert, the eloquent speaker and the tongue-tied conversationalist" (32). Looking to these factors, Frye was one of the most characteristic and unique products that Canada has ever produced. He is a Canadian, yet a universal literary figure, a cultural critic working within the Canadian environment yet conscious of the whole of Western literary tradition – it is in this sense that the Canadian identity is no less Canadian because it is shared by the entire humanity.

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## Women as the Nation's Citizen Subjects: Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich like Us*

Dr. Tanvir Sachdeva\*

### Abstract

The grand narrative of Indian nationalism constructs itself as a singular, homogeneous "truth" about national identity and largely fixes women in the circumscribed space of the interior. The claim of women to nationhood is usually depended upon the male citizen, and they are subsumed only symbolically into the national body politic. This paper takes up Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich like Us*, and examines how the protagonist, locates herself as a citizen subject vis a vis the nation that is in danger of being rewritten from a democratic-socialist setup to a dynastic totalitarian state in the seventies with the imposition of Emergency. It traces not only a gendered perspective on Emergency but also sets a new discourse of resistance to corruption of moral values.

**Keywords:** Nation, Citizen-subject, Women, Exclusion, Sahgal

Nation and nationalism are back with a vengeance all over the world and Western theorists can no longer dismiss them as ugly, hysterical resurgence of nationalisms "out there" (with separatist claims of a variety of ethnic nationalisms in the USSR, the unification of Germany etc). Political analysts like Partha Chatterjee have pointed out that although the nation is undoubtedly the most important political unit in the world today "nation," "nationality" and "nationalism" seem to lack coherence as concepts in political theory and are extremely difficult to describe or analyse. Ambedkar defined nationality as an elusive subjective psychological feeling, drawing upon the vocabulary of culture and cultural politics rather than political philosophy. Benedict Anderson has defined the nation as "an imagined community. . . [that is] distinguished by the style in which it is imagined" (15). The grand narrative of Indian nationalism constructs itself into a state. In the

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seventies with the imposition of Emergency there were palpable fears about the altering character of the nation from a democratic-socialist setup to a dynastic upsurge. According to Aloysius, within a few decades of independence and partition India seems to have become “instead of a nation state one powerful state system” (2). Sahgal through her protagonist tries to “reclaim the nation at the time when corruption and intrigue” have precipitated a national crisis and in the process, identifies herself as a citizen subject vis-à-vis the nation. (Wadler 103).

The text deals with impingement of the state on the personal lives of its citizen-subjects and studies the impact of the emergency on a vast plethora of people. In *Rich like Us*, Sahgal presents various female characters, located in different positions vis-à-vis the nation--with the protagonist Sonali clearly inhabiting the public sphere of enterprise, Mona and Kiran remain confined to the domestic space and define themselves only in relation to the family, while Rose as a Cockney memsahib who is the second wife of an Indian businessman remains the Other in her relationship with her adopted country, included neither in the public space nor in the private. However, Sonali alone emerges as a citizen subject of the nation, chooses a powerful, public career in the country's elite bureaucracy and refuses to comply with the corrupt practices of the state. In fact, Sonali shares the space of the postcolonial woman intellectual-- the author Nayantara Sahgal. Sahgal had not only broken established scripts that control female conduct with a divorce in Indian society but had also gone public in her stance of protest against the totalitarian ideology of her cousin, Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, especially the imposition of Emergency in a public act of resignation as adviser to the Sahitya Academy and in the writing and publishing of *Rich like Us*, one of the books that went public in its anti-emergency posture. Sonali the protagonist of the novel, in her resignation from the Indian Administrative Service, echoes the author's stand.

Sahgal enlarges the scope of the female subject of by making her an entrant into a politicised public environment, the erstwhile male bastion of absolute power -- the elite Indian bureaucracy; the

epicenter of state, administration and capitalist machinery. She is seen as the individual/ citizen in a political sense, as the subject of law or subject of the political state. This suggests that the individual citizen is not free to determine her life but “subject” to forces of control which operate in Indian society. Having won for herself the freedoms of the feminist movement, she locates herself vis-à-vis the nation-state by reposing faith in the vocabulary of nationalism, socialist democratic systems, its parliament and five-year plans. Her entry into the annals of power in the bureaucracy sets a new discourse of resistance to corruption of moral values with the courage of conviction that is rare in men and women. But in the annals of Indian writing in English, a model where matrimony, professional success and happiness can coexist for a woman is perhaps not yet prevalent. For Sonali, the truly empowered woman whom Kachru had found “so burning bright,” success in the public sphere does not exist with the possibility of marriage. She stands as an autonomous individual.

At Oxford, the relationship between Sonali and Ravi is rocky because she does not follow conformist practices but reveals a will of her own, separate from his and different ideological affiliations. “We lay brain to brain as much as body to body, with a completeness of loving old and practised lovers would have envied. It was because of this -- because even when we were discussing the Commonest Manifesto, it was love we were making -- that the path was so rocky” (126). The actual break comes because they disagree about Marxist process that impinged on freedom and lives of artists and writers and thinkers. Rose suggests that since there is no revolution round the corner Sonali and Ravi need not fall out, but “stay together until [they]. . . come to the crunch?” But Sonali feels that Ravi is “so bossy, so selfish, if I married him I'd have to agree with him all the time...I am, oh, I still am in love with him” (230). Belonging to the same batch of service the two drift apart, with Sonali buried in her state while Kachru, “flew to conferences and acquired foreign gloss and gilt,” she finds that she cannot love the man he has become (192). Unlike Rose who sacrifices her selfhood to love and marriage, Sonali chooses the self over traditional conformist patterns. The choices

she makes mark a distinct definition vis-à-vis the nation space. Even after she becomes a bureaucrat, she rejects advances of foreign diplomats who expect a woman's brown eyes to “melt and sparkle at the desert stage of conversation,...[and] twinkles and half hinted messages [to] shoot out from her pores” (193). She does not even allow her mother's pressure or even the idea of romantic love to intrude upon her sense of self.

In decentring Eurocentric ideas of statecraft, she cannot understand why Indians should cut and paste western concepts together and bind themselves to it as if, “Europe was the centre of the universe, and the Bible and Marx were the last word in mankind. Wasn't it time after all the centuries to produce a thought of our own and wasn't that what Gandhi had done, pack off an empire with an antique idea instead of an atom bomb?” (124). Sonali' has total faith in the ideals of the nationalism of Gandhi, and the progressive idealism of Nehru. Her faith in the ideals of the nation-state-- the socialist, democratic promises made to the people by the leaders of national independence stems from her own belief system. She sees herself in relation to language inspired by the discourse of Marxism “though language will ravish anywhere if it is real and you are ready for it,” as well as that of nationalism “the beauty of the words and their power to inspire, and the new vocabulary which had swayed by new words that Gandhi had coined ‘Daridranarayan’,. . . ‘Harijan’ the language of a new epic invented by Gandhi.” “Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny. . . and now, like an elixir, you have nothing to lose but your chains. I wrote that sentence in large capitals in one of my notebooks to keep its lilting promise before me (reminding me not only of Marx, but of my liberated hair and my skirt and blouse” (120, 125).

She seems to be aware of the contradictions in the narrative-of-the-nation but rejects Kachru's critique of Gandhi as “God's gift to the capitalists” (125). According to G.Aloysius the nationalist agenda spearheaded by Gandhi, brought about a change by replacing the British with the high caste Hindu, and was devoid of any serious social change. The political mobilisation of the masses sought to divert

them from their agenda of economic and social interests (de-legitimising them as imitations of the West) to a religion based agenda in the name of uniqueness of Hindu/ Indian civilisation. Such a political mobilisation turned out to be false consciousness or the camouflage for the masses whose political and economic interests were excluded. “The religious discourse of Gandhi with political praxis . . . meant religion for the lower caste masters and politics for the upper caste nationalists” (Aloysius 182). Sonali, along with Rose, unaware of this contradiction (brought out by the Subaltern Studies Group) supports the nationalist ideals of progress and idealism. Nationalism required of its citizens that they cultivate specific habits of thought and living so that they could naturally and freely accept their role for national development. Sonali accepts this role in questioning and exposing the idea of the democratic ideal in the post-independence state. Sahgal aims her guns at Mrs. Gandhi's totalitarian stance ignoring the perpetuation of the vertical caste and class system that was left untouched by the leaders of national independence like Gandhi and Nehru.

Sahgal dwells on the dream of a secular-democratic nation turning sour during emergency. Sonali is stringently critical of the new direction that the nation has taken in its conversion into a state and attempts to “reclaim the nation at the time when corruption and intrigue have precipitated a crisis” (Wadler 103). She is conscious of the all pervasive oppression of the state which has touched all citizens and marginalised groups. The Indian state despite its obvious obligations to powerful business and landed interests had maintained at least at the level of legislation and government policy, a commitment to social justice and equality. But during the emergency this commitment was threatened and the founding ideals of the nation-in-making were toppled. At the time of emergency, elections were postponed, the democratic processes stalled, civil liberties suspended, the press censored. Hundreds of activists were imprisoned and movements were broken or driven underground. Resistance continued and found new strength in the anger of the people over such issues as forced sterilisation, slum “clearance” and city “beautification” projects. With the bureaucracy pretending “that the emergency was an emergency

when civil servants should know what the real emergency is” and taking part in “a conspiracy of silence” to facilitate the installation of family rule, civil servants like Kachru, with their ineffable blend of mediocrity and respectful response are next to being kith and kin of the Prime Minister (23).

Emergency meant curtailing the freedom of citizens with thousands of people held under detention without trial, censorship of press, prevention of public meetings, forced vasectomies of citizens and monopolisation of power and creating the big and small tyrants. Kishori Lal, a petty merchant is arrested and harassed by the police for being allegedly associated with RSS, a youth from the University is severely manhandled and imprisoned for being a member of Marxist party and eventually Kachru who had managed to ride the tide of popularity in the early days of emergency, eventually falls from grace when he tries to question the illegal transactions of Dev. The socialist base of society is shifted to accommodate new capitalist ventures which are not in agreement with state policy and in the process all oppositions whether they are unaccommodating civil servants like Sonali, freedom fighters or powerless citizens, are hacked out of sight. The nascent idea of a nation state, with its socialist and democratic ideology is compromised to facilitate dynastic upsurge forming affiliations with vested capitalist interests. The rational is simple as Dev says, “We are realising businesses business” (4). The P.M's son is in business himself making a people's car. Therefore old ideas of quotas and permits are conveniently by laid to facilitate business. The ideology of the succession of the son is presented as an objective/ natural fact, “The dictatorship around us was one of nature's marvels, not manmade not ‘made’ at all. It had the naturalness, the mother and child-ness of a crop that was cultivable” (99).

Louis Althusser argues that the state exerts power over its citizens in various ways, either repressive or ideological. The Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) functions by a form of violence or coercion and operates through such forms as the government, the administration, the police and the courts. In Rich like Us, all these operate together as a single form of power. The lawyer in his

anxiety to be politically correct evades the issue of helping Rose to get maintenance from her stepson Dev, who is pitted to be a minister in Madam's cabinet. Police, the keepers of law of the patriarchal state, sexually exploit and harass a group of women from the village of the armless beggar to punish their resistance against the landlord.(278).Sahgal collates the issues of gender, class and state, as she brings into focus the disappearance of the wife of the armless beggar into the brick kilns of the landlord, never to return. The resistance of the peasants against the landlord is quelled by the joint forces of the landlord and the state. It is the low class women who are the worst sufferers, exploited along lines of gender, class and by the repressive measures of the state. Rose highlights this ‘difference’ among the citizens of the nation-state by pointing out that she couldn't see any of his happening to “you and me” (279). The women of the upper classes are protected owing to the power wielded by their class.

As a conscientious, empowered citizen, Sonali pitted against the corrupt state refuses to compromise while others unhesitatingly reconcile to it. Valuing freedom which for Sahgal is not merely economic independence or metronomic achievement but “creativity, adventure, experimentation and even risk,” “a habit of mind or a way of life,” she refuses to cower down to the might of the state (Sahgal, *A Search* 85; *Storm in Chandigarh* 225 ). Using the pre-independence Gandhian era as a point of reference when love for freedom flourished, she contrasts it with the troubled seventies when the Socialist democratic character of the state itself is endangered. It is the culmination of erosion of moral values among politicians, civil servants and people at large. Sonali along with other civil servants knows that she is up against power she cannot handle individually or collectively, yet she courageously stands upto the might of the state and disallows the Happyola project. Consequently she is replaced as joint secretary in the Ministry of industry by Ravi Kachru and is transferred back to her home state, demoted to a junior position. She proves herself as a model citizen subject in democratic practices, transcending the subordinate position of women in relation to the nation. Her resignation

from the civil service is the effect of her refusal to compromise with dictatorship. However, it is only when the Nemesis of Emergency catches up with her that she connects the injustice meted out to her with the oppressions that other citizens face.

Rose, the foreign wife of Ram, remains an Other vis-a-vis the family as well as the nation. She is dependent on her stepson, Dev for maintenance. After Ram's stroke she desires to have an arrangement drawn up that will protect rights. The Hindu code Bill gave a widow equal rights to property and assets of her husband along with other members of the family. Although entitled to a share according to law, she does not get it and has to ask Dev for money. She voices her suspicion to Sonali, but before her friend can help she is pushed into the dry well by the youths of a political party and silenced for ever. In fact as Walder has pointed out, Dev with his indulgent mother, Mona, is an irresistible and doubtless intended reminder to the reader of the indulgence India Gandhi displayed to her playboy-entrepreneur son Sanjay, who emerged during the emergency as leader of a new, youthful, business elite, and whose words and actions were reported almost as exclusively as those of his mother in the carefully controlled and censored press. In an environment where social, political and ideological forces unite with the patriarchal hegemonies of the state, "blazing truths she [Rose] tactlessly tumbled out with, revelations far from pleasant" upset hegemonic cliques, "What you call enter-prennship now or however you pronounce it, is one minute you're nothing and the next minute you're a bloomin` millionaire. Where is all the money come from all of a sudden, I'd like to know" (4). She hits "nails squarely on their ugly heads" mouthing truths that others are either too afraid to admit or have joined the bandwagon of self-aggrandisement (285).

Both Rose and Sonali voice protest against the repressive practices of the state; Rose through voicing her tactless truths in the face of her stepson Dev and Sonali by refusing to allow the Happyola project to get through. But the repressive machinery of the state cannot be overpowered, and both Sonali and Rose pay for it: Sonali,

through her demotion and Rose through her life. During her last moments sitting cross-legged like a yogi dwelling upon her many pasts in the silence of the old tomb her thoughts became beautifully clear" as she recalls Mona's voice telling her that it wasn't too late to tackle Dev to cry for justice. Chew suggests that Rose, like Sonali, is about to engage in resistance but it also connects her as Walder has pointed out with all those women in the novel who are destroyed before they can do anything about their lot -- whether by Sati or less ritually sanctioned deaths, thrown down wells or immured in brick-kilns beside the Ganges after they have been used by landlords. Rose's murder in the novel is linked with the Sati of Sonali's great-grandmother and reclaiming these histories "involves addressing the significance of such personal histories within the larger histories of the nation" (Wadler 109).

Sahgal thus raises the issue of the efficiency of legislation and connects the twenty-first century ills with the evil of sati, whether they concern inheritance as in the case of Rose or dowry "bride[s] burnt to death by [their]. . . in-laws. . . because her family could not satisfy greedy demands for more dowry" linking past oppressions with new ones and fixing responsibility in passivity (30). Thus Rose was murdered not simply because she constitutes a threat to male dominance but because her stepson wants to appropriate her inheritance, as the law is infringed upon and she's cheated off any inheritance as is the muted subaltern colonial subject -- the Sati victim, through her grandfather's papers. Sahgal critiques the religious and political ideology which coerced women to jump voluntarily into their husband's pyres luring them with promises of "swarga for thirty-three million years" with her husband at the end of which she would be born in a noble family and reunited with her husband (159).

The issue of custom versus law arises for women across denominations of class and time. According to Kumkum Sangari, for women no inalienable rights exist that would stretch across the tension "between class and patriarchal interests and egalitarian premises of law" (3388). As Sahgal says, "Generations of lawyers will uphold

generations of laws but the old evils will go on into the twentieth and twenty first centuries because no torch has been lit, and because you who have every opportunity, don't seize the moment and break the back of evil when you have the chance (emphasis original, 153). Sati could not be eradicated merely because Lord Bentick sitting in Fort William, Calcutta signed a statute and passed on to the twenty-first century because it was not "ruthlessly prevented and publicly punished" thus revealing Sahgal's stance of active legislation where those who perpetuate evil "must be hanged in the marketplace" (148). Because no torch has been lit, oppressions continue in all forms whether against women or against other less privileged citizens. The earlier situation may have changed with new inheritance and property laws for women but the reasons for the domination over women by men/ society have remained very much the same -- the greed for money and the need to demonstrate power. The law is horizontal as the site of struggle but has limits as an instrument of change. "The near universal deferral and infringement of customary and statutory laws of inheritance is primarily a matter of class interests regardless of whether it is found in secular or religious agents and that is why most if not all patriarchies are into practice to position evil into inadequate existing laws" (Sangari 3385).

Sahgal seeks not only the transformation of society and the nation but also the freedom of its women subjects. It is the thirst for power -- individual or at the level of the state that underscores oppression. For Sonali and westernised elite to which she belongs the position is clear enough. She fixes personal responsibility to fight against oppression and assert oneself as an active citizen subject, with unassailable individual will. When faced with the choice between escaping responsibility and taking it up squarely, her protagonists do not evade it but need to challenge squarely. She reposes her faith in the potential of the individual to resist and protest against oppressive practices as "the individual is the unit of all progress, and compassion the most powerful of history's motive forces" (qtd. in Varalakshmi 28). She envisions a future where the Emergency would end to redefine the nation along lines of socialist democratic principles.

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## Cobbling Technotexts Material Metaphors in Graham Rawle's *Woman's World*

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### Abstract

The proliferant symbiosis between print media and digital culture has led to remediations in the complex relationships between the material substrate and the generated literary and artistic output. Mediatization has appropriated print narratives and has rendered innovative transformations in the design and materiality of literary artifacts creating technotexts that are conscious of its production such that they concurrently, interrogate and thematize the inscriptions technologies that have lead to their creation. Alterations in materiality transform the semiotic context of the verbal content and by extension transform the metaphoric networks that structure the relation of the word to the world. Technotexts constantly and reflexively interact with the inscription technologies that produce them and plot them as “material metaphors” that foreground the traffic between words and materiality. Graham Rawle's *Woman's World* (2005), is a collage novel created from 40,000 fragments of 1960's women's magazines, pasted together to tell the subversive and captivating tale of Norma Fontaine whose life is pieced together from the multiple voices of the magazine cut-outs. This paper maps the material metaphors present in *Woman's World* to comprehend its unique narrative design, its technotextual self reflexivity and thereby explore the mutating effects of new media on print literature.

**Keywords** –Collage-novel, Graham Rawle, Material - metaphors, Mediatization, Technotexts.

Indubitably, books have survived the digital age and the influence of cyberculture. But the survival has been more of a metamorphic, turbulent rebirth than a tranquil lifing. Never before had there been such a fructiferous symbiosis between the print media and digital

culture. Radical shifts in writing, reading and thinking has led to digital narratives that play with sound, story, animation, plot, motion, video, kinesthetic technology, software functionality etc. on one end and the publication of vibrant literary texts such as artists' books that perform with colors, textures, cut outs, page order, layout, typography and tactility etc. on the other end of the continuum. The materiality of the physical world and its mediation through technological apparatus has had a profound impact on the imaginative and creative realm of the literary world: its conception, composition, textuality, and recipience. The (sur)face of literature is in a state of flux and divergent works self reflexive of its medium specificities are the future. It also opens up the significance of Media-Specific Analysis, a mode of critical inquiry that explores ways in which the medium constructs the work and the work constructs the medium. Thus, critical studies on media consciousness and comprehensive investigations of digital and literary works conscious of their materiality are necessitated.

Katherine Hayles's *Writing Machines* (2002) is a critical study that specifically interrogates the intricate correlation between the material aspects of the medium and the generated content. According to Hayles (2002), “This book is an experiment in forging a vocabulary and set of critical practices responsive to the full spectrum of signifying components in print and electronic texts by grounding them in the materiality of the literary artifact.” (6). Literary works that foreground and thematize the complex liaison between the structural domain and the imaginative realm play a special role in directing literary criticism to significant material practices and that would induce the integrative understanding of literature as an art form. Hayles introduces the term “technotexts” to embody literary works that interrogate “the inscription technology that produces it, mobilizes reflexive loops between its imaginative world and the material apparatus embodying that creation as a physical presence.” (Hayles 25). Technotexts represent the liaison between the texts' verbal constructions and the inscription technologies responsible for its material status. According to Hayles (2002), for something to count as an inscription technology, “a device must initiate material

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changes that can be read as marks.” (24) She categorizes conventional printing presses, computers, telegraphy, video etc. as inscription technologies. The material schemata transmutate the semantic and semiotic context of the verbal content and duly revolutionise the metaphoric networks that forge the relation between the word and the world. According to Hayles, technotexts are different from hypertexts that emphasize on multiple reading paths, chunked text and links and “cybertexts”, a term introduced by Espen Aarseth in *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997) that foreground the “non trivial” functionality of traversing non linear literary works. Technotexts focus on the physical properties of verbal constructions and inscription technologies that produce them. Technotexts constantly and reflexively network with the inscription technologies that produce them and portray them as “material metaphor” (Hayles 22). Material metaphors foreground the traffic between words and materiality and cue changes in physical properties that alter reading patterns, word and visual semiotics, verbal contexts and transfer of knowledge as a whole. Above all, material metaphors and the material interface they signify transform the metaphoric networks that narrativize the world and the way it is fathomed.

This study investigates the material metaphors and technotextual properties of Graham Rawle’s *Woman’s World* (2005), a collage text that is composed of cut outs of 1960’s women’s magazines. Plaid from around 40,000 fragments of visual artefacts and cut out text, *Woman’s World* is a multimodal motley that dazes the reader with its semiotic ingenuities and stylistic innuendoes. *Woman’s World* is narrated by the first-person homodiegetic narrator, Norma Fontaine, who is obsessed with beauty, fashion and housekeeping- the stereotypical notions of feminine allure and domestic excellence. She thrives on the domestic wisdom and feminine refinement proffered by the women’s magazines such as *Woman*, *Woman and Home*, *Woman’s Own* and *Woman’s Journal*- the source texts that Rawle uses to assemble Norma’s life. The novel, cobbled from fragments of magazine material is semantically triumvirate. *Woman’s World* is primarily about Norma’s innocuous accounts and her candid obsessions

with being an upscale fashionista camouflaging a dark family secret. The secondary narrative layer incorporates distinctive magazine-speak resonant with feminine and domiciliary sagacity, is vociferous of gender echelons and the image of the perfect woman prescribed by the women’s magazines of the 1960s. While the narrative arc is relatively transparent, the visual disconnect is manifested in the tertiary narrative level through typographical juxtapositions, stylistic chicanery and the herky jerky rhythm typical of verbal collage with its variegated font sizes, cases and types, illustriously disguise the semiotic profundity at play. Therefore, *Woman’s World* is scrupulously multilayered in its semiotic capacities and it is reflected in its ingenuous narrative and the voices of the women’s magazines rendered through the cacophonous stylistic coalescence.

Norma is the archetypal stooge of television and magazines adverts and a parody of the conservative ideals of femininity broadcasted through its clichéd taglines. Norma’s manic obsession with being the perfect woman running the perfect home triggers her decree -“house keeping is after all the most thrilling work in the world” (Rawle 5) and confession -“my entire day is filled with womanly pursuits and the house is alive with feminine appeal.” (Rawle 3). For her “To be a woman today is no longer a disability but a challenge to be met with careful preparation and planning.” (6). And these insightful guidelines are mastered from the women’s magazines that she reads fervently and quotes verbatim. Norma’s brother Roy Little, and their puritanical mother Mary are the other main characters who share the narrative diegesis. Roy is an endorser of Norma’s femme ideal and her prime benefactor who frequently purchases chic wear and fashion magazines to favor her dressing up. Roy, on his return from vacation procures the job of a delivery man at White’s Laundry and eventually falls in love with Eve, the pretty girl he met at the interview. Narrative hints and overlaps halfway through the novel like “If it hadn’t been for my brother, I wouldn’t be here today” (52) and conciliatory avowals from Roy about “I’ll make sure Norma stays indoors. Permanently.” (137) and a dramatic exposé of a makeup streaked Roy accused of going out “in skirts” (245) reveals that

Norma and Roy are in fact fractured alter egos of the same character. Their transvestite shared consciousness is a tragic fallout of a fatal childhood motor accident that killed Roy's sister when "he [Roy] should have been holding her hand." (15). Roy's guilt ridden conscience, internalizes the gender identity of his sister and for him, the magazines become "an invaluable source of advice as he took me [Norma] from a little girl through difficult teenage years into the fulsome splendor of womanhood." (Rawle 415). Roy's conflicting love for Eve and his sister ego triggers an identity impasse much like the disembodied voices of the women's magazines masquerading as a cognate novel.

Though *Woman's World* is a paper-based collage that has internalized digital textual technologies, its creation as described by the author in the epilogue-"The Making of the Book" was more of a primitive "scissors and glue" affair :I started writing this book in the usual way. When I had completed a rough draft, I then searched through hundreds of women's magazines, cutting out anything that seemed relevant to the scenes I'd written—sentences and phrases that, when joined together, could be rearranged to approximate what I wanted to say. These cuttings were then filed and from them I began to reassemble my story. Little by little, my original words were discarded and replaced by those I'd found. Once the transition was complete, I could start pasting up the pages as artwork. The method was primitive: scissors and glue. (Rawle, "The Making of the Book" 439)

In fact this method of textual collage is equated to writing with scissors that foregrounds collage as a material intervention that fragments reading processes from within. Though the cutout fragments are visibly composite and offer a linear reading path their materiality is emphasized as the reader can never disregard the gaps and cuts in between words and phrases signifying their material singularities and their cutout status. The recurrence of these material signifiers and graphical manifestations foreground the technotextual characteristic of *Woman's World* embodying the creation of a physical artifact that narrates an imaginary tale of fractured identities through its

structurality. Just as *Woman's World* is linear and unitary in its narrative content yet fragmented in compositionality so are the disintegrated identities of Norma and Roy blended in mind yet incongruent in body, manifested through Roy's cross dressing tendencies. However, the materiality of *Woman's World* is not its own. It is visibly and metaphorically connected to an anterior space and time: that of the women's magazines of 1960s. According to Kiene Wurth (2011) "*Woman's World* is never "its own"; it is a prosthetic text, simultaneously an amputation and an extension" (128) that is severed yet connected by visible material multiplicities that formulate a discontinuous continuity.

The material context of *Woman's World* belongs to the 1960's women's magazines that create and enforce an austere and subservient femininity. The twenty first century novel is fashioned out of popular magazines of the 1960s such as *Woman's Own*, *Woman's World*, *Woman's Weekly*, *Woman* etc. retaining their distinct prescriptive vociferations while narrating the subversive tale of a transvestite, Norma Fontaine. In fact, Norma is caught within the clutches of a traditionalist society just as her narrative is entangled within the borrowed words of magazines that are pedantically and moralistically exuberant. The borrowed materiality of *Woman's World* is submissive yet radical in its representation. Using its own language, Rawle re-creates the gendered norms of the 1960s and narrates the story of cross dresser who is materially and literarily created from the very magazines she is obsessed with. Rawle uses text, images and ideas from 1960s women's magazines to invert, subvert and recreate gender norms. Thus, sourced from oppressive material *Woman's World* utilizes its materiality to undo the conventional gender norms and to recreate a world that is uninhibited in its representation and celebrates the uniqueness of its creation.

Material reflexivity is another unique feature of *Woman's World*. Reflexive loops between the story world and the material apparatus is a marked characteristic of technotexts and this feature is employed towards the end of the novel, when Norma reflects on the idea of starting a scrapbook of her own. Her dressing room, the site of her

performing womanhood is piled high with women's magazines that she has collected over the years and if published, the scrapbook that contains favorite fashion features, useful tips, anecdotes and advice, would be a guide to womanhood dealing with all the things that matter to the average woman. It would be handbook for every woman and with this wistful idea Norma realizes her full feminine potential. She remarks: "I used to think I had nothing- Nothing that is, except that strange female quality that no one has ever really been able to define. But now I realized I was a veritable fountain, ready to spout." (Rawle 430). Norma's scrapbook is a composite of cutout features and edited highlights from women's magazines and is a metafictional metaphor that is reflexive of the material makeup of *Woman's World*. Just as Norma is formed from Roy's little sister's clothes box, the material origin of his cross dressing tendencies, Norma's scrapbook is created from scraps of cutout material from the magazines that guided her upbringing. It all started when one day, eight year old Roy opened his deceased sister's clothes box, and tried them on for the first time, " he could imagine it was ME standing there. And that's how it all started." (267). The women's magazines mentored his desires and became an invaluable source of advice that guided Norma through the vexing teenage years to become a fulsome woman proud of her femininity. Just as the clothes box became the material source for Roy to voice out his feminine essence, Graham Rawle has used the cutouts of women's magazines, the source material of *Woman's World* to enunciate gender disparities: the feminine voices manacled by a regimented culture and the transvestite voices caught in the fetters of modern society. Moreover, both the materiality of the text and the identity of Roy/Norma are patched. Each one is being reflected and reinforced by the other. Thus for a multilayered collage text such as *Woman's World*, its materiality is simultaneously reflexive and performative in its capacities.

In short, technotexts such as Graham Rawle's *Woman's World*, aware of its own materiality and amenable to creative constructions and critical investigations are symptomatic of remediations in 21st century literature that at once accrue the ingenuity of the digital

realm and the tenability of conventional printing and publishing. Thus digital culture and mediatization has led to a resurgence of print narratives that are conscious of their own subjectivities and materialities, creating inimitable literary and artistic works that interrogate their creation, and traverse beyond its formative precepts to fictional territories that are infinite and yet uninhabited.

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## Limning the Diasporic Hyphenation: Problematizing the Diasporic Space in Anita Desai's *Baumgartner's Bombay*

Dr. Narinder Kumar Sharma\*

### Abstract

Diasporic experience reconfigures one's sense of 'being' entailing a dualistic identification with the hostland and the homeland. It results in the making of an existential sandwich whereby the subject is dispersed in the two worlds simultaneously. As a consequence, it shapes an ambivalent and oscillating condition for the subject signifying excruciating domains of the human existence viz. cultural duality, rootlessness, fragmentation, a sense of exile (chosen or forced) and finally identity-crisis caused by the dialectics of dislocation and othering. It is in this context that the present chapter attempts to evaluate the hyphenated diasporic existence in Desai's novel *Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) in the light of certain insights of the Diaspora theory and postcolonial conceptual corollaries relevant thereto.

**Keywords:** Diaspora, Cultural-duality, Rootlessness, Fragmentation, Dislocation, Othering.

*Baumgartner's Bombay* (1988) explicates the problematics of the diasporic space underlining the duality of the hostland (roots) and the homeland (routes). Being exposed to the onslaughts of racism and consequent existential humiliation, the experiential in-between, irreconcilable and contingent condition emits agony and chaos for the protagonists and thus unsettles their sense of a stable and coherent identity. Richards, in his essay "Framing Identities" remarks: "Racism fractures the ability to engage with others at a fundamental level by substituting a 'corporeal schema' with a racial epidermal schema... ." (10). In such circumstances, the homeland haunts the subject even more and causes acute bewilderment by way of altering one's sense of self-fashioning in a pejorative manner. However, on the contrary, such diasporic experience on the part of an immigrant also opens up

the possibility of transcending such kind of duality and crisis. It grants him/her an opportunity to 'write against the empire' and thus co-opt a rejuvenated, negotiated and hybridized sense of one's identity deconstructing racism, difference and inequality of the hostland. Such a stance transforms reductionist notions of racial identity into positive racial values. Further, such a diasporic conjunction unfolds a better model of identity as compared to the one founded upon fixities of race and nation. It also opens up what Bhabha calls the 'Third Space' for the subject in question. This conceptual framework constitutes the critique for the purpose of analyzing the novel under study. The next section of the paper aims at developing the theoretical premise of the critique expounding relevant insights of Diaspora and postcolonial studies.

## II

Speaking etymologically, the term Diaspora comes from a Greek word 'diasperian' which can further be split into 'dia' and 'sperien' meaning 'across' and 'to sow/scatter' respectively. In the modern context, the Great Britain assumed the White Man's Burden and thus the British Empire became an international phenomenon. Interestingly, the scattering of the colonizers also witnessed the arrival of the colonized from a variety of different places in the host country. McLeod in his important book titled *Beginning Postcolonialism* remarks that: "Often these voyages put [the slaves] to work as servants in their British homes, or the use of South Asian Women as 'ayahs' by families employed by the East Indian Company during and after their return to Britain (205). Such forced migration in the hostland enabled the dispersed individuals to cross-identify with each other so as to carve an individual and social matrix of self-recognition while living on the margins in the host country. Resultantly, the colonial nations (especially their metropolitans) became the vibrant centers of people dispersed from a number of countries/ex-colonies. And it is now that the 'scattering' turns out to be a 'gathering' of the dispersed migrants in the colonial headquarters. Bhabha in an important essay titled "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation" designates such gathering: "...as the gatherings of exiles, and émigrés

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and refugees, gathering on the edge of the 'foreign' cultures... . Gatherings of the worlds lived retroactively... . Gathering of the people in the Diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned... . (291)

Since we don't choose our birth, parents, home, country etc., life just happens to us. Our thrownness into a particular time, place and a set of relations surreptitiously influences what we come out to be in the later part of our lives. The belongingness to the specificities of our immediate world or resistance thereto forms the maze of our conception of this world. We write our narratives or counter-narratives in terms of a response to our existence with a desire to trouble/unsettle the enigmas of reality. However life, at times, unsettles us recklessly. Such antagonistic situatedness rips apart the apparent order of existence for the young Jew Hugo Baumgartner throughout his life. Contextually, Eliot's quote "In my beginning is my end" is embedded in the heart of the narrative.

Appropriating the conceptual dimension of the critique in the context of the novel, it is important to assess the problematics of the home so as to comprehend Hugo's perpetual dislocation vis-à-vis the horrors of the holocaust and the partition of India. Admittedly, home has a distinct performative role in shaping our subjectivity towards our being in the world. An important French philosopher Bachelard in his book *The Poetics of Space* remarks that home "...is our vital space, our corner of the world, our first universe" (4). But, Hugo Baumgartner fails to envision such a home on account of his Jewishness as he is confronted with the superior Aryans in Germany. Hence, he is a diasporic in his own homeland. In other words, Hugo is also representative of the wandering Jew that is archetypally searching for the roots of his existence. So, the feeling of being-elsewhere and his othering in his own homeland constitute the core existential problem for Hugo and triggers the "...fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present" (McLeod 211). Guttman remarks: "The loss of identity...is an important feature of Baumgartner in Desai's novel" (516). Accordingly, his situatedness stands as a metaphor of his displaced positionality in the realm of the original space signifying his enforced necessity for an 'imaginary hostland'. Hence, the notion of the imaginary hostland acts as an independent

site for problematizing Hugo's dualistic relationship with the original roots, i.e., pre-war Berlin. Understood in this context, the diasporic Hugo is perpetually dislocated and thus is eternally homeless.

Conceptualizing his hyphenation, it is apt to consider his childhood in the pre-war Berlin so as to locate the fissures, holes and incongruities of Hugo's 'being' in the homeland. Here, it is worth pointing out that his childhood reveals a dual pattern of economic prosperity and adversity. The second chapter of the novel presents an aristocratic and authoritative picture of Hugo's father who strides with his head "...held high, his fat gleaming...his walking stick with the ivory knob tapped the Berlin streets with authority" (Desai, Baumgartner's *Bombay* 26). His father owns a big showroom "...in which elegantly languorous chaises-lounges in carved mahogany or consoles in blonde wood with gilded scrolls basked in the light from the floor-to-ceiling windows" (29). Being a rich furniture merchant, his father displays a special air of prosperity. However, the narrative soon unfolds that Hugo's parents exhibit different temperaments and there exists a relational gulf between the two. Seen thus, the apartment upstairs and the showroom downstairs are presented as two separate domains of existence for the mother and father respectively. The young Hugo can easily differentiate between "...[father's] belongings and hers" (30). Importantly, Hugo relates more to the sphere of the upstairs (the mother) since it represents a world of living as opposed to the world of objects (the father). At school, Hugo is again pushed to the margins and is thus discriminated against being a Jew. He does not get the Christmas gift and this experience shakes him deeply. Hugo "...is the only one without a Christmas gift...and Hugo could not move. Not one step...[throwing him] into the dark ditch of his shame" (41-42, emphasis added). On realizing his inferiority and othering after this incident, Hugo experiences himself to be an immigrant in his homeland.

Seen thus, Hugo's stay at the Jewish school also confirms his marginality and sense of being an outsider. As the Nazi movement gains momentum, a sense of despair and adversity creeps into the bipolar spheres of Hugo's home, i.e., the upstairs and the downstairs.

Now, Baumgartners' are set to spend black days of their life. The chocolates of Hugo are replaced with sticks of barley sugar now. His father's business suffers considerably. The Aryans patronize their own dealers and don't purchase anything from the inferior Jews. Later when noise on the street increases, they find the word 'JUDE' painted in red on their showroom window, causing them a deep sense of humiliation and insecurity. Consequent upon this, Hugo's father commits suicide after his two-week long arrest and humiliation by the Nazis. Now, the mother and the son face the real hard times in the homeland as "...their lives fell into a groove and remained there...seldom leaving the apartment, looking after each other with stricken concern...there was no butter now" (58). Now, a sense of depravation and degradation overpowers their solitary existence and they are forced to sell out everything to the gentleman of Hamburg who installs himself in the showroom first.

Later Herr Pfuehl, the gentleman from Hamburg and the new owner, suggests that Hugo should go to India for starting timber business there and hence introduces Hugo to the idea of 'imaginary hostland'. This signifies the possibility of transcending the duality and crisis in the homeland and thus instills a romanticized vision of the 'imaginary hostland' in Hugo. Under these circumstances, Hugo is forced to leave his homeland so as to co-opt a rejuvenated, negotiated and hybridized sense of his identity deconstructing racism, difference and inequality of the homeland. He aspires to transform reductionist notions of racial identity into positive racial values. Importantly, such a diasporic stance offers him a better model of identity as compared to the one founded upon fixities of race in his homeland. Hence, Hugo embarks on his journey being full of romantic notions and dreams. In the light of Cohen's typology of diaspora, Hugo relates to the category of victim who remains a subaltern in the homeland as well as in the hostland.

On reaching India, Hugo finds it difficult to comprehend the contesting expressions on the typical Indian faces; takes a stinking Tonga and embarks on a journey towards the Taj Hotel. However, the presumed exoticism of the Taj turns out to be a dingy multi-

storied building with pitch darkness offering potential illness. After an encounter with a shrieking woman, Hugo meekly accepts the dirt and darkness of the allotted room. Having been tricked, Hugo ruminates: Was it not India's way of revealing the world that lay on the other side of the mirror? India flashed the mirror on your face, with a brightness and laughter as raucous as a street band. You could be blinded by it. (99)

It clearly explicates the difference between the illusion and reality of India. Hugo finds the hostland quite different from his imagination. The heat and light of India bruise him hard and he is outraged with dualistic apprehensions. Later, Hugo meets Chimanlal with a letter of introduction from the gentleman of Hamburg who advises him to move to Calcutta for better business prospects. Hiding his nationality and Jewishness from the Catholic priest in the train, he reaches Calcutta. Here, Hugo starts a business with Habibullah coupled with a far better stay in a hotel at Middleton Row. It is in Calcutta that he manifests his positive attempts to opt a linguistic hybridity. Consider the extract: "He found that he had to build a new language to suit to these new conditions? German no longer sufficed, and the English was elusive. Languages sprouted around him like tropical foliage and he picked words from it without knowing if they were English or Hindi or Bengali...the India he was marking out for himself" (107). It further highlights the creative tension between the native and migrant. Importantly, it manifests Hugo's attempt to mimic the native's language. Mimicry happens when the migrant replicates the native by mimicking his language and way of life. Such mimicking of the native comes at the cost of willful transmutation of his own cultural identity. In this context, mimicry is a shameful act.

However, all of Hugo's creative attempts towards assimilation and acculturation in the hostland run parallel to the ever-darkening situation in Europe in the wake of ruthless Nazism. Accordingly, the Aryan desire to pervade its power across Europe being a Master race forms the destructive tumult in Hugo's homeland with its rippling effect in the hostland, i.e., India. It comes as an existential jolt for Hugo and fragments him further. It deepens his sense of rootlessness

since his German identity strikes him again. It also devalues his novel attempts at searching a new coherence of life in the hostland. In other words, the homeland pejoratively haunts the hostland and thus shatters Hugo's sense of being here. It is in this sense that the prison camp at Ahmednagar becomes as an extension of Germany. Further, the dispersed or the scattered Germans/the enemy aliens in the country turn out to be a 'gathering' in the hostland and are made to share a common fate of imprisonment although the Aryans and the Jews maintain similar power relations here as well. Seen thus, the Jew Germans are subjected to the bullying of the Nazi German prisoners. Under dismal conditions, Hugo is made to live in this detention camp for six long years and faces all sorts of humiliations. Hugo's problems get doubled here on account of his Jewishness and German origin. Strikingly, his oppression is again catalyzed by the German Nazis here. Certainly, he "...had been arrested for no reason, being harmless, no enemy, merely a refugee from Nazi Germany who wished only to pursue his business interest in India" (123). It is worth considering that the English don't differentiate between German Jews and the German Nazis and pose to be unaware of their meta-positions of power relations. Not only this, Hugo and others are separated from the Nazi Germans and are given a separate 'home' in the camp followed by their exclusion from the morning prayers. It clearly brings forth Hugo's marginalized, peripheralized and fragmented being in the detention camp. But, the glimpse of hope still shines brightly for this eternal outsider and therefore Hugo prefers new relationships in comparison to the horrors of his solitude.

Hugo-turned-Madman of Cats/Firanghi is killed by a German drug-addict and he is survived by the wailing cats and some postcards each stamped with the number J 673/1 written by Mutti to him. Capitani holds that "...the postcards?written by Hugo's mother from the concentration camp?represent the transnational and intricate structure of the novel, as their complex origins contain the whole of the novel's multiple narrative threads" (57). Further, "...with their representation of stock phrases, their use of clichés and language of childhood, the horrors of life in the concentration camp can be inferred

only through the almost total absence of content in her [Mutti's] communications" (Guttman 517). At the same time, the postcards also signify an emotional treasure of the mother(land).

However, it is worth highlighting that for Hugo, migrancy itself assumes a sort of sovereignty and subsequently reformulates his understanding of himself in relation to the problematics of the homeland and the hostland. It is in the light of this complexity of being that he shuttles between the extremes of the hostland and the homeland, the present and the past and the familiar and the distant. The tangible (physical objects) and the intangible baggage (the belief systems of the homeland) with which he arrives in the hostland are concomitant to his othering in the hostland. Consequently, his arrival is permeated with the pangs of exclusion and marginality at the hands of the dominant discourse of the hostland, i.e., Firanghi. Henceforth, Hugo is confronted with the gigantic intangible borders existing in the hostland always baffling and demeaning him in multifarious ways. Accordingly, he remains a Trishanku throughout the narrative incessantly attempting to integrate his past, present by negotiating the homeland with the hostland privileging a fluidic validation of his being-not-at-home. Seen thus, he is the "...archetypal victim and thus seems to answer a particular post-holocaust stereotype of the persecuted Jew" (Stahler 77). Natale opines, "Hugo is not a colonizer; actually he has been colonized" (23) despite the fact of his valiant attempts to cross-fertilize and rejuvenate the duality of the homeland and the hostland.

Finally, Hugo manifests a creative impulse to negotiate the duality of the homeland and the hostland by envisioning Venice as the Third Space? a bewitched point where East meets West. Hugo says, "Venice...it was both East and the West, both Europe and Asia. I thought?maybe, in such a place, I could be at home" (94). At Venice, he intuits a new identity, possibilities and choice. Another critic Lin Ho in her book titled Anita Desai remarks: "A crisis of identity is temporarily reconstructed as a rediscovery of self" (58) during Hugo's stay at Venice. Hence, he does show a creative volition for the hybrid conception of one's being in the world which endows a sense

of double consciousness and mitigates the difference of physical and imaginative borders to host a point of convergence signifying cross-national, de-territorialized and cosmopolitan fervor in the consciousness of the migrant. Furthermore, since the positionality of the diasporic subject?the liminal or in-between space?problematizes the issue of identity as natural and/or identity as invention, the diasporic Hugo reverberates with the idea of identity formation as dynamic process capable of both destabilizing ethnic absolutism and of strengthening ethnic ghettoization and enclavization at the same time. The journey of Hugo also explicates that the self as discursive formation is never complete and hence the search for identity, which is a characteristic feature of diasporic consciousness, is never ending. Further, his "...life has no pattern; the pattern has been blown to its bits" (Desai, "Against the Current: A Conversation with Anita Desai" 29). In this sense, the narrative lays bare that Hugo inhabits liminal, interstitial spaces. The inter-subjective and intercultural experiences constitute him as a hyphenated and hybrid subject. Importantly, this hybridity is not an organic hybridity which fuses and reconciles the codes of culture, race, colour, ethnicity, and gender which inform it; rather it is self-reflexive hybridity and is an outcome of a conscious negotiation with and contestation between its informing elements. The hyphenated existence of Hugo assigns it a fluidity which is continuously on the run vis-à-vis the changing socio-political environment of varied diasporic spaces.

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## Negotiating Arab-American Identity in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage From Cairo to America- A Woman's Journey*

Dr. C. G. Shyamala\*

### Abstract

The paper traces the construction of Arab-American identity in Leila Ahmed's memoir *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America, a Woman's Journey*. The received socio-political norms about identity are in a constant state of flux and the author questions the basis of the customary approach to perceiving the self. Stuart Hall argues that identities are not monolithic in their representation. Marred and influenced by multiple changes in geography, culture, politics and economy, the individual identifies innumerable contradictions behind a unitary perception of one's identity. Historical processes continually shape race, gender, ethnicity and class, which appear fluid at several intersections of time. Unique experiences at such significant moments rest on geopolitical and religious facts that discard the accepted notions of identity and form a distinctive individuality. Under such circumstances, the identity of the protagonist in Leila Ahmed's memoir changes when she confronts the dual influences of nationality and geography.

**Keywords:** Arab-American identity, Ethnic, Geopolitical, Memoir, Memory.

The confluence of race, gender, ethnicity and class is intrinsic to the construction of identities. This paper explores the construction of identity of the Arab-American Muslim female in relation to the political and social events of the time in the novel. The paper argues that the individual's identity is viewed and defined by others, which influences the person's realization of one's identity. Identity continuously negotiates with itself, and gets defined and redefined in particular positions. According to Hall : "...identities are never unified and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never

singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions" (4). Geo-political events, social changes and historical incidents influence the notion of the formation of identity. By defying the accepted construction of identities, one realizes the position of the self at a specific point of time. Identity emerges from an understanding of a past, the present and the diverse social cultural, political and geographical factors that construct the individual perception of one's identity. Mohanty argues: "...identities are ways of making sense of our experiences. They are theoretical constructions that enable us to see the world in specific ways" (55). She elaborates that people with different, multiple or hyphenated identities can have different explanations of who they are and of the world taken as a whole.

Abdelrazek identifies a shift in perspective of the Arab women writers in the selection of themes and forms in their writings. While the early Arab-American women writers tend to locate "a space within American culture through various strategies of assimilation," (63) which often results in a move away from culture and homeland, the later Arab-American women writers inquire the complexities of a hybrid identity. They resort to the process of "acculturation," whereby "adaptation to a new culture does not mean losing oneself or giving up one's own values to pass or gain acceptance" (64). These writers neither deny nor ignore the chaotic Arab American relationship, which intensify their struggle to claim an Arab-American identity. The impact of geography and politics on Arab identity has created an ambiguous subject position. Earlier the term 'Arab' referred to the people of the Arabic peninsula. The formation of Arab league in 1945 created the union of twenty-two nations located in the continents of Asia and Africa possessing diverse historical, social and cultural backgrounds. In the post-colonial scenario, the word Arab is perhaps unique as it is derived from linguistic and political definitions in contrast to the ones that arouse of similar geographical and historical framework. This derivation of the term Arab complicates the basic idea of the distinct Arab-American identity.

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Ahmed's memoir provides detail historical accounts of events both social and political, which are embedded in her narrative that make the memoir probe the history of Egypt in the twentieth century from her personal perspective. Born of mixed parentage, an Egyptian father and an elite Turkish mother at Aim Shams the name of her house in a rich part of Cairo during the end of the British colonial rule, Ahmed analyses how this diverse cultural background affected her understanding of the construction of her identity. The family spoke English, French, Turkish and Arabic at home. She was brought up by Nanny, her Croatian governess who was a devout Christian. As a young girl, she was fascinated by the stories of angels and fairies told by Nanny. However, her relationship with her mother was rather unpleasant. There were differences of opinion among them on several matters that included religion and profession but later Ahmed understands her mother to be a source of strength, courage and love and the colonised culture of Egypt that she and the other women represented. Her father, who was a respectable engineer and the Chairman of the Nile Water Board Control, believed and internalised the superiority of European culture and imparted the same to his daughter, who became adept in the history and culture of Europe but she could not trace her native culture. As Tetz opines: "The postcolonial narrative of struggle between coloniser and the colonised over the issue of culture is faced head on by Ahmed in the early chapters of *A Border Passage*, the Nasserite period in Egypt and her own ambivalence toward Classical Arabic culture and political Arabism" (28). The divided affiliation made acceptance of an Arab identity problematic. However, she contends that growing between parents of diverse cultures has made her conscious of "a convergence of traditions, cultures and histories coming together in this time and this place moving like rivers through us" (*A Border* 25).

Ahmed notices the negative effects of the spread and practice of European culture upon native culture. Many elite groups of people gradually favour scientific progress and adopt European manners at the cost of their own heritage. The end of the colonial rule proves disastrous to these groups of people because they are regarded

traitors by their people in their country and the racist attitude of the Europeans made them inferior. The internalisation of colonial perspectives complicate the natives' perceptions and thought processes after the colony attained independence. Ahmed's doubt regarding her identity intensified after the revolution of 1952 that witnesses the birth of a new country developing a new national identity. The President of Egypt Anwar Sadat expresses this dilemma in his autobiography *In Search of Identity*. This book serves to instill in her, questions regarding her search for her Arab identity.

She understands that the thought of Arab identity and nationalism originated among the Christians of missionary schools in Syria in the late nineteenth century to retaliate the formation of the Islamic Ottoman Empire. The idea of Arab League was proposed in 1941 by the British foreign minister Anthony Eden in the interest of colonial pursuits, which were the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire and the acquisition of new territories. In view of the political scenario of the time, it was useful for the colonialists to have the region around the Arabic peninsula redefine itself collectively as Arab. Ahmed writes: "Europeans were defining us and we, falling in with their ideas, agreed to define ourselves as Arab in the dictionary sense a member of a Semitic people of the Arabian Peninsula; a member of Arabic speaking people" (*A Border* 266). The history of the notion of Arab Nationalism, which was framed to oppose the Islamic empire, is now used as a synonym for Muslims and Islam. Identity could be assessed to be a constantly negotiable sense of self, emerging from the perpetual process of defining and redefining one's boundary, which is inconsistent.

Ahmed's move to England to pursue the undergraduate course and later to America, where she would become a lecturer at the Women's Studies Department, would entail the diverse projections and perceptions of Arab identity prevalent in the west which are largely influenced by political upheavals. Her encounter with other Middle Eastern colleagues in England and her subsequent visit to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates would make her realise that being Egyptian is not the same as being an Arab. Her discomfort in

Egypt on being defined as Arab gets further complicated when she faces racist attitude in England. The situation worsens after the Arab Israel war and anti-Arab sentiments being to strengthen its roots in Europe. She narrates the incident when a man spits on her on the bus in Cambridge when her Arab identity is revealed. Such incidents expose the fact that that being an Arab who follows Islam is the reason for communal hatred. She expresses her disgust at the way “other people’s inventions, imputations, false constructions of who [she is-] what [she] thinks, [believes], or ought to think or believe or feel” (A Border 255-6) becomes responsible for false notions about her identity.

In America, she faces racial prejudice and struggle due to extreme stereotypical notions related to the Arabs. Ahmed says that she “became black when [she] went to England ...and a woman of colour when [she] went to America” (A Border 238). She contemplates how the western world looks on white, Christian and Jewish women to be the secular group that could “rethink their heritage and religions and traditions” (292), while it tends to view Islam as rigid and Arab societies to be inherently misogynist and oppressive, and Arab men as either fundamentalists or rich oil sheiks or Arab women as either they are victims of patriarchal assaults or as the exotic and sexually permissive female of the orient. These dominant paradigms create stereotypes which further complicate the position of Arab-American women. The debate regarding the identity in America gains new propositions. Hassan is of the opinion that Ahmed’s memoir “belongs to the new directions in Arab American immigrant writing,” one that not only challenges Orientalist assumptions but also assimilates the identity of the autobiographical subject within the context of history (A Border 149). Instead of rethinking and freeing herself of the imposed Arabness, she finds herself defending her culture and religion against white women’s feminist approach towards Arab women. She associates herself with the black feminist writers June Jordan and bell hooks.

She understands the American feminist mindset and Islamophobic prejudices in the context of Arab women. This makes

her associate with Arab-American feminism eventually. She realises that Arab-American women must not only tackle the sexist socio-cultural factors of their communities but also speak against the western misconstruction of their images. They must oppose the oriental’s view of Arab females and simultaneously resist the Arab patriarchal setup which misconstrues the Islamic religion in order to segregate women as a symbol of communal dignity that has to be manipulated and whose activities need to be regulated and codified. The inquiry about her identity as an Arab Muslim female leads her to research the history of Islam in the context of the position of women. The findings result in a significant theoretical work *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Ahmed delineates her perception of religion to the gathering of the female relatives in her maternal grandmother’s house where they converse and move about uninhibited. The gradual transition of Ahmed’s contempt for her traditional Arabic-speaking mother, who spent her days with female relatives, into an understanding of how these women made sense of their lives is evident when she provocatively reformulates the terms by which Western and Arab men have defined women.

She writes that these meetings were an initiation of the life in a Harem, a system whereby female relatives share their time and space enabling them easy access to others life. These women get together and discussions range from religion, sacredness and women’s roles that appear the source of knowledge into Islam and patriarchal value systems. Such gatherings provide insight into various facts related to women’s subjugation and the discussions sustain lives that always get crushed under patriarchal strongholds. She compares the all-female Girton College at Cambridge to be a harem- “the harem as I had lived it, the harem of older women presiding over the young” (A Border 252). From these regular meetings and from her mother, grandmother and aunts she learns about the unique relationship women have with Islam. She recalls: “Islam as I got from them was gentle, generous, pacifist, inclusive, somewhat mystical” (A Border 121). She distinguishes between two types of Islam – one is the official, which is the male interpretation of Islam and the other is the women’s

Islam which is dynamic and transmitted orally from one generation to another amidst females. Ahmed posits that this parallel lived Islam equally and perhaps considers it more important and profound than the official Islam. This dual stream found within the religion is not exclusive to Islam. The essence of the holy scriptures of most religions has been largely transmitted by androcentric agencies that marginalise women and Ahmed considers that self-claimed authority of the male clerics over religion and its rituals needs to be questioned.

Being a coloured woman, Ahmed explicates how and why she has decided to “examine, analyse and think about the world which [she is a part of] from the vantage point [of] the margins (A Border 288), especially the question of her fluid identity, which is all about negotiating and re-negotiating her position. In this connection, Min-Ha claims “...the hyphenated time-space that does not limit itself to a duality between two cultural heritages. It leads, on the one hand, to an active ‘search of our mother’s garden ...-the consciousness of root-values’...and on the other hand, to a heightened awareness of the other ‘minority sensitivities,’ have of a third- world solidarity, and by extension, of the necessity for new alliances. (159) Ahmed realises that her hyphenated identity is a harmonious blend of different cultures that is not bounded by rigid lines. She occupies a space that searches for the native roots and makes her conscious of her nativity, while she also becomes aware of her condition that is the confluence of other identities that forms a minority culture. This position calls for extension of her hyphenated identity that embraces newer formations every time she travels from one country to the other.

Ahmed comes to agreement with the fact that her life is multifaceted and she is all the better for it, as she concludes her story is “all about the increasing fluidity or porousness of borders and boundaries” (A Border 296). By questioning the existing approaches to the perception of identity that is subjected to continual historical procedures and framing her sense of identity, she traces the decisive effect of geopolitics on the formation of an Arab identity and simultaneously relates the religious connotations of her identity as a Muslim female.

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## The Plight of Human Dignity : Trauma of Biafra War as Represented in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

P. Michael Arokiasamy\*

### Abstract

The impact of the Nigerian Civil War was tremendous, which gave rise to the Civil War Literature in Africa. A number of African works explicate the aftermath of civil war. *Half of a Yellow Sun* of Adichie is a prominent work that clearly portrays the pathetic condition of women and children during the war period and shows how human dignity is taken for granted. Adichie combines the themes of post-colonialism with the background of the Nigerian Civil War also known as Biafran war. She sympathetically presents the plight of women and children in Africa especially during the crisis moments of war. Children too were abused on different grounds. The very first article of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ensures that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity." But it is violated in varied ways during the Biafran War. This paper therefore is an attempt to present the plight of human dignity during the Biafran War as represented in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

**Keywords:** Nigerian Civil War, Biafran War, Human Rights, Human Dignity, Politics

The Federation of Nigeria is known for its different tribes and peoples. It has never been one homogeneous country in the past. The colonial administrators initiated the artificial structure of Nigeria from West Africa. But they neglected to consider the religious, linguistic and ethnic differences. When Nigeria got independence in 1960, it consisted of 60 million people belonging to 300 different ethnic and cultural groups. Of the many different groups, three are predominant ones namely, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. Based on

the ethnic groups, the British politicians divided Nigeria into three regions namely North, West and East. Hausa-Fulani were in the North, Yoruba in the West and Igbo in the East. The North was high in their population, so they allocated more seats to North than the other two regions. They formed largely regional and tribal political parties such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the North, National Conference of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the East, and the Action Group (AG) in the West. Besides ethnic groups, Nigeria was also moulded by religious criteria as well as economic reasons. In the South there were mainly Christians while in the North there were mainly Muslims, and the South possessed resources of oil. The oil and various other commodities caused a number of rivalries among the ethnic groups and thus rupture between the North and the South of the country became increasingly evident. As a result, the South-Eastern region was isolated.

On 15 January 1966, some sections of the Nigerian army gave rise to a coup and the head of the Nigerian army General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo, became the President of Nigeria. He was the first military head of state in Nigeria but soon he was accused of promoting only Igbo officers at the expense of Hausa and Yoruba officers. Within six months, the Northern states organised a counter-coup and made Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon as the leader. Ethnic tensions were so severe that massacred the Christian Igbo minorities present in the Northern regions. As a result, on 30 May 1967, the colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military governor of the Southeast of Nigeria, officially announced the separation of the Republic of Biafra. In the words of Oyenyi, "Ojukwu made it clear that given the killing of Igbos in Northern Nigeria and the inability of the government to bring situation under control, the Igbos would secede from Nigeria" (Oyenyi, 122). The Federal Government in Lagos considered this as an illegal act and so it decided to bring back the country into the main fold by force to avoid the disintegration of the country. Several meetings were held to resolve this issue peacefully. However, Biafra initiated the war against the Federal Government and thus began the Biafran war on 6 July 1967. It was a bloody and

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most destructive war that lasted for two years. But the Federal Government won over Biafra in April 1969.

The war influenced many writers to write about the Biafran War and its impacts. Thus emerged a number of literary works which came to be known as Civil War literature. It usually refers to the works produced in 1970s and 1980s. It includes, Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra* (1982), Chinua Achebe's *Girls at War and Other Stories* (1972), S.O. Mezu's *Behind the Rising Sun* (1971), Flora Nwapa's *Never Again* (1975) and *Wives at War and Other Stories* (1980). These novels present the major dilemma and the immediate aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one among these war writers. Her second novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a fine example of Civil War Literature.

Adichie, in her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, explores the harrowing experience of Biafran war in which we find the representations of the plight of human dignity. It is Adichie's remarkable ability that helps her handle effectively the historical truths of the brutalities and effects of war without prejudices. This novel consists of four parts in which the first and the third parts deal with the period before the war and the second and the fourth parts present the horrors of war and the sufferings of the main characters. Adichie narrates the story through three different characters such as Ugwu, Olanna and Richard and the narration shifts from one to another respectively. While grappling with *Half of a Yellow Sun* one will find how women are treated as sexual objects in the patriarchal society. According to article 3 of UDHR, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of life." Further article 5 says, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Adichie presents through the characters of Olanna and Kainene, the violation of human rights and human dignity. They were the victims of sexual oppression and gender discrimination. In many situations, they are forced to lose their self-dignity. Most of the rulers and famous business people are men though Olanna and Kainene are the female protagonists of this novel. Olanna, a well-educated woman, completed her master degree in London, who faced much

discrimination than her twin sister Kainene, who was an independent woman. Further, the portrayal of these women objectified and suppressed vouches the dehumanized status of woman who is just the 'other' in the society.

Olanna was used as a sex bait by her own parents, which is ruthless and unbelievable. The social make-up of the Nigerian society permitted such crimes against women. The parents asked Olanna to have relationship with an old man Chief Okonji, a wealthy Cabinet Minister in order to lobby a contract for Olanna's father. This shameful act and the pain caused by it is not realised by Olanna's parents. The chief expressed his love for her and was highly attracted towards her beauty. He said, "I love you, believe me. I really love you." (33) Olanna's mother too pressurized and bribed the girl to initiate a relationship with chief Okonji. The parents engaged in such shameful act in order to alleviate their poverty. However, Olanna refused and said that she would move to Nsukka where she had applied for the job as a tutor of sociology department in the University of Nigeria. Kainene understood the motive of her parents so she comments: 'Daddy literally pulled me away from the veranda, so we could leave you alone with the good cabinet minister,' Kainene said. 'Will he give Daddy the contract then?...' 'The other bidders probably don't have a beautiful daughter...' 'The benefit of being the ugly daughter is that nobody uses you as sex bait.' (35)

In the Post-colonial Nigeria, a woman who is either legally or traditionally married is expected to beget a child at the earliest. A real woman is discriminated from the spoilt one through her child alone. So she is expected to give birth to a child after committing herself in a relationship. It is a sin, if she has not conceived a child. Adichie also presents the superstitious beliefs of her society and the question of dignity of women in this novel through the character of Mama, Odenigbo's mother. She did not like Olanna who was highly educated. She thought that Olanna had used some medicine to make him love and live with her. She said: 'Please go back and tell those who sent you that you did not find my son. Tell your fellow witches that you did not see him...' 'Did you hear me? Tell

them that nobody's medicine will work on my son. He will not marry an abnormal woman, unless you kill me first. Only over my dead body!' (96-97) Mama called Olanna as witch and she was furious at her, because Olanna did not beget a child since she started living with her son, Odenigbo. The stereotypical mentality of the society prescriptions pushed barren women into a depression and identity crisis. The traditionalist typecast Mama wanted Olanna to leave her son since she did not beget a child.

Olanna later comes to know about the betrayal of Odenigbo who had slept with Amala, the house girl of his mother. Amala was pregnant and gave birth to a girl child. Though Odenigbo betrayed Olanna, she did not decide to leave him. Instead she wanted to adopt the child which was abandoned by Amala. Olanna called the child as 'baby'. Though Olanna and Odenigbo had deep love for each other, the betrayal scar was deep. Though the seventh article of UDHR ensures that all are equal before the law. The women in Nigerian society as portrayed in Adichie's novels are very submissive and accept all kinds of betrayal of the society. This shows how the aspirations and desires of women are least respected in the society. It is very sad that even after 60 years of declaration of UDHR, the violation of those rights with respect to the dignity of women is still at stake.

Kainene, the twin sister of Olanna, had mutual relationship with Richard who loved her unconditionally and supported her in all her activities. When she came to know that Richard had betrayed her for Olanna, retaliated by burning all the manuscripts of his book. Then she broke her relationship with her sister. The brutality of Biafran War brought the sisters together. She supported Biafra and believed in the victory of Biafra over the Federal government. When the war became worse and Biafra suffered with lack of money, food and facilities. Article 22 of UDHR ensures that "Everyone, as member of society, has the right to social security". She spent all her money and started a refugee camp for children and women in Orlu and helped the people with food and proper medical facilities. Richard also supported her financially to develop the refugee camp. Towards the end of the novel she disappears when she goes out in search for

food in the enemy camp. She is devastated when her children are affected by Kwashiorko. So she wanted to bring some food from the enemy camp. Her braveness in fact led her to lose herself. Kainene's condition remains undiscovered till the end of the novel. Adichie leaves a marked impression in the mind of the readers by with her open ending to Kainene's story. This gives rise to the reflection that though she was deprived of her dignity and rights at various level, yet she never failed to be at the service of the humanity.

Besides the characters discussed there were other poor and needy girls who were exploited to the core during the war. Adichie painfully describes that the girls were 'food' for the soldiers. In fact, when Ugwu was a soldier, he was enforced to participate in the gang rape of a bar girl. Though he did not like to participate in it, he did not want to be seen or called as 'coward' by others. The men in power also sexually exploited the women. For example, a greedy white-man who was the commander of Biafran army raped a young girl for his own pleasure. The commander used his power to sexually exploit the young girls publicly and exposed their nakedness to all the soldiers. Father Marcel, a religious leader, who was in charge of praying and encouraging the people in the refugee camp run by Kainene, also exploited the young girls in exchange for food. Ugwu's lover Eberechi was offered to Colonel as gift in exchange of her brother's posting. Thus at various levels the poor girls were also exploited and deprived of their rights. Though UDHR declares and assures that all are equal in dignity yet even today people are deprived of their dignity.

Adichie, thus, painfully explicates in *Half of a Yellow Sun* the condition of women and how men took advantage of them during the Biafran War. The novel lends itself with incidents and storylines of strong sense of violation of human rights and dignity. The UDHR 1948 declares that all human beings are equal in dignity and human rights. This is basically not achieved in many societies and is acutely violated during war times. Through history and literature one can encounter the plight of human dignity massacred through intolerance, war and captivity. This opens a question if a just society is an impossible reality. Change should begin from within and this is much

needed at a time when there is a lot of political instability. The UDHR has to be put into practice in the societies and that the basic human rights of a person should be ensured.

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## Sarah Woodruff and the Question of her Social Freedom in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

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### Abstract

John Fowles has always been concerned with the general issue of human freedom, by which he usually means the freedom of individuals from the constraints of the society and its institutions. In the 1960s, he defined this freedom in the context of existentialism, but even after his interest in the broader philosophy of existentialism declined in the 1970s, he maintained a concern with the achievement of 'authenticity', the result of the individual's successful struggle with society. In this context, Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is probably the best to examine closely on this subject. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, there are three different kinds of freedom noticeable and they are: social freedom, existential freedom and narrative freedom. But however, this paper is an attempt to discuss the concept of social freedom and how it emerges in the novel through the character of Sarah Woodruff. Furthermore, this paper also excavates the ways via which we get to analyse the question of social freedom in a Victorian setting as well as Sarah's determined endeavours to break free from the rigid Victorian society and emerging as a 'Modern Woman'.

**Keywords:** Freedom, Society, Existential, Social

John Fowles's use of Karl Marx's statement that "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself" as an epigraph to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* signals out the importance of 'freedom' as one of the significant and constitutive subject-matters of the text. To define what freedom is, we may address it to be as one's power or right to act, to speak, or think without any hindrance or restraint.

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Similarly, in terms of social freedom, it is something which is achieved when we resist certain social norms and conventions and want to place ourselves not within the confinement but somewhere outside it. But however, John Fowles in the novel *The French Lieutenant's woman* through the amalgamation of the Victorian age with that of Modern age wants to show the meaning of freedom that exists in both the Ages. Fowles here indicates that Victorian age is a time of contradictions, "An age where woman was sacred, and where you could buy a thirteen-year-old girl for a few pounds-a few shillings, if you wanted her for only an hour or two" (*The French Lieutenant's Woman* 268). Moreover, the sensual description of the literary productions in this age never went beyond a kiss. Therefore, in Victorian England, a woman should be demure, an elegant lady who is expected to be a future good mother as well as a good wife and in case of man, he should be gallant and chivalric gentleman: to please, to protect ladies, to control their temper and emotion to be loyal to their love. So against such a period of contradiction and transition, Fowles concerns with human emancipation and the Victorian sexual hypocrisy are relevant to his treatment and examination of freedom in this particular novel.

In Fowles's thinking, there are three kinds of freedom: narrative, existential and social. Narrative freedom is the freedom of the fictional characters (or the illusion of it) from their authors. It is the freedom the narrator speaks of when he asserts that a "genuinely created world must be independent of its creator . . . It is only when our characters and events begin to disobey us that they begin to live" (*The French Lieutenant's Woman* 81). In the context of existential freedom, Fowles believes that existentialism is primarily a response to social and political pressures on the individual to conform. Though there is some overlap between social and existential freedom in the sense that both give the individual the opportunity to choose, but existentialism necessitates a choice independent of any sustaining community. Social freedom on the other hand, is the opportunity to choose between alternative social "realities" which confirm and strengthen one's identity. It is a way, therefore, of choosing an identity

which comes with a certain self-assurance and comfort.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the characters of Sarah and Charles can be conceived in terms of their reactions against social conventions of the late Victorian period. Charles acted as conventional rebel for much of the novel but more than him, it is Sarah who can be perceived as a more genuine rebel against social constraints. A renowned critic called Thomas Forster called Sarah "female Heathcliff", someone who ignores social convention (*Understanding John Fowles* 70) because she, unlike the women of her time who had no choice rather than to accept the fixed social parameters of the society, sets forth for herself the notion of social freedom. For instance, in the very beginning of the novel, we see Sarah Woodruff chained in the domestic life made by Mrs. Poulteney. She was the force holding Sarah in her domestic clutch, but some sort of resistance is seen towards the domestic state of life when she answers back to Mrs. Poulteney on one occasion when the latter questions her for moving near the sea and wandering on the empty and solitary roads. Again the character of Sarah Woodruff is mysterious for constantly being addressed as "The French Lieutenant's Whore", "Poor Tragedy" and so on throughout the text. Sarah seems to bear out the public's view of her as an outcast when she explains to Charles that she indeed became infatuated with the French Lieutenant when he was recovering from an injury in the house, where Sarah was governess, and that she followed him when he left to return to France. She tells Charles that she quickly realised that he had regarded her only as an amusement, but that she gave herself to him, doubly dishonouring herself by choice. She seems to be proud of her status as outcast, for it differentiates her from a society which she considers unjust. She confesses that she deliberately allowed herself to be seen by him and through which she uncovers her attraction towards him.

In the novel, Sarah has made three essential choices revealing her own definition of freedom- actively receiving the nickname of "The French Lieutenant woman", and the insult, bias and isolation of the local people in Lyme Regis; chasing after and imploring the love

of Charles, etc. Moreover, she actively uses her identity as “fallen woman” to reconstruct a new self which shall stand in sharp contradiction to Victorian Woman thereby asserting that she is not a part of the Victorian womanhood. So, by making the self an outcast by choice, she resists against the ill-conventions and norms set against women in the Victorian period. Sarah, while asserting her freedom says, Why I sacrificed a woman’s most precious possession for the transient gratification of a man, I did not love. She raised her hands to her cheeks... I did it so that people should point at me, should say, there walks the French Lieutenant’s whore... I think I have a freedom they cannot understand. No insult no blame can touch me. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 175-176) From the above statement, it is very clear that Sarah is not the conventional Victorian Woman who toes the line. ‘Prostitute’ or ‘whore’ is an identity Sarah designs for herself. By use of this unique, indirect method, she lets out her dissatisfied, resentful emotion against a society whose social codes she denies to conform. It is not only the silent protest to the secular environment but the wise strategy to realise the freedom. Under the cover of the infamy, Sarah was able to be spared of the moral rules of that time, to shake off all kinds of bondages and pressures of the upper class to become a total expatriate.

As Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert say, “For the more secular nineteenth century, however the eternal type of female purity was represented not by a Madonna in heaven but by an angel in the house (The Mad Woman in the Attic, 2). The Evangelical and Utilitarian ideas of purity, morality, wholesomeness and utility strengthen Victorian Period. Its doctrines are based on sexual repression. Sexual expression was impractical because it diverted men from work, it appealed to emotion rather than reason, and it did nothing to further the progress of society. But Sarah Woodruff breaks this aspect of sexual repression when she aims to achieve her sexual freedom with Charles Smithson. As presented in the textual narrative, Sarah arranges very carefully every meeting with Charles. For instance, when she learns that Charles was an amateur palaeontologist, interested in collecting fossils, she makes herself wander in the forests

where Charles sought for his precious fossils. Sarah consciously let him fall into her trap by many meetings. In their first encounter, Charles inadvertently saw her sleeping under a cliff, and he was addicted in watching her. As he says, There was something intensely tender and yet sexual in the way she lay, it awakened a dim echo in Charles of a moment from his time in Paris . . . part of her hair had become loose and half- covered her cheek. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 70)

We can see the aspect of social freedom in Sarah Woodruff’s character when she rejects the style of fashion and clothing of her age. Unlike other Victorian women, for e.g. Ernestina, Mary, who wore fashionable clothes and were always conscious of their looks, Sarah revolted by wearing black in particular and avoiding the fashionable clothes in general. In addition to this, Sarah achieves freedom by emerging as a “Modern Woman”. This can be well noticed when she is contrasted with the character of Ernestina. Sarah is presented as a social rebel and Ernestina as an orthodox lady of the Victorian age. Ernestina Freeman was a lady of Victorian period, a product of that age, a spoiled daughter of a rich but contemporaneous draper.

She had exactly the right face for her age; that is, small, chinned, oval, delicate as a violet . . . Her grey eyes and the paleness of her skin only enhanced the delicacy of the rest. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 26) Again Ernestina’s desire for sex is so overpowering that she admired herself in the mirror. Whenever the physical female implication of her body, sexual, menstrual, parturition tried to force an entry into her consciousness, she is aware that she should restrict herself. But Sarah is completely opposite from the women of her age. She freely expresses her sexual desires, although it was not to be outspoken in public. Her freedom that she achieved through breaking the shackles of sexual repression also helps her to emerge as a modern woman. Moreover, Sarah stands out as a “Modern Woman” in the sense that she is not counted as belonging to the group of so-called well-behaved women.

To bring in the reference of Mary Wollstonecraft, she once mentioned that “Women are termed as fragile, they’re obliged to look up to man for every comfort. In the most trivial dangers they cling to their support with a parasite’s grip; piteously demanding help; and their natural protector extends his arm or raises his voice to guard the lovely tremble” (A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, pg. 42). This may be applied to Ernestina who was fragile not only physically but both mentally and emotionally. To cite an instance, when Charles decide to broke up his engagement, she could not endure the pain and beseeched him to think twice. She behaved as if her life would be meaningless if Charles abandons her. But one can see that Sarah is free from all these. She neither wants protection from Charles nor his control upon her.

Another interpretation of Social freedom achieved by Sarah is asserted in her rejection of the institution of marriage. Sarah knows that in a society of her time, a woman should curtail her freedom and marriage and child bearing should be their first preoccupation. Thus she believes that the only way to showcase her rejection of societal values can be achieved via her rejection of Charles. Therefore she says, “I do not want to share my life. I wish to be what I am, not what a husband, however kind, however indulgent, must expect me to become in marriage. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 453) She further says that she is very happy in her present life without him, “I never expected to be happy in life. Yet I find myself happy where I am situated now” (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 453). Thus Sarah symbolically defies the patriarchal attitudes which consider women as inferior or less than that of their male counterparts. Moreover, the reason why she chose the latter between love and freedom is not because her love for Charles was reduced, but because she thought that economic independence was the foundation for the realisation of freedom. Thus Sarah thought that by giving Charles his freedom, she can secure her own choice of freedom.

In the latter part of the novel, we find Sarah fleeing to London without telling Charles about it, who still very much in love with her, looks for her the next several years and finds her living in the

Rossetti’s house enjoying her new found freedom. Charles is surprised to see her in the new creative look which breaks his traditional belief that “a fallen woman must continue falling”. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 445). When Charles meets Sarah in the Rossetti’s house, she re-appears as a “New Woman” with her fresh dressing style. She rejects the contemporary clothing style and her new image surprises Charles : “:And her dress! It was so different that he thought for a moment she was someone else. He had always seen her in his mind in the former clothes, a haunted face rising from a widowed darkness. But this was someone in full uniform of the “New Woman”, flagrantly rejecting all formal contemporary notions of female fashion. (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 446)

Her new dressing style reinforces her frankness and directness. She chooses not to pursue the conventional woman’s career of marriage and motherhood. Sarah’s achievement of subjectivity in the final second ending by refusing the imprisonment of marriage is the significant element to consider her as a “New Woman”. She finds her individuality and stands out working herself and being economically independent in the house of the Rossetti’s. Sarah asserts the finding of her true happiness and the achievement of her selfhood by refusing Charles’ proposal of marriage even though he assures her freedom without setting any condition. “Mr Smithson, I am happy, I am at last arrived, or so it seems to me, where I belong” (The French Lieutenant’s Woman 453).

To conclude, it can be said that, with Sarah, Fowles wanted his audience to see a woman who transcended the Victorian age into the future. Sarah was unlike any other woman in the Victorian times as she represents the changing times and the creation of a self-identity. Moreover, her intelligence sets her apart from Victorian society’s standard for Women and her quest for attaining a social identity can be seen as a direct attack on the women of Victorian background who relied on their husband’s name, through which they are identified and known. Thus, it can be said that Sarah employed the strategy of being stigmatised as a French Lieutenant’s Whore to pursue her freedom and accordingly she breaks away from the patriarchal

dominant ideology that the domesticity is a woman's nature and the role of a mother and wife are the duty they should fulfil.

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## Projection of War, Emotions & History in the Works of Svetlana Alexievich

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### Abstract

The paper examines the writings of Svetlana Alexievich, a celebrated Belarusian writer who writes about the historical and political events in the Soviet and post-Soviet Union setup. A war prose writer who has followed the oral tradition of storytelling through her writings is the recipient of Nobel Prize in Literature for the year 2015. The Nobel Prize Committee has recognised her works which are non-fictional in nature, for her impressive cycle of books known as the Voices of Utopia. The rawness and honesty of her books are brought through by the careful documentation of the horrors of the war time situations and representation of history through the accounts of the actual witnesses of the traumatic events. Each work of Alexievich brings forth the variance between the accounts of official debates of Soviet Union and even the glorification of the war in contrast with the accounts of survivors and their experiences. Dehumanizing experiences of wars and missions that have never been documented find a voice in her works. The discussion of this representation of war, emotions, narratives of the survivor through the expressive writings of Alexievich is the central theme of this paper.

**Keywords :** Documentary Prose, Emotions, History, Narratives, Soviet Union, Survivor, Svetlana Alexievich, War, Witness.

“We are air: we are not earth.” (Merab Mamardashvili)

The very tone of the epigraph of *Chernobyl Prayer* lays emphasis on life as an element of Svetlana Alexievich's writings. This quotation depicts the sentiments of Alexievich. Alexievich used this quotation in a symbolic sense. On looking at it critically, she is writing

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something that is not visible to the world. Air is something that cannot be seen and Earth is something that is visible. 'Air' is about the sentiments and emotions we humans have, but the 'Earth' is about the bodies. Her aim by using this quotation is not just looking at men or women as just a piece of flesh and bones but a soul that has feelings, emotions and desires. The internal wars and conflicts that this body fights is a matter of concern for her and not just the wars that the sturdy bodies have fought just for a piece of land.

Svetlana Alexievich is one of the very few non-fictional writers who have been regarded by the Nobel Prize Committee and is the 14<sup>th</sup> woman to receive Nobel Prize in Literature "for her polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our times." (Nobel Prize, 2015). Alexievich's works have been interpreted and analysed through different approaches and there have always been contestations regarding the categorisation of her works as a part of literature. Whether to call it as a work of literature, oral history or ethnography is still under disputes even after receiving the ultimate literary accreditation. The works have been organised structurally around the problem of representation of the people and their experiences of the historical events, rendering it the quality of the finest literary pieces. Expression of the courage in the times of the war, each witness becomes a tale for her to tell, each story having a quest to take on in the struggles of the harsh times. Addressing the issue of catastrophe created by humans and suffered by humans, she has presented the inexpressible image of the wars through the lens of the survivors or the people who have seen the history unfolding in front of them. She has found a genre to speak of men and women. The echoing of voices she has heard over the years after conducting interviews, each of her interviewee becomes a protagonist for her. Every person is a hero and that hero has its own memories, struggles, rise and fall coinciding with the political developments that made the country grow and suffer respectively. Her field work has made her listen to the silences and be patient about knowing and exploring new and unbound realities. That is why her works are exceptional and unique in the sense that she has allowed her characters to breath. Marking

them to speak of the uncensored truth and experiences of life. Deglorifying the Second World War, Soviet Afghan war or for that matter the Great Patriotic war, she peeps through the silences of the emotions and untold desires.

Inspired from the writings of the Ales Adamovich, she has regarded him as the writer who has influenced her writings. The famous Belarusian writer had an important influence on Svetlana Alexievich's writings. She has always regarded him as her teacher and a motivator. Two of his works in particular *I'm from the Fiery Village* and *The Book of the Siege* had an impact on her writings. Though the works were a joint venture with other writer the main ideas and the development of the works were entirely his own. The works paved a way for a new genre of literature for both Russian and Belarussian literature. While looking for her motivation in writing her grand cycle, she has incorporated her own style with the foundation laid by her mentor. In the pursuit of gaining knowledge about World War II she has consciously decided to work through the path laid by her guide Adamovich, who paved the way for her future. Easing the way of publishing of her works and helping her with getting in contact with the editors and prefacing his comments in the form of introductory remarks in her works. Therefore the influence of Adamovich is prominent in her works as a writer and has shaped her basic writing style and genre selection.

"There are a good many times when there is no war just as there are a good many times when there is a war. To be sure when there is a war the years are longer that is to say the days are longer the months are longer the years are much longer but the weeks are shorter that is what makes a war. And then there is no war, well just now I cannot remember just how it is when there is no war." (Stein, *Wars I Have Seen* 12)

The words of Gertrude Stein gives the fundamental essence of the works of Alexievich. Every work of the grand cycle echoes the exact sentiments. The soviet sentiment is related to nothing but a turmoil situation. Each generation has experienced the pain and the sufferings, directly or indirectly. The common discussion points amongst

the families was nothing but the war and that psychologically impacts the child's growing up experiences. The factuality not only lies in just the historic situations that framed the narrative of the USSR but also what conditions led to the framing of the consciousness of the common people that witnessed the catastrophe. History for the historians is about that facts and details that formed the part of the documental details of the nationalism and wars based on the growth of the national boundaries or defence of the national territories. The borders that need protection and the undying nationalistic spirit of the people ready to sacrifice are just archetypes for historical writings and writers. Alexievich's narratives breaks the popular construct of archetypal writings. She is a historian of souls and emotions.

"We did not know the world without war, the world of war was the only world known to us, and the people of war were the only people known to us. Even now, I do not know the other world and the other people. Did they ever exist?!" (Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*3)

Alexievich in her writings, is explaining the fears in her mind, that, the world she has witnessed for her lifetime is the world that shall never end. The world which is full of struggle, death, war and sufferings. That has become the reality of the Soviet people and that it has become an important element of their existence. Though the official Soviet discourse constantly presented that the Second World War was believed to be the last war the Soviet Union took part in and believed that the authorities managed to take the necessary steps to prevent any war like situation in future, yet the actuality lies in the fact that whether in real form or the symbolic form, war has always been a part of their lives. Almost all the aspects of the human lives of probably the most militarised society of the human history had the discussion and contemplation on militarism. The Soviet propaganda penetrated among the people was about the military practices and the praises for the rhetoric of *muzhestvo* Russian word meaning 'Bravery' and 'Courage' resonating with the nature of 'Masculinity' amongst the citizens. Therefore, the civic situations though prevailing, were consensually

war-like for example 'Chernobyl' being regarded as 'a place of defeat for the Soviet people'. Even market and the democratic reforms were regarded as 'fight' towards the 'Totalitarianism'. What Alexievich was looking for is something beyond the general narratives of the documented history and the common representational narratives, she connects with the people to know their part of the history the one unaltered from the propaganda created by the state or the authorities rather their sufferings and the emotions that they went through following the social obligations and confining themselves to the struggles and pressure to survive in the military setup.

"And history? It is in the street. In the crowd. I believe that in each of us there is a small piece of history. In one half a page, in another two or three. Together we write the book of time. We each call out our truth. The nightmare of nuances. And it all has to be heard, and one has to dissolve in it all, and become it all. And at the same time not lose oneself. To combine the language of the street and literature. The problem is also that we speak about the past in present day language. How can we convey the feelings of those days?" (28)

Alexievich actually is trying to ultimately undress the memories, feelings and emotions of the individuals that have found no references in the history books about the wartime. The representation of Individuals as an important entity is an essential aspect of Alexievich's works. Her novel *The Unwomanly Face of War* represents the history of the women who has actually experienced the Second World War. Somewhere taking the front-line defence tasks like being a soldier, pilot etc. and the others acting like a support staff, like cooks, doctors, nurses etc. Nobody talked about this aspect, as every one was busy glorying the victories and trying to look at the physical damages of the state property. The experiences and the frights, the women had during the war, and the change in the psychology after the war is something nobody actually explored. *Zinky Boys* for that matter explores the situation of the survivors of the Soviet- Afghan war, the young boys fighting the war. A teenager getting ready to pick up arms for the sake of his country, and some

of the young mothers losing their sons wrapped up in the zinc coffins after attaining martyrdom. Her novel *The Chernobyl Prayer: the chronicles of the future* talks about the worlds after the deadly nuclear disaster took place. It is about the acceptance of the new realities of life after the tragedy occurred. People conforming to the new vision of life, the new outlook to overcome a nuclear disaster, acceptance of the new situations of the space which was already there, but was not perceived. Alexievich even talks about the lives of the people after the Soviet Union collapsed, following the tradition of oral storytelling, she has incorporated the voices of the people that have witnessed the collapse, people experienced the shattering of the soviet dream and the Soviet culture.

Alexievich's proses have a central meaning towards the idea of suffering and has a deep-rooted philosophical experiences and political implications (Gapova, 2015). She in her attempt is writing down the realities of the soviet and post-Soviet emotions. She is not interested in asking for political stances from her witnesses, rather her focus is on the small detail of their lives such as childhood, love, desires, dresses, fashions etc. trying to look at the crude details that form the very psyche of the people. Her lookout for life is in the words and the stories, that her literature. That is what interests her and these words form the central content of her written work. She has become the voice of the voiceless. The one's who know nothing about their own struggles and a means for representation, because they are silenced. A common man is silenced by the system that works underplay. The system that governs the common man and its expectations are under the scanner. People who are the basic bricks of the nation building and the nation formation are the ones that need voices. Their choices and desires are never head of and the expectations that a common man has towards the growth of the nation and the personal satisfaction are always sidelined. Though USSR was a glorious country to live, the global world felt threatened of the might of the country. The common people lived under the fear of losing their loved ones in the wars. World War II and the Soviet- Afghan war saw casualty and death

of young men. The families getting devastated by the loss of the loved ones. Young women going for the war supporting the men. Then came a time when the people saw their young boys wrapped in the zinc coffins after fighting a war. Young women traumatised from the shell shocks they experienced during their war days. Those who survived had nothing to do, they were prepared for the war. The war memories haunted them, they had to pick up a new job to earn bread and butter for their families. Women had to hide their identities to fit into the non-war conditions. To fit into a family system, they had to conceal their identities. They were terrified by the idea of their husbands and their extended families knowing about them being at war. The fight was not just against the system but also against the consciousness that made that question the very point of having a war and being a participant in that. The women were the worst sufferers, they played the role of sisters, wives, mothers and that pain to lose the close ones made them suffer.

Alexievich is a 'Soviet' person and a 'Soviet writer'. The Soviet person in her has the pain of losing the soviet state. The Soviet sentiment in her propounds the non-acceptance of the death of that Soviet dream and Soviet life. She is familiar with this Soviet person and that narratives of the oral histories and traditions are a part of her own narrative. Alexievich throughout in her books explores the details of the people, their sufferings, emotions of love and hate. Bringing the trauma of the people alive in the war conditions and how the people have lived in this situation across generations. The distress caused by the major events in the human history and the history of Soviet- union and Post-Soviet situation for that matter. Under the Authoritarian rule the strategies of the lives of the people is the core area for her. Her voices from utopia speak out for the overly big ideas that in the end result in blood-shed. Blending history and emotions, she has written the realistic approach of the common people. She looks for 'a little big person' and defines it as someone who was humiliated, tortured and suppressed by the totalitarian controllers, still at the end of the day was able to win.

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## Anita Desai's *The Artist of Disappearance*: Reverberations of Defeat And Disillusionment

Amita Rawley Thaman\*

### Abstract

The present paper aims to capture the portrayal of characters and the kind of life throbbing within them in Anita Desai's *The Artist of Disappearance*. It is a collection of three tales—"The Museum of Final Journeys", "Translator Translated", and "The Artist of Disappearance". True to the literary tradition set by herself, all three tales comprise of heartrending descriptions of the inner workings of people's minds—their fears, weaknesses, complexes and failures. All the three tales reverberate of the bitter realities of contemporary times. The characters depict the precarious predicaments they face whereby Desai gives us glimpses of their lives, the pangs of conscience or the dilemmas they face, the failures they witness owing to their personal weaknesses or inhibitions. They all are essentially a part of modern, corrupt world where people are too materialistic, too selfish to think about others or to do something for them.

**Keywords :** Ordeal , Disillusionment , inhibitions, complexes.

Anita Desai has embellished the Indian literary scene for over fifty years now. Desai is an artist of a high order and her concern for the human lot has imparted profound appeal to her novels. As a novelist, Desai has always sought to examine the interior landscape, the psychic life of her characters. All her protagonists are rather intense and self-absorbed. In her earlier novels like *Cry*, *The Peacock*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, and *Voices in the City*, Desai writes primarily about human relationships. Family and familial relationships have always played crucial roles in her fictional world. In Desai's fiction, one does miss the warmth and compassion for the Indian humanity as a whole. This is because Desai feels about India as an Indian, while she thinks about it as an outsider. Desai's fictional

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world is not bathed in the clear light of day but in the murk of despair. Her neurotic protagonists are born to suffer. Nothing redeems either their life or their world: "...neither hope, nor delusion, and certainly never love, courage, or passion. R.K. Narayan writes of similarly vulnerable creatures, but seldom with such a sense of doom." --P.S. Chauhan, (Encyclopaedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English)

Desai's writing style is simply inimitable. For etching her characters on to the literary landscape, Desai uses a number of techniques. There is no linear movement in her novels. As she pens down the innermost feelings, conflicts and dilemmas of her characters, she resorts to flashbacks, diary entries and interior monologue. The disturbed psyche of the protagonist is at times depicted in sharp contrast to a placid description of nature which serves to sensitise the readers all the more towards the turmoil of the characters. All her chief characters are intense and self-absorbed, there is a rather heightened level of awareness, a strong sense of individuality and yet paradoxically a clear-cut quest for identity of the self. They are in search of the truth underlying the surface level of life. In an interview with Yashodara Dalmia, Desai acknowledged: One's preoccupation can only be a perpetual search—for meaning, for values, for dare I say it truth. I think of the world as an iceberg...the one-tenth visible above the surface is what we call reality, but the nine-tenths that are submerged make-up the truth, and that is what one is trying to explore.

*The Artist of Disappearance* by Anita Desai is a collection of three tales—"The Museum of Final Journeys", "Translator Translated", and "The Artist of Disappearance". True to the literary tradition set by herself, all three tales comprise of heartrending descriptions of the inner workings of people's minds—their fears, weaknesses, complexes and failures. The first story "The Museum of Final Journeys" deals with the early career experiences of a disinterested male government civil servant newly posted in a remote station of North-eastern India. There are vivid descriptions of the primitive residence allotted to him and the solitary, languishing hours he spends there after work—with practically no alternatives for pastime, no social life, nothing to look forward to. He stumbles upon an estate on the verge of ruin, faces a

challenge of saving the relics and artistic remnants and even a baby elephant by turning government's attention towards it but after culminating in high suspense, the story takes an abrupt turn by opening many years later when the unnamed narrator, now posted in the din and bustle of the city reminisces about his early days and feels qualms about having done nothing at that time for the estate manager. The narration of the story is in first person. Desai deliberates a sharp contrast here between the mysterious, intriguing world of the crumbling 'museum' house and the callous urban world. The narrator listens intently to the curator/ caretaker of the house-museum, decides to personally visit the place and for all practical purposes makes him believe that he is going to be the saviour of the dynasty's relics when suddenly Desai brings us face-to-face with the unkept promise of the unnamed narrator. When the story resumes in the present times, we are told that the narrator is no longer a bachelor now. He is a family man with grown sons and daughters, and he admits that all these years, he never cared to look back or keep in touch with the keeper of the museum. Presently, the narrator remembers the museum as a vague image or even a mirage, and it is here that Desai brings to the fore the unardonable, materialistic mentality of modern man.

The second story is about two classmates, poles apart in childhood and even now—the protagonist Prema Joshi, an ordinary, unenthusiastic, middle-aged teacher of English literature "going home from work with nothing to look forward to"(pp.89) and the other, Tara, in publishing business—popular and glamorous-- as in early days. They happen to meet at the Founder's Day function held at their old school. Tara, a cunning epitome of the modern society lures Prema for venturing into a project of translation of a work of Suvarna Devi, "the unsung heroine of Oriya letters"(pp.51), which only brings more despair for Prema who is only mocked at and rendered inferior in comparison to the original. Besides giving us a realistic account of the vagaries associated with the publishing business, Desai also throws light at the secondary treatment meted out towards translators in our society. The story titled "Translator Translated" renders a true picture of the bearings in contemporary society whereby

it is a matter of common knowledge and practice that rich people condescend the less privileged and truly hardworking people are bereft of their due. Prema is intimidated when question after question is flung at her at the Press Conference and she ruminates and regrets that she could not keep pace with the current of the times and simply clung to teaching Victorian literature all those years. As she went through the ordeal of translating Suvarna Devi's work, Prema transformed into an ill-tempered, harsh and bitter personality: Whyever did I imagine that I was different, and could live differently from them. We are all in this together, this world of loss and defeat. All of us, everyone of us has had a moment when a window opened, when we caught a glimpse of the open, sunlit world beyond, but all of us, on this bus have had that window close, and remain closed. (pp.89-90)

The third and the titular story is that of Ravi, the lonely son of wealthy parents who withdraws into an old palatial, burnt house in Mussoorie in the search of solace. With the family liquor business flourishing, Ravi's parents Hosni and Tehmi completely neglected Ravi, attending parties and the like. Later on Tehmi's asthma worsened and she confined herself to her room and even to her bed, while her husband indulged in "bridge-games, sedate celebrations of anniversaries of one kind or another, and many hours in the club bar." (pp.111) Ravi was seldom invited to his mother's bedroom. Ravi soon developed a strange fondness for Miss Dora Wilkinson, the new elderly housekeeper. After the death of his father in a car-crash and his ailing mother still in Mussoorie, Ravi lived for many years with his relatives in Bombay "who thought him freakishly backward." (pp.114) The news of his mother's death took him back to the hills, to Miss Wilkinson, finally "released" (pp.116) after his mother. In the lap of nature, Ravi immersed himself in "an art no one witnessed and he himself barely acknowledged." (pp.119) The closeness which he never shared with any of his parents, he developed with the old housekeeper. One unfortunate day the house caught fire and "stood knee-deep in soot and smoke, contorting and writhing in the heat." (pp.121) When a film crew arrived from Delhi, and discovered

his glade and wanted to shoot there, Ravi the recluse he was, withdrew further and took refuge in Bhola's hut: His longing to resume what was his real life was left smouldering inside him like a match blown at but not put out. Brooding, he sat studying his hands as if they were all that were left to him now that he had nothing to work on. (pp.152)

All the three tales reverberate of the bitter realities of contemporary times. The characters depict the precarious predicaments they face whereby Desai gives us glimpses of their lives, the pangs of conscience or the dilemmas they face, the failures they witness owing to their personal weaknesses or inhibitions. They all are essentially a part of modern, corrupt world where people are too materialistic, too selfish to think about others or to do something for them. The unnamed narrator of the first story "sins against", whereas the protagonists of the other two tales are "sinned against" and denied providential justice in one way or the other. All her chief characters echo of the ordinary, the mundane individual who is aware of his capability as well as culpability, yet cannot make a special mark in life somehow. The rich linguistic landscape of Desai however stands in sharp contrast to the reverberating disillusionment emanating from all the three stories.

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## Journey through Darkness to Light : An Exploration of Swami Vivekananda's Thought and Personality through his Poetry in English

Sudipta Chakraborty\*

### Abstract

A modern Indian philosopher, a non-dualist monk and a visionary poet per excellence, Swami Vivekananda (12 January 1863 – 4 July 1902) is a unique phenomenon in the history of Indian English poetry. His poetry sprung from his life-long search for truth and knowledge. Unfortunately, inadequate attention has been paid to Vivekananda's literary works, which remains rather a less acknowledged area among his myriad preoccupations as a monk, philosopher, nationalist and social reformer. The paper aims to shed light on the thought and personality of Swami Vivekananda by examining the productive mutuality between Vivekananda's spiritual quest and his poetry. In the process, the study would revisit Vivekananda's philosophical and religious teaching through his poetry and explore his achievement as a spiritual leader in colonial India.

**Keywords:** Advaita, Awakening, Brahman, Humanism, Spirituality.

A modern Indian philosopher, a non-dualist monk and a visionary poet per excellence, Swami Vivekananda (12 January 1863 – 4 July 1902) reaches a height of lyrical eloquence and spiritual quest for truth in his songs and poems that are only to be matched by the mystic intensity of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo later on. Writing poetry for him was a serious and compulsive preoccupation. His poetry sprung from his life-long search for truth and knowledge. There are evidences that Swami was keenly aware of the complementary co-existence of a philosopher and a poet in him and it is vindicated by his argument in *Memoirs of European Travels* that

“every good poet is a Vedantin”, e.g. Goethe, Schiller and Lamartine [Complete Works (henceforth CW) 7: 376]. Unfortunately, inadequate attention has been paid to Vivekananda's literary works, which remains rather a less acknowledged area among his myriad preoccupations as a monk, philosopher, nationalist and social reformer. Recently a few critics have focused on the formative influence of Vedanta philosophy on his poetry (Chakrabarti 1998) and his contribution to Indian-English poetry (Mishra 2002).

The philosopher-poet in Vivekananda did not dwell in the ivory tower of Vedantic non-dualism in complete disregard of human verities. A profound strain of humanism informs the epistemological core of his poems as well. Swami's humanism bids for a highly illuminating religious and ethical understanding of the philosophy of man, which conceives divinity in man and calls for embracing humanity out of disinterested love. Setting Swami Vivekananda's philosophical contemplations and spiritual quest in this perspective of religious humanism, I have chosen to undertake the analysis of a few of Swami's representative poems written in English. These poems speak of the poetic genius of Swami Vivekananda in his profound concern for the spiritual emancipation of human soul from all kinds of earthly bondage.

It is in “The Song of the Sannyasin” (composed at Thousand Islands Park, U.S.A. in July 1895), the universal rhythm of Brahman, or the Absolute, can be heard in its most audible form. Each of the thirteen stanzas in the poem resounds with the incantatory refrain “Om tat sat, Om”, or only the Absolute that exists. It renders the poem a Vedic hymn-like quality. The song is a celebration of the sannyasin's ideal of renunciation and his dogged determination to triumph over all fears and frustrations of life. The poem invites us to follow the example of the sannyasins. By shaking off all earthly attachments and lifting themselves above all causes of worldly suffering, the sannyasin becomes divine joy personified and dauntlessly goes on chanting “Om tat sat, Om”, the mantras of salvation from the Bhagvad Gita. The poem draws on the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, which emphasizes the pursuit of moksa, or liberation, from

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the cycle of death and rebirth through the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman or the Supreme Reality behind the phenomenal world. Vivekananda builds his argument on this theme of liberation and spirituality so that spiritual knowledge is shown to be the sole source of inner strength in the poem. Thus “The Song of the Sannyasin” can also be labelled as the sannyasin’s song of freedom since the sannyasin in the poem is shown to have owed his indomitable and incorruptible spirit to the knowledge of Advaita, or the Indivisible. He advances towards the life divine in defiance of all trials and tribulations that are attendant upon one given to the pursuit of the Absolute.

Tracing the poetic development of Swami Vivekananda seems to be particularly useful to those people who are interested in Swami’s religious life. His poetry provides us with an index of his troubled progression in the path of faith. If “The Song of the Sannyasin” gives us a glimpse of the figure of the intrepid holy man in Vivekananda who is ready to risk any hazard or suffering in his quest for the eternal truth, “Kali the Mother” (composed in Kashmir in 1898 on his return from America) shows a different aspect of his spiritual struggle. The tone and mood of the poem communicates a psychological state, which may be compared to that phase of spiritual journey described by St. John of the Cross as the “Dark Night of the Soul”. In the “Khshir Bhowani” chapter of *The Master as I saw Him* ([1910] 1977), Sister Nivedita observes that in spite of his lifelong adherence to transcendental idealism, Vivekananda seemed to be strangely in the grip of a deepening consciousness of suffering, death and terror during this phase of his life (105-15).

A fruit of an intensely visionary experience, “Kali the Mother” witnesses the descent of such a dark and terrible mood that inspires the poet’s apocalyptic imagination in his nocturnal quest for truth - truth that dwells in death and destruction. The poem, indeed, begins with a vivid description of the nocturnal sky that is overcast and about to explode in thunder and rain. Then it gradually takes us amidst a scene of terrible destruction wrought by the demented fury of the raging tempest. The tempo of poetic imagination in this instance can only be compared to Shelley’s mythopoeic description of the

tumultuous storm in “Ode to the West Wind”. The Mother Goddess is shown to be the symbol of elemental power and energy that lurks beneath all creation and manifests itself primarily through death and destruction, but is always supposed to beget what is essentially good and beneficial for the entire humanity at the end. The poet sends his prayer to this volcanic eruption of the “maternal”, the fountain-spring of life-sustaining primeval energy, as follows:

In the roaring, whirling wind  
 Are the souls of a million lunatics  
 Just loose from the prison-house.  
 Wrenching trees by the roots  
 Sweeping all from the path.  
 [. . .]  
 A thousand, thousand shades  
 Of Death begrimed and black -  
 Scattering plagues and sorrows,  
 Dancing mad with joy,  
 Come, Mother, come! (CW 4: 384)

The poem is shot through with Swami’s brilliant uses of functional imagery. The uncanny atmosphere of the stormy night, compounded by the portentous darkness of the nocturnal sky and the suggestion of all-pervasive violence in nature, is perfectly attuned to the dark and terrible image of Goddess Kali. The theme of divine terror in the poem revolves around a central paradox – the Mother’s benediction is shown to be manifested through death and destruction. It may suggest that the key to truth and knowledge lies couched in the understanding of the problem of evil and the mystery of suffering. This conjecture may be corroborated by Sister Nivedita’s reference to Swami’s words regarding the worship of the “Terrible” : “It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship the Terror for Its own sake. (The Master 135)

It is recorded by Sister Nivedita that “Kali the Mother” was occasioned by the rare instance of the poet’s effortless imagination. After the stupendous emotional exhaustion of his visionary experience Vivekananda fell on the floor (The Master 107). The poem ends on the note of embracing the terrible beauty of the Mother. Vivekananda was keenly aware of the fact that each one of us is not always capable of such daring act since the sorrows and afflictions of mundane existence bow us down and strip us of our dignity quite inevitably. “The Cup” is a poem, in which Swami addresses this hard fact of life and contemplates on the practical means of accepting the burden of suffering. The poem may be read as a document of Vivekananda’s spiritual struggle as well. The poem plays on the Hindu doctrine of Karma, which postulates the universal law of causality determining the individual’s existence. The initial lines of the poem capture the essence of this doctrine. The speaker is offered a cup of dark brew as follows,

Nay, My child, I know

How much of that dark drink is your own brew

Of fault and passion, ages long ago,

In the deep years of yesterday, I know. (CW 6: 177)

But God also dictates that the speaker need not understand the working of this causal law. On the contrary, the speaker is asked to “close your [his] eyes to see My [God’s] face” (CW 6: 177). Thus suffering is conceptualized as preordained by God. These lines, with which the poem ends, emphasize the importance of keeping alive faith in God vis-à-vis the inscrutable ways of Karma.

Swami’s visit to the Kshirbhawani temple in Kashmir brought about a discernible change in his thought and mood. Witnessing the temple in a state of ruin, he fell distraught with pain and grief. He thought that he could have saved the seat of the Holy Mother from the hands of the marauding non-believers who were responsible for such sad condition of the temple. At that moment, it is said that he heard the Mother saying, “What, even if unbelievers should enter My temples, and defile my images! What is that to you? Do you protect

Me? Or do I protect you?” (Nivedita The Master 109). These words of the Mother made Vivekananda suddenly realize the folly of “patriotism”. After this dramatic event, the ever-vigilant and wrestling spirit of a Vedantist in Vivekananda gives way to the urgency for absolute surrender to the divine will. Instead of the excitement and enthusiasm of his earlier poems, a meditative mood of calm resignation and self-submission to the Almighty prevails over the poems of this period. Among these poems, at least three poems - “My Play is Done”, “O’r hill and dale” and “Peace” - deserve special mention.

“My Play is Done” is a strangely poignant poem composed perhaps in the busiest hours of his life, portraying a lonely karmayogi (one devoted to the path of action) singing the swan song of his life. Though written in 1895, the poem presents Swami already bidding farewell to his lifework and making prayers to the Mother for restoring him back to his original abode, which is the kingdom of God. In keeping with the subject matter, the tone and the mood of the poem strikes a difference from all other poems that preceded it. The entire poem is steeped in the calm piety of an enlightened sufferer. To the speaker the world looks as hollow and ephemeral as a “floating bubble” and all human efforts including the “task” of his philosophical teaching appear but exercises in futility (CW 6: 175). The poem registers the speaker’s desperate yearning for deliverance from the mundane existence marked by “life’s currents’ ebb and flow” (CW 6: 175). Only the light of truth and knowledge is shown to provide sustenance to the distressed soul as follows,

Open the gates of light, O Mother, to me Thy tired son.

I long, oh, long to return home!

Mother, my play is done. (CW 6: 176)

In respect of its philosophical vision, the poem builds on Sankaracarya’s doctrine of Advaita Brahman and reminds us of Plato’s contemplations on appearance and reality as follows,

Take me, O Mother, to those shores

[. . .] beyond e’en earthly bliss;

Whose glory neither sun, nor moon, nor stars that twinkle bright,

Nor flash of lightning can express. They but reflect its light.  
(CW 6: 177)

“O’r hill and dale” bears ample testimony to Vivekananda’s lyric genius. It is a poem of passionate search for the dearest friend and the beloved from whom the poet seems to be long estranged. “Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?”, laments the poet (CW 7: 448). After a prolonged period of heart-rending anguish that this separation causes, came the felicitous moment when the “gentle soft and soothing voice” of the beloved cries out “‘My son’, ‘my son’” (CW 7: 449). The poet intuitively feels his ever-proximity to the beloved whose mystical presence is felt to be extending all “O’er hill and dale, high mount and vale, /Far far away and high” (CW 7: 449). The poem may be considered an indirect tribute to the memory of Ramakrishna, as the image of his spiritual mentor or Guru and that of God merge together in the figure of the beloved. Although his master passed away, Swami never ceases to feel Ramakrishna’s palpable presence in whatever he does and thinks. As Vivekananda admits it several times that Ramakrishna embodies for him the highest ideal to follow in knowing and worshipping the Supreme Reality.

Written on the auspicious occasion of Sister Nivedita’s ordination, “Peace” is a poem of 29 lines in seven stanzas. Apparently the poem presents a direct counterpoint to “Kali the Mother”. “Kali the Mother”, as I have discussed, lends importance to the speaker’s daring to invoke the terrible form of the Mother by willingly embracing “Death” and “misery”. But the present poem is made to emphasize self’s silent acquiescence in what is divinely ordained for it. This is the path of Bhakti or worship to the realization of truth. But a close reading of the poem belies any such simplistic binary opposition between knowledge and worship, power and peace. Through an evocation of a series of paradoxes the poem sets a fine balance between these seemingly opposite categories, for humility is knowledge and peace is power.

“Peace” is a remarkable poem composed in the last phase of Vivekananda’s life, suggesting a new direction of Vivekananda’s spiritual development that we might have witnessed in his later life, had it not been cut short by his premature death. The poem proffers a vision of synthesis between two seemingly opposed aspects of Vivekananda’s spiritual journey - an unwavering quest for truth that upholds the agonized but indomitable spirit of a religious seeker on the one hand and an urgency for unquestioning self-abnegation before the Almighty on the other. This realization takes place in a heightened moment of vivid lucidity when all contraries dissolve as follows,

It is not joy nor sorrow  
But that which is between  
It is not light nor morrow  
But that which joins them in.  
[ . . . ]  
It is beauty never seen  
And love that stands alone  
It is song that lives un-sung  
And knowledge never known. (CW 4: 396)

Vivekananda’s philosophical doctrine is commonly known as Practical Vedanta, which is founded on his idea of “service” (seva). Vivekananda’s concept of “service” contains distinct features. “Service” for Vivekananda was not simply charity work. It is largely a pedagogical concept. By “service” Vivekananda meant his work for humanity by teaching the world the emancipatory message of Advaita Vedanta. It had the objective of setting up the ideal of spiritual liberation as the universal appeal and essence of Hinduism. Another important feature of “service” is seeing and worshipping the divinity in humankind by selfless work for the distressed humanity. It is vindicated by his unforgettable words spoken in course of an address delivered at Rameshvaram temple on “Real Worship”. “He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak and the diseased”, says Vivekananda, “really worships Shiva; and [ . . . ] with him Shiva is

more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples” (CW 3: 142).

In essence Practical Vedanta presents Vivekananda’s version of applied Advaita Vedanta and upholds the idealism of philosophical teaching of the masses. Practical Vedanta aims at imparting the knowledge of humanity’s oneness with the Absolute so that the whole world may be inspired to seek deliverance from the darkness of ignorance and be transformed in the light of truth and knowledge. “The Song of the Sannyasin” contains reference to this ideal of philosophical teaching as the lifework of a monk. The sannyasin must not remain solely preoccupied with his pursuit of the absolute truth and the ultimate reality. He needs to play the role of a spiritual educator of the masses. The Sannyasin must teach people the ideal of Advaita Vedanta as follows,

Few only know the truth. The rest will hate  
And laugh at thee, great one; but pay no heed.  
Go thou, the free, from place to place, and help  
Them out of darkness, Maya’s veil. (CW 4: 395)

The above-quoted lines contain the essence of Vivekananda’s idea of “service”. At the same time, teaching people the significance of liberation is shown to be an arduous task. Hard realities beset the sannyasin’s mission. He should be prepared to face people’s rejection and derision. In this respect the poet urges the sannyasin to be selfless (‘help’) in his action, which is to provide spiritual guidance to the world.

The idea of service for humanity by means of Practical Vedanta is not personal. Indeed, the idea of spiritual awakening of the masses also inspired Vivekananda to visualize the possibility of a national awakening – his vision of Prabuddha Bharata, or awakened India. The poem, “To Awakened India”, contains the essence of this narrative – Practical Vedanta as a tool of spiritual leadership. The poem begins with the poet’s impassioned plea that India should awake once more from the long slumber since “The world in need awaits” (CW 4:

386). So the poet believes that the world has great expectations from India and India must respond to the calling with its “stirring words”. As we move further into the poem, it is given to our understanding that India owes this message of awakening (“stirring words”) to its age-old spiritual heritage. Like a visionary, the poet looks forward to the coming future when India would be awakened to the teaching and inspiration of the Mother, who “resides in all as Power/ And Life” (CW 4: 387). Let Uma, the Divine Mother and the daughter of the Himalaya, the poet says, reveal the “One in All” and bestow “untiring/ Strength, which is Infinite Love” (CW 4: 387). The Mother’s teaching, therefore, contains a distinct feature of Vivekananda’s ideal of “service”, which postulates that love and compassion for humanity is the true form of worshipping God since divinity resides in every human being (‘One in All’).

Harvests of a key thinker of his age, all of Vivekananda’s writings bear the indelible mark of his personality, his originality of thought and deep concern for the deliverance of human soul. In this respect his poetry makes no exception, but it also brings out a different aspect of Swami’s personality since his poetic preoccupation gives us an intimate detail of the embattled self of a non-dualist monk, who happened to be a suffering man as well. From the brief assessment of Vivekananda’s poetic development, carried out in this article, it can be observed that for Vivekananda poetry was no pastime, rather vitally integrated to his personal quest for truth and knowledge. In course of this spiritual journey he too fell on the thorns of life and bled. At the same time, he had the extraordinary capacity to transmogrify personal suffering in the alchemy of his searching consciousness and make it a vehicle of the universal and hallowed vision of the Brahman, the ultimate reality. In this respect I have given special attention to “Kali the Mother”. This particular poem bears testimony to the mystical aspect of Vivekananda’s spiritual development. It is not simply because divinity in this poem is conceptualized in terms of the fearsome “maternal”, but the manifestation of divinity is also shown to be ridden with paradoxical truth and knowledge. Secondly, I have made an attempt to revisit

Vivekananda's philosophical teaching and his ideal of "service" through his poetry. In this respect a couple of poems – like "The Song of the Sannyasin" and "To Awakened India" – have been taken into consideration for textual analysis. It shows that these poems portray spiritual guidance and spiritual leadership as the ultimate objectives of Vivekananda's philosophical teaching. Moreover, "To Awakened India" presents Practical Vedanta in a visionary dimension so that spiritual awakening is shown to be national awakening as well.

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## Quest for Oneness with the Supreme Soul : Mystic Poetry of Narsinh Mehta

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### Abstract

Mystics relish in the non-ending search for the Supreme Soul. They enjoy the blissful state of inquisitiveness. They seem to have experienced the power of the Supreme Soul in the form of Nirguna but are further determined to attain the same in the Saguna form. The search for Saguna form of the Supreme Soul is actually the search for the Self. Basically, a mystic pines to attain oneness with his Divine counterpart and for that he completely surrenders the self to the Supreme Being. The seers believe that the blissful state attained in a dream is no less than a real life state. In contrast, wherein a person is physically awake but away from the divine communion, the purpose of human life is lost. This paper is an attempt to understand the essence of mysticism in the select spiritual poetry of Narsinh Mehta—the Gujarati saint poet.

**Keywords :** Supreme Soul, Divine Counterpart, Nirguna, Saguna, Narsinh Mehta.

Narsinh Mehta is a great Gujarati poet and an unparalleled devotee of Lord Krishna. He was born around 1414 in a Nagar Brahmin family in Junagadh district of the state of Gujarat. According to an anecdote, Narsinh was dumb by birth. But his grandmother, a firm God-believer, requested a saintly figure to cure Narsinh's dumbness. The saint whispered God's name in the five year old Narsinh's ears and asked him to repeat the same. Narsinh's immediate response astonished his grandmother. This miracle strengthened her faith in the almighty God and Narsinh became her devotee-companion to satsangs (collective prayer assemblies), bhajan sandhyas (devotional song evenings) and kirtans (collective recitation of devotional songs and chantings). Though Narsinh got married and had two children, his odyssey on the path of devotion to Lord Krishna continued

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unaffectedly. No worldly affair could deviate him from his ultimate goal to attain oneness with Lord Krishna.

Mehta's name shines in the Gujarati Bhakti Literature. His poems are mainly divided into three categories: Padas – small verses, Prabhatiyas – early morning prayer songs and Aakhyaans – the character stories from mythologies. The devotional poet Mehta's poetry is deep in pure devotion (Ananya Bhakti), mysticism and preachings for the purity of the immortal soul over the mere cleanliness of the mortal body. Many of Mehta's poems advocate the removal of the social evils like class and caste differences. He sings: Krishna kirtan vina nar sada sootaki, vimal kidhe vapu shuddha na thaye (one who is away from Krishna devotion is untouchable, mere cleaning of the body does not assure purity). Mehta's upper caste family could not accept his frequent visits and devotional musical evenings at the lower class habitats. Due to his peaceful but revolutionary actions to bridge the gaps between class hierarchies and spread love and praise of Lord Krishna, Mehta's family almost boycotted him from the high status society. Whenever his community people tried to show him the prevalent line of discrimination between upper and the lower class, Mehta laughed at them. He used to sing: "Halva karma no hu narsaiyo, mujne to Vaishnav vhalo re Hari-janthi je antar ganshe, tena fogat fera thalo re." (I am the Poet named Narsinh who is a man of normal deeds, I love the Vaishnavas (who are free from differences between classes). Their human life is wasted who distance themselves from the Harijans – God's people and lower class people).

Mehta's poetry is simple but deep in revoking the context from the Indian scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads. Mehta affirms hope for the world peace and faith in the unison with the supreme godhead Lord Krishna. He preaches to drop hypocrisy and vanity from human nature so that the path leading to the Supreme Being becomes smooth and thus one attains the real and true meaning of human life. Mehta infuses in his readers faith and confidence by saying, Hari Hari Ratan kar, kathan kali kal ma, dam besenahikamsarse. (Keep chanting Hari, the name of God in this Kaliyuga. It does not cost a pie and your work will be done easily). Material prosperity has always been

the biggest desire of humans. One who wants to be prosperous would compromise with ethics and loyalty towards dharma – duty and would forget the Supreme God who has been kind in bestowing blessings. Poet Mehta says, material prosperity would not support at the time of death. So keep chanting the name of God Hari. For money minded people, Mehta says the chanting of the name does not cost a single pie but it can surely pave the way to reaching God, the way to self-actualisation. In the same poem, Mehta compares a greedy person with a fool who does not take support of the trunk of a tree (the central support system) but a tiny branch that is vulnerable to the slightest unfavourable situation.

Many of Mehta's poetic lines are famous as proverbial statements. These lines are short but replete with deep philosophy and the truth of life. These lines are incidental to Mehta's personal life and so put up the testimony to the social life predicaments. Such proverbial poetic lines carry moral wisdom, universal truth, power of the almighty, the role of destiny and meaninglessness of vanity, arrogance and self-praise. At times, Mehta sounds a little bitter when he unleashes his anger on the arrogant and hypocrite people who pointlessly claim for the credit for the tiniest duty observed. Whether the means to incur this credit were ethical or not, is also a mystery. Mehta says: Hu karu hu karu ej agyanta, shakat no bhar jem shwan tane. (It is the biggest ignorance to take credit for all the deeds. It is like a dog that walks beneath a cart and considers that it is he who carries the load of the same).

The late editors and an authoritarian voice over Mehta's poetry, Shri Manilal Ichcharam Desai and Harilal Harshadray Dhruv write in their book Narsinh Mehta Krut Kavyasangraha that Mehta's unparalleled faith in God's will has inspired the great Gujarati poet Premanand to narrate Mehta's undisputable devotion in one of his poems. Poet Premanand gives words to Mehta's shtitpragya behaviour in a colloquial manner. Premanand writes: Bhaluthayubhangijanjal, sukhebhajishu Shri Gopal (It is better that the web of Maya is broken, now I can chant the name of Gopal without any worldly burden). Poet Premanand does not demean Mehta's respect for his late wife or son

by calling the relations as the convoluted “web of maya”. Premanand, rather, speaks this line in reverence for Mehta’s state of unaffectedness. This poetic composition by Premanand is so popular that it is commonly mistakenly believed as lines by Mehta himself. Mehta’s verses have distilled essence of devotion concerning Vedic wisdom that sings the glory of the Brahman, the Supreme Godhead.

Mehta was born in the conservative society that misguidedly considered that applying a sandalwood tilak, or wearing a Tulsi rosary or going to temples or worshipping a tree, river or mountain would incur Punya – godly consideration due to good deeds. Like other Bhakti Poets of the 15th century India, Mehta also preached that the individual soul is a part of Brahma and so one should search the Supreme Element of God within the inner self instead of applying any pretentious technique to be recognized as a knowledgeable devotee. In one of his verses, Mehta ridicules all the ornamental approaches to showcase love for religion and says, *E cheparpanchsahu pet bhavata tana aatmaramparibrahmnajoyo Bhane Narsaiyo ke tatvadarshan vina, ratnachintamani janm khoyo.* (One who lives life under the fallacy of being recognized as the spokesperson of Dharma and God can easily cheat on the ignorant people but such people are actually wasting their human life as they are far away from the *tatvadarshan* – the auspicious sight of the Truth incarnate). Mehta preaches to love God unconditionally instead of making efforts to impress Him by the pretentious manners.

Mehta addresses man with adjectives like *Ataram* and *Ratnachintamani* meaning ‘the soul itself is as pious as Lord’ and ‘the precious gem that can give whatever wished for’ respectively. The human birth itself is like *Ratnachintamani*, the precious gem which can fetch whatever one desires. But the wish for material pleasures or carnal desires, even if fulfilled, is vain as it does not pave the path for union with God. The human birth is to be used to attain oneness with God. The Soul, *Atmaram*, that is indestructible even if the body is vanished (*Na Hanyate Hanyyamane Sharire. Bh. Geeta 2/20*) is unalloyed and so the human body should be involved in the deeds that keep the soul as virtuous as it was at the time of

birth. Mehta is very suggestive in using these adjectives. There are many such philosophical verses that are simple in composition but deep in the contextual reference to the Brahmagyan – the knowledge of the Supreme Godhead Brahma. Lord Krishna sings in *Bhagvad Geeta*: *Janma karma cha me divyamevamyovettitattvatah Tyaktvadehampunarjanmanaiti mam eti so [A]rjuna. (4/9)* (O Arjuna, One who knows the transcendental nature of my appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains my eternal abode).

Mehta’s verses sing the praise of the transcendental self of the Eternal God who can free humans from all kinds of worldly wretchedness and defencelessness. But this is not possible with materialistic speculations. The serenity is attained when the intelligence is free from all doubts and suspicions regarding God’s eternal existence. Mehta says, *Jeev ne Shiv to aapichcha e thaya, rachi parpanch chaud lok kidha Bhane Narsaiyo e te j tu te j tu, ene samryathi kai santsidhya* God has created this world of His own will. He parted the *Jeev* (human soul) from the *Shiv* (Supreme Generous Soul). So I, the poet *Narsaiyo*, announce that you are the same, you are the same as the Supreme Soul. Those who keep faith in Him, they attain Him.

Such *Punya-Jeevas* live for eternity who experience the invisible but omnipresent God. On this divine level, where the devotee feels unison with God, his spiritual odyssey from *Nirguna Brahma* (the invisible and Impersonal form of God) to *Saguna Brahma* (the visible and personal form of God) commences. One who existed in beliefs is experienced in real life situation. There are incidents in Mehta’s life when he surrenders completely to God’s will with fathomless trust and devotion and God himself intervenes in his life and solves the problematic situations. Mehta does not know how the puzzle of his worldly problem is solved but he is sure about God’s personal involvement in his life. It has been highly exemplified how the function of *Mameru* at his daughter *Kunwarbai*’s home successfully got over without a single pie in Mehta’s pocket. This proves co-existence of the physical self and the divine self within the body of a pure soul. This co existence is defined by

William C Chittick in his book *Sufism* where he quotes from the book *The Niche of Lights* by Ghazali who writes:

The Gnostics climb up from the lowlands of metaphor to the highlands of reality, and they perfect their ascent. Then they see by direct eye-witnessing that there is none in existence save God and that Everything is perishing but His face. Not that each thing comes to perish at one time rather than another, but rather that it is perishing from eternity without beginning to eternity without end. It cannot be conceived of in any other way. After all, when the essence of anything other than He is considered in respect of its own essence, it is sheer nonexistence. But when it is considered in terms of the face to which existence flows forth from the First, the Real, then it is seen as existing – not in itself, but through the face toward its Giver of Existence. Hence the only existent is the Face of God. So, each thing has two faces – a face toward itself, and a face toward its Lord. Considered in terms of the face of itself, it is nonexistent, but considered in terms of the face of God, it exists. Hence, there is no existent but God and His face. Therefore, Everything is perishing but His face from eternity without beginning to eternity without end (Chittick: 57-58). Mehta talks about dream and reality and explains this co existence of the Supreme Self within the human self.

The distance between Chitt and Chaitanya can be bridged over only by knowing the awakened and the sleeping state of the human life. The English metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell in a poem, 'A Dialogue Between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure', advises to make the soul courageous and use the immortal and weighty shield of Faith. The soul needs to be courageous to fight against pleasure, worldly temptations. With the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, the human soul should protect the divinity that it is born with. If the human life is spent without recognizing the true valour of the soul, it is like living a dormant life. But if this true Self is actualized, the life is worth lived. The poet Mehta shows the difference between the awakened life and the sleeping life. He says, when awake we live the material life, we live for worldly matters and completely forget our relation with the Supreme God. When

asleep we dream the unbelievable pleasures of life. The mystery lies in differentiating between the jagritawastha (awakened status) to nidraawastha (sleeping status). Is the awakened life, full of miseries a reality or is the dream full of pleasure a reality? This means the chitt – the human soul and the Chaitanya – the supreme Soul are One and the Same. It can also be understood as if the human soul is being amused by the various forms of the Supreme soul. Chitt is the finite (apoorna) entity and Chaitanya is the infinite (poorn) one. The finite travels to attain infinity and eventually arrive at the state of infinite happiness. Editing a book on *The Sufi Mystery*, Nathaniel Archer writes: One should look on absorption of the finite into the Infinite as the culmination of happiness; and to attain that end he remains immovable in one spot, and resigns himself to complete apathy. The sense of infinity makes it difficult for him to distinguish objectively between the priest and the God, or himself and the God; and eventually between the Deity and the different forms of nature in which He is supposed to be manifested. Gradually this train of contemplation leads to the formal conclusion, as appears from the *Bhagavad Gita*, that Creator and creation are identical (Archer: 192).

Mehta's words, *Te j tu, Te j tu* (you are the same, you are the same [as the almighty Supreme Soul]) iterate the Vedic lines *Tat Tvam Asi* and thus instil confidence in the reader poets to have Faith in the omnipotent God who is elusive yet tangible and invisible yet pervasive. Chitra Shreedharan writes in her paper: One obviously must make a distinction between a dream, a hallucination and the notion of world as Maya. In fact, it is often believed that a powerful imagination has the capacity to manifest itself in the world of phenomena, where potential energy gets transformed into kinetic energy. At a deeper level, we could say that he [here Poet Mehta] calls the world an illusion because: while all things are a manifestation of the same cosmic consciousness, none of these in their present form can give any indication of its real nature. While the microcosm has evolved out of the macrocosm and is still connected with it because the essence of both is the same, the microcosm also has an independent existence and we cannot perceive what this essence is

really like, as all we perceive is the different permutations and combinations of it. Therefore, even if the nature of the Absolute is monistic, the nature of the universe is pluralistic. And this is probably one of the reasons why Hinduism is pantheistic and encourages idol worship, despite its perception of the supreme as monistic and formless.

The poetic structure of Mehta rests on the infrastructural pillars of Praise, Love, Faith and complete submission towards Lord Krishna. Mehta's poems use Love as a symbol of surrender. Mehta's poems have the natural potential of complete Devotion, Faith and Surrender to Lord Krishna. These poems are powerfully yet effortlessly written in a lucid flow of unconditional Love of the poet. The metaphors, allegories and symbols are drawn so accurately that a reader devotee will almost take a devotional plunge into the ocean of ecstasy created by the overwhelmingly emotional heart of Mehta. The heartfelt recitation of these poems is instrumental in awaking the dormant emotions and expressing them in the manifestation of love and surrender towards the Supreme Being. Mehta's poems have transcendental effect. For the one who understands Mehta's pure love for the Supreme Being, self submission – aatm-samarpan becomes natural and also evident.

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## **One Problem, Two Solutions : A Comparative Study of the Plays of Nissim Ezekiel & Shiv K. Kumar**

*Dr. Gawali M.B.\**

#### *Abstract*

Indian drama in English is not so well-developed a branch of Indo-Anglian literature as the Indian novel or poetry in English. It has also not come up for as much scholarly and critical attention as the other two. It is in the post-Independent period that there has been a conspicuous attempt to deal with political, economic, domestic, psychological and other problems as themes in drama. Especially playwrights like Nissim Ezekiel, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and a few others have built enjoyable plays around some of these subjects. The present article is an attempt to make such a comparative study of two plays based on a common theme.

**Keywords:** Psychological, Comparative Study, Solution, Hypocritical, Superficial-adjustments.

It is in the post-independent period that there has been a conspicuous attempt to deal with political, economic, domestic, psychological and other problems as themes in drama. Especially playwrights like Nissim Ezekiel, Asif Currimbhoy, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and a few others have built enjoyable plays around some of these subjects. Though the themes dealt with by these writers are different from one another, occasionally one can come across plays on the same theme written by different authors. The present article is an attempt to make such a comparative study of two plays based on a common theme.

The two plays under consideration are Nissim Ezekiel's *Marriage Poem* (1969), Shiv K. Kumar's *The Last wedding Anniversary* (1975). The theme of the two plays is the domestic discord due to the temperamental differences between the husband and the wife and also because of the extra marital relationship of the husband. It is

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interesting to note that, though there are striking similarities in theme and even in characterization among the two plays, they differ from one another in the general tone, in the dramatist's attitude to the problem and in the dramatists attitude to the problem and in the solutions they offer to the problem.

Naresh, the protagonist of Ezekiel's play *Marriage Poem* and his wife, Mala, are of different temperaments ("our temperaments are very different," p.79). Mala is the typical suffering, nagging sort of wife who just does not know what to do to keep her husband to herself. She has a strong feeling of being neglected and humiliated by Naresh. Hence even insignificant unintentional lapses on his part like forgetting to post a letter given by her or failing to ring up her sister etc. provide Mala with opportunities to pick quarrels with him. Mala complains to her neighbour, Mrs. Lall that he is "efficient except when he has to do something for me" and is sure that he does not remember important occasions like her birthday or their marriage anniversary etc. This feeling of neglect is intensified by her suspicion that her husband is running after other women. When Naresh, for instance, shows her an invitation for dinner from the Guhas, her immediate reaction is, "I'm not coming, I don't like Mrs. Guhas" When Naresh hits back "You don't like any of my friends, do you?," She twists his words and retorts, "Is Mrs. Guhas one of your friends? I didn't know it." Later when Malati and her husband, Ranjit, call on them, Naresh talks to them freely and eloquently and particularly to Malati. When the guests are gone, Mala tells her husband, "I don't trust Malati, the way she looks at you" and later complains sarcastically, "You never want to say anything to your wife. But when visitors came, you know how to talk. What long Speeches!" (P. 77). There is a touch of pathos and innocence when she asks Mrs. Lall "What would you do if your husband become attached to another woman?" Mrs. Lall's spirited account of how she would harass the other woman and also her own husband makes Mala resolve not to give up her husband! "I won't give up my husband either. He's married to me. He is my Husband. We have two children. I'll never give him up."

Mala's suspicion about Naresh's involvement with other women is not baseless. On one occasion when Mala leaves the room in a huff after one of her usual skirmishes with him, Naresh goes to the dream world, where he meets his sweetheart, Leela. Leela is jealous of Mala because she has Naresh all the time, whereas she (Leela) could have him only "once a week, sometimes only for an hour." This Leela does not mind "the secrecy, the lies, the danger of scandal" involved in her relationship with Naresh.

However, Naresh's amorous games do not stop with Leela. When Malati with her husband visits him, Naresh after flattering her on her charming looks, adds meaningfully, "We Should meet oftner." Her reply is equally significant: "Its up to you. I am accessible." On this occasion, when Mala expresses her contempt for Malati, as usual, the argument between the husband and the wife begins on a mild note but grows into a heated exchange of words. When Mala express her contempt for Malati, as usual, the argument between the husband and the wife begins on a mild note but grows in to a heated exchange of words. When Mala becomes hysterical, Naresh cools her down by making love to her. As he embraces his wife, Naresh goes to the dream world and meets Leela. This dream is interrupted when the couple is awakened by the knocking on the door by the children – Naresh wakes up from his dream and Mala from her sleep. ChetanKarnani has a very valid point when he comments on the ending of the play. Ezekiel somehow can't do without the interplay of dream and reality. After Naresh makes love to his wife and she sleeps peacefully, this should have been the end. But the dramatist once again gets theatrical and rather contrived when we are told that Naresh "raises his arms slowly in the crucifixion (sic) pose against the door. Leela enters slowly, dream walks towards him, wipes his face lightly with a handkerchief." (Karnani, 120).

*Marriage Poem* which is described as a one act tragicomedy has more of comedy than of tragedy. The tragic element is to be found in Mala still being in love with her husband and clinging to him with increasing desperation. Lighting and Sound effects Play a very important part in this Play: may be as a technical device to depict

the light and shade that constitute the life of the couple. The dream sequences which cut into the realistic scenes not only reveal Ezekiel's ingenuity in the matter of technique but also serve to show Naresh's attempts to escape the naggings of his wife by seeking the company of other women. The scenes also provide a little variety to the action of the play. The other characters just look like puppets. In spite of these defects, with its brevity, its smart dialogue and the visual and audio effects, the play "may click as a fine visual and verbal piece on the stage."

Shiv K. Kumar's *The Last Wedding Anniversary* presents a profile of the marital incompatibility as depicted by an upper middle class couple – Lalit, a sensitive editor of a popular magazine and his wife Rupa, a shrewish and ambitious socialite. The scene is a party to celebrate their second wedding anniversary but because of the many stresses and strains that have developed in their relationship, the second anniversary turns out to be their last wedding anniversary. Though the immediate cause of the problem is the appearance of Lalit's first love, Neela, the root cause is a "basic clash of wills, of personalities which are too headstrong to abide together." The opening scene is laid in the drawing room of Lalit Khanna's house. The room is decorated with festoons as a mark of celebration of the marriage anniversary, but the external decorations ill accord with the bickering of the couple. While Rupa insults in most of her husband's remarks, Lalit asks her to control her "fiendish" temper: "Will you control your fiendish temper – my soft and gentle wife? I know you can't stand my friends but you could at least try to be civil. If this weren't our wedding anniversary, I would have walked out this minute." (Kumar, 20) This tension and strife go on increasing during the course of the evening.

The guests begin to arrive. When Vinod, Lalit's friend, tells him that Neela is in town, Lalit tells him, "But that's not a surprise. I know she's here" and adds "she sent me a greeting card-gold-laced and heart-shaped. Came by the morning mail. Such a bitter remembrance though." (P.5) Rupa, Lalit's wife, is upset with him for many reasons. She is sad that her husband has no ambition. She is

angry that he is not interested in cultivating the friendship of Ved Aggarwal who might help him in starting a magazine of his own. She is unhappy with the acquaintances of Lalit. To cap it all, she has seen the greetings sent by Neela and has also understood its significance. In Scene 2, when Lalit is searching for the card, she pulls it out of a book rack and flourishes it before him. The dialogue that follows this situation shows how their relationship has reached the brink. After accusing him of lying to her, Rupa bursts out and asks him, "Then, who is she? This Neela!"

Lalit (regaining his composure): Just an old classmate. And what's wrong in her sending me greetings on my wedding anniversary.

Rupa (sneering): Ours! Pardon my interruption, please.

Lalit: Yes, ours! What's wrong with this card?

Rupa: Nothing whatsoever. Except that its heart-shaped and a woman's instinct knows better.

Lalit: Okay, then how and scream. Do whatever you like if you are to sniff out all this in a perfectly innocent card.

Rupa: I guess we have played enough patience and innocence.

Lalit: Time for action now?

Rupa: Precisely. (Kumar, 20)

Finally they agree to part. Next morning Lalit meets Neela in her room in Hotel Plaza. When Neela feels sorry for the problems she had created by sending the greeting card, Lalit consoles her saying: "No, you're not to blame for it, it would have happened sooner or later." When they are in a reminiscent mood, Rupa knocks at the door. Lalit hides himself behind the partition. The door is opened and Rupa enters. Introducing herself as Mrs. Khanna, Rupa tells Neela that Lalit was really mad the previous night and had tried to hit her with a paper-weight. She also refers to Lalit's flirting with Gulmohar. When Rupa is gone, Lalit comes out of his hiding and is faced with some jealous questions from Neela about his relationship with Gulmohar. But when he explains that Gulmohar is one of the "egoistical fools" one has to suffer in life and that he is least interested

in her, Neela is satisfied and agrees to accept him as her husband, adding half – humorously and half – seriously, “ But no wedding – anniversaries, please!”

The play in a realistic way presents the conflict between the husband and the wife as a clash of two strong – willed persons. The temperamental differences between them are the cause for the severance of their relationship, though Lalit’s extra – marital interest in Neela acts as the proverbial last straw on the camel’s back. Both the characters and the dialogue are convincing enough. While the elements of satire and humour are found in the characters of Vinod, Gulmohar and InderBhan, there are certain interesting situations in the play. The last scene is one such where hiding behind the screen, Lalit listens to the complaints of his wife against himself. Moreover Neela who does not find anything wrong in her own relationship with Lalit becomes jealous of his supposed flirtations with Gulmohar. The dramatist has treated the theme quite competently and it is said that when this play was put on boards in Hyderabad in 1974, it was a tremendous success.

Shiv K. Kumar’s play seems to imply that if a couple cannot get on well and smoothly in life, the honest and best course of action is an honourable divorce between them and this is preferable to a hypocritical life of superficial adjustments. Shiv K. Kumar’s solution is modern in as much as it does not consider marriage as a holy or indissoluble bond but introduces the idea of divorce which is still to get total acceptance in Indian society. Nissim Ezekiel’s play, on the other hand, appears to give a solution which is rather a compromise between the other two extreme solutions. In Ezekiel’s play the husband enjoys the best of both the worlds- the domestic and of love. Neither would his wife give up her hold and right over him nor would he sacrifice his involvement in other women. The play seems to give a hint of husbands in the predicament of Naresh that while they could find emotional and sexual satisfaction with other women, they should be tactful and clever enough to keep up the façade of loyalty by humoring their wives. The solution given by Ezekiel is neither conservative nor modern but one of the compromise and expediency.

Though it may not be quite right to conclude that these solutions have been consciously worked-out by the respective playwright, one cannot help thinking that the solutions arrived at should have been moulded unconsciously by the social, moral, cultural and family background of the respective writer’s character. Dr. Johnson’s Preface to Shakespeare excuses Shakespeare’s lapses on historical and personal grounds. In that context Dr. Johnson observes: “Every man’s performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities.”(Raleigh,30) Shall we add that every man’s performances to be rightly estimated must take in to consideration the writer’s own attitudes towards the social, economic, moral and religious questions of the society of which he is a member, perhaps an articulate member?

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## Illusion v/s Reality; An Existential Dilemma in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Kapil Sharma\*

### Abstract

Reality and illusions are sometimes mixed in the lives of human beings. Illusion gets developed from alienation and alienation is closely related to Existentialism. Albee's first full length play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is an absurd play in which the characters take help of illusion to lead their life. Each of the characters in the play has married his/ her partner for some selfish purpose and their relationship is fake, and based on some illusions. Their behavior in public and private differs as they all pretend to be happy and satisfied in the public but are always ready to argue, scold and cheat when in private. In this play, Albee tries to depict life of the disillusioned American people and their difficulty in facing the real life. Their experiences depicted in the play highlight existential questions that this paper aims to explore.

**Keywords:** American Society, Existentialism, Absurd, Illusion, Reality, Albee.

Edward Albee (1928-2016), was one of the well known American playwrights, famous for writing absurd plays. His well known plays include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Zoo Story*, *American Dream*. Albee started his career as a full time dramatist at the age of thirty with his first one act play *Zoo Story*. Since then till his death he continued to get name and fame and some renowned awards and honors, like Pulitzer Prizes and the prestigious Tony Award for Life Time Achievement. Albee was included in the list of founder absurd dramatists such as Ionesco, Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett. Absurd drama or the theatre of the absurd has become an important phenomenon which includes the plays written during mid 20th century. The term 'Absurd' was borrowed from the French Philosopher Albert Camus from his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" in

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which he explained the condition of the human beings on this earth as totally meaningless. All the writers of this group shared the same theme and technique in their writings especially Post World War II when European countries lost their faith in better life and religion. The situation in the United States was different from Europe as Martin Esslin mentioned, "There has been no corresponding, loss of meaning and purpose. The American dream of the good life ... [was] still very strong. Their belief in progress... has been maintained into the middle of the twentieth [century]" (Esslin, 225). Due to this it was very difficult to find or search many absurd plays in America but Edward Albee was one of the major playwrights who established theatre of the absurd and attacked the roots of American Optimism and established himself also as the absurd playwright.

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was Albee's first full length notable play and a great success. It has three acts, Act I "Fun and Games", Act II "Walpurgisnacht" and the Act III is "Exorcism". The play earlier had the title same to the Act III but later on Albee updated it with the current metaphorical title. The play presents the disturbing married life of two couples based on fake relations and illusions. In the whole play both the couples pretend to be happy and satisfy before others but in private they never miss any chance to abuse and scold each other. In this play Albee tries to show the real picture of American Society post World War II where all have developed illusions to avoid the harsh realities of the life as the reality is very harsh and there is no scope for religion, faith, believe etc. The characters in the play live in illusion which is a false idea or belief created for self comfort but really does not exist. They may have many different reasons for that but they are not ready to accept the reality. In this play, Albee tries to reveal the heart of the American Society and culture which believes in illusions and fantasies. The American Dream of success, satisfaction and prosperity lead people to develop illusion and ultimately they prefer illusion to reality.

Albee's *Who's is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* also has this theme. The play is set in an apartment of George and Martha in the campus of New England College in New Carthage. Martha is elder to George

in age and always dominates him in the house. George is a professor of History and his wife Martha who is the only daughter of the president of the college in which George works. They both are rude and always ready to insult each other. Their relationship is not so harmonious. They both have developed an illusion of having a child and mutually agreed not to disclose it to anyone. But in reality they don't have any kid in their life due to their infertility. But when the younger couple Nick and Honey enter their house, the things become horrible. They both are told that George and Martha have a son who is about 21 but towards the end of the play it becomes clear that their son is an illusion which they have created to hide their infertility and alienation. This is the biggest illusion in the play.

The setting of the play in itself presents life in a confined way. C.W.E. Bigsby says, "Its single set, a womb like living-room stands as an image of a refusal of life by those who enact their fears and illusions within it"(Bigsby, 264). George, a professor of history and his wife Martha live in that apartment. Martha's father is the President of the college and Martha and her father both want George to become the next president of the college. George, on the other hand, feels himself incompetent and does not like Martha's father. Martha married George with some expectations and hopes such as to take over the history department and to become the next president of the college. But George could not prove himself competent for these challenges. Whenever Martha tried to prove him competent, George got failed whether it was the Boxing Match or taking over the History department or becoming the president of the College. George is a failure in the viewpoint of Martha. These failures of George were like the mental strokes for Martha so she gets frustrated and starts to humiliate and comment on him whenever she gets a chance. She becomes alcoholic too. George, on the other hand, tries to save himself from the torture of his wife by reading books. He feels himself not so aggressive and capable to take over the History Department to succeed her father as the chairman of the college. This is the major cause for disappointment for Martha and her father. For this he is teased and taunted each

day by Martha. She tries him to remind his failures every time. This feeling develops frustration and alienation in Martha as she is not satisfied by her husband in both ways physically as well as emotionally. As a child is the middle bond between a husband and wife but this couple is not lucky enough to have a child so they both created an illusionary child to hide their infertility and to strengthen their relationship. Since the beginning, George and Martha had an agreement not to mention their imaginary child before others. In the beginning of the play it is told to the readers that their son is now 21years College going student and is coming to home back. But when the guests, Nick and Honey join George and Martha, the agreement gets broken and all things get down.

Martha is not really quarrelsome by her nature but she has developed this trait due to the disappointments and dissatisfaction which she got during her married life of 20 years. For example, Martha considered George worthy to take over the History department. Martha married George assuming the potential of him to take over the History Department and then to succeed his father as the chairman of the college. But George could not do that. Next, she mentioned the 'Boxing Match' which was held between George with her Daddy with the idea that all the men in the University ought to get interested in self-defense. But George refused to fight with his father in law and this was a kind of insult for Martha. When George refused to box with Daddy for fear of getting hurt, she put on the gloves and caught him a blow when he was off balance, sending George sprawling into a bush. So, these were some of the humiliating moments in the life of Martha which made her quarrelsome with George. The 'Boxing Match' incident hurt George badly and he felt humiliated. To take the revenge on Martha for reviving his humiliation now by talking about it, George takes aim at her with a short-barreled shotgun. When she turns round and he pulls the trigger, a large Chinese parasol blossoms from the mouth of the gun.

The parasol is perhaps the nearest symbol of George's impotency. It becomes very clear after some when Martha offers sexual exchanges with Nick. Nick too turns out to be another pointless

infidelity. George is the best in the play as he is always ready to get humiliated and tries to satisfy the shifting moods of her dominant wife. He is her scapegoat, the articulate challenger who keeps Martha on her toes, the constant reminder of her own inadequacies. Martha needs victims, and she can pick them up anywhere; but George is the only one who rises to the occasion each time she lashes out. There is some secret understanding between them. Martha has ruined him with her excessive demands and expectations. His strength reassures her, even when she forces it against herself. George is her conscience and her accuser. In her soliloquy she admits that all the things he says are true-even to Daddy's red eyes, but she fights him for having said them. In some strange way, their fighting is only a means of real communication between them.

The series of failures and unfulfilled expectations or desires have removed their faith in the world in which they live. George and Martha both have created their own world in which they feel comfortable with some illusions as a way to comfort from the harsh realities of the world. They have an unwritten code and an arrangement which they try to put into practice without violating them. The situation in which George and Martha find themselves comfortable is the real situation in Albee's society. Modern man who is solitary and isolated feels obliged to secure himself against himself, against his society and against the world which he has built. In the entire first part of the play, "Fun and Games" in which George and Martha go on drinking George says that in their Fun and Games everything is permitted except reference to their illusory "Son", before strangers.

George and Martha always enjoyed their fantasy child as it was a kind of escape from their reality and unhealthy relations. Martha, though not a mother in real, feels happy in bringing up the baby, coloring his eyes, celebrating his birthdays and teaching him manners. Like the child, these feelings are also illusionary. Dircks comments on Martha's expression, "Martha's dedication to the child is apparent: She is almost lyrical in describing the child..."(Dircks, 89). From the beginning of the play Nick and Honey along with the audience are told that George and Martha have a son. They both

carry this illusion in this way that it seems difficult to separate illusion from the reality. But, now the time comes when George thinks that Martha cannot escape from the reality and kills their imaginary son. For killing the imaginary son, George makes an excuse that Martha has disclosed their son in front of the guest and thus has broken the agreement. But in reality it is important for Martha to accept the reality. At this point George wants to take revenge from Martha as she has already humiliated him in the presence of the guests. So he decides to kill the kid. George does this in a very dramatic way only to make Martha feel the reality. He says that he recently got a telegram with a message that their son got killed in a car accident as he was coming back to his home. Martha is shocked to hear this news.

MARTHA. You have no right . . . you have no right at all.

GEORGE. I have the right Martha. We never spoke of it; that's all. I could kill him any time I wanted to.

MARTHA. But why? Why? GEORGE. You broke the rule, baby. You mentioned him . . . You mentioned him to someone else." (Albee, 305).

After this incident Martha feels broken as she has the bitter reality of being a childless lady. Her motherly hopes are shattered now though it was an illusion. Now she comes to know the reality that she is not a mother of any real child and now George is there only to console and take care of her in the remaining life.

Not only George and Martha but Nick and Honey also the other frustrated characters in the play. Nick is a handsome man and a professor of Biology in the same college in which George works. He married Honey only for the sake of money and to hide a scandal. He really does not love her wife and Honey too, on the other hand does not have the pure feelings for her husband. She has been avoiding pregnancies by taking pills and hiding this fact from Nick. Initially George tries to mediate between Nick and Honey, but he does not get success. Martha is also impressed by the personality and the success of Nick as he has been successful

at his early age so she tries to have sexual intercourse with him though Honey gets failed to satisfy her. Martha does not have a child so she is frustrated and creates an imaginative kid but on the other hand Honey has been taking pills to avoid a child as she is afraid of the labor pain during the delivery of a child. When Martha feels broken after the end of their imaginary kid, Honey also develops some feelings for motherhood and she also wants to be the mother of a kid. The irony here is that George and Martha are infertile so they do not have a child but on the other hand Nick and Honey are capable to have a kid in their life but Honey has been avoiding the child by taking pills. So both the couples in the play lead their life in illusion and not ready to face the reality.

The relationship between the husband and wife in both the couples in the play *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is based on illusion. George and Martha, from the very beginning of the play have an illusion of an imaginary son. They always quarrel with each other but when they are in front of others they behave in a proper way. Martha has a dominating personality and always finds faults in George and she has enough time to scold George. On the other hand, the relationship of Nick and Honey is also based on illusion. Nick married Honey only for the sake of the money which Honey would inherit from her stepfather. He really does not love Honey. Honey too uses to take pills to avoid pregnancies which she hides from her husband. On the nature of the play Hudson comments, "On the surface level, the play seems to be about the social crises of American social values. But in fact if we examine the deep level, we find out that the play examines truth and illusion".(Hudson, 307).

The title of the Play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* also seems illusionary. The title may have two meanings. Firstly it may be inspired by the song "Who's is Afraid of big bad Woolf? and secondly it may be related the English writer Virginia Woolf whose works are famous for the stream of consciousness. In the play also Albee tries to remove the illusion of the characters and to make them realize the reality in the last. Bigsby comments about the source of the title of the play in this manner, "Albee's own explanation of the play's title is

that he derived it from a sign which he had seen in a Greenwich Village bar, and that it means, "Who's Afraid of Living Life without False Illusions?"(Bigsby, 265) Now at the last of the play time has come to remove all the illusions and embrace the reality when George asks that Who's is Afraid of Virginia Woolf (reality) and Martha says, "George: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf . . .

Martha: I . . . am . . . George. . . . I . . . am."(Albee, 322).

To conclude this paper it may be said that illusion plays an important role in the lives of the characters of the play as to make them somewhat comfortable from their frustration and depression. They are happy by this illusion but they cannot survive for long with the illusions. So this illusion needs to be removed also as to familiarize the characters with the reality. The imaginary character of the 'kid' though does not appear on the stage but has its own powerful role in the play. In this play Albee describes the American dream of success which has pain, deceit, fake relations, and materialism and to overcome for this problem people develop illusions in their lives as a kind of escape from the reality.

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## The King of Mahismathi Resides in You: Recurring Patterns and Archetypes in *Baahubali*; An Analysis of the Monomyth Hero Archetype in the *Baahubali* Film Series

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### Abstract

The paper argues that Baahubali, the protagonist in the film series directed by S S Rajamouli, is an archetypal hero. A character in literature considered a hero, can only be an archetypal hero by completing a series of events both predetermined and determined for him. Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* outlines these qualities and events of the hero. Using Campbell's work in a critical perspective, the hero of the *Baahubali* series is read as an archetypal hero. The paper uses the "collective unconscious" theory of Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss analytical psychologist. The hypothesis of the study is that the archetypal characters present in the plotline of the *Baahubali* series strike a chord in the collective unconscious of the 21st century audience due to the primordial images present in their minds accounting for the success at the box office.

**Keywords :** Archetypes, Monomyth, Collective Unconscious, Primordial Images.

Heroes can be perceived in every culture around the world. In movies, novels and life, people are named as heroes. They have inspired, educated, motivated and influenced the entire world's people since the beginning of time. Heroes in general embody traits and characteristics which we as human beings value and long to possess. These desires form our sub-conscious. Joseph Campbell, a well-known mythologist born in New York and a disciple of Carl Jung, outlines certain traits and characteristics of a hero in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Campbell also introduced the

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"Monomyth theory", which claims that all stories are fundamentally the same story, related specially to the journey of the protagonist. He believed that myth was universal, because it sprang from the common imagination of the collective unconscious.

The adventure of the hero, a necessary cycle in his life, consists of three phases; The departure, the initiation and the return of the hero. This paper "The King of Mahismathi Resides in You: Recurring patterns and Archetypes in *Baahubali*" applies Campbell's monomyth theory to S.S Rajamouli's, *Baahubali* series, a two part epic fantasy and a box office record breaking Indian blockbuster. The series reveals the epic journey of a tribal couple's adopted boy called Sivudu (Prabhas) who unknowingly travels back to his homeland, up a mighty waterfall while chasing his romantic interest. He extends his help to Avantika (Tamanah Bhatia) in her rebel tribe's mission to free the captive queen from the clutches of the cruel king Bhallaladeva (Rana Daggubati) and learns about his true identity as Mahendra Baahubali, (Prabhas) the legitimate King of the Mahishmati kingdom. He learns that the much loved royal couple Amarendra and Devasena (Anushka Shetty) are his real parents.

The first part of the movie ends with Kattappa (Sathyaraj), the loyal Army commander revealing to Sivudu that Kattappa himself had killed Amarendra Baahubali on the orders of Sivagami (Ramya Krishna). Part one however, had an abrupt ending, only to add curiosity, among the audience to know why Kattappa killed Baahubali and second part serves as the answer to this question marking a grand success of the *Baahubali* series. This success can be related to man's unconscious archetypes to which he clings and seeks link with the lost past. The archetypal elements that bring success to this movie can be traced in different elements of this film series.

The hero and the recurrent archetypes:

According to Carl Gustav Jung, certain physical traits are common to man and so are certain psychological ones. He relates Freud's theory of personal unconscious to the collective unconscious, which is 'the psychic residue of numberless experiences of the same type'. Jung perceived a close relationship among dreams, myths and

art because all these three factors serve as media that makes archetypes accessible to consciousness. They are detached from anything personal and are common to all men. They are a racial inheritance, a biological structure ("Jungian Model" 3). They remain in the psychic depths and the collective unconscious of the people. Campbell took the monomyth theory to new heights in his most successful book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. To Campbell, myths are manifestations of a collective human need to comprehend and relate reality, and are expressed throughout the world. He treats all the myths as different aspects of the same myth. This also implies that all heroes are one, hence the title of his work. According to Campbell there are three great stages of the journey of the hero; Separation or Departure, Trials and Victories, and Return and reintegration with society.

Baahubali, an archetypal hero and *The Departure phase in Baahubali*:

In the film series, the departure phase unfolds as follows. Sivudu (Mahendra Baahubali) had been trying to climb up the magnificent waterfall since his childhood as he had the urge to climb it but could never succeed, till one day when he comes across a mask that came down the gigantic waterfall and gets curious about it. He climbs the waterfall as if in a trance, totally smitten by his imagination about the beautiful lady behind the mask. He comes across some rebel tribes and decides to keep out of the hassle between the royal guards and the rebels but finds himself in the middle of it and gladly accepts to help his love interest Avantika in her quest to save her queen, even though he is reluctant at first but he is love struck and so sees no other choice than to help Avantika. He manages to free Devasena and behead Bhallaladeva's son. Kattappa narrates to him the story about his father Amarendra Baahubali, his feats, nobility and competence. Kattappa narrates his journey and declares Mahendra the 'would be' king of the Mahishmati kingdom.

In the second part Amarendra embarks onto a tour to explore his kingdom thus taking a plunge into the unknown. Amarendra is always helped by Kattappa and Sivagami except in the end where

the decision and execution of the duo costs Amarendra his own life. Kattappa and his loyal army support Mahendra in his revenge attack but in the end he defeats Bhallaladeva in a one to one battle.

The Initiation Phase of Baahubali:

Amarendra accompanied by Kattappa follow the orders of Sivagami and go to survey the wellbeing of their subjects. On their way they come across Devasena, Kunthal king's sister. Amarendra manages to woo her after rescuing her and her kingdom from the Pindari tribe. He relinquishes the crown when he is faced with a choice between his would be wife and the crown becomes a symbol of misunderstanding. Amarendra's trial continues as Bhallaladeva plots against him and gets him and Devasena expelled from the palace. But the people of the kingdom regarded him as their uncrowned king owing to his noble nature. Bhallaladeva lays a trap to murder Amarendra. He manipulates Sivagami into issuing royal orders to Kattappa in order to kill Amarendra. However, Amarendra falls for the trap and gets killed. The truth is revealed to Sivagami who stilled by remorse and guilt, declares Devasena's son as the new king. On learning about the story about his birth, mother and father from Kattappa, Mahendra gets acquainted with his true lineage and manages to rescue his mother finally and reclaim his kingdom in the second part of the movie, thus, acquiring the goal of his quest.

The return and reintegration with society, serves as the final stage which includes six subheadings: 'Refusal of the Return', 'The Magic Flight', 'Rescue from With-out', 'The Crossing of the Return Threshold', 'Master of the Two Worlds' and 'Freedom to Live'.

The Return phase in Baahubali:

Mahendra Baahubali wages a war against Bhallaladeva with the help of the common people, rebels and Kattappa and some of his men. He manages to kill Bhallaladeva by burning him alive on the funeral pyre that Devasena had been preparing for the past twenty five years. Mahendra Baahubali finally completes his quest of finding the face he had fallen in love with and rescuing his mother, avenging the murder of his father thereby fulfilling the call of his destiny (Bahukhandi 6).

### Archetypal characters in Baahubali:

Jung said , “...there are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life”(Archetypes 99). This chapter is mainly devoted to discuss only those of Jung’s archetypes that seem most pertinent to this project. Jung characterized the major types of archetypal situations such as birth, death, and marriage and archetypal figures of mother, old man, trickster, and child.

For the purpose of this project the following Jungian archetypes are taken into account. The Shadow, The Persona, The Animus and The Anima.

### The Dark side, the Shadow and Baahubali:

According to Jung, “everyone carries a shadow, and the less is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, it is” (214). Amarendra is far superior to Bhallaladeva when it comes to nature, conduct and character but, both are physically strong and very good in the art of combat and warfare. There are many instances in the film which reveals the shadow side of Bhallaladeva(Paras). He doesn’t bat an eye lid while allowing his trusting brother to jump to his death. He even attacks his mother when she tries to flee the palace trying to take Mahendra Baahubali to a safe place.

### The mask or the Persona in Baahubali:

The persona is the person’s mask, which is shown to the world. It is the social personality. The persona sometimes masks the true personality. Kumar Verma, the cousin of Devasena can be taken for the analysis of the persona archetype. But as the Persona archetype Kumar Verma has a “mask” which hides his true nature, a nature which reveals itself fully as the story progresses. He evinces a false impression of himself being a coward to the society. Although he has the inner strength within him, he mistook his true nature as a coward and believed in his persona. Finally he acknowledged his persona and eventually became victorious

### Anima in Baahubali :

A man has within him an unconscious feminine side or figure, which is called the anima. Anima is the opposite side of the man’s

psyche, which he carries, both in his personal and collective unconscious. It is the personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man’s psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational and mostly his relation to the unconscious. Jung sees it as “the soul which is the living thing in man, that which lives of itself and causes life” (Man 26). It is usually projected upon women who arouse man’s feelings whether in a positive or negative sense.

The anima in Sivudu is the projection of his vague feelings and the receptiveness to the irrational. He fell in love with the mask of Avantika, which urges him to take a trek to Neermalai and pushes him to climb the majestic waterfall. The Anima is achieved when he is made to travel to Mahismathi. His unfamiliar life-long mission of emancipating his mother Devasena from the clutches of Bhallaladeva and also to avenge his father’s death is accomplished only through his anima.

It is the presence of anima that causes a man to fall suddenly in love, when he sees a woman for the first time, and knows at once that this is ‘she’. The projection of such an anima might disturb the man’s intellectual life and at times make them divert from reality and thereby leading to their tragic death.

The Animus is the masculine image within a woman’s psyche. Just as the male contains an anima within himself, a woman contains an animus within herself. According to Jung, “...[animus] it takes the form of a hidden sacred conviction. When such a conviction is preached with a loud, insistent, masculine voice or imposed on others by means of brutal emotional scenes, the underlying masculinity in a woman is easily recognized”(Man 185). In order for her to become whole she must have that archetype activated. It personifies the masculine traits like courage, chivalry and so on.

### Animus in Baahubali :

Sivagami Devi manifested the animus within her throughout the film Baahubali. The mortally wounded Sivagami tried to rescue a baby she was carrying in her arms, being chased by soldiers hell-bent

on killing the baby. But her determination was inexorable. In that helpless state, she somehow killed the soldiers and succeeded in saving the baby's life, sacrificing her own in the process. Another instance where she exhibits the animus is, with the help of her confidante Kattappa she brings an end to a coup, killing the conspirator with her own dagger before breastfeeding the two newborns in the royal court (Clan).

The character Baahubali can be viewed as an archetypal hero in all aspects. Both the film, *Baahubali: The Beginning* and *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* has been created following the framework of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey which is described in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Baahubali fulfils all the seventeen stages in the life of a hero, thus emerging as a typical archetypal hero. One of the major reasons for the film's blockbuster success was that, the audiences were able to connect themselves with its characters. The appreciation and success of both these series is a testimony to the belief that the appeal and effect of the archetypal images and patterns has a great role in the creation and reception of works of art.

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## Information Structuring in Hindi: Issues with an Analysis of '-to' as Topic Marker

Ojaswee Bhalla\*

### Abstract

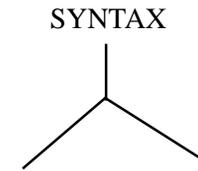
What is unaccounted for, as of yet, in the literature on Hindi syntax and semantics of 'to' is the presuppositional contribution it gives to a Common Ground (CG) established between the interlocutors in a given discourse. This paper looks at data sets with well-defined common ground and the distribution of 'to'-marked XPs in it. The conclusion that will be drawn after analysis of data is that 'to' can attach as topic marking strategy with only those entities that are presupposed in the CG content available in the discourse after utterance event has taken place. No new topics that introduce new entities in the discourse can be associated felicitously with this topic particle in Hindi.

**Keywords:** Information Structure, Morphosyntax, Semantics, Pragmatics.

Linguistics has been defined, essentially, as the scientific study of Language (with a capital 'L'), where the primary object of study is the structure (hierarchical, for generative grammarians) and some universal principles underlying all natural human languages (a 'Universal Grammar' present in the faculty of language situated in human mind-brain) and not just overt differences occurring in them because of parametric variations. The language that we speak is actually under multiple constraints at different levels of its production process. Following a Chomskyan style inverted-Y model of grammar, the output of narrow syntax (the module that computes the structure of a sentence from items taken from the lexicon) interfaces with the external performance systems (Articulatory-Perceptual system and Conceptual-Intensional system) at the PF (Phonological Form) and LF (Logical Form) interfaces respectively.

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**Figure 1: Y-model of grammar**

A-P system is responsible for giving a phonetic and phonological shape to the structure exiting narrow syntax, so that sentences can be externalized in the physical world. C-I system is responsible for cognizing and making sense of the outer world and for interpreting all semantic relations like inference, implicature, presupposition etc. The structure of a sentence exiting the derivation has to be not only PF and LF compliant (i.e. obeying the bare output conditions as imposed by these interfaces) but also be felicitous in the discourse at that given point in time from a pragmatic viewpoint. Information Structural considerations of a sentence situates it in the larger discourse at hand. For the purpose of this paper, syntactic derivation of '-to' marked XPs in Hindi won't be analysed as that goes beyond the scope of this paper. The paper will be limited to IS, pragmatic and semantic analysis of the phenomenon.

### Information Structure

The term Information Structure (IS) dates back to Halliday (1967) who used this term to account for "the distinctions of focus, presupposition and propositional attitude towards entities in the discourse conveyed by phrasal intonation". Whereas Halliday takes a prosodic lens to analyse IS, other linguists have worked from psychological, pragmatic or syntactic viewpoint, amongst others. To illustrate the differing conceptualizations of IS, I provide two more definitions of it. Syntactically, Information Structure is the meta-structure annotated over the hierarchical structure exiting Spell-Out using the primitive notions of Topic and Focus (Erteschik-Shir (1996) amongst others). Topical constituent of a sentence is, broadly, what the sentence is about and Focus-marked constituent is the new information provided by that sentence. A sentence has to obey the constraints of all PF, LF and IS to be uttered grammatically and felicitously in a given discourse. On a third approach, IS as theorized

by Chafe (1976) used the notion of ‘packaging’ to state that information is packaged in an utterance to satisfy the temporary communicational requirements of the addressee’s mind. This is more of a psycholinguistic approach as the focus has now shifted to hearer’s mental world. The model of communication taken up here invokes dynamic changes in Common Ground (CG), a concept attributed to Stalnaker (1974), Karttunen (1974) amongst others.

As can be gleaned from above, the literature on Information Structure is vast with no clear consensus on either primitives of the theory or a unified framework. For the purpose of this paper, I take Topic and Focus to be the basic IS building blocks that interact with CG dynamically as the discourse is being built up between the speaker and hearer. Let me start by giving those definitions of them that are accepted by many.

The linguistics data covered by this paper deals with Topic and Topic-marking in one of the natural languages.

### Topic-Marking in Hindi

From a syntactic viewpoint, languages are typologically classified as either topic-prominent or subject-prominent (Kidwai 2004). A topic prominent language has to obligatorily mark its topic and the topical constituent has to occupy the A-bar specifier position by the end of the narrow syntax derivation process. Languages that are considered as classic examples for topic-prominence are Kashmiri or Japanese. Hindi, on the other hand, classifies under the label of subject-prominent languages, which have subject as the default topical constituent and which may optionally mark them. English is another example of a language that qualifies as subject-prominent are.

Topical constituent in Hindi could be either unmarked or marked using some strategy. Let us first consider the unmarked topics in a Hindi sentence. If a context licenses a sentence topic interpretation to a particular constituent, then that entity has to occupy the sentence-initial position. If the sentence-initial position is blocked by some other constituent, then a sentence becomes infelicitous in that discourse. The reason for this infelicity is the default topic interpretation given to any constituent in the sentence-initial position, irrespective of the IS requirements of the discourse. The diagnostic of Tell me something about X Test (Roberts 2011) has been used in this paper to fix the

aboutness topic (X) of a sentence by putting that X at the center around which the discourse is structured. To explicate this for English, consider the following example:-

Speaker 1: Tell me something about Mary. Where does she go after school every day?

Speaker 2: [Mary]TOP goes to a temple after school every day.

Here, Mary is fixed as the aboutness topic of the discourse between both the speakers and is highlighted using the subscript labelled ‘TOP’.

Using the same test to fix sentence topic, consider the following data from Hindi for unmarked topical constituent and the topic interpretation coherence :-

(i) Speaker A: dose ke bare mein batao. dosa kis ne khaya?  
‘Tell me about Dosa. Dosa, who ate?’

Speaker B: dosa Rahul ne khaya

‘Dosa, Rahul ate.’

(ii) Speaker A: Utepam ke bare mein batao. Utepam kis ne banaya  
‘Tell me about Uthapam. Uthapam, who cooked?’

Speaker B: # Rajiv ne Utepam banaya<sup>4</sup>.

‘Rajeev cooked Uthapam.’

Speaker C: Rajiv ne kya banaya?

‘Rajeev cooked what?’

In example (i), speaker A limits the set of entities about which the sentence is structured and hence, probable candidates for topical interpretation, to {Dosa}. Speaker B places this topic in sentence-initial position and a congruent question-answer pair is received. In example (ii), even though Speaker A fixes {Uthapam} as the aboutness topic, Speaker B’s utterance has degraded felicity if it is to be construed as answer to A’s question. This is because some other entity occupies the sentence-initial position here (‘Rajeev’) and the topical constituent (‘Uthapam’) is placed word-medially. Notice that the infelicity is removed if we take speaker B’s utterance to be the response to C’s question as there the topical interpretation given to ‘Rajeev’ remains

constant in both the question and the answer construction.

For the cases where topical constituent is marked, Hindi optionally employs any of the following three strategies available to it: syntactic or morphological.

#### • Syntactic Strategy

Topicalisation is a type of A bar-movement (non-argument movement) that involves fronting the topical XP from its base position to a sentence-initial position. This movement is motivated in narrow syntax for valuation of unvalued features in Chomskyan Minimalist framework. The exact derivation of such a structure is not central to the aim of this paper, so will not be dealt with in this space. Example:

(iii) rahul-ne lajwab khana banaya

‘Rahul cooked awesome food.’

(iv) [lajwab khana ]TOPi, rahul-ne <ti> banaya

‘Awesome food, Rahul cooked.’

Sentence (iii) is the base structure from which sentence (iv) is derived by syntactically topicalizing the object of the verb to sentence-initial position. This movement leaves behind a trace ‘t’ (a syntactic device this is phonologically null but not syntactically, written within <> brackets) that is co-indexed with the moved element. Thus, an entity can be marked topical by syntactic movement of topicalization.

#### • Morphological Strategy

Hindi has a particle ‘-to’ which the linguistics literature analyses as either a topic particle (Kidwai (2000, 2004), Bhalla (2016)) or as a discourse particle (Bai 1977, Montaut 2016). The account of ‘-to’ developed as a discourse particle is descriptivist in nature and indicates only the various functions that have been associated with this particle from the corpus of traditional grammars of Hindi, without delving into explanation of the linguistic data.

Kidwai (2000) attempts a semantic account of the interpretation given by ‘-to’ on the lines of Miyagawa’s (1987) understanding of Japanese topic particle ‘wa’. For Miyagawa and Kidwai, topic particles are intrinsically ‘set-anaphoric’ in nature. This anaphoric relation is with a set (a set of entities that are identifiable and present in the immediate conversational context and whose knowledge is

shared by the speaker and the listener) as a whole and not some individual entity from it. The criteria that decides the type of topic interpretation (thematic or contrastive) is the way that every member of the set gets exhaustive representation in the statement containing the topic particle. What topic particle does in a sentence is that it associates a property with all members of the set that are referentially picked out. If the set is singleton, then the singular entity picked out is accorded the property given in rest of the sentence. If only one part of the set gets marked with the topic particle, then the rest of the members of the set get ‘in contrast to’ relation to and hence, are exhaustively represented in the sentence. This yields a contrastive topic interpretation. For example:-

(v) rahul-to kitab paarh raha hai (THEME)

‘Rahul is reading the book.’

(vi) chicken to bachon ne kha lya par sabjian to baron ko khani padeee (CONTRAST)

‘Chicken, the kids ate but the vegetables, the elders had to eat.’

The relevant set for sentence (v) is {Rahul} and that for sentence (vi) is {chicken, vegetables}. Sentence (vi) marks sabjian’ as the contrastive topic of that sentence.

This is one way of formulating the topic effect of such particles. What will be attempted in this paper is another way of capturing this topic effect from a semantic-pragmatic viewpoint. The approach is similar but implemented using tools like Common Ground (CG), CG content, CG management, presupposition and presupposition accommodation.

#### Issues with Hindi - ‘TO’ Marked XPs

There are multiple issues with Hindi ‘-to’-marked topic XPs, starting from their syntactic derivation to their interpretation and distribution. This paper will focus on a subset of issues so as to do justification to the research question at hand. Let us begin by checking ‘-to’-marked XPs and how they respond to the battery of tests provided for Aboutness Topic (AT) and Contrastive Topic (CT) in Roberts (2011). AT topics fulfill the What about X test and Tell me something about X test. The second test was used in a previous

section of this paper. By formulating a question like this, the speaker has to put X at the centre, about which the response is structured in a given discourse. Data from Hindi for AT tests:-

#### What about X test:

(vii) Context: A and B are friends. A has come to B's house for a party but hasn't seen B's sister –Ritu yet. So A asks B:

Speaker A: *rito ka kya hua?*<sup>5</sup>

'What about Ritu?'

Speaker B: *rito tu tuition gai hai*

'Ritu went for a tuition.'

Tell me something about X test:

(viii) Context: A and B are friends. They have been discussing the locality that B lives in. So A asks B:

Speaker A: *muje apne padosion ke bare mein kuch batao.*

'Tell me something about your neighbours.'

Speaker B: [*mere padosi*]-to sab ache log hain.

'My neighbours are all good people.'

Example (vii) and (viii), with 'Ritu' and 'my neighbours' as topical elements respectively, above show that 'to'-marked XPs fulfil aboutness topichood test.

Contrastive topic tests provided in Roberts (2011) are Speaking of X test and As for X test. These tests signal a shift of topichood from an entity that was the topic in the preceding discourse to a new topic for the current statement. Data from Hindi for CT tests:-

#### Speaking of X test:

(ix) Context: A and B are friends. They have been discussing the qualities of various animals and their advantages as pets.

Speaker A: *kutton ki baat karen to woh to sab se ziada wafa daar hote hain.*

'Speaking of dogs, they are the most loyal of all.'

As for X test:-

(x) Context: A and B are friends. They have been discussing the qualities of various animals and their advantages as pets.

Speaker B: *aur saanp ke lye to , unhen to pyar karna mushkil hai.*

Examples (ix) and (x) above exhibit that even the contrastive topic tests are fulfilled by 'to'-marked XPs in Hindi as both 'wo-to' and 'unhe-to' are contrastive topics for examples (ix) and (x) respectively.

But there is an issue with these last two tests that is problematic for an analysis of 'to' as a topic particle. Firstly, this test is not exactly marking contrastive topic but rather a switch topic, which itself is a shifted aboutness topic. Secondly, which constituent gets attached with '-to' particle is not explicitly clear for the CT tests. It is not a Noun Phrase (NP) or a Determiner Phrase (DP) that gets '-to' marked in these cases, which would be an issue for fulfilling set-anaphoric property of topic particles a la Miyagawa.

Sener (2010) adopts Tell me something about X test to mark the aboutness topic of a sentence. But the crucial difference in the diagnostic criteria adopted by him to demarcate AT and CT in a sentence is that he follows a conceptualisation of CT that takes it to be the answers to questions of sub-enquiry. As a result, his context set includes items that are probable answers to questions of sub-enquiry and hence, likely candidates for CT interpretation. His approach thus provides a clear distinction between aboutness topic, contrastive topic and focus in a question-answer pair. To show this for English language, consider the data given below:

(xi) Speaker 1: What did your siblings get you for Christmas?

Speaker 2: I don't know about my sister but my brother gifted me a bicycle.

In the above context, the word 'siblings' itself directly implies sub-questions related to each member of the set. These members of the set become contrastive topic constituents {sister, brother} in the response given by speaker B. Focus goes to 'bicycle', the element that corresponds to the wh-element in the question.

#### Adopting this for Hindi :

(xii) Context: Two brothers are talking about how their parents received the news of one of them failing an exam in school

Brother 1: *mummi ke bare mein batao. unhon ne kya kaha ?*

'Tell me about Mummy. What did she say?'

Brother 2: [mummi] ka pata nahin par papa-ne kaafi daant sunai

'I don't know about Mummy but Papa scolded me a lot.'

In the above context, Brother 1's sentence fixes 'Mummy' as the AT topic for the response required for his question. Brother 2's response links AT interpretation to 'mummy', CT interpretation to 'papa' and focus interpretation to 'kaafi daant'. The template followed above is unproblematic for unmarked topical constituents in Hindi. But as soon as morphological topic particle '-to' is attached to AT or CT above, there is a difference in felicity judgement perceived for such constructions- which is contradictory to the (positive) results of battery of tests done above for AT or CT interpretation accorded to '-to' marked XPs in Hindi.

To see the issue at hand, consider the data given below:

(xiii) Context: A and B are friends who are discussing about the party that happened at B's office. A only knows one of B's colleagues – Rahul. So A asks B:

Speaker A: rahul ke bare mein batao. usne kya khaya?

'Tell me about Rahul. What did he eat?'

Speaker B, Response 1: [rahul ka]-to pata nahi par shyam ne dosa khaya.

Speaker B, Response 2: # rahul ka pata nahi par [shyam ne]-to dosa khaya.

'I don't know about Rahul but Shyam ate dosa.'

Response 1 by speaker B is felicitous as an answer to Speaker A's query but not response 2. The only difference between the two responses is the attachment of particle '-to' to the contrastive topical element 'Shyam'. But this should not be problematic as expressed by the section on CT test and '-to' marked XPs. This exhibits that '-to' can't be classified simply as either an AT or a CT marker and that there are conditions that license felicitous attachment of this particle with a constituent in a sentence. This licensing condition is not derivable from the battery of tests performed above.

## Resolution of Data

The data at hand can be resolved by making explicit what is the status of the common ground between a speaker and a hearer at utterance time and how it changes dynamically as the discourse proceeds and what restrictions it imposes on the information structuring of a sentence.

The term 'Common Ground' has its origins in Paul Grice's work on maxims of conversation where it was used to represent "presumed background information shared by participants in a conversation". It was earlier theorized as a shared set of mutual beliefs but was later defined as a shared set of acceptance rather than beliefs (as one may accept a proposition without believing it). Presupposition is a propositional attitude that a speaker has; it is essentially speaker's belief about common beliefs. To give a semantic definition of Presupposition – Sentence S presupposes that P if and only if S is either true or false only if it is true that P, where S and P are propositions. An entity that a speaker presupposes must be a part of the Common Ground between the speaker and the hearer. In case of mismatch, the hearer has the strategy of Presupposition Accommodation available to him to keep the conversation moving. Accommodation has been defined as the process by which something becomes Common Ground in virtue of one party recognizing that the other takes it to be Common Ground. This factor controls the dynamics of discourse by controlling the way that Common Ground changes in response to what happens in discourse.

Coming back to the data, example (xiii) is repeated here as example (xiv):

(xiv) Context: A and B are friends who are discussing about the party that happened at B's office. A only knows one of B's colleagues – Rahul. So A asks B:

Speaker A: rahul ke bare mein batao. usne kya khaya?

'Tell me about Rahul. What did he eat?'

Speaker B, Response 1: [rahul ka]-to pata nahin par shyam ne dosa khaya.

Speaker B, Response 2: # rahul ka pata nahin par [shyam ne]-to dosa khaya.

'I don't know about Rahul but Shyam ate dosa.'

The Common Ground developed between speakers A and B has only one person that A knows that goes to B's office (as made explicit by the context above). This referent is {Rahul}. Speaker A presupposes that Speaker B knows that {Rahul} is the only entity in CG between them. Speaker B's response 1 exhibits his acceptance of the current status of CG and attaches '-to' to the referent available, giving it an AT interpretation. It also introduces a new entity to the CG {Shyam} which gets contrastive topic interpretation. Response 2 of speaker B is problematic because it attaches particle '-to' to an entity ({Shyam}) that was not part of the Common Ground between the interlocutors. Infelicity of speaker B's response 2 is removed if the addressee (here speaker A) accommodates B's presupposition that the relevant set of alternatives available to answer A's question is {Rahul, Shyam} as opposed to just the singleton set {Rahul}. This strategy of Presupposition Accommodation is available provided {Shyam} had a prior mention in discourse, which may not be recent, which enters this entity into the larger CG. Thus, particle '-to' can attach with only those entities that may be actively or passively available in CG.

### Affirmatory Argument

The hypothesis developed above gets support from the argument that particle '-to' can't attach with new topics in an out-of-the-blue context, even though such topics are attested in literature (like in Krifka (2008)). The function of such new topics is to introduce entities in the discourse. Consider the following data from English (taken from Krifka (2008)):

(xv) [A good friend of mine]TOP [married Britney Spears last year]

The above sentence is felicitous in an out-of-the-blue context. Such contexts have no implied Common Ground between the interlocutors. This specific indefinite nominal 'a good friend of mine' is added to the CG and functions as the topic of this sentence. Using a similar construction to test this in Hindi:

(xvi) # [meri ek dost ki]-to pichle saal shadi ho gai

'A friend of mine got married last year'

Infelicity of example (xvi) in a context where this construction is used to introduce the referent {a friend of mine} to the hearer strengthens the argument that particle '-to' can't attach with newly introduced topics because of the licensing condition operative on their felicitous usage. This licensing condition requires the XP that gets attached to '-to' to be a member of the Common Ground between them.

### Conclusion

Information structuring of Hindi language is facilitated by use of topic particle '-to' in the marked cases as opposed to the unmarked cases where sentence-initial constituent gets the default topic interpretation. Particle '-to' itself can't be classified simply as either an AT or a CT marker. These are the semantic interpretations it gets depending on the Common Ground management, information update and presupposition accommodation done by the interlocutors after the utterance event has taken place in discourse. A constituent may get an AT or a CT interpretation but a felicitous attachment of particle '-to' is licensed only under the condition that the referent of that constituent be a member of the Common Ground between the speaker and the hearer. That referent maybe actively or passively available in the Common Ground and can shift between the two domains via the strategy of Presupposition Accommodation.

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## Live Without Really Living: A Psychoanalysis of the Main Characters of Dattani's *Brief Candle*

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K. K. Sunalini\*\*

### Abstract

Dattani as a bold playwright has created a new generation which deals with many of the invisible issues of society. Through the characters of one of his most popular dramas 'Brief Candle', he has depicted the desperate longing of people to cling to life which is not strongly realized as long as they are happy with whatever is happening to them but is made active when they understand that they are contracted with a deadly disease like Cancer. Dattani has delineated the hardest side of life in the most delicate style where one is forced to do things which are generally considered not morally good and even sinful. This paper aims at analyzing the psychological struggle undergone by various characters of the play by mainly applying id, ego, superego theory and defense mechanisms proposed by Sigmund Freud and Egocentric theory of Jean Piaget. It also attempts to highlight the dexterity of Dattani in delineating the deep emotions of individuals which are best understood when experienced rather listened to.

**Keywords:** Indian Drama, Psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, Id, Ego, Superego, Egocentricism

The title *Brief Candle* implies the transient nature of life that makes people experience the inexplicable pain when they know that their life will end soon. It further signifies the importance of leading a life of no regrets as this helps people leave this world without any guilt since the feeling of guilt gives more pain than the truth of

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leaving the world. This play predominantly deals with the theme of death while other themes like sexism, free will, women oppression and religion also find their role. Dattani has shown his brilliance by using the technique Play within the play to explore the pains and sufferings of cancer patients who are kept in a hospice. The play begins with a farce i.e. "the play within the play" with a conversation between Deepika and Mahesh. This farce is penned by Vikas, who is also a cancer patient, to raise funds for their hospice and all, except Deepika, who plays the owner of the Hotel, are affected by cancer. Vikas writes a comedy as he wants to help these victims of cancer spend some time joyfully keeping the unbearable pain aside but unfortunately Vikas leaves the world before his play is staged.

The name of the hotel in the farce 'Hotel Staylonger' is a clear allusion to the desire of the victims to live long in which the hotel represents the world where people come to live and the world 'Staylonger' symbolizes their desire to live long even after knowing the fact that they are suffering from a terminal disease. The longing of Sengupta for 'Bloody Mary', i.e. alcohol and Amarinder's for 'Viagra' is an indication of their struggle to get enough strength to survive. Their struggle is not really to get alcohol or viagra but for the drug morphine which they badly need to bear with the excruciating pain they undergo. Hence, alcohol and viagra, stand for Roxanol, betoken their desire to be strong. The words by Amol 'Make the most of your stay in Hote Staylonger, may your stay be long' is symbolic to their stay in the world. It is the wish of vikas who has penned these dialogues as he clearly knows that their stay in the world is going to end soon. And, the words by Deepika 'You will be in trouble. Because the airline is paying for only one night, and you have exceeded your credit-card limit' hint that God is paying for them for only a few more days and he may call them back at any time.

### Psychoanalysis of the Major Characters

Vikas is an enthusiastic, positive and determined guy who gets affected by HIV which further takes the form of Cancer. He writes the farce, 'Hotel Staylonger' i.e. play within the play in which Dr.Deepika who is his ex-girlfriend plays the role of Hotel Manager. He prefers

comedy since he wants to help the victims of cancer enjoy the last moments of their life. Though the reason for his being affected by HIV is not explicitly mentioned, it could be understood that his nature, which is driven by ID, could be one of the possible reasons.

Vikas: You are a bachelor, right?

Mahesh: Yes

Vikas: So am I. But you don't go around screwing like I did. You just sit in a corner. Like little Jack Horny.

Mahesh: Yes! That's why I don't have AIDS! (Dattani 18).

The above conversation clearly indicates that Vikas is a passionate man who believes in satisfying the pleasures without suppressing them and it also presents the failure of ego which couldn't restrict Vikas from leaving Deepika, travelling and making friends and shows the clear domination of id. According to Snowden, id is the fulfillment of pleasure principle (desire) and the avoidance from the tense and unpleasant condition. (Snowden 45) So, id forces an individual to satisfy his or her pleasures without getting caught in any of the social norms or conventions which may sometimes drive individuals towards sacrificing their interests. An individual needs to choose one of the defense mechanisms that help him handle the conflict caused by his sacrifice. And, Vikas' personality has chosen not to undergo any sort of conflict between desires and social norms. He went on doing whatever had given him true joy and pleasure by ignoring the reality. But this cost him his life as ego, in contrast to id, representing reason and common sense had failed badly. According to Sigmund Freud, "... in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this his ego. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility... it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes."(Boag 2)

Vikas' personality has got the features of an individual whose super ego, "according to Maze's (1983, 1987, 1993) view, is not a dynamic structure (or agent, or independent set of drives) and instead conceptualized in terms of the moral *beliefs* guiding the ego in terms

of possible sources or gratification and punishment" (Boag 7), is inferior to id and in a battle between id and super ego, id has always dominated. If super ego had shown some resistance, it would have been easy for ego to control id and Vikas would have been very careful in making relations with many and could have escaped from the danger of becoming the victim of HIV. And also, if super ego, when Vikas had to make a decision of leaving Deepika, had dominated id, he wouldn't have left her as the moral principle of making true love would have acted against his will.

Deepika, another important character of the play, is a doctor who runs a hospice. Her character possesses the qualities like strong determination, firmness and practical approach towards life. As the play moves on, it is understood that Deepika is not interested in Vikas' attempts of rebuilding his relation with her although she was in love with him when they were in the college. When Vikas was leaving her and asked her to quit her course and come along with him if she really wanted to lead her life with him, she preferred to continue her course and became a successful doctor. And this decision of her turned out to be a very sensible one as Vikas became the victim of Cancer. Had she gone with Vikas, She would have had remained a spoilt. These decisions of Vikas and Deepika indicate that Vikas is predominantly led by id and Deepika is well controlled by ego element which restricted the dominance of id.

Deepika shows very firm character when Vikas meets her again at her hospice after he gets affected by cancer. By then, she loses all her feelings for Vikas and he finds it really difficult to convince her and win her love once again. Avijit Pramanik in his "Ars Longa Vita Brevis: A Critical Study of Dattani's Brief Candle" mentions that 'As Deepika was extremely angry with Vikas, she chided him in that sarcastic manner. But interestingly, Deepika is absolutely right.'(249). This remark indicates that he appreciates Deepika's firm attitude towards Vikas which is the result of the pain caused by the departure of Vikas who has left not just his course in the middle but also Deepika. But one will change one's soft concern towards Deepika when one understands that she has been in a

secret relation with another person even before Vikas leaves her : Vikas: We got talking and he mentioned that you were seeing someone. You were sleeping with him even when we were together? I wasn't so special after all. Why? Why did you do that? (Dattani 40).

It is not easy for a woman to respond to a question where she has to answer whether she, being in relation with one, has slept with somebody else. The defense from Deepika is very practical as she says that she has understood long back that her relation with Vikas will not last long as his interest is purely in travelling, meeting farmers and field workers. This response from Deepika gives rise to many questions and the most significant one is why she has not discussed her feelings with Vikas. The decision of Deepika to continue her love with Vikas after sensing that he will leave her someday may be not to hurt him by revealing the fact that she sensed Vikas' true interests. But, her choice of sleeping with another person with whom she hasn't made her life is against to the moral codes of society. "According to Freud, in the course of an individual's development a portion of the inhibiting forces in the external world are internalized and an agency is constructed in the ego which confronts the rest of the ego in an observing, criticizing and prohibiting sense. We call this new agency the super-ego. Thenceforward the ego, before putting to work the instinctual satisfaction demanded by the id, has to take into account not merely the dangers of the external world but also the objections of the super-ego, and it will have all the more grounds for abstaining from satisfying the instinct." (Boag 7)

An important characteristic of Deepika is that she keeps hiding her feelings for Vikas when he meets her again after their break up. It is understood that she has feelings for him which she is not disclosing. Neha Arora in her 'Brief Candle : Life in Death or Death in Life?' opines that 'Masks' play an important role in Dattani's plays which is very integral to us who 24\*7 are masked. "Amarinder and Shanti are anxious about their bodily changes that would transform not just them but also the attitude of society towards them. They both share their apprehensions where as Deepika is constantly concealing her emotions for Vikas" (Kumar and Arora 6). This marks that she

still has an emotional concern for Vikas and her having a sexual relation with one doesn't affirm that she is in love with him and this behavior of Deepika could be due to the influence of urban attitude where sex is considered just as a means to satisfy one's carnal desires and also Id (Pleasure Principle) is given priority over Super-ego (the ethical or moral values).

One more significant character of the play is Amarinder who has to live without really living as he is diagnosed with prostate cancer and loses his masculinity. For him, losing his maleness is more painful than approaching death. The below lines show the steadfast nature of Amarinder who prefers to die rather than undergo a surgery that makes him lose something which he is very proud of. Amarinder: What will I choose? To live? And deal with the loss? Instead of vitality flowing through my loins, bear the embarrassment of urine dribbling down my pants and not even noticing it? ( Dattani 23) Amarinder's character reflects the pain caused by the anxiety that he has to lead his life further without being male and face the sympathy of others which he doesn't like at all. Vikas, who understands the pain of Amarinder, creates a character called Mr.Sengupta for him in his play "Hotel Staylonger". By Playing the role of Mr.Sengupta who can live up to the expectations of a woman, Amarinder gets satisfied and this act marks the use of a defense mechanism called "Fantasy" which is used to satisfy one's desires in the artificial world. This technique is known as one of the best defense mechanisms suggested by Freud and this gives the feeling of fulfilling the desires through which the pleasure factor of id is satisfied. However, this doesn't give the sufferers a complete relief from their pain but acts as a temporary solution.

Shanti, wife of Amarinder, is another victim of Cancer who undergoes breast surgery and has to lead her rest of life with only one breast that causes extreme pain to her. Her character suffers from severe inferiority complex which is caused by the fact that she will need to cope with the ugly and deformed body. Shanti has grown up in a traditional environment where woman are supposed to pay little attention to and is not allowed to take liberty with her sexual

desires. Shanti has the influence of superego as her character reflects the internalization of cultural rules, mainly taught by her parents applying their guidance and influence.

Dattani has delineated the hardest side of life in the most delicate style where one is forced to do things which are generally considered not morally good and even sinful. In one of her conversations, Shanti says that she doesn't even dare looking at her own breasts and her own curves are strangers to her. But unfortunately she is forced to expose her body to the lab technicians during her diagnosis. While it is quite uncomfortable for any woman to be half naked and lay barely down on a table by looking upwards and not knowing exactly what is happening to her, it is extremely excruciating for a woman like Shanti, whose personality shows the dominance of super ego that has always made her conscious of how a woman should look at her own body and treat it. Tapashree Ghosh in his 'Life as a 'Brief Candle' blown out by death : A Critical Analysis of Mahesh Dattani's Brief Candle states that Shanti never loved her own body. And now when she wants to embrace her sexuality, love the curves of her body she has to accept the reality of living with ugliness and deformity (8). According to Adler, Inferiority complex arises when a person finds himself in a situation where his/her abilities and attitudes are denigrated or rejected by other people (Ansbacher & Ansbacher 57). Shanti's concern about the moral and ethical elements, which have fully subjugated her freedom and imposed a restricted life on her, and her feeling that she is no more a normal woman and is different from other women, have caused a severe conflict in her personality. Therefore, the dominance of superego is one of the reasons for her psychological conflict that has lead to develop inferiority complex.

Dattani's *Brief Candle* is a wonderful depiction of the theme 'Live without really living'. Dattani has shown his excellence in dramatizing the inexplicable and the most excruciating pains of the cancer patients who are just living in the hospice without really living. As far as the psychological analysis is concerned, it is observed that the pains of Amarinder and Shanti aggravated due to the inferiority

complex developed from the feelings of Amarinder's inability to satisfy a woman and Shanti's fear of leading her life with deformed body. Unlike Amarinder and Shanti who have been victimized, Vikas and Deepika invited problems which caused them irrecoverable loss. And, this behavior of Vikas and Deepika is due to the domination of id which, if at all, had acted well and showed upper hand over id, there would have been different results and Vikas could have escaped from being caught by HIV and Deepika would not have suffered from guilt caused by her actions. Through this wonderful masterpiece, Dattani seems to dramatize his philosophy of striving hard and not yielding to the problems of life.

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