

ISSN 0975-4091

Pragati's
English Journal

Vol. 22. No.2

December 2022

*Pragati Educational Council (Regd.)
Jalandhar*

Editor
Dr. N K Neb

Pragati Educational Council (Regd.)
Jalandhar

PRAGATI'S ENGLISH JOURNAL (ISSN 0975-4091)

A PEER-REVIEWED BI-ANNUAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED
REGULARLY SINCE 2001. INDEXED WITH COSMOS, AND
DIRECTORY OF RESEARCH JOURNALS INDEXING
(COSMOS IMPACT FACTOR: 5.866)

Pragati's English Journal is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed, refereed journal published by Pragati Educational Council, in June and December. It focuses on the study of English language and literature. Contributors are welcome to submit critical articles, reviews, creative writings (including translations) in English highlighting new developments in literature or literary thought or suggesting new directions towards the use of English as language of communication.

Address: *Pragati Educational Council (Regd.) 61\75-A, Garden Colony, Jalandhar City, Punjab, 144003*

Editor: **N. K. Neb**
Former Associate Professor of English
DAV College Jalandhar

FREQUENCY\ PERIODICITY OF THE JOURNAL:

Pragati's English Journal is a bi-annual journal published in June and December every year.

Number of issues : 2 **Form of Publication:** Print

JOURNAL WEBSITE: : www.englishjournal.in

CONTACT US

Editor
Pragati's English Journal, 61\75-A, Garden Colony,
Jalandhar City, 144003, Punjab, India
Email: nebnaarinder@gmail.com, nebnaarinder@yahoo.co.in
Mobile No. 09815884583 Website: www.englishjournal.in

EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE JOURNAL

(Late) Dr. K. B. Kushal
(Founder Member Advisory Board)
(Former) Education Advisor, Reliance Foundation Mumbai

EDITOR

Dr. N. K. Neb

Associate Professor, P.G. Department of English,
DAV College, Mahatma Hans Raj Marg,
Jalandhar City (Pb.)
Email: nebnaarinder@gmail.com
nebnaarinder@yahoo.co.in

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dr. Monika Sethi

Professor of English, Department of English
Jammu University, Jammu (J&K)
Email: monikasethi@jammuuniversity.in
sethimonika2000@yahoo.com

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Gurupadesh Singh, (Former) Professor and Head, Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
gurupadeshsingh@yahoo.com

Neelima Kanwar, Professor (English), ICDEOL, H.P. University, Shimla-5, Himachal Pradesh. neelima.kanwar@hpuniv.ac.in

Manjinder Singh Gill, Deputy Director, Higher Education (Punjab), PSEB Building, Phase -8 Mohali (Punjab)
sgill234@gmail.com

Manjit Kaur, Professor, Department of English, Post-Graduate Government College for Girls, Sector 42- Chandigarh.
manjitkdr@gmail.com

Maya Sareen, Principal, Hans Raj Mahila Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar. sareenajay@yahoo.co.in, info@hrmmv.org

Manjinder Kumar, Associate Professor, PG Department of English, Baring Union Christian College, Batala, Distt. Gurdaspur (Pb.).
banku5@rediffmail.com info@bucc-batala.org

Ashoo Toor, Assistant Professor of English, Department of Agricultural Journalism, Languages and Culture, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. ashootoor@pau.edu

Sukhmeen Bedi, Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Khalsa College (Autonomous) Amritsar.
sukhmeen@rediffmail.com

SUBSCRIPTION

(With effect from December 2018)

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Annual	Rs. 1000/-
Two years	Rs. 1500/-

FOR INSTITUTIONS

Annual	Rs. 1500/-
Two years	Rs. 2500/-

Subscription can be sent in the form of a **Demand Draft or Money Order** in the name of **Pragati Educational Council**, at the address given below. Or it can be deposited in **A/c 640110100014238, IFSC: BKID0006401** in the name of Pragati Educational Council, with **Bank of India**, Mai Hiran Gate Jalandhar branch.

ADDRESS FOR SENDING SUBSCRIPTION:

Pragati Educational Council
61\75-A, Garden Colony
Jalandhar City - 144003 (Pb.)

SUBMISSIONS

For submission of manuscripts and subscriptions, contact or write to:

The Editor
Pragati's English Journal
61\75-A, Garden Colony
Jalandhar City Punjab
Pin Code: 144003
Mobile Number: 91-9815884583
Email: nebnarinder@gmail.com
nebnarinder@yahoo.co.in

Contents

Parayan's Treatment of Time in <i>The Eater of Malgudi</i>	<i>Dr. Seema Gupta</i>	1
Enquiries into the Cross Performing Arts of <i>India</i>	<i>Dr. Aditi Jana</i>	9
Effectiveness of Smartphones Learning English Language : Study of Learners' Perspectives	<i>Dr. Narasinga Rao Barnikana</i>	17
Web's The Flooded Desert: Critical Analysis	<i>Dr. Anurag Sharma</i>	28
Cherry's <i>A River Ran Wild</i> : of Eco-Social Restoration	<i>Ashoo Toor, Ph.D.</i>	35
Boss: Hyperreality and Illance in Reality TV	<i>Alka Lakhera , Shveta Kumari</i>	45
Celebration of Powerful Men in Literature through the Bodybuilding	<i>Disha Sharma</i>	56

Derek Attridge's Conceptualization of Ethical	<i>Abhimanyu Kumar Mishra</i>	64
Reading Partisanship of Women after India-Pakistan Partition in Sidhwa's <i>Cracking India</i>	<i>Bimal Kishore Shrivastwa</i>	73
The Resisting Potential of Graffiti : An Analysis of Graffiti Works in the Select Cities of Kerala	<i>Parvathy Rajan</i>	83
Bhagwat Gita : A Way to Life	<i>Kunal Verma</i>	90

R.K.Narayan's Treatment of Narrative Time in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

————— Dr. Seema Gupta*

Abstract

The Man-Eater of Malgudi is considered the most tentative novel of R.K.Narayan. The present paper proposes to study Narayan's treatment of time scheme in his most popular novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. Time which is the most important element of narrative fiction is certainly one of the most recognized aspects of an artist's art and craft of fiction. Earlier when time was thought of as unidirectional irreversible flow, the structure of the narrative remained no more linear. Narayan through the movement of time and through various anachronies reveals the non-linear arrangement of plot and submerged self of his characters as well. Narayan's treatment of time in *The Man eater of Malgudi* reflects the journey of the ancient to the modern by contrasting two concepts of time—preserver and destroyer—and thereby visualizing a distinction between the past and the present. To Narayan the real universe is represented through a cosmic memory, myth and history of the ancient past. Narayan belongs to the post-colonial age. His reaction to the incessant changes this age brought to India's ancient tradition was chronic. This study analyzes Narayan's conception of time as preserver and destroyer or his idea of time as continuity. The narrative reflects how Narayan's imagination and memory are adopted for the task of recreating the ancient past of Hindu religion.

Keywords: Analepsis, Prolepsis, Ellipsis, Homodiegetic, Intradiegetic, Extradiegetic.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi published in 1961, immediately attracted attention as a next novel after *The Guide*, an undisputed

masterpiece. *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is basically known for its sustained mythical structure. Narayan's use of Bhasmasura Myth in the novel is a conscious piece of literary strategy. During his visit at Colombo University in 1972 R. K. Narayan himself makes comments on the genesis of the novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* : . . . I based this story on a well-known mythological episode, the story of Mohini and Bhasmasura. ("Gods" 47-48) So the use of this archetypal myth is indisputably the most important part of the narrative technique in this novel.

The Man Eater of Malgudi takes us back to the same familiar Malgudi territory. The main protagonist Nataraj is a printer with a shop in Market Road and with a house in Kabir Street. His settled daily routine is disturbed when one day a taxidermist, Vasu, enters his premises. The novel is written in homodiegetic narration, and Narayan employs Nataraj, a printer of Malgudi, a homodiegetic narrator. The man eater of Malgudi is Vasu, a potent and dangerous bully, from the jungles of Junagadh in Northern India. He forces himself as a tenant on Nataraj's printing press and sets himself up there as a taxidermist who kills the animals, stuffs them and sells them to the people. In search of a larger game, his evil eye is set on the temple elephant, Kumar that Nataraj has befriended. But the elephant has a miraculous escape. In order to trap a couple of mosquitoes, Vasu bangs violently on his forehead with his fist and drops dead of concussion. Sastri, a friend of Nataraj, makes a wise comment that "every demon appears in the world with a special boon of indestructibility" (*The Man-Eater of Malgudi* 242). The narration is subsequent, in terms of Genette, as the events are narrated in past tense.

Narayan's treatment of time in *The Man Eater of Malgudi* reflects the journey of the ancient to the modern by contrasting two concepts of time—preserver and destroyer—and thereby visualizing a distinction between the past and the present. To Narayan the real universe is represented through a cosmic memory, myth and history of the ancient past. Narayan belongs to the post-colonial age. His reaction to the incessant changes this age brought to India's ancient tradition was chronic. This novel depicts Narayan's understanding of time as preserver and destroyer and his idea of time as continuity. The narrative reflects how Narayan's imagination and memory are adopted for the task of recreating the ancient past of Hindu religion. The fact that

an lived in an age which saw cataclysmic changes, yet in his haunted the past, denotes a man inclined to inhabit two worlds—world as it is and the world of dreams—the past and the present, the art of Narayan we find a mixture of the realism of the west and the mythic imagination of the east.

The narrative observes a play of mythical time and the human time in a subtle manner. The most important influence of the classical Greek mythology on his work is the concept of cyclical time which affects the world view contained in his works profoundly. This cyclical time is evident in *The Man Eater of Malgudi* when it draws a parallel between the story of Vasu and the myth of Bhasmasura. At the end of the novel, Sastri says, "Every demon appears in the world with a special quality of indestructibility. Yet the universe has survived all the demons and the *ashas* that were ever born. Every demon carries within him, hidden from himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction, and goes up in flames at the most unexpected moment. Otherwise what is to happen to the human race? He narrated again for my benefit the story of Bhasmasura, unconquerable" (*MEM* 242). But the narratee is allowed to transcend the physical time in the words of Nataraj: "when you are done with your work for lunch it will be drying and ready for second printing when you return" (*MEM* 242). K. Challappan in his essay "The Dialectics of Myth and Irony in R. K. Narayan" says, "In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* the cyclical pattern is imposed. . . . Here the human time transcends the cyclical pattern of myth" (31).

Narayan once said, "In an otherwise philosophical country where the best evidence in continuity and mortality lies in little things . . ." (Holmstrom 125). In order to render the universal concept of time in Malgudi into the concrete and credible world of fiction, Narayan uses antiques to image the continuity of events in time. An antique clock presents a reminder of a time from the past. The Queen Anne style harpichord, the harmonium, the Amla tree, so dear to his father, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (discovered among the seventy philosophical volumes in the family lumber room) (*MEM* 237) imply the meaning of continuity. The characters stand in the present but represent past. This continuity is further emphasized by the use of Indian myths and mythical characters in the novel. Vasu is a symbol of Bhasmasura who is totally crushed under the wheels of time. The hands of a clock in his room move on but do not witness the tragic happening in the life of Vasu: "The alarm clock

which had screeched in the dark on the previous night was now ticking away modestly. Its pale pink patch must have watched the process of Vasu's death" (*MEM* 221). Thus time becomes the mute observer of the ups and downs in the life of Vasu.

Ch. I invites the narratee to be introduced with the normal life of Malgudi. It devotes more attention to the protagonist's daily life, going about his daily business, interacting with his friends, family and townspeople. The novel begins with Nataraj's description of his press with a framed picture of Goddess Laxmi hung up, of his son, Babu, his Albert Mission School, and of his beloved wife, an intelligent house-wife who "kept the pantry well-stocked and our kitchen fire a glowing glow, continuing the traditions of our ancient home in Kabir Street" (*MEM* 1). The opening chapter also gives a detailed account of his daily morning routine which takes the form of a walk to the river for his morning ablutions and puja. Nataraj's family background is foregrounded through an analeptic movement, the reach and extent of which is almost a generation. His detailed account of how he became the sole occupant of the house is informed through the extradiegetic homodiegetic external analepsis. Ch. 2 is marked with another analeptic movement—an intradiegetic homodiegetic external analepsis. The narratee is introduced to the main character Vasu as a man of "a tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair like a black halo" (*MEM* 13). Vasu's past life is told at intradiegetic level where Vasu acts as a homodiegetic narrator. I learnt everything from this master. The training was unsparing. He woke me up at three o'clock every morning and put me through exercises. And he provided me with the right diet. I had to eat a hundred almonds every morning and wash them down with half a seer of milk; two hours later six eggs with honey. . . ." (*MEM* 16-17)

It introduces Vasu in all his ugliness and all his repulsive traits. This homodiegetic narration in his own words helps the readers to look at his inside. Analepses are used to introduce all the minor characters in the narrative. These are basically used at intradiegetic level when the author allows other characters to speak about themselves. The various analeptic movements introduced in the narrative show a non-linear chronological movement of the narrative. The narrative though seems linear is not arranged in a chronological order. Chronology of the story is interrupted many times through various

onies. The novel is divided into twelve chapters, and almost every chapter is marked with one analeptic movement throughout the narrative. Sastri's narration of the myth of Bhasmasura takes narrative time to the past. He narrates how *rakshashas* threaten the peaceful atmosphere of the world, how they think themselves indestructible and how they conserve all their energy to destroy the world; but in the end, the energy so conserved turns against them, thus saving the world from their onslaught (Patnaik 94). The narrative ends with an intradiegetic heterodiegetic internal analepsis when Sastri relates the events leading to the death of Vasu communicated to him by Angi herself.

Another type of discrepancy between story order and text order is known as flash forward or anticipation which Genette calls 'prolepsis'. As analepsis provide past information about the characters and events, prolepsis replace the kind of suspense deriving from the question 'what will happen next?', and 'how is it going to happen?' Genette also argues that the first person narratives lend themselves to the use of prolepsis better than other types. Sastri's repeated narration of the myth of Bhasmasura acts as a proleptic statement which tells about an event that may happen in future and generates suspense in the mind of the narratee. This prolepsis is narrated at intradiegetic level by a heterodiegetic narrator Sastri. So this proleptic movement can be termed as intradiegetic heterodiegetic prolepsis. But since the proleptic statement is anterior to the end of the first narrative, the prolepsis is also internal. Another proleptic statement is observed in the text which also plays a crucial role in generating suspense in the mind of the reader. On P. 144 an astrologer marks three days for the completion of the epic—good, not so good and half-good. The good and half-good dates are not convenient for them. They have chosen a bad date.

Narrative ellipses in the novels of R. K. Narayan operate in thematically expressive ways. The reader "no longer experiences a sense of purposeless drift" (Swinden 12). But sometimes the ellipses are in the form of real disconnections. For example, on P. 130 the elephant disappears round the bend in the village street and reappears in temple on P. 177 without giving any information of Dr. Vasu's hospital. Ellipses have also been used to leave out some crucial measurements of time in the life of Vasu. Vasu joined the

civil disobedience movement and went to jail in 1931 and after his release he found himself in Nagpur. Thus without recording the time spent in the jail, the novelist brings Vasu to an indeterminate point of time. The author also makes use of ellipses to describe the life of Nataraj on the day of temple procession. Nataraj goes to meet Vasu in the morning to dissuade him from killing the elephant and then immediately the narrative records the events of the afternoon and thus omits the narrator's activities during the noon.

The temporal aberration is also observed in Ch.4 when a three hour jeep ride of Vasu and Nataraj to Mempi village is described in two and a half pages whereas two and a half hour stay of Nataraj at Mempi is described in eleven pages. Similarly eight hour return journey of Nataraj back to Malgudi took four and a half pages in the text. The narrative pace is decelerated at the last part of the novel. The reading time is more than the story time when the text takes sixty five pages to describe the events of two and a half days before Vasu's death. Nataraj's elaborate preparation for the temple procession, his nerve racking concern to the safe passage of it, his last minute effort to convince Vasu not to harm the elephant in any way and the subsequent death of villain are all described in maximum possible detail. Descriptive pause is also used to inform what preparations are done to celebrate the competition of poet's long poem *Radha Kalyan*: Every hour of that day was like a tenth of a second to me, it was so compressed and so fleeting . . . Every item appeared to be important and clamored for immediately attention. . . . Everything today was on the top priority level. (MEM 163-165)

Frequency is another aspect of narrative analysis that touches the temporality of events. Like earlier narratives of Narayan, in *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, there are certain events which are narrated more than once and at the same time, there are events which happened more than once but are narrated only once. Thus, in terms of frequency the narrative is both repetitive and iterative. Nataraj's morning routine described in Ch.1 is narrated only once. The frequent use of the word 'always' implies that these events are taking place quite frequently but are narrated only once. Similarly in Ch. 6 on P. 110 the way meeting of Vasu and immoral women is described, it implies that they used to meet every day at attic. There are some events which have been narrated more than once. Sastri's narration of the myth of Bhasmasura is one

Narayan's Treatment of Time..... 7
example which is narrated more than once throughout the
ve. The magenta color used in KJ fruit juice bottles, the specialty
Nataraj Printers is also mentioned three times throughout the
ve.

The narrative is in subsequent narration as the events are told
tense. Though the narrative moves in indeterminate time, a
e contemporaneity of story-time and narrative time is disclosed
the help of Hindu calendar. The embedded story of Vasu begins
day of *Satyanarain Puja* when "Sastri had to go a little earlier
usual since he had to perform a *puja* at home" (MEM 10) and
also on the day of full moon, the day which was fixed by the
nger for the celebration of the completion of epic written by the
otherwise Nataraj's act of narration bears no mark of duration; it
finite.

Thus the way time is manipulated here is an indication of
an's vision of life. Narayan, a representative post-colonial Indian
st in English communicates his themes through his handling of
Sometimes time moves in epic fashion, sometimes in the
nist use of memory and sometimes through the cinematic devices
e flashback and flashforward. In whatever the way time is treated,
ver in linear order in Narayan's novels, though seem linear. The
onal linear mode of narration is also eschewed in favour of a
ex handling of time as the modernist fiction mainly focuses on
orkings of the human mind, conscious, unconscious or
scious. The various analeptic movements in *The Man Eater of
di* clearly throw light on the working of the mind of its characters.

Works Cited

Appan, K. "The Dialectics of Myth and Irony in R.K. Narayan."
R.K. Narayan: Critical Perspectives. Ed. A. L. McLeod. New
Delhi: Sterling, 1994. Print.

Chrom, Lakshmi. *The Novels of R.K.Narayan*. Calcutta: Writers
Workshop, 1973. Print.

Narayan, R.K. "Gods Demons and Modern Times." *The Literary
Criterion* 10.3 (1972). Print.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi. Mysore: Indian Thought Publications,
Print.

8 *Pragati's English Journal Vol.22 No. 2*
Patnaik, Nityanand. *R.K.Narayan: A Study in Narrative Technique*.
New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers, 2012. Print.

Rao, V.P. "The Art of R.K.Narayan." *The Journal of Common wealth
Literature* 5, 1968. Print.

Shlomith, Rimmon-Kenan. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics*.
London: Methuen, 1983. Print.

Swinden, Patrick. "Gods, Demons and Others in the novels of
R.K.Narayan" *R.K.Narayan: An Anthology of Criticism*. Ed.
C.N.Srinath. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print.

Post-national Enquiries into the Cross-cultural Performing Arts of India

————— *Dr. Aditi Jana**

Abstract

India is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic country. Indian society is essentially plural. The age-old notions of nation-state are breaking apart in the globalized India. Different communities of people celebrate their Indianness in diverse cultural forms. They address the issues of their identity and culture in polymorphic performing arts. The heterogeneous nature of performing arts does not invite nationalism. Rather it reveals the pan-Indian unity among diversities. India has an illustrious heritage of performing arts. The postcolonial character of Indian civilization experiments in the mixing of different performing arts.

Keywords: post-national, culture, folk, performing arts, nation-state)

Performing arts uphold any nation's culture, heritage and tradition. India has an age-old legacy of its performing arts. Music, theatre and film crystalize the glory of Indian performing arts. India is a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural land. People try to connect their roots to the country through so many variegated performing arts. There is a unique bond among the heterogeneity of performing arts. Indian culture speaks of unity among diversities. To overcome upon the note of unification among differences, ambivalences and contradictions records the Indian performing arts have done an outstanding job. In the past decades, Indian performing arts have celebrated the issues of nation-state, post-nationalism, and communal harmony. The uniqueness of Indian civilization speaks a volume of our incredible India. In my paper I

Assistant Professor of English at Shahid Matangini Hazra Govt. General Degree College for Women, Tamluk

10

Pragati's English Journal Vol.22 No. 2

propose to engage with the scope of performing arts. Some questions crop up in my mind. Is there any limit for performing arts? Is there any geographical, cultural border for performing arts? Is their appeal limited only to the inhabitants of a particular country? Are these concerned with the age-old issues of nation and nationalism? What impact do these arts have on the broader world? Do they generate only from the cultural beliefs and practices of a particular nation or a state or a province? So, in my paper I have consciously decentralized performing arts from the limits of nation and nationalism. I tend to examine the cross-cultural performing arts of India through the theoretical thread of postnationalism.

Post-nationalism is an emerging literary theory. It is difficult to bifurcate postnationalism and nationalism into polar opposites. Rather they are closely related. The tolerant, wider approach of nationalism gradually develops into postnationalism. Nationalism is apathetic towards discrimination of religious communities, cultural differences and socio-ethnic groups. Rather it has made people believe in equality, humanity and catholicity. So, how can the discourse of nationalism be limited only to a specific national periphery? Doesn't it push us into an uncharted realm of the universality which can be synonymous with postnationalism? Rather it is a development of nationalism itself. In the poem titled "Where the Mind is Without Fear", Tagore dreams of awakening his country to a new world of perception. The poet sings a hymn for all mankind:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high

Where knowledge is free

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls (1-4)¹

Tagore speaks of a borderless world. The phrase "ever-widening thought and action" is a loaded one as it triggers up humanitarian feelings. Post-nationalism underscores the necessity of freeing oneself from any kind of national, regional prejudices. It speaks of an ever-widening horizon. In "Nationalism in India", Tagore says: "The most important fact of the present age is that all the different

of men have come close together”(101). Tagore’s essay titled *Nationalism* applauds the spirit of union, combination among people of diverse regions in the early ages. The great humanitarian sage writes: “. . . it was this spirit of combination which was the true source of their greatness, and this fostered their art, science and religion” (101). Tagore’s essay on Indian nationalism has a palpable undercurrent of post-nationalism. Post-nationalism has surged up in the contemporary scenario of the then Indian nationalism. Tagore’s lectures on nationalism were delivered before India’s independence, but they are relevant in the current scenario of the present day world in order to delineate the principle of love and humanity in all. Tagore says: “There is only one history- the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one” (100). A post-national sensibility is a matter of imperative necessity in today’s world to live in cooperation and combination. Tagore’s pointing out of the choice between two alternatives puts a big question mark before today’s world: “The question is whether the different groups of peoples shall go on fighting one another or find out some true basis of reconciliation and mutual cooperation whether it will be interminable competition or co-operation” (100). Though Tagore has not used the term “postnationalism”, his discourse on nationalism is interrelated with postnationalism. Postnationalism speaks of a borderless world. It trains people to cooperate and assimilate with different cultures and religions. Postnationalism is undoubtedly a continuation of nationalism itself in its march towards a peaceful, habitable world. Postnationalism aims at bridging the difference between man and man. While nationalism is about securing stability, integrity and fraternity in a nation, postnationalism does the same in a greater, broader transnational world.

According to Tey Marianna Nunn in “What is Postnationalism?”, “Postnationalism, as a theoretical construct, does not mean that nationalism has ended. On the contrary postnationalism is not separate from the national. They are inseparable.” (10) Nunn thinks that post-national discourse takes culture, society, government, politics, and the economics of an individual nation and inserts these components into an increased regional, continental, hemispheric, and global alternative narrative.² A postnational construct is inevitably complex and it straddles, blurs, and shifts borders.⁴ In the present age of globalization the discourse of nation-state cannot deny the global

backwaters. According to Donald E. Pease, “Because globalization goes above the nation-state and goes below it at the same time, the postnational might be described at once as what has come after the national but also as what has established a kind of resistance to nationalism.”³ Pease uses the term “resistance nationalism” to demarcate the expansion of postnational enquiries beyond the borders of “nationalist hegemony or nationalist syndrome”.⁴

Kabir was a saint poet. He was a pioneer of the Bhakti movement. He spread the message of love and humanity through his *dohas*. In an article titled “Kabir: Love, Mysticism and an Alternative Vision”, Neha Dabhade says: The time he was living in was marked by the dominance of Brahmins, rigid religious traditions, rituals and customs, feudal laws and orthodoxy. These hierarchies and rigidity were an anathema to love and humanity which Kabir sought to underline. Kabir tried to break the religious discrimination through his *dohas*. The equality of all religions is beautifully explored here: “Chahe Geeta bachiyeya Padhiye Quran, tera merapyar hi harpustak ka gyaan”.⁵ Kabir’s messages have no national or regional, religious or cultural borders, These are for all the people of the world. His *dohas* speak of humanity, love and charity. Another example of his *doha* is “Buradekhan main chala, buranehimilakoye, jo maan khoya aapna, tohmujhsaburanaa koye.”⁶ Kabir *dohas* are sung and performed by various performers today. Singer Sooryagayathri pays salutation to this great Guru by garlanding some of his beautiful *dohas* into *bhajan*:

Moho kahandhunde re Bande?

Mein to terepaas Mein!

Na Teerathmein na Mooratmein

Na ekant Niwas mein.

Na mmandirmeinnna masjid mein

Na Kashi Kailash mein!

Na mein Kriya Karam mein Rehta

suggested that God resides within every righteous person. He is such within human being. During the Covid-19 lockdown when the world has come to a standstill, Shankar Mahadevan Academy started a free webinar on Kabir Jayanti. On 5th June the stunning performances of the vocalist Chaitra Sontakke, guitarist Dr. Prakash Sontakke and visual artist Anurag Sontakke mesmerized the people from any corner of the world. Music knows no bound. Kabir's dohas speak of love, fellow feeling and humanity from everyone. No borders curb its essence. No particular culture can claim it. They are universal. Aks and Lakshmi adapted Kabir's poem "Bada hua to jaisibadikhajur/ panchi ko chhayanahifollagi atiduur"⁸ into rock music. It is an experimental album where folk, classical and rock are blended. The renunciation of ego is the motto here.

Tagore was deeply touched by the western music. Sitansu Ray in *An Indian and Western Music: Phenomenological Comparison* writes: *Tagore's Viewpoint:* Since his boyhood Tagore had had a considerable degree of familiarity with both the Indian and the Western music thanks to the cultural environment of his family. In "Tagore and Boundaries" Rabindrasangeet was Transcribed into the Western form of presentation. The compilation of Rabindrasangeet in the Western classical notation has transported the listeners into an unfamiliar territory of experience. The programme was conducted by Anjan Ghose in Townsley Auditorium. The Sarod player Dr. Rajeeb Ghosh mesmerized the audience with the music of "Bonyepurnoprano". The symphony of Sarod, guitar, violin and flute is outstanding. The popular song "tumikonkanonerphool" was based on the popular Spanish tune "BesameMucho". Tagore's song "phule dhole dhole" is inspired by the popular Scottish song "Ye Wee and Braes" composed by Robert Burns. In dance-drama "Kali pratibha" he has used three songs like "kali kali bolo re aj" "ay sobe ay", and "mori o kaharobahbha" based on the Western music. Besides this "purano sei diner katha" and "kotobarvebechinu" adapted from "Drink to me only with thine eyes" and "Auld Lang Syne". Plurality is the very nature of art. Then how can we limit it to a national border?

Use of folk songs and dances in mainstream Bollywood culture is innovative. Folk songs and dances have gained enormous popularity in the globalized world. In the earlier period folk songs and dances were the cultural assets of a particular region. But in course of time, the adaptation of the folk culture in the mainstream Bollywood movies has demanded the national eminence. As it is the age of globalization, culture travels from one country to another. Cultural purity, cultural insularity are no longer valid now. Rather culture deserves to be renewed and circulated and reformed with other cultures. Bollywood has its own international market in the world. It is no longer an Indian cultural product now. Rather, many of the Indian cinemas have been elevated to the world cinema status. Provincial folksongs in the Hindi cinemas have drew the attention of the viewers from all over the world. "Navraj Majhi" in the movie *English Vinglish* is a Marathi bridal song that is sung by the bride's family. The movie is located in the USA. But the Marathi culture of the bride's family and the Christian culture of the groom's family are given equal space. Indian culture joins hand with the American culture. Another beautiful example of cross-cultural movie is *Bride and Prejudice* where Jagjit and Chitra Singh have performed the ending song "BalleBalle". The Gujarati folk song "Mor Bani Thanghatkare" originally titled "Navi- Varsha" was originally inspired by Rabindranath Tagore. The folksong is used in *Goliyon Ki Rassi Leela Ram-Leela*. Use of Rajasthani "Nimbooda" in *Hum Dil De ChukeSanam*, Kashmiri folksong "Bumbro" in *Mission Kashmir*, Chattisgari folksong "Genda Phool" in *Delhi-6*, Rajasthani folksong "KesariyaBalam" in *Dor*, "Pinga" in *Bajirao Mastani*, "Ghoomar" in *Padmavata* are highly acclaimed all over the world.

Apart from the movies, there are many modern Indian folk artists who have experimented with the new styles and fusion of music. *Swarathma* is the leading folk rock band in India. Their style incorporates the western and Indian music. Indian folk, Reggae, Rock, Blues, Jazz are blended here. *The Raghu Dixit Project* is a multilingual folk rock band. This band is a fusion of Indian ethnic music and styles from various parts of the world. It is unique in its style as it experiments with the traditional Indian music under the influence of the Western style. *Courtyard Jam Sessions* is an innovative album comprising songs like "Rain Song", "Hey Bhagwan", "Jag Changa", "No man Will Ever

“You Like I Do”, “Mysore Se Aayi” and “Parasiva”
 ganaKoliNungitha” with an unavoidable cross-cultural melodic
Kailasa. another popular band blends western, Sufi, and Rock
Advaita blends the Indian and the Western music. *Sukanti and*
ree have produced soul-stirring music by blending Indian folk
 and western music styles like rock and jazz. *Indian Ocean*, the
 ck band is famous for mixing jazz, Sufism, Indian Shlokas and
Tetso Sisters is from Nagaland. The four sisters present the
 folk music of Nagaland. In spite of being devoted to the folk
 of Nagaland, they have used the western musical instruments
 r performing arts and elevate their genre of music to the status
 ld music.

In this paper I have examined the cross-cultural aspects in the
 ning arts of India. The paper aims at finding out the post-national
 in Indian performing arts.

Notes:

1. See <https://allopathy.com/where-the-mind-is-without-fear> .Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.
- Nunn, Tey Marianna. “What is
 tionalism?.” *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas* 4, 1
 : 10. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hemisphere/vol4/iss1/>
 ssed 30 Mar. 2021.
- <https://www.scribd.com/document/260555446> .Accessed 30
 2021.
- <https://www.scribd.com/document/260555446> Accessed 30
 2021.
- <https://vikalpsangam.org/article/kabir—love-mysticism-and-arnative-vision/> Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.
- <https://www.hindivarta.com/bura—jo-dekhan-main-chala-miliya-koy/> Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

7. See YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzcgstafkle> .
 Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

8. See YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2fh0g4onhq>
 .Accessed 30 Mar. 20

Works Cited

Dabhade, Neha. “Kabir: Love, Mysticism and an Alternative Vision”,
<https://vikalpsangam.org/article/kabir—love-mysticism-and-an-alternative-vision/> .Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Nunn, Tey M. Nunn, Tey Marianna. “What is
 Postnationalism?.” *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of*

the Americas 4, 1 (2011): 10. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hemisphere/vol4/iss1/8> Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Ray, Sitansu. “Indian and Western Music: Phenomenological
 Comparison from Tagore’s

Viewpoint” .Tagore on Comparative Music Aesthetics: Indian
 and Western –DocsLib .Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Tagore, Rabindranath. “Where the mind is without fear”. <https://allopathy.com/where-the-mind-is-without-fear> .Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

—. The Project Gutenberg eBook of Nationalism, by Sir
 Rabindranath Tagore.

Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.

Effectiveness of Smartphones in Learning English Language: A Study of Learners' Perspectives

————— *Dr. Narasinga Rao Barnikana**

Abstract

Students and teachers are now more interested in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) than Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). This is because digital literacy is changing quickly, and the COVID-19 Pandemic is happening all over the world. Increased use of educational apps and the internet via Smartphones resulted in blended and flipped learning. Smartphones make learning possible anywhere and anytime for digital natives of today. The current study investigates how students feel about the effectiveness of smartphones in learning English. This study was descriptive, and a mix of methods were used to gather data. Data was gathered by having students fill out questionnaires about themselves. The questionnaires were sent to a sample of one thousand B. Tech students from two universities; three autonomous colleges in Andhra Pradesh; and one autonomous college in Telangana Pradesh. The information gathered was looked at in both qualitative and quantitative ways. The study's results showed that, on the one hand, some of the people in the study were more aware of how smartphones could help them learn and how they could use them to access the right tools and information to help them achieve their goals, meet their needs, and learn English in a way that worked best for them, while on the other hand, most of the people in the study used their smartphones in class in an intuitive or ad hoc way.

Keywords: Learner autonomy, English Language Learning, Smartphone for Learning English, Digital literacy, 21st century learning.

1. Introduction

In recent times students and teachers have been increasingly interested in smartphones and computers. This is because people are more interested in using these new technologies more and more to learn a language.

* Lecturer in English Damodaram Sanjivayya National University Sabbavaram , Visakhapatnam

more as these devices include features like individualised learning, a variety of mobile applications, and simple internet access. Using these technologies greatly enhances both informal and formal language acquisition. Using instructional technology and student autonomy have always been related, claims Benson (2011). Researchers and practitioners in the field of technology-mediated learner autonomy should keep in mind that “future research and practises will need to be better connected to the tools, circumstances, and activities that are essential to language learners” (Reinders and White 2016). The diversity of locations, tools, and experiences that may be had, according to Reinders and White (2016), “is now practically unlimited.” To benefit from and participate in many environments, people must develop important adaptive learning skills (p. 151).

Modern teachers of second languages need to make sure that their students know how to use mobile devices to learn languages and use them to suit the purpose. Also, it is crucial for researchers and educators to comprehend how language learners plan their own learning activities and surroundings as well as the function of mobile devices, particularly smartphones and tablets, in these contexts. The present study investigated into how advanced English language learners use smartphones and tablets, to aid in their English learning. The article begins with a synopsis of pertinent academic work including the research objective, a description, the instruments used to gather data, and the analysis. The research paper ends with a discussion and its findings.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Autonomy in learning second language

For over 30 years, many researchers and language teachers have been interested in autonomy in second language acquisition. Learning autonomy in the context of second language acquisition was characterised by Holec (1981, p. 3) as “the ability to direct one’s own learning.” Holec’s idea of autonomy includes skills that language learners need to have for some autonomy also means “the ability to be detached, to think critically, to make decisions, and to act on one’s own” and “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. According to Benson, “autonomy is multifaceted and may take various forms depending on the person, the location, and a variety of macro- and micro-contextual elements.” and Reinders (2011, p. 48) says that it is

multifaceted concept with several layers” with roots are social, and educational changes.

Examining the features of autonomous learners may be the fruitful method to define “autonomy” in language acquisition. A researcher says this competence depends on two main factors: motivation and willingness. He also says these two factors’ things can be broken down even further. So, the ability to do something depends on knowing what options are available and having the skills to choose the best ones. For being willing, it depends on being motivated and having the confidence to make good decisions on one’s own. Also, Littlewood (2004) says these things must be present for a person to succeed at being independent. Autonomous language acquisition is the process in which motivated students make active, well-informed decisions about their own learning (p. 48). As Reinders (2011) states, “Autonomy is not a binary concept; it must be viewed as a continuum.” This is because, as a student learns more, he or she can show how independent he or she is in different ways.

Jones says that language resources available on mobile devices help language learners since they provide students access to a wide range of language materials whenever and wherever they are needed. Jones believes this type of language usage might involve activities such as utilising pieces of free time to practise the language, searching for target language phrases in circumstances that are appropriate, or interacting on social media platforms. Also, a language student who uses a mobile device can take command of his or her own learning, interact, and participate in language activities tailored to the learner’s specific goals and requirements (Kukulka-Hulme, Traxler & Pettit, 2015).

People who want to study a language on their own may find modern technology is helpful. Still, what do we mean when we talk about “mobile learning” and “mobile devices”? Some scholars prefer mobile learning to extend online learning, while others prefer it a form of education that can take place at any time and in any place. (Kukulka-Hulme et al., 2015). A lot of research has been done on how mobile technology and mobile devices can help people learn languages.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research question

In the journal *Language Learning & Technology*, Reinders and White wrote an in-depth analysis of the relationship between autonomy and technology, and one of the questions related to future research and practise in technology-facilitated learner autonomy was how language learners may use technology-mediated settings to design learning experiences that match their learning goals and requirements. Since mobile devices are now a part of almost everyone’s daily lives, the question was changed and put in the following way for this research. Do students use their mobile gadgets to create learning experiences (like using them for formal and/or informal English language study) that reflect their needs and goals as English language learners (such as developing the target language abilities and subskills)? If so, why do they do this and how?

3.2 Methodology

The researcher employed the survey method to gain insight into the level of effectiveness of smartphones in learning the English language of engineering students and their need to develop English language competence as English is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world. As noted in the literature, the survey method is used to collect information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. Further still, surveys are important in education research because they can provide quantitative descriptions of the characteristics, behaviours, and attitudes of students, teachers, principals, parents, district leaders, and other specific populations (Walston et al., 2017). The researcher collected data through a questionnaire designed to measure the level of the effectiveness of smartphones in learning English language of engineering students in selected universities and colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms. The questionnaire was organized with 8 multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions. The answers to these questions provided information about the student’s level of knowledge about effectiveness of smartphones in learning English language.

3 Participants

questionnaire was completed by 1000 one thousand B. Tech students from two universities; three autonomous colleges in Andhra Pradesh; and one autonomous college in Madhya Pradesh. The universities and colleges were located both in city and rural areas. According to the demographic data collected through the questionnaire, participants included boys and girls.

Consequently, the questionnaire was filled out by students representing a comprehensive spectrum of Indian educational teaching-learning curriculum. The questionnaire was filled out individually by participants online, without any possibility of intervention. The questionnaire ensured the preservation of confidentiality and informed participants that the data of the questionnaire would be valid only for research purposes.

3.4 Questionnaire

Questionnaire consisting of 10 questions, developed by the researcher for this study, was administered to identify students’ level of effectiveness of smartphones in learning English language. In addition, the questionnaire assessed participants’ understanding of the role digital technology plays in the teaching and learning process. There were multiple-choice questions, where participants had the possibility of selecting more than one option and provide comments on the answer. However, they were required to interpret their position. The questionnaire was sent to students via email and WhatsApp invitation. Completing the questionnaire created the possibility for each participant to be identified by email address. Consequently, the data obtained from the questionnaire were individual, identifiable, and non-repetitive.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

Semi-structured interview was used to get the data. This interview technique was chosen deliberately because it employs a series of open-ended questions and prompts to guide a conversation, and participants are encouraged to comment on subjects addressed throughout the interview. In this form of interview, according to Merriam (1998), “the interviewer offers rules and guidance” (thus the “structured” portion of the term) but is also ready to follow up on interesting developments and allow the interviewee to delve into deeper issues on particular topics. The interviewees were asked to discuss their experiences with mobile-based English language learning. The

researcher asked the interviewees these questions to discover more about how they learned English through smartphones:

The collected data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The study began with a partial transcription of the significant data elements using the Microsoft Word 2019-word processor. The transcribed portions of the material were then reviewed many times in order to identify recurring patterns and information. The repeated concepts were coded, recoded, edited, and updated. The researcher used the word processor’s highlighting feature to highlight the transcript with various colours and notes to record observations and thematic groupings. The emerging categories were evaluated, contrasted, and adjusted in the analysis of the data. It’s important to emphasise that quantitative analysis was done on the information that was collected. The responses of the respondents were tabulated, and percentages calculated for this type of research.

4. Findings and Interpretation

Following is a list of the theme areas derived from an in-depth analysis of the data: usage of smartphones; reasons for using smartphones; resources and tools; language practised; and academic success.

Q. No Questions

1. Do you learn English on your smartphone

Yes	No	Total
701	299	1000

2. How does your phone help you learn English?

Since the question is open ended, the researcher has taken a few student’s answers: It feels very good. I can use my dictionary whenever I want, and I need not carry around heavy books. The most important thing is convenience. I can find the information I need because... I always have my phone with me, so I can always connect to the internet. I also use my phone at home for learning English, and it doesn’t bother me that the screen is so small.

My smartphone can also replace a traditional paper dictionary, meaning I need not look at multiple pages to find the words I need.

3. How long have you been using your smartphone for learning English?

Since 10 th Std.	Since Intermediate	After joining in Engineering
589	200	211 (1000)

Using English classes, do you use your smartphone?

Yes	No	
425	575	1000

Do you use your phone to study English outside of the classroom often than in it? If yes, choose purpose.

To know word meanings-	To know word usage-	No	
508,	150	342	1000

What smartphone apps have you been using most often for learning English? You can tick multiple apps.

Dictionary-512	Language learning Aps-60	YouTube-823
News Apps-89	TED Talks apps-28	

Since this question is like open ended, twenty-eight students decided that they use all the apps which the researcher mention in questions. Two hundred and eighty-three students responded that they use YouTube apps; 512 students said that they use dictionary apps, 89 students said that they use English news apps; sixty students use free language learning apps; and twenty-eight students are using TED Talks apps.

How often do you use your phone for formal or informal English language studies?

No	Total
432	1000

Do you organise regular formal or informal mobile English language learning sessions?

No	Total
612	1000

What do you learn most often with your smartphone? Open question.

Students have been quizzed on how well they use their mobile phones, and how much time they spend using them for target language vocabulary. Some students also talked about pronunciation, and only mentioned practising grammar, reading, listening, and speaking. Subjects chosen to practise their English vocabulary on their smartphones and/or tablets because they thought vocabulary was the important part of the language to learn. They praised their smartphones for making it easy to find the words they needed and see how they were used in sentences. As many interviewees pointed out,

using mobile devices to learn English words and check they were pronounced correctly. These samples show the predominant smartphone usage patterns of the study's participants: With vocabulary, looking up terms and understanding how to apply them in phrases is simpler than searching for words. My grammar to be strong, and I practise listening on my phone. As mentioned, a few students also utilised their smart phones to practise speaking, reading, and listening in addition to grammar. This is due to their preferring more conventional learning tools, such as grammar books, or that they utilised other technology, such as laptops, or that they believed they already knew a great deal about languages and didn't see the need to study them on a smartphone.

10. Do you consider yourself an experienced smartphone English-learner? If yes, give reasons.

There is evidence that the use of smartphones encouraged students to learn English effectively and efficiently (reported by 720 people, or 72% of those interviewed). Yes, I believe so. I believe that I spend more time... If I used conventional resources, such as books, I would commit less time to it. In this way, I study English, and I learn more.), and motivated another student to study more. My smartphone is more likely to be used than a printed dictionary. and allowed another subject to obtain more nomenclature. Yes. Without my smartphone, I would not have learned these words. Last, 280 (28%) respondents could not explain if the use of smartphones let them learn the target language more effectively or efficiently.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Analysing the data, a positive picture emerges of students' success with smartphone-based English learning. This is because the participants in the study used their smartphones and/or tablets to learn English on their own, at least to some extent. Most people interviewed also agreed that using smartphones to learn English was a good idea. Their use of smartphones and tablets helped them learn English because it was easy to find English language learning resources and to store them; they could use their phones and tablets anywhere and at any time, and they thought they were improving at English. The study also showed that all the people interviewed used their smartphones and/or tablets to practise the target language's vocabulary, and that most people used their mobile devices on their own time and in language classes.

students are becoming more aware of how smartphones can help learn a foreign language. They can also better find the right tools and the information they need to reach their goals and learn the language in a way that fits their own learning styles.

Even though the students who participated in the study said they used their smartphones, the outcomes of the research showed that only a few people used their mobile devices to learn language like reading, listening, writing, speaking, and English grammar. Some people who were interviewed only used their smartphones in a language classroom in a natural way. It's also important to note that most half of the subjects thought they didn't know much about how to use their smartphones to learn English, even though some of the students had been using them to learn English for years. Considering the findings into account, perhaps this is because language teachers didn't understand or didn't give mobile devices enough credit for learning and teaching foreign languages. So, it seems reasonable to think that the way students use mobile devices could change if teachers talk about the benefits they could bring. Because of this, language teachers should talk to their students about the benefits of mobile technology during language classes. They should also choose mobile devices and set up ways for students to use them in and out of class by creating or making tasks for practising different language skills and activities that work well with these devices. If this happened, teachers would require official training in technology-mediated language learning and teaching and learner autonomy to adapt rapidly to the continual and dynamic changes in current second language learning teaching situations.

Like all studies, this study too is not without its problems. Although the people interviewed had different levels of experience in learning English, the small number of people involved makes it difficult to generalise the results. Another problem is that most people in the group were similar in their approach. For example, they all went to similar schools where English was mostly a second language. The structured interview, which was done only once, may have created bias in the data collection tool. Maybe a different set of questions, the way they were asked, or these interviews done over a certain period of time would have given more detailed and insightful results. Notwithstanding these problems, the study gave useful information about why and how

English language learners use their mobile devices for enhancing language skills. It should be emphasised, though, that if teachers help set up an environment where mobile devices can be used for language study, students may be more interested in mobile technology and become more self-reliant learners.

The findings of the current study can highlight the effectiveness of smartphones in learning English language in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and usage of words. However, it should also be noted that the efficacy of smartphones in developing speaking skills is not discussed in the present study. Other important language parts such as grammar, and lexical density which have not formed part of the study can also be learnt effectively using smartphones. Hence, further research should investigate this issue from more perspectives to promote a comprehensive knowledge of the effectiveness of smartphones in developing speaking skills.

Works Cited

- Benson, P. (2001, January 1). Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning. <https://doi.org/10.1604/9780582368163>
- Benson, P. (2015, October 8). Teaching and Researching: Autonomy in Language Learning.
- Benson, P. (2010, January 29). Teaching and Researching: Autonomy in Language Learning.
- Luzòn, M. J., Ruiz-Madrid, M. N., Villanueva, M. L., Josè, M., L., M., Ruiz-Madrid, N., & Villanueva, M. L. (2010, October 1). Digital Genres, New Literacies and Autonomy in Language Learning.
- Byrne, J., & Diem, R. (2014, April 30). Profiling mobile English language learners. *The JALT CALL Journal*, 10(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.29140/jaltcall.v10n1.165>
- Chatterjee, S. (2022, January 3). Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL); Hefty Tools for Workplace English Training: An Empirical Study.

Effectiveness of Smart Phones 27
International Journal of English Learning & Teaching Skills, 4(2), 1–
<https://doi.org/10.15864/ijelts.4212>

Durrant, P., Siyanova-Chanturia, A., Kremmel, B., & Sonbul,
22, September 22). Research Methods in Vocabulary Studies.

Holec, H., & Europe Staff, C. O. (1981, January 1). Autonomy
Foreign Language Learning.

Hamilton, M. (2013, April 11). Autonomy and Foreign
Language Learning in a Virtual Learning Environment. Bloomsbury
Academic. <https://doi.org/CBID168465>

McKinley, J., & Rose, H. (2019, December 6). The Routledge
Handbook of Research Methods in Applied Linguistics. Routledge.

Miangah, T. M. (2012, January 31). Mobile-Assisted Language
Learning. International Journal of Distributed and Parallel Systems,
3(4), 29–319. <https://doi.org/10.5121/ijdps.2012.3126>

Oz, H. (2015, January 20). An Investigation of Preservice
Teachers' Perceptions of Mobile Assisted Language Learning.
International Journal of Language Teaching, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n2p22>

Paltridge, B., & Phakiti, A. (2015, July 16). Research Methods
in Applied Linguistics. In A Practical Resource. Bloomsbury Academic.
<https://doi.org/CBID181773>

Sarrab, M. (2012, July 31). Mobile Learning (M-Learning)
in Educational Environments. International Journal of Distributed
and Parallel Systems, 3(4), 31–38. <https://doi.org/10.5121/ijdps.2012.3404>

The Use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning Applications
in Learning Arabic. (2015). Issues in Information Systems. https://doi.org/10.48009/2_iis_2015_63-73

N. K. Neb's *The Flooded Desert*: A Critical Analysis ————— Dr. Anurag Sharma*

Abstract

Indian English fiction has shown tremendous growth and artistic maturity. There are a number of writers living in India and the ones settled abroad whose writings have added to its artistic and thematic achievements. N.K. Neb's novel is another significant addition to the corpus of Indian literature in English from yet another reason. Like a number of other novels concentrating on the complexities and conflicts of life in a particular region of India, this novel too brings out some aspects of cultural development in Punjab due to the terrorist violence resulting in migration and displacement of the minority community in the Punjab. It also explores the way information technology in the form of mass media like TV, cable TV, and the temptation to go and settle abroad have impacted the life and lifestyle of the people in India, particularly in the Punjab.

Keywords: Region, Displacement, Migration, Information-technology, Temptation to go abroad.

The Flooded Desert is Narinder Neb's debut novel published in 2017. The very title of the novel consists of a contradiction. Flood and desert are the two entities which stand opposed to each other. At first, the floods are a phenomenon which is never or rarely seen in a desert. However, if ever there is flood in a desert it brings immense joy and prosperity to the inhabitants of a desert including vegetation and the animal world. But this happiness is short lived and leaves behind a trail of destruction as desert is not accustomed to floods. The presence of such contradictory situations has been well expressed through the title of the novel.

In this novel, the story moves around the main character named Devika. It brings this novel to the category of character dominated

* Former Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Punjabi D.A.V. College, Jalandhar. Punjab

novel. The temporal setting of the novel relates to the onset of the green revolution in Punjab, technological changes particularly in mass media, and the onslaught of mass media including 24 hour news and entertainment channels. One end of the story goes back to the troubles in Punjab resulting from a sense of anguish in a particular section of society which itself is considered the outcome of the tactics employed by the then government in power to retain its political hold over the state. The novel depicts the changes that took place as a consequence of this turmoil. In the novel, a family belonging to the urban community in the state suffers displacement in search of safety in the city. The presentation of some pleasant moments in the life of the family during their struggle in the city also brings out the novelist's intention to bring out the opening of a new reality in front of the female protagonist Devika. The presentation of the fulfillment of Devika's unexpressed desires through coincident makes the reading of the novel a pleasant experience for the readers.

The novel begins with the fictionalization of the silent approval of illegitimate relationships from the family. Devika gets married to a man who suffers inability to establish physical relations. Motivated by her situation, Devika defies social norms and establishes physical relations with her younger brother-in-law. On the one hand, the development of this relationship indicates the changes that have taken place in the traditional Indian woman. Here it is pertinent to note that instead of suffering silently and taking her situation as a matter of destiny or some curse in her previous lives, Devika challenges her situation and tries to find ways for gratifying her desires. At the same time, the relations between the sister-in-law and the brother-in-law suggest that such affairs are not objected to in some sections of society in the Punjab and they don't cause much hue and cry in the cities. In some cases not many questions are raised about these affairs in certain communities for socio-economic reasons. It is the result of these factors that Devika's father-in-law and brother-in-law remain silent despite the fact that they know much about Devika's affair with her brother-in-law. It is obvious from Dinesh's words said to Devika, "In fact, mother and father didn't have any objection against our relationship. They'd even planned to talk to Suraj also. Mother had pointed out this to me". (63) These words transform Devika's

illegitimate pregnancy into accepted and approved one. In this rural society, people have their own logic and reasoning for the acceptance of such relationships. It can be ascertained from the case of Bakshi in the novel. His mother advises him to remain silent and sleep over the incestuous relations between his wife and his younger brother: "It was his own mother who had advised him to remain silent, "You already have a son of your own. Don't you plough the same field and share the grains. It's like that only". When he stood confused and annoyed, she explained, "You fool! Why don't you understand?... Your wife has done a favour to you. Had she not allowed this to happen, your brother would have insisted on getting married! She has worked to save division of your land. Now the whole land would remain with you and your children". (p.64)

When the dark shadows of terrorist violence fall on the village, Devika's in-laws started thinking of deserting the village and going to the city. The hope of better prospective for their second son Dinesh also forces them to think in this direction. They believe that getting their son married to some educated and employed young girl will also make their life more comfortable. At last they get a house in the city and start living there. Devika under the influence of Lakshmi, her newly made friend in the city, starts adopting the ways and behaviour of middle class urban women. Through her character, the novelist tries to show the urban middle class life of the times. From chapter 13 to nineteen, the novelist shows Devika's adoption of the city ways and the silent protest of her in-laws against her changed behaviour.

Devika joins a kitty party and starts visiting beauty parlour to have gorgeous looks. There the women having modern liberal ideas become her ideals. Mrs. Gupta and Lakshmi become the representative characters of this type. Talking in favour of women's endeavors to beautify themselves in a parlour, Lakshmi tries to convince Devika saying, "You should not bother about money.... If one can, why shouldn't one try looking beautiful?" And when Devika expresses her fears that her mother-in-law may get annoyed and not approve of her visit to a beauty parlour, Lakshmi argues emphatically, "You are no longer a kid. Who is she to approve or disapprove?... Nobody dies with the dead! Don't be afraid of her. How long would you live under her fear? If she says something, tell her to mind her own business. What will

?... Nothing.... She can do nothing! You don't survive on her
 ." (94) Devika's acceptance of the new ideas and her going to
 beauty parlour forms the first step into the modern world of women's
 liberation. The novelist here fictionalizes the process of a traditional
 woman's gradual transformation into a modern, liberated and
 self-assertive woman.

Kitty party, beauty parlour and the company of modern
 educated, and rich women bring a constant change in Devika's
 character. In the same way, the depiction of live-in relationship,
 women's love marriage and the incidents reflecting the ways adopted
 by temporary women bring out the changed behaviour and thoughts
 of middle class women in India. The frank and uninhibited
 discussion of the women in the Kitty Party referring to matters
 concerning physical relations indicates that woman here in the city
 may not have completely changed, but her tendency certainly
 leans towards the acceptance of the modern ethics. When Mrs. Gupta
 is lucky about her marriage, she shows no hesitation while saying,
 "I'm not afraid of anyone, not even my husband. He cannot treat me
 as an object.... I'm not an illiterate village woman, I know my
 own mind." (116) The whole situation has a decisive impact on Devika. On
 the other hand, the writer here focuses on the need for woman's liberation,
 and at the same time he exposes the designs of so called women's
 liberation groups exploiting their companions in the name of their
 freedom. It comes out when Mrs. Bhanot warns, "You don't know,
 there is a group of women crazy for cheap popularity. I know some of
 them. They are rich idle women.... They claim helping women....
 They persuade women to seek divorce! They offer arguments to make
 you do something desired. They simply don't allow you to explore
 the possibilities of reconciliation"(121).

In the next about five chapter (from 19 to 25) the
 novel concentrates on the unprecedented changes ushered in by the
 revolution in information technology which has turned this world into
 a global village. The new ideas developing out of these material changes
 have been narrated through Devika's daughter Anamika, Devika's NRI
 son Sharda, Anamika's husband Gurnek and Dinesh's son Monty.
 The novel shows the way these things have impacted the younger generation
 who has returned back home. Sharda Aunty's character and personality reveals

the way a false show of wealth by the NRI's influences an ordinary
 Indian Punjabi family. These NRI's adopt the ways of their adopted
 homes to the extent that they neither completely follow the native
 culture nor the culture of their new countries. But women like Devika
 think that these NRI's live a wonderfully liberated life free of all
 worries. Ironically, Sharda is a mother of two sons, but one of them is
 involved in immoral relationship whereas the other stays in a hostel
 and rarely visits her. She simply pretends to be happy. Her own words
 offer a glimpse of her disturbed life, "Marriage Marriage
 Marriage.... We people are too obsessed with the idea of marriage
 only." , "I haven't seen him for seven years or so now.... Tony and
 Rommy "Oh, They! They are quite young now. Rommy sometimes
 visits me on Sundays. He's a bit emotional.....(164). Such strange and
 startling aspects of life has a different charm for people and tempts
 them to go abroad. Its consequences come out in the younger generation
 using marriage to go abroad. Anamika frankly tells Devika, "....
 Mother, I wish to marry the boy who takes me abroad, that's what I
 want"(183),

The temptation to go abroad, using illegal tactics and
 conspiracies to go abroad and the way these gullible but overexcited
 people are befooled by the travel-agent form another central concern
 of the novel. It also focuses on the frustration resulting from one's
 failure to go abroad and the way these factors impact human
 relationships. Apart from this, the legal compulsion forcing parents
 to consent to the marriage particularly of their daughters with the partner
 of their choice has been fictionalized through Maneka.. The
 disintegration of marriages due to the temptation to go and settle abroad
 highlights one more startling aspect of the emerging ways of life in
 India, particularly in rural Punjab. Dazzled by the promise of a life in
 Canada, Anamika's husband gives his consent for her contract marriage
 with someone else there. She goes to Canada and ultimately deserts
 her husband and son for the sake of a comfortable living there.

So far as the narration of the novel is concerned, it follows a
 simple linear pattern. Some of the incidents like the life and treachery
 of pseudo saints, Dinesh's life after the death of his wife, his live in
 relations with his maid, and the visits of Sharda Aunty involve the
 technique of multi-focalization. However, their removal from the plot

novel perhaps does not impact the overall structure of the novel. Incidents related to one family, particularly one individual are around the displacement and migration resulting first from the violence in Punjab and then the temptation to go abroad. The novel creates a fictional world sans any major tragic incident happening to the characters except the death of Devika's husband that too leads to a comparatively better life for her. The narrative appears free from any racial biases and the characters move forward to achieve the fictional world the narrator creates character on his own instead of making them move according to circumstances. Seen from the example of the role of Sharda Aunty, the use of coincidences take all the situations to a logical end. Sharda functions as a catalyst in arousing and fulfilling Devika's desires. In this character dominated novel there are no elements which one rarely finds in the novels written in Punjabi language. Additional readers may treat the women like Sharda, Lucky, or Devika as villains but the readers having modern outlook there seems to be something like this. Instead of making them grow on their own, the narrator has developed them mostly through informative utterances directed towards them. The treatment of some prominent contemporary issues is the major achievement of the novel.

So far as the title of the novel is concerned, its intended significance is hinted at the ending of the novel. The desert here refers to the suppressed and subjugated life of the traditional Indian woman Devika. Of course, the lot of this woman needs improvement and liberation. But the way some of the women characters in the novel experience their newly found freedom is like a flood in the desert. The woman's life dominated by patriarchal norms was like a desert but her indulgence in immoral and unethical practices in the name of freedom is like a flood in the desert. The novelist suggests through these words, "I suffered like a plant in some desert. The soil in which I took roots didn't allow me to grow, to enjoy a life free from oppression. The waves of occasional fresh air and stolen joys of a drizzle kept me alive. The showers of rain were much delayed. Their abundance after spring offered haphazard growth. But the recent rains have flooded the desert. These plants celebrate the floods, unmindful of their effects. They behave like the hungry, starved ones who indulge in overeating. Their need was rain, not floods." (232) The use of metaphors like desert, floods, rain, plants make the narrative suggestive.

Neb, N.K. *The Flooded Desert*. Auhors Press, New Delhi: 2017

Gupta, Renu, "A Comparative Study of Feminist and Immigrant Issues in Jasvinder Sanghera's *Shame* and N.K. Neb's *The Flooded Desert*". Sushminder Kaur and Dr. Hargunjit Kaur edited, *Immigrant Literature By The Writers of Punjabi Origin*. Gujranwala Guru Nanak Khalsa College Civil Lines, Ludhiana. 2018.

Lynne Cherry's *A River Ran Wild: A Story of Eco-Social Restoration*

————— Ashoo Toor, Ph.D.*

Abstract

Great questions of life that have always been explored in literature books, often, become catalysts for change. We live during a period paralleled, human-caused, systemic disruption of the biosphere and the very processes that sustain life on Earth. As such, it is important to direct our intellectual, emotional, individual, and collective energy towards eco-social restoration. The paper considers how ecological thought can support the learning of embodied and restorative cultural practices. Eco-social restoration is discussed within the context of environmental thought, traditional education, eco-poetry, and the politics of place. We need to remember that there are other humans and creatures living on this planet, and that life is inherently interdependent. Eco-social restoration requires that we learn to live in relationship with all our relations. This paper is epistemologically grounded in eco-social thought and draws on the ecological processes, including cycles, of breathing, soil and seed, and water as metaphors for restoration envisioned in Lynne Cherry's *A River Ran Wild*, which recounts the true story of the Nashua River in Massachusetts, New England, from its crystal clear beginnings, to its death by pollution, and its amazing recovery.

Keywords: Eco-social restoration, ecological thought, politics of place, and human interrelatedness.

Barbara Kingslover writes, "Among the greatest of gifts is to know one's place" (40). Co-extensive with "knowing one's place" is a sense of connectedness with "time present and time past...both in time future" (Eliot 11). Knowing our place is to feel the relatedness of times, places, peoples, and stories and to be at home

in a world that we love as ourselves. It is a dynamic and creative process of developing intimacy in our relationships. Intimacy depends on "feeling with" (Eliot 11). It cannot be achieved intellectually but must be embodied. Through knowing one's place, we understand and feel the extent to which we conspire and breathe with each other.

In one of the most remarkable environmental success stories of our time, Lynne Cherry, in her non-fiction picture book, *A River Ran Wild* explores the true story of the Nashua River in Massachusetts – a story about restoration, renewal, and environmental consciousness. The story begins with the first Native Americans deciding to settle upon the banks of River Nashua, believing themselves to be a part of nature, feeling grateful for its clean sparkling water and teeming fish for food. Then came the European colonists who drove the natives away, conquered the land and the river, cut down trees, constructed mills and brought industrial revolution, which in its wake brought progress, but also made the river murky with all industrial waste dumped into it. The book opens with one of the last remaining native Americans having a dream in which he sees one of the first Indians who had seen the river clean and beautiful, come back to see it again; and who cries on seeing it dead and polluted. The two significant human characters in the story are Oweana, the last descendant of the native American tribe and his friend, Marion, who take up cudgels to bring Nashua to regain its lost glory, as stated in the text, "Long ago, a river ran wild through a land of towering forests" (n.pag.).

Cherry, in the Preface to *A River Ran Wild*, echoes her vision and purpose when she says: "I hope this story inspires its readers to be the people who try to make a difference in this world" (n.pag.). In her texts, nature is not a fragmented one-dimensional landscape, but a vibrant, wild and interdependent community. *A River Ran Wild* offers a comprehensive representation of the relationship between humans and the natural world. She focuses on the inherent dependence of humanity upon nature for survival and on the equally important fact that nature does not need humanity for its continuance. Nature was in full bloom before human settlement appeared along the river and polluted it, upsetting the ecological balance. It was only with the protective approach of the North Americans that the river could be saved and replenished with the biotic and abiotic life forms.

*Assistant Prof. of English Department of Agricultural Journalism, Media & Culture Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana

Cherry's ecocentric works do not place human interests above of the non-human world. Instead, she gives humans, and ally modern civilization, only a fleeting part in her stories of the history. *A River Ran Wild* goes a step ahead and shows people to sacrifice their own desires so that other creatures may live. Introduction to her book,

A River Ran Wild is Cherry's effort to illustrate for children, own vision of nature restored. She introduces a range of environmental issues and philosophical positions on nature by means techniques that are common in children's stories: personification, y, allegory, as well as the obligatory happy ending. The environmental issues introduced by her are: fears about the destruction appearance of natural landmarks such as rivers and rain-forests; eats of extinction, erosion and pollution; diminishing natural ces: and the aesthetic aspects of nature that are threatened by nmental degradation. It is through dreams that Cherry unicates these issues: the Indian Owean's dream, in which his or's tears fall upon the dirty river until it is cleansed, is an allegory vision of the river's clean-up. Cherry communicates, through ndering of a private experience of dreaming, personal sibility to the environment and the efficacy of individual visions. s remain least distinguishable from reality during childhood and ower to transform reality is unquestioned. Resultantly, fantasy intersect with the 'real' world to offer new perspectives on the ed notions of reality.

A River Ran Wild, like many classic children's tales, features s that talk and have feelings – characteristics which, though sible to adults, go unquestioned by most children. Cherry's use onification is consistent with her environmental message: There al relationship between animate and inanimate life, and this nship manifests itself in the form of an ecosystem. Cherry fosters ay in her young readers by depicting a world whose creatures d in intelligible ways, thereby augmenting her chances of ding them to share her vision.

Cherry's work, truth is not always synonymous with scientific cy for she believes that children's stories can offer valid

metaphysical, sociological and psychological truths. In *A River Ran Wild*, she explores two contrasting ways of perceiving 'nature'. On the one hand, she examines the European settlers' view of nature either as the embodiment of evil or as a collection of commodities, in dire need of human intervention and control. On the other, she observes the natives' view of nature involving a mystical correspondence between all living and non-living things. It is through these natives that Cherry presents her vision for they are the ones who take action to restore the environment. She advocates giving children a healthy understanding of their strengths, pride in past successes through historical perspective and some sense that the future may be an improvement over the past rather than emphasising limits, distrust of technology or gloomy scenarios.

Instead of explicitly providing examples of action and their positive environmental consequences, Cherry's characters act on their emotions in relation to the land. Marion, in *A River Ran Wild*, takes action when she discovers that the pollution in the river caused "Chief Weeawa to mourn for the Nash-a-way" (n.pag.). Cherry attempts to demonstrate that the factories and mills were responsible for this pollution, but the changing social and economic structure of the community is what mechanised the development of these companies in the first place. The text enables comprehensive understanding of the complex ideologies surrounding the concept of nature.

A very important aspect of *A River Ran Wild* is the visual element that adds to its impact. It is a picture book geared towards a child audience, where the textual element is not more than two thousand words, and where the pictures are an essential component of the narrative, providing it a dual medium to tell a single story. Cherry's dark, elaborate artwork foregrounds the landscape in her narrative, thereby pushing the human characters to the background. The protagonist, Marion, in *A River Ran Wild* does not even appear in the visual elements of the text. The description of the indigenous culture along the Nashua River is heightened by the pictures that border the text, showing the tools and products used by the people in their everyday life. The impact of the Industrial Revolution on the river and its consequent dilapidation is quite graphically represented through the

ings of the inventions that emerged during that period of time. Textures of the grasses, tree bark, fabrics and hair cannot be missed in the larger picture which communicates the current of the river and the blowing away of leaves by the wind in a more pronounced manner than a description in words. But Cherry is careful not to let an overly detailed art overshadow the message she intends conveying. What the artist is saying, at all times, remains central to the reading rather than the picture is.

There exists a clear divide between the natural world and indigenous cultures from Western North American culture, which is the culture she holds responsible for the pollution in the river. The book in *A River Ran Wild* reflects the type of narrative Cherry chooses to tell – temporally vague tales in very specific and fragile settings. The specificity of her art and the striking visual images give the reader with an insight into the landscape and tell a story of the town, above and beyond the textual element of the narrative. McArgue argues, “If an artist wants to portray the beauty and complexity of the physical world, realism of some sort is going to play a part” (41) and this is exactly what Cherry accomplishes. For instance, when the artist comes and “pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the rain forest” (n.pag.), the picture depicts the bees dancing around the man’s head while he is pollinating the flowers around the tree. The readers, with the help of the pictorial descriptions, can vividly understand how the pulp and paper mills polluted the river, poisoning it with toxins and chemicals; how the indigenous community used the river and what the river looked like when it was healthy.

The theme of indigenous cultures is employed by Cherry in an attempt to demonstrate that North American cultures need to look beyond their own often beyond the western ideologies in order to solve the environmental crisis. She chooses locales very carefully – usually environmentally threatened places. She locates, both on the geographical and the ideological front, the narrative of *A River Ran Wild* outside the contemporary North American society through the visual and textual representations of the indigenous community. Such representations immediately evoke a symbolic world of infinite complexity, surprise, colour and richness. Her readers, having been

made to move beyond their immediate range of actuality, are confronted with new questions and insights through a different cultural lens. Too often the “western scientific worldview privileges the expert universal knowledge against traditional, place-bound, local knowledge” (Pena 3). It is of utmost importance to step outside the boundaries of western culture to seek answers, especially when it comes to an issue that is as multi-faceted and far-reaching as the environmental crisis.

People need to become “committed to understanding the relation between literature and the physical environment within a context of lived experiences, of the production of cultural identities, social domination, and transformative response” (Platt 186). The self-evident truth of interconnectedness needs to be amplified by an ethical stance: humans do not have dominion. The old mechanistic, anthropocentric worldview must be replaced by a new ecocentric paradigm. The environmental crisis cannot be solved by “the same kind of education that helped create the problems” (Orr 8). It has been argued that the solutions should not be seen or taught to be “simple practices, sacrificial actions, nor stem from patriarchal or racial ideologies or from an unwavering faith in technology” (8), all of which is promoted by liberal environmental discourse. A reorientation of our pedagogical practices is required so that the complications of our current environmental rhetoric can be recognised without denying hope to the children who engage in such dialogue. Donna King presses the need for a radically new set of social relations that will require “a highly politicized and socialized environmentalism, one that looks well beyond the dominant ideologies of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and liberal individualism” (119). New concepts of nature that reconfigure our social and ecological relations need to be embraced.

Lynne Cherry encourages her readers to look beyond problematic constructions such as ‘progress’ and ‘invention’ to find environmental solutions rooted in a vastly different perspective of nature. The Nashua River only had a chance when Marion and Chief Weeewa of the “Indian tribe together decided that something must be done” (n.pag.). A holistic environment solution can only be achieved by engaging in a complex dialogue with other actors within nature and culture and understanding that western ideologies and problem-solving

do not have all the answers. The recognition of other practices and cultures necessitates a differentiation between the concepts of 'self' and 'other' and Cherry's text dualistically encourages a dichotomous view of nature from a local and indigenous perspective. In *A River Ran Wild*, she explores indigenous relations to the river and the land, and the "times of progress and invention" (n.pag.).

Not affixing a temporal timeline to her representation of the indigenous culture, Cherry attempts to insinuate that there is a closeness associated with them. The "pale-skinned community" that the river engages in progress, building increasingly modern and advanced technologies, beginning with "ploughing the fields, and sowing the crops", moving to "an industrial revolution" where "many machines were invented. Some spun thread from wool and cotton. Some wove the thread into cloth. Some machines turned wood into paper and others made the pulp into paper", and the "factories along the river made new things of new materials. Telephones and radios and other things were made of plastics" (n.pag.). A vivid representation of animosity between the 'pale-skinned' and the 'Indian tribe' is depicted visually after their extremely complex social and cultural relationship is disrupted by the settlers. It was the 'pale-skinned' who created the settlements in the first place, but, according to Cherry, ultimately, it was the 'pale-skinned' who were ingenious enough to solve the problem of their technological power 'responsibly' and by working 'with' the local people. When society can learn to love and respect nature and use it responsibly, long term sustained use of its resources can be maintained and nature can maintain its ecological vitality. On the other hand, when nature is treated as if it is in opposition to society, and the relationship deteriorates.

Lynne Cherry chooses to focus on contemplation of such 'rootedness'. Her narrative represents deforestation and habitat loss as direct consequences of human action, the historical displacement of indigenous people and how contemporary human lifestyles and the western notion of progress are to blame for this. Cherry's work capitalizes on such a situation where her characters experience a strong sense of loss when their land is harmed. Sobel, a child psychologist, argues that "early childhood is characterized by a *lack* of differentiation between the self

and the other. Children feel implicitly drawn to baby animals; a child feels pain when someone else scrapes her knee" (13). However, Sobel maintains that "rather than forcing separateness, we want to cultivate that sense of connectedness so that it can become the emotional foundation for the more abstract ecological concept that everything is connected to everything else" (13).

An important element of ecological literacy is recognizing what defines nature and its relationship with humanity. Liberal environmental discourse falsely constructs society and nature as a conflicting binary, wherein nature is a distinct 'other' that can be exploited, dominated or feared. It has been argued by King that "ideologies of patriarchy and capitalism, racism and liberal individualism forget or deny the simple yet profoundly radical fact that humans *and* nature are interdependent" (119). Everything – the quality of our consciousness, our concerns and priorities – changes when this interconnectedness is acknowledged, embraced and embodied. Society and nature have a shared continuum of everyday experience, mutual origins and have a symbiotic relationship.

A careful reading of Cherry's text reveals the ways that white settler culture and knowledge comes to dominate the intellectual and physical landscape of Nashua. The land itself is renamed Nash-a-way, individual indigenous people go unrecognized, Western capitalist concepts of ownership and productivity are imposed, and the surroundings of the river are transformed from an indigenous to a settler world. The book is loaded with beautiful photographs; readers are repeatedly asked to imagine scenes in the garden and in the past. The author shares a genuine sense of sorrow and loss in her descriptions of old, rotting buildings. The restoration of the river is presented as a caring and nurturing act. Stephen Bonnycastle comments, "There is a great difference between the myths promulgated by the dominant group in society and those put forward by minority groups. The dominant group's myths have power on their side. They are repeated from every corner of the world, or so it seems, and they may become especially immune to criticism" (151).

In order for the settler way of life to quickly predominate, traditional territories are viewed as wilderness, as devoid of humanity

Cherry's *A River Ran Wild*..... 43
culture (Braun 88). A dehumanized landscape almost invites settler
rest. *A River Ran Wild* reassures settler people that they belong
that through their hard work, perseverance, and determination,
entitled to the land. In sad contrast, indigenous people – through
onment and a lack of dedication to settler ideals like farm labour
to have lost that right. In Cherry's hands, *A River Ran Wild* is
y of settler people moving into the future, and of the indigenous
receding into the past. It is the story of western values and
of interacting with the land and its people overtaking and
ing local connections and knowledge. It is the story of eco-
restoration, renewal and a lesson in interrelatedness.

Works Cited

- John. *Restoring the Earth*. Knopf, 1985.
- W. *The Unsettling of America*. Sierra Club, 1977.
- castle, Stephen. *In Search of Authority*. 2nd ed. Broadview, 1996.
- Bruce. *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture, and Power
ada's WestCoast*. U of Minnesota P, 2002.
- , Lynne. *A River Ran Wild*. Harcourt, 2002.
- T. S. *Four Quartets*. Faber and Faber, 1944.
- r, Ernst. *The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach*. Peregrine
1924.
- Donna Lee. *Doing their Share to Save the Planet: Children and
vironmental Crisis*. Rutgers UP, 1995.
- olver, B. (2002). *Small Wonder*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- ud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Harper
ial, 1994.
- avid.. *Ecological Literacy*. State U of New York P, 1992.

44

Pragati's English Journal Vol.22 No. 2

Pena, Devon G. *Chicago Culture, Ecology, Politics: Subversive Kin*.
U of Arizona P, 1998.

Platt, Kamala. "Environmental Justice". *Wild Things: Children's
Culture and Ecocriticism*. Eds. Sidney Dobrin and Kenneth
Kole. Wayne State UP, 2004, pp 183-197.

Sobel, David. *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature
Education*. The Orion Society and the Myrin Institute, 1996.

Bigg Boss :

Hyperreality and Surveillance in Reality TV

Alka Lakhera*

Shweta Kumari**

Abstract

World is inundated with visuals whose sustainability is dependent on their realism. The popularity of the reality TV genre brings this phenomenon with image-driven reality to the fore. Reality TV shows cater to the human desire to see and be seen and, simultaneously conceal the paradoxical impulse of maintaining an aura of secrecy. The format sedates the audience with the idea of giving a glimpse into the lives of 'real people'. The paper attempts to examine the reality TV show Bigg Boss and problematizes the idea of 'secrecy' or privacy of reality TV. The attempt is to locate the concept within the matrix of Foucault's panoptic and panopticon power. Using Foucault's notion of the panopticon to support the attempt is to study Bigg Boss, the notion of real life surveillance, and its repercussions for the individuals in society. The popularity of these shows paves way for curiosity and control thereby making surveillance a mechanism to push the boundaries and advocate the right to surveil'.

Keywords: Reality TV, Bigg Boss, Hyperreal, Disneyland effect, Surveillance, Privacy, Panopticon, Synopticon

The initial *Bigg Boss* promos that hit the Indian TV screens in an attempt to shock the audience by teasing them with the premise of capturing and telecasting private moments. The show is an adaptation of the international show, *Big Brother*, and the title is derived from George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* which imagined a dystopian society based on surveillance. The show was originally conceptualised as 'part social experiment, part real-life soap, and part competition' (Andrejevic 72). Although the Indian audience was used to the degree of unscripted shows, *Bigg Boss* was a radical departure

Assistant Professor in English literature, Jamia Millia Islamia (Teaching at the Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia College).

Assistant Professor, Maitreyi College, Delhi University.

from the previous reality content they had been consuming which were primarily game shows and competitions like *Antakshari*, *Boogie Woogie*, *Kaun Banega Crorepati?* etc. Over the past years, it has spawned its regional variants to cater to the demands of people from various socio-cultural spaces.

The format across the adaptations follows the same idea - an enclosed space cohabited by a diverse set of people, predominantly celebrities but sometimes non-celebrities, who are constantly monitored by cameras. The audience gets to see the edited footage for around an hour, based on which they vote out contestants through a process of elimination until only the winner is left. While the contestants are in the house, they are given tasks and are placed in unusual situations by the 'Big Boss' figure, only present through his voice, who is responsible for maintaining discipline in the house. The conflicts in the house and the voyeuristic set-up are the source of the audience's interest which amplifies their addiction to the show. They get invested in the contestant they perceive as 'real' and relatable, while their idiosyncrasies make the show entertaining.

The showrunners have also begun calling it 'unscripted drama' rather than labelling it as 'reality'. The production company's website, *EndemolShine India*, describes the show as 'a hyper-real environment largely unpenetrated by the outside world while everything they do is watched by cameras and ultimately the audience' ('Bigg Boss'). The nature of reality presented itself is quite contestable. We in our daily interactions perform various roles or impressions for audiences (Goffman). Similarly, the contestants are aware they are being watched so their behaviour is 'performative' for the masses and the rest of the contestants as well. Akin to Stephen Greenblatt's idea of self-fashioning where a notion of self is constructed, the celebrities perform for an audience by creating personas and/or breaking away from previously constructed/projected images. The housemates attempt to create as many 'real' spectacles as possible as they know that the more dramatic their outbursts, the more eyeballs they grab which in turn increases their chances of surviving till the end.

Owing to the conservatism of the Indian audience, the house was segregated along the lines of gender during the initial few seasons. Since 2013, owing to the social media explosion, there has been a surge in the inclusion of couples and intimacy which pushed it to a

time slot reserved for less family-friendly content on Indian TV. Supposedly private and intimate moments are thus televised for consumption - a theatrical performance that must maintain the illusion of reality as the viewers must not perceive any hint of artifice. After all, the spectators look for a contestant they can relate to - someone 'real'. As Andrejevic remarks in his *New York Times* article, the focus is on authenticity or the cracks in the personas that can only be captured by an omniscient system of surveillance ('Are Reality Shows') The author also notes: The celebrity status attained by participants on the show highlights the promise that surveillance via surveillance has its tangible rewards. *Big Brother's* no longer symbolizes the threat of mass homogeneity but the promise of a paradoxical mass individuation...the promise remains intact with an emerging paradigm of mass customization that commodifies individuation only to commodify it. (Andrejevic 111)

Hyperreal and Disneyland Effect

These shows generate spaces where performing for the self takes precedence, and questions about the very nature of reality can be looked into. French scholar Jean Baudrillard's semiotic studies deal with the system of signs and meanings in the contemporary media and consumer-driven society. Baudrillard in his work claims the shift towards a new era of simulations where social production driven by technology ensures the proliferation of codes and signs. These signs create a society of spectacle and hyperreal space where entertainment and information provides an exaggerated sense of mundane 'reality'. Therefore, 'the real is produced from digitized cells, matrices, and memory banks, models of control - which can be reproduced an indefinite number of times from these. It no longer needs to be rational, because it no longer measures itself against either an ideal or negative instance' (Baudrillard 1). It is in this context of simulated hyperreality that *Bigg Boss* creates a narrative of simulated subjectivities of individual housemates to be assessed by the audience who have lost the ideal 'real'. The housemates, generally public figures who have gained some notoriety, are made to undertake various tasks. As their performance in the course of the show reveals their 'real' self - paranoid, idiosyncratic, entertaining - the hitherto unexplored dimensions of the contestants come to the fore.

However, the performativity of 'reality' or the 'real' self by these housemates living in a hyperreal space brings out a state of terror which is characteristic of the schizophrenic, an over-proximity of all things, a foul promiscuity of all things which beleaguers and penetrates him, meeting with no resistance, and no halo, no aura, not even the aura of his own body protects him. In spite of himself the schizophrenic is open to everything and lives in the most extreme confusion (1988: 27).

The proximity to media images and technology leads to the implosion and dissolution of subjects where the state of the real is defined by an idea of 'reality' dependent on these images. Thus, the subjects of the house are viewed as an image of 'reality' by the viewers who thrive on the 'reality' of a simulated universe. From breaking/throwing objects, abusing, displaying intimacy, aggression, and depression to performing the role of an 'ideal' 'real' celebrity/contestant fighting for their rights, 'real' love stories of contestants, a spiral of human emotions is spun for the viewers. The histrionics of the housemates consequently result in their dedicated fans' attempts to humanise the content and tone down the sensationalism. Thus from normalising shouting matches and verbal abuse, the content moves on to trivialise the violence and naked stunts by the contestants. The spectacle of slice of 'reality' created for the viewers keeps pushing the conservative boundaries of the Indian audience; passionate kisses, intimate moments, and massage sessions garnered rave reviews for the show in an otherwise conservative medium.

Debord in his theorisation about spectacle argues that 'the spectacle presents itself as a vast inaccessible reality that can never be questioned. Its sole message is: 'What appears is good; what is good appears.' The passive acceptance it demands is already effectively imposed by its monopoly of appearances, its manner of appearing without allowing any reply' (Debord 4). The viewers of *Bigg Boss* are looped in the narrative of the simulated spectacle, as there is an unquestioning belief in the 'real' nature of the performance. The emotional investment of the viewers in the journey of the housemates demands a passive acceptance and subsequent justification of their controversial actions and outlandish behaviour. The relatability with the range of human behaviour, emotion, and outrage unleashed in the show makes the 'passive' viewer an active participant who is complicit

performing and practising similar kinds of behaviour. In this passive activity and active assessment in the overwhelming presence of a media driven by images, the audience of *Big Boss* normalises voyeurism and glamourises surveillance. The performativity of 'reality' shows amuses the audience because the relatability is amplified and exaggerated 'realness' through 24x7 broadcast, and curated footage is a glorification of the 'realness' of the participants. The display of a mix of raw emotions makes even the publicity stunts, misogynist comments, sexist remarks, and uncensored intimacy palatable and more enjoyable than the reality they inhabit.

In a country where kissing publicly is taboo and invites moral policing, and penalisation, *Big Boss* managed to attract the audiences to tune into the television sets and now even OTT or over-the-top platforms to lap up an unabridged version of the show. In the hyperreal space of *Big Boss*, the simulated settings of the show range from the jungle, heaven-hell, aircraft, and haunted mansions, thereby creating miniature signs, codes, and models of real-life scenarios. The viewers witness fully grown adults turning into children, ghosts, thieves, angels/demons, kings/queens, farmers, and a variety of other characters for the sake of tasks to prove their 'real' selves. The show's more authentic and dedicated performativity of fiction in a reality show would be a benchmark of their 'realness' for the viewers. The overwhelmingly engaging response of the viewers to the show is a sign of a group of human beings engaging in simulated reality in a virtual space that probably makes the viewers feel better than the

Big Boss is a melting pot of simulations, glamour, 'unscripted' reality, drama, themes, and celebrity culture fuelling the imagination, creating and glorifying 'celebrities', and creating phantasmic images of 'real' 'reality'. For the viewers of reality TV, the pleasure is similar to that derived from amusement parks and Disneyland as the illusion of 'reality' is customised yet unfettered, thereby giving a sneak peek into the palatable degeneracy and bohemian aspect of real life in a controlled setup. The narrative created by the hyperreal images and the controlled setup in *Big Boss* gives us a 360-degree view of 'reality' being performed, concealing the reality of hyperreal society just the way Disneyland conceals the banality of the real world and making American consumerism appear more real. The

imaginary of Disneyland is neither true nor false, it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate the fiction of the real in the opposite camp. Whence the debility of this imaginary, its infantile degeneration. This world wants to be childish in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the 'real' world, and to conceal the fact that true childishness is everywhere - that it is that of the adults themselves who come here to act the child in order to foster illusions as to their real childishness. (Baudrillard 13).

Hypervisibility and Viewership

These shows with a surveillance format practice two-step concealment. The first level consists of concocting a fictional real world in hyperreal space for viewers to believe that their own 'real' world is devoid of frivolity. The other level manipulates the idea of surveillance, as viewers are made to believe that they control the viewership and the power of assessment gives them a monopoly on surveilling the housemates. The willing participation in this controlled, 'benign', and glamorous structure of surveillance set up by the reality TV shows commodify the idea of control, concealment, and surveillance. Since media is an ever-expansive terminology therefore the viewer's gaze and preference determine the acceptability of surveillance. Ellis makes a significant argument about the complicity of viewers as he or she passes 'his or her gaze across the sights in the TV eye' while the action of 'look[ing]' (Ellis qtd in Rives-East 10) is performed by the television. The very act of looking in the case of Reality TV shows, especially shows like *Big Boss*, replicates Bentham's Panopticon from a Foucauldian lens. The idea is to establish systems carrying out surveillance within full visibility thereby re-entrenching the social order and inequalities. In the age of digital network feed, the following panopticon model tries to capture 'real' images leading to internalisation of a surveillance system that leaves multiple digital footprints.

The aural visibility of God-like 'Big Boss' figure, multiple cameras across the house, live footage of the house, broadcasting on OTT and television have managed to conceal the 'loss of real', hiding the surveil nature of viewer society dependent on spectacle. The idea of the panopticon conceives of an internalised system of surveillance where people are always under scrutiny which acts as a deterrence for further or any transgressions. The viewer society finding amusement in the dose of 'reality offered' by the hyperreal universe of reality

assumes the act of viewing as a passive intimate and harmless. However, the act of viewing television is very powerful as it accords power to judge, but in turn, the viewer/subject becomes the viewed/through the voting and fan base mechanism in place. The real space created in the panopticon format opens up the distance and hypervisibility of the viewer itself.

The power a viewer has in a society of the spectacle is driven by the ability to control images and technology. The act of assessing and judging the contestant extends the ideas of the panopticon further than what Thomas Matiesen termed the 'synopticon'(10). The synoptic power which reality TV shows like *Bigg Boss* accord to the viewers go from assessing to opinion formation to social media warfare, the structure of the show is 'designed specifically for viewers to monitor and critique contestants or participants'(10). The trajectory of *Bigg Boss* over the years shows a gradual shift from panopticism to synopticism; the first few seasons of *Bigg Boss* were centred around the idea of viewers voting in or out their favourite 'real' contestants. With the proliferation of the internet, digital networks, and social media hyperreality intensified, and the surveillance by/of the viewers became all-pervasive. The entry of *aam janta*(audience) inside the show to select the top six contestants in Season 15 not just lay bare the 'reality' of the hyperreal space but also concretised the synoptic structure of the show. The questions and criticism contestants face on *Weekend ka Vaar*(weekend attack) can be seen as a point of convergence of hyperreal 'reality' of the show and its synopticism; the popularity of the show is well distributed across India.

The fascination with the banal lives and 'real' drama being viewed stems from the desire to know and uncover what is hidden behind the mundane. The knowledge of everyday life in the hyperreal space of *Bigg Boss* gives immense synoptic power to the audience, the interrelation between the power and knowledge highlights the mechanism in which *Bigg Boss* and the 'reality dramas' of the same genre are becoming structures of micro-power. We are aware that the television is not just a medium of information but also, A useful tool to disseminate knowledge, to perpetuate those speeches through which we regulate and control individuals, to rework the objects, externalize social relationships, to diffuse, to fix and bind together those

practices, those rules which create the subject and that distinguish it in series from the others.('Biopower of Television').

Thus one can locate television as a system of micro-power which influences the choices of consumers and gradually prepares them to accept a manufactured reality. With the proliferation of digital media, the regulation of consumer choice is just a swipe away, thus the content served and viewed through the reality TV shows function as soft power concealing the surveillance society viewers are participating in. The changes in the format of these shows are in tandem with the cultural changes and the micro power they exert in turn generates and creates new cultural political and social norms heavily influenced by the hyperreal universe of the show. Foucault while theorising about biopolitics details the regulation of living species and their locality in a political setup controlled by government practices. While elaborating on the interaction between body and biopolitics he gives the term biopower to encapsulate the experience of subjects or individuals, who are immersed in this nexus of power-knowledge. The contestants engage in willing surveillance and act of creating the real out of the desire for prize money or fame, but the viewers are becoming the subject of a viewer's society engaging in hyper surveillance.

The Age of Surveillance

We live in a 'viewer's society', where the TV audience is casting a glance at the participants thereby comfortably judging them from the confines of their living rooms. The passive participation without any repercussions ensures the audience's complicit involvement in the maintenance of the surveillance structure. The presence of cameras on the show runs parallel to the surveillance system we inhabit in real life. Fuelled by the proliferation of low-cost internet access and nudged by the pandemic, there has been a shift in the medium of the show - from television to OTT platforms. This has enabled the viewers to have an even more detailed and voyeuristic look into the lives of the housemates that can be accessed on-demand and promises more rawness by bypassing the editing stage of the production. As the shows get more and more voyeuristic, this has an impact on the real-life attitude, where the observer becomes the observed sans resistance. Furthermore, it makes a case at the subliminal level for broadening the ambit of surveillance.

Misha Kavka in *Reality TV* notes the aspects of the *Big Brother* reply to its subsequent adaptations as well:

‘Similar to the zoos that exhibited exotic human ‘others’ to a voyeur-seeking public (Bancel and Boëtsch 2008), the pseudo-utopian isolation of the *Big Brother* cast becomes a sellable commodity in entertainment culture. In *Big Brother* participants voluntarily give up their privacy in exchange for money, fame and/or a ‘prize’; producers sell this privacy to viewers; and viewers, through various media platform, pay to be entertained by seeing private selves of other people. It is this convergence of confinement, surveillance and voyeurism that made *Big Brother* such a controversial programme in its initial series.’ (Kavka 88)

Thus, it shapes our perception of privacy and we unwittingly contribute to or become passive citizens of a surveillance state. It erases authentic aspects and makes it into something marketable and consumable - something one associates only with entertainment. In the process, however, we do not get to consent to part with our privacy the way the contestants get monetary compensation and popularity. It becomes a part of our daily routine existence including our citizenship. Lyon observes, ‘The on-camera performances function as a kind of mimicry with the ways in which everyone has increasingly to come to terms with surveillance space’ (Lyon 154). These shows or surveillance subgenre’ affect our perception of reality. (De Simone 2008). The viewers become desensitised to the omniscient voyeuristic gaze in the public spaces and become habituated with being on watch, just like the contestants whose lives they see played out for recreation. Mark Andrejevic comments on how the model of reality TV surveillance becomes a part of self-expression and the impact it has on the audience as it ‘provides a certain guarantee of authenticity, and that this authenticity becomes a process of self-realisation, self-realisation, and self-validation’ (Andrejevic 108). Limited to only its entertainment aspect, surveillance becomes voyeurism that is an issue to only those who are hiding something. (‘Reality Shows’)

Due to the lack of knowledge about the ramifications of sharing confidential data in the digital world, the prevailing attitudes towards privacy and data are quite lax. Some also attribute it to the

cultural ethos that has never made a space for the ‘private’ (Manzar). The act of keeping any information to the self becomes an act of ‘hiding’ that has a range of negative connotations. But this hinders attempts to debate privacy and data protection - especially in a country that has seen a tremendous increase in the availability of affordable data.

As we debate the right to privacy and its contours, it is interesting to note the divergent and sometimes indifferent attitudes to it. Jeffery Rosen notes that we are ‘beginning to learn how much is being lost in a culture of transparency: the capacity for creativity and eccentricity, for the development of self and soul, for understanding, friendship, and even love’ (Rosen 11). Amidst the proliferation of these shows premised on vicariousness that constantly pushes the boundaries, there is an urgent need to understand the importance of privacy as a legal and moral right that is central to our existence as a human. Edward Snowden remarked, ‘Arguing that you don’t care about the right to privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different than saying you don’t care about free speech because you have nothing to say.’ (‘Edward Snowden Compares’) In a world increasingly defined by stimulation and simulation, we need to safeguard our privacy against intrusion by both state and non-state actors.

Works Cited

Andrejevic, Mark. *Reality TV : The Work of Being Watched*. Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Cop, 2004.

—. “Reality TV Is about Surveillance - NYTimes.com.” *Nytimes.com*, 2012, www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/10/21/are-reality-shows-worse-than-other-tv/reality-tv-is-about-surveillance. Accessed 24 May 2019.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. 1988. Los Angeles, Ca, Semiotext(E), 2012.

“Bigg Boss 11 Opens with 16.8 Million: Are TV Viewers Hooked to This Season’s “Dhinchak” Contestants?” *Zapr*, • blog.zapr.in/tv-analytics/bigg-boss-11-opens-with-16-8-million-are-tv-

s-hooked-to-this-seasons-dhinchak-contestants • Accessed 25
022.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Cambridge,
Massachusetts, Unredacted Word, 2021.

“Edward Snowden Compares Privacy to Freedom of Speech.”
University of Arizona News, 28 Mar. 2016, news.arizona.edu/story/
ed-snowden-compares-privacy-freedom-speech.“Endemol –
Endemol Shine India.” *Bigg Boss - Endemol Shine India*,
endemolshineindia.in.

Erving Goffman. *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. S.L.,
Yale University Press, 2022.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the
Prison*. New York, Vintage Books, 1975.

Kavka, Misha. *Reality TV*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University
Press, 2012.

David. *Surveillance Studies : An Overview*. Cambridge, Uk,
2012.

Manzar, Ozama. “Privacy and the Indian Culture.” *Mint*, 21
Nov. 2017,

www.livemint.com/Opinion/rM3vgXErD5oWiv12IEaKcK/
privacy-and-the-indian-culture.html. Accessed 20 Nov. 2021.

Penney, Thomas, and Committee On. *Aspects of the Prison
Industry*. Strasbourg, 1972.

Riddle, Karyn, and J. J. De Simone. “A Snooki Effect? An
Analysis of the Surveillance Subgenre of Reality TV and Viewers’
Attitudes about the “Real” Real World.” *Psychology of Popular Media
Science*, vol. 2, no. 4, Oct. 2013, pp. 237–250, 10.1037/ppm0000005.
Accessed 12 May 2020.

Rives-East, Darcie. *Surveillance and Terror in Post-9/11
America and American Television*. S.L., Springer Nature, 2020.

Jeffrey. *The Unwanted Gaze : The Destruction of Privacy in
America*. New York, Vintage, 2001.

Sguglio, Alfredo. “Biopower of Television.” *Medium*, 21 Nov.
2020, medium.com/@Alfredo.Sguglio/biopower-of-television-
514701. Accessed 1 July 2022.

The Celebration of Powerful Women in Literature through Female Bodybuilding

————— Disha Sharma*

Abstract

Female body had always been in an affected relationship with social expectations of feminine beauty. The radical feminism prompted women to shun femininity-as an expected ornament for women in the society and go beyond the implied set of restrictions to seek emancipation and assume power through Bodybuilding. The concept of bodybuilding was synonym to men and their masculinity until late twentieth century and beauty was an asset ascribed to women only. Earlier men’s events were often supplemented with either a women’s beauty contest or bikini show. But women subverted the rundown by engaging themselves in power-lifting, Bodybuilding advent and thus attempted to transform identities. This way female Bodybuilding outgrows gender implications of society and becomes target of the controversial act of violating society’s norms. The present paper aims at charting out the incremental growth of women bodybuilding; their strong attempt to break the gender expectations; society’s role in undermining these revolutionaries and significantly the repercussions of obsessing over bodies. The study will incorporate recent literature portraying female bodybuilders as the main protagonists. To compound to the ground reality of the embarked research, the paper will manifest personal Interview of the rising Female bodybuilder (Monica Gupta) from Jammu, solely taken by myself.

Keywords: Female Bodybuilding, literary works, social norms, gender hierarchy, obsession over bodies

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally a male activity, Bodybuilding has been ascribed to men only prior to 1970s. The realm of Bodybuilding has no role for women

*Ph.D. Scholar University of Jammu

But this notion was overturned completely by women, who became increasingly interested in competing Female Bodybuilding competitions (Andersen et al. 161). Moreover, in a report generated by Lambert and colleagues (2007) which states that in New Zealand the number of female bodybuilders contesting the competitions are higher than males. However, many changes took place in the Female Bodybuilding since the late 70's. According to the article, "Femininity and Muscularity: accounts of seven women bodybuilders", around 1986, Female Bodybuilding was bifurcated into two classes: Physique and Figure (Lambert et al.) Whereon the Physique class focuses on more muscular physique with lesser stress on feminine characteristics like, no make-up, no heels and contestants are bound to compete in bare feet; the Figure class emphasizes on moderate muscularity with a special focus placed on feminine characteristics like contestants wear earrings, makeup and high-heeled sandals are worn. If not divided into two categories, the female bodybuilding also differs from women's bodybuilding. Though Female Bodybuilding differs from women's bodybuilding in its exact connotations but as far as both categories are related to 'female' as sex, the paper will analyze the role women play in making in so non-traditional sport.

Though legitimately a sport, female bodybuilding has found a footing in literature in last few decades. Not only does Literature passes such bold expressions on part of women, but, cinema highlights the struggles and the underneath functioning of the sport since the late 1980s. As a prerequisite to my research proposal for my current area, I interviewed Mrs. Monica Gupta, who has got Miss North India Silver in 2019 and has following accolades to her credit: Miss World in athletic physique 5th place (2017), Miss North India Classic Champions of Champions (2017), Miss North India Classic Silver (2017), Miss J&K Gold Champion of Champions (2017). The experience behind personally interviewing Monica, falls directly to her and she envisaging onto the breaking of stereotypical society and its place in a place like Jammu. Her quotes are deliberately put in between general assumptions to bring reality at crosschecks.

Apparently, the society is in transforming stage, where not only female bodybuilders are threatening to transgress the gendered interaction order, there are other sects also who were long suppressed

and are now attempting to seek emancipation. People seen as fat, men who are over-burdened by the clichés of responsibility of whole house, Trans-gendered individual, female soldiers, and boxers are all risking deprivation and striving for their corporeality. These individuals are unacceptable and are not assimilated for their erasure of natural identities and are deemed as deviants for stepping out of gender boundaries and proclaiming symbolic men. Now for the other sects, society could even think of bearing the transforming identities as far as it is not threatening to patriarchy, but for female bodybuilders, who are attacking the sphere where only men could think of reigning, is complete distortion of gendered interaction order. The place that men are expected to display at least their capacity for physical dominance, as a counterpart to their social dominance, is increasingly taken up by female body builders.

In her ground breaking work, *Iron Maidens* (2005), Kristin Kaye presents the dichotomy that stays with female bodybuilders. It is only when she is hired to direct a show about female bodybuilders that she acknowledges the depth of the sport that embodies these muscular women with awe-inspiring strength. Least acquainted with the different aspects of the sport, Kaye thought this was her chance to enter a whole new feminist arena, but in reality she was about to enter another world entirely. Kristin tells the whole story in this hilarious book, alternating between an account of directing the show, which builds to the disastrous climax of opening night, and reportage on women's bodybuilding and the little-known sub-culture around it, including the use of steroids, the side business of strong women who wrestle men for money, muscle worship and the judging controversy that threatens to split the sport in two.

The rising spirits of writers in scraping the truth beneath the embodiments of power and strength of these females aid in contextualising gender in the present post-modern epochs. The deviant nature of female bodybuilders is well studied by Durkheim in his book, *The Division of Labor in Society*, where he argues that the concept of existence of deviance is not because of people's involvement in natural rule breaking taboos but because this deviance leads to "shock the collective conscience" which is so prominent in case of female body builders. The cultural sensibility of the society is encountered by their

ressive modes of appearances. The society has been cultivated by as natural the social distinctions that separate men and women, masculinity and femininity.

With fictive characters in their respective works, these authors try to rationalize gender stereotyping in the society and yet adheres to an inclination in divergent liberation. In another work published in 2022, *The Muscle Girl Next Door*, is a graphic novel by Yoko Anjo. In the novel, a boy named, Daria is a lean college student with inferior body-image complex. The story encompasses his liaison with a girl who seems to be as muscular as he is thin boned and the subsequent conflict in admitting his body dysmorphia to her. He maintains his cool composure as a shield to protect his complex, even though he has a lot of love to give. The novel unfolds as he being encouraged by a friend, finally get closer to Ruby by working out with the conflict only gets apparent when he dares to open up about his innate body dysmorphic image. Through novels like this, contemporary authors are attempting to find a meaning in the ongoing obsession of sculpting the body for beauty ideals and how the appearance is channelized in the society by high end capitalized market.

Published in 2000, the compilation *Picturing the Modern Woman* edited by Laurie Fierston, the hyper-muscular and physically fit woman is studied in popular culture and contemporary art. The different aspects of female bodybuilding from its deliverance in the 1970s to concepts of gender fluidity are taken up. Positioning the bodybuilder as prototype, various authors engage with the physicality of these females, and scrapes the manipulation of body amidst societal values. From the sublime to the gritty, this volume presents women as amazons as a culture with a history, a dazzling and transgressive phenomenon, and avatars of the future. It investigates the representation of muscular women in a range of visuals.

Being a sport of appearance, bodybuilding challenges not only the physical aspects of the female body but also psychological aspects related to self-perception, body-beauty, and gender ideals. Women were from the very beginning so conscious with their appearances and images, the whole psychology that is involved behind the training of women and making them aware of the discourse laid by

the society as being toned is beautiful and fat is ugly. On recalling, what was asked of Monica Gupta, that how she stepped into bodybuilding she states, Being overweight, I was struck with problems like Knee pain and lower back pain, so at first I hit gym to reduce my body weight. My husband motivated me to train with the weights initially. I was reluctant but later when I started getting compliments, I developed a passion towards fitness then I chose it as a profession. (Gupta) Marcia Ian also voices somewhat similar views, that women are not objectified by others in recent times, yet they are themselves choosing the objectification. In "The Primitive Subject of Female Bodybuilding: Transgression and other Postmodern Myths," Marcia Ian states that women had always centered their attention in their bodies and are themselves taking revenge by moulding it and reconfiguring it which earlier patriarchy had been trying to do for so long, "It's just that now sisters were doing it to themselves". (71)

Female Bodybuilding pronounces not only rebellious nature but also questioning of gendered norms. As the sport thrashed down the feminine characteristics of tender and slim body, the bodybuilding industry comprises mainly of men, has responded by compounding the ideals of judging the female bodybuilders by over-monitoring and limiting the equivalent bodies of women to put them back into the molds of feminine body, which categorically states how a female bodybuilder should look like. Consequently, women finds themselves into the third space of identity crisis, where on one hand, they are leaving the feminine fragility behind, they are constantly struck to maintain the feminine traits in the sport too. So, female bodybuilders thrive to build muscular physiques, but being in the sense of a feminine appearance, as Susan Bordo asserts in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western culture, and the body*, "...reproducing rather than transforming precisely that which is being protested" (177).

To demonstrate the structure of hierarchy running parallel down the institution of bodybuilding, there is a massive play of gendered nature of muscle. When these women compete on large scale, three components are considered; Muscularity, presentation and symmetry whereas, in case of women, an additional asset is added called "femininity". Women are thus expected to form a relation with the body that seems completely outside their bodies. They find themselves

ing to masculine identity but still thwarted by society's notions of feminine ideals. The judging criteria of the bodybuilding by as IFBB postulates: First and foremost . . . he/she is judging men's bodybuilding competition and is looking for an ideal physique. Therefore, the most important aspect is shape.... Other aspects are similar to those described for assessing men, but hard to muscular development, it must not be carried to excess that resembles the massive muscularity of the male physique. (115)

The issues that are associated with the female bodybuilding closely seen to be linked with power. Though knowingly or unwittingly, women who build their physiques to be seen as strong muscular may crave for the power that is inherently gifted to men that would take years for women to make such muscular bodies eventually have the fruit of power. But as Bordo in his book *Unbearable weights* asserts, "To reshape one's body into a male body to put on male power and privilege" (179). On being questioned the same, relation of power with body, Monica agrees with Bordo says, No, it has a long way to go still. We don't see a lot of female personalities in our society. There are only a few names. And to overturn the power rundown of males, it is not a work of a single woman to scream equality rather lots of us will have to work for this. It is not as simple so that the roots of patriarchy are so ingrained in the society it becomes impossible for women to stand outright. (180)

According to Bordo, when the symbols of femininity are constructed in the hierarchy of body shapes, the exact framing of a woman's slender and trimmed body appears to be of utmost importance in our society for it epitomizes weakness and passivity. Bordo also states that the subjugation of women to men in the society is a constant effort and is achieved only when women are constantly at work with their bodies. The body becomes a metaphor for culture. And body is then performative on which gender is displayed.

For the society is judgmental in accepting those who meet the ideal and encompasses them as normal while those who do not meet the standard aesthetic ideal are termed deviant, and are easily pushed to the peripheries. This constant threat of marginalization keeps

women subservient. The attempt to scrape off the functioning of media's representations of bodybuilding discourses of male body is well conceptualized by Philip White and his co-worker James Gillett in their land-marking article "In Reading the Muscular Body" in *Flex Magazine*. But, however, their focus is shifted to their analysis on "how bodybuilding discourses address the erosion of power felt by many men, and how bodybuilding practices are represented as a means of self-transformation" (19). White and Gillett tries to contrast male bodybuilding against the budding female bodybuilding, suggests that the confining restraints of femininity can well be understood by analyzing the foundational context of masculinity and its recent loss of power.

CONCLUSION

For the broad spectrum of Female Bodybuilding has till now been not so researched area and if some light is shed onto the realm, it is through lens of sports and Physical education. By far now, this attempt of scrutinizing the area of Bodybuilding in Literature is a fresh and new attempt to highlight the empowered women of the times and confronting them within the confining norms of the society. The sport, on one hand levels up the women in respect of strength to men and simultaneously results in creating excessive obsession over the bodies that it does not shirk away from taking prosthetics. The further scope for the sport can be under the lens of Post-humanism and its different strands can be researched over.

Works Cited

Andersen, R., et al. "Weight loss, Psychological and Nutritional Patterns in Competitive Female Bodybuilders". *Eating Disorders*, vol.6, 1988, pp.159–167. doi:10.1080/10640269808251251. Accessed 2 May. 2019.

Ano, Amesuke. *The Muscle Girl Next Door*. USA: Seven Seas, 2022.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable weight: feminism, Western culture, and the body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

celebration 63
Bunsell, T. *Strong and Hard Women – An Ethnography of female bodybuilding*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Durkheim, E. *The Division of Labour in Society*. London: Macmillan, 1984.

Grogan, S, et al. “Femininity and muscularity: Accounts of seven women bodybuilders”. *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2004, pp. 49–61. doi:10.1080/09589236.2004.10599914. Accessed 29 April. 2019.

Gupta, Monica. Personal Interview. 29 April 2019.

Ian, Marcia. “The primitive subject of female bodybuilding: Transgression and other postmodern myths”. *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12, no.3. Fall 2001, pp. 69-100.

IFBB Professional Guidebook for Athletes, Judges, and Promoters. Reprinted in *Flex*. July 1992. Pp.115

Kaye, Kristin. *Iron Maidens: The Celebration of the Most Awesome Female Muscle in the World*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2005.

White, Philip G. & Gillett, James. “Reading the muscular body: A critical decoding of advertisements in *Flex* magazine”. *Sociology of Sport Journal*. Vol. 11, no. 1, 1994, pp. 18-39.

Derek Attridge’s Conceptualization of Ethical Reading

————— *Abhimanyu Kumar Mishra**

A text is not literary—or non-literary—by essence. It becomes literary when readers let it work as literature, when they do justice to it. (-Derek Attridge, *The Work of Literature* (2015))

Abstract

Derek Attridge in his *Singularity of Literature* (2004) postulates three linchpins of his literary theory: singularity, inventiveness and Otherness. Singularity, for him, is the literature’s capacity for transformation while reserving its identity as an act-event—a shared experience between the work and the reader. Inventiveness characterizes the absolute newness of the work to be made and discovered by both the writer and the reader. Otherness or alterity is the quality of unpredictability and difference that challenges the assumptions and values of the reader. In *The Work of Literature* (2015), Attridge refines these ‘three different aspects of the literariness of the literary work’ (57) that bring the notion of ethicality. His focus is on what makes literature singular—different from other arts but also from other forms of writing. His interest lies in what gives literature and the experience of reading and interpreting it their specificity. For Attridge, reading (interpretation is one mere substitution of reading) is an ethical act because it involves the acceptance of both the invitation of the author and the otherness to which the work exposes one. His conceptions of ethical reading also underline an important aspect of reading that moralists have ignored—the element of risk. This paper is an attempt at understanding, Attridge’s conceptualization of ethical reading and its application in the work of J. M. Coetzee

Keywords: Singularity, inventiveness, Otherness, J. M. Coetzee, ethicalreading, Diary of a Bad Year

*Research Scholar, Dept. of English, University of Delhi.

Introduction

Derek Attridge in his book *J. M. Coetzee and The Ethics of Reading: Literature in the Event* (2004) brought his excellent thesis on Coetzee's novels dealing with the "ethico-political realm" with a new critical lens. His works are the sustained critique of the postcolonial literary theory and criticism that deals with the limits of knowledge and the portrayal of the Other in which questions of ethics come to the fore: "responsibility to the other," of "trust and betrayal," and "confession and truth to the self" (xii).

Attridge suggests the holistic way of reading Coetzee whose novels are singularly experimental and "ethically charged" (xi). The concept implicit in the phrase 'the ethics of reading' was first developed in his previous book *The Singularity of Literature* (2004) and later in *Works of Literature* (2015). However, it was J. Hillis Miller who coined the phrase "the ethics of reading" in 1985 as a decisive intervention in literary theory and criticism known as the ethical turn in literary studies. The critical scholarship to (re)think the ethical dimensions visible in the works of Lyotard, Levinas, and Derrida who transformed literary studies in general. This is best exemplified by Miller's defense of the ethics of reading against the reduction of the text to its context. He locates his ethical not in the content of the work but in the act of reading itself—the reader's exposure to the singularity of the work.

Attridge's argument about ethical reading is enshrined in the singularity of its event, an event which takes place between the act and the enactment of reading the text—the complex relationship between the work and its reading or interpretation. It is a shared experiential quality of reading that produces the reader's relation to the text. Reading is a kind of *performance* (*Singularity* 95) that situates the reader in the possibility of opening up the historical and cultural environment in which it gives a text its 'ethical force of the event.' Attridge does not see the reader and her reading experience as that of an individual or a subject, but through the window of what he calls "idioculture," which refers to the "embodiment in a single individual of widespread cultural norms and behaviors" (*Singularity*

The idea of difference and the unpredictable quality of reading that challenges the value and expectations of the reader leading to the argument that apprehends the Other. Other is not merely other to the culture in which the work of art is produced, circulated and received. It is the Other that cannot be assimilated without the deconstruction of cultural norms—that advances the work's singularity. Coetzee disrupts his realist narrative to foreground the impossibility of that discourse to comprehend the Other. Coetzee's early novels employ modernist techniques to express the resistance of the Other to the dominant western discourses of the culture. The means of representing the claims of the Other is the ethical stipulation made upon discourses which come under the compulsion "to abandon their universalizing pretensions and to recognize their historical origins and contingent existence" (13).

Revisiting modernism in the postcolonial context is to understand reading as an experiential event. Coetzee's work speaks directly to the reader from the dominant culture about that culture's failures and responsibilities. Ethical reading is an act of responding responsibly to artworks by situating the reader's response to the work's form(s). New formalism locates the trained or professional critics into reading practices as potential for political action, but it seems that Attridge relies on the common and expert readers alike to "a *conscious and pleasurable opening of possibilities*" (*Singularity*102). He insists on the capability of the real readers reading actual literary works that not only can open up the new possibility but to contribute to social justice also. The alert and sensitive reading surprises and transforms the reader and her reading experience through the affirmation and recreation of the work's inventive force that keep the vital questions of the form and meaning figured in the text alive. The invention of otherness is the key element that constitutes a social good. However, there is a risk involved in opening oneself to otherness as there has always been the possibility of having dismissive effects of reading into other cultures. Responsible readers revitalize the works of art by affirming them in singular reading—reading that elicits works' inventive engagement with otherness in which the formal properties or verbal invention of literature transform it into a literary event.

The attempt to do justice to the literary work is to tackle the singularity of its "singularity". Singularity is not fixed in the formal elements of the text (words on the page) but is an "act-event"—the performative linguistic practice which is different from other arts and other forms of writing. Attridge gives literature and the experience of reading and interpreting it their literary character or what he calls 'literariness'. For him, a work of literature manifests itself in 'literariness' only when it allows the reader to identify it as an 'event'—an enactment of unknown and unexpected. The work of literature is seen as an event of reading in a complicated creative, cultural, social and temporal proximity. It is the transformative power of poetry and fiction that justifies creating the category of 'literature' over other forms of writing in the first place.

Attridge's *The Work of Literature* is preoccupied with the notion of justice rather than with either the pedagogy or aesthetics. Its principles are expressed in explicit ethical language—"doing justice," and "responsible" reading. In the final chapter of the book, he champions the surprise of readers and critics as a form of "hospitality":

...effective hospitality to the literary work involves informing and energizing one's conscientious, careful, rule-governed reading with the limited, unpredictable force of unconditional openness to whatever might arrive (305).

Diary of a Bad Year (2007)

Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) complicates the traditional understanding of the novel in favour of a more fluid form in which the author himself distances from the narration to convey multilayered meaning through an "othered" interpreter to the reader. In the title "On Al Qaida" in the book, a passage on the prosecution of young American Muslims who were accused of planning an attack on Disneyland in the section "Strong Opinions" has a protagonist "JC" asks, "Where did the prosecutors learn to think in such a way?" "The answer: in literature classes in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, where they were taught that in criticism objectivity is the chief virtue, that the critic must accept nothing on its face value" (*Diary* 33)

Peter Brooks responds to the passage in his article *The Ethics of Reading* by locating his response in a longer history of critical debates rooted in the "theory wars" of the 1980s and 1990s in the Yale School of deconstruction. He reveals that "the lessons of deconstruction in the wrong hands — less adept than its original practitioners — led to facile untetherings of meaning." He found the best responsible "close readings" practices either promoted by New Critics or Structuralists or Poststructuralists were essentially ethical in understanding the meaning and language of texts. Brooks' careful mirroring of the past and the future of literary criticism is an absorbing defense of the notion that "teaching to read literature carefully, seriously, reflectively can be an ethical act" ("The Ethics").

Coetzee's remark about the 'torture memos' is a plain indication of "the pernicious effect of unscrupulous reading" ("The Ethics") based on the exposition for what JC calls the prosecution's "paranoid interpretation" of the home video (*Diary* 33). Such is the Coetzeean world into which *Diary* throws its inattentive readers and critics alike in the ethical deliberation of reading and writing practices.

The ideal interrogation and probing of who reads would lead us to the wider social and political engagement with the questions of literacy as Wendy Griswold recognizes in *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (2008) that critics are not the only important readers who have a stake in the literary. It is the "ordinary" readers who form their own 'reading class.' This reading class is modest in size but intense in its literary practices. To make this reading class a part of what is at stake in the works of literature, we need to consider what Attridge calls "idioculture" (*Singularity* 21).

Coetzee's works assail against the grain of text and summon the reader's creative response to the text in the ethical encounter between the self and the other that initiates responsibility so crucial to avoiding what is external to oneself in the interpretative freedom. In *Diary*, JC brings opinions that are continuously challenged by other voices in the text. The ethics of telling a story in Coetzee's deconstruction of the other jolts the reader toward new ways of thinking. For example, Coetzee's novel, *Foe* (1986) voices the oppression through the dilemma of how to empower those who have been silenced

the discourse of the oppressor and it resists its own moralization and the reader's as much as Susan's and Foe's attempts to Friday voice. The reciprocity of authorial control and freedom poses the problematic issue in the work of fiction that supports the position of the author and the reader's ability to yoke her position to the text's commands.

Attridge's fundamental approaches to the idea of literature locate an event of singularity which is inseparable from the idea of alterity and otherness. The claim that the otherness of the literary work makes the reader aware of the ethical demands to alterity and to the other is a "call coming from the work itself—the work as a singular event of otherness" (*Singularity*124). The ethical reading, therefore, consists of responding to works responsibly by doing justice to the singular other. Attridge, in fact, goes far to suggest that "it is the apprehension of otherness and in the demands it makes that the pleasure of the literary response . . . is to be experienced" (*Singularity* 131). The ethical turn in literary studies comprises the reader's experience of pleasure in the dynamic and transformative encounter with the other. The emphasis on otherness associated with the inventiveness of the literary work is "a good in itself" (*Singularity*137). Through its dislocation and future possibility, it critiques the instrumental approaches to literature as a critical event.

Attridge's criticism about literature in terms of the invention of the other is an extension of the ethical theories of Derrida and Levinas. It is worth mentioning that Derrida has made two ethical moves. First, an absolute ethical position is not possible and, therefore, ethics cannot be purely ethical. Second, ethics is never absent because 'I am always in relation with an Other'. To Levinas, the encounter between the self and the other coincides in a moment that brings ethical responsibility so vital to avoid conquering what is external to oneself. The non-dominant self becomes a conscious self and it relates to the other without dominating it. It opens up to the force of the encounter with the other who is different from the self, and remains partially ungraspable and unrepresentable. This ethical relationship of partial acknowledgement is expressed in language that does not attempt to appropriate the other through representational operations.

Brooks' claims and assertions about the immediate necessity of reading literature ethically has a special resonance for readers of Coetzee's works in the affirmative practice and the pedagogy of reading should "leads our students to a reflective engagement . . . clarifying its moral dilemmas?" ("The Ethics")

Attridge's argument about reading the works of literature as an ethical act is not a retreat to any essentialist notion. The power of literature lies in the individual act of reading. He explores a number of concerns in the works of Coetzee regarding the issue of interpretation, literary judgment and responsibility to the other. These are essential to the recent debates within the realm of ethical reading.

"Form" is central to Attridge's investigation of ethical in the experimental modernism of Coetzee's early fictions. However, his engagement with the question of creativity is what he calls an "event". It is the "event" of reading and responding to the otherness, singularity, and inventiveness of the works that constitute literature, not alone through the lens of form or what and how of representation. Ethical criticism is concerned primarily with the text that does justice to form-as-event, with the responsible participation in its co-creation. The "event" introduced by Attridge is based on the critique of representation in the force of the possible—the ethical in the literary.

The modernist practice of subverting the convention through formal innovation and experimentation in the literary "event" does not address some of the problems that the ethical criticism take them into account. In contrast to the modernist emphasis on direct attention of reality built on vision and perception as modernist aesthetics, Attridge's conceptualization of ethical reading in practice makes it quite non-modernist premised basically on the distrust of vision and visual representation (Chow 678). Rey Chow, in his article *Towards an Ethics of Postvisuality: Some Thoughts on the Recent Work of Zhang Yimou* claims that Attridge and other ethical critics inscribed the nonrepresentational, nonvisual constitution of engagement with alterity, including the alterity of literature. The repudiation and denigration of the visualization and representation of alterity (as all vision requires

Attridge's 71
composition and presupposes the reduction of the "other") in the
of the ethical potency of the very alterity of the work itself is the
ion of what Chow considers as the iconophobia of ethics, and
ics of iconophobia (676)—given the ubiquitous inundation of
s in the contemporary world and the virtual impossibility of
entering the real "other" without depending on visual mediation.

Works Cited

Age, Derek. *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading: Literature
in the Event*. 1st ed., University of Chicago Press, 2005.

———. *The Singularity of Literature (Routledge Classics)*. 1st
ed., Routledge, 2017.

———. *The Work of Literature*. Illustrated, Oxford University Press,
2015.

Age, Peter. "The Ethics of Reading." *THE CHRONICLE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION*, 8 Feb. 2008,

Age, J. *Diary of a Bad Year*. First Edition, Harvill Secker, 2007.

Foe. Revised ed., Penguin Books, 1988.

Age, R. "Toward an Ethics of Postvisuality: Some Thoughts on the
Work of Zhang Yimou." *Poetics Today*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2004,
pp. 3–88. *Crossref*, doi:10.1215/03335372-25-4-673.

Age, Simon. *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and
Literature*. 3rd ed., Edinburgh University Press, 2014.

Age, Jacques, and Elizabeth Rottenberg. *Negotiations:
Interviews and Interviews, 1971–2001 (Cultural Memory in the
Contemporary)*. 1st ed., Stanford University Press, 2002.

Age, Wendy. *Regionalism and the Reading Class*. Illustrated,
University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Age, Caroline. *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*.
Illustrated, Princeton University Press, 2017.

72 *Pragati's English Journal Vol.22 No. 2*
Miller, Hillis. *The Ethics of Reading: Kant, De Man, Eliot, Trollope,
James, and Benjamin (Wellek Library Lectures)*. 1st ed., Columbia
University Press, 1986.

Robbins, Jill. *Altered Reading: Levinas and Literature*. 1st ed.,
University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Stocker, Barry. *Jacques Derrida: Basic Writings*. 1st ed., Routledge,
2007.

Partisanship of Women after India-Pakistan Partition in Sidhwa's *Cracking India*

————— *Bimal Kishore Shrivastwa, PhD**

Abstract

The research paper seeks to explore the cracks in the gender orientation and reinforcement of patriarchal system generated with the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *Cracking India*. Lenny, the child narrator of the novel, *Cracking India*, re-examines the exploitation and discrimination exercised on the children and women in order to explore how the female characters of the novel were marginalized physically, economically, and culturally, and how they fought against the age-old sexism, the research tool used for the investigation is radical feminism, especially, theories of Simone de Beauvoir and Christine Delphy. The principal finding is that the women of the patriarchal societies are socialized to follow patriarchal norms and they are very rigid, orthodox, and strict so far the freedom of women is restricted. It is expected that scholars intending to study the feminist partition literature can take the paper as a reference.

Keywords: Feminism; marginalization; oppression; partition; rebellion.

Introduction

Women in South Asian countries, especially, in Nepal, India and Pakistan, have long been suffering from gender discrimination. Many South-Asian novelists have dramatized the domestic issues based on ontological constructions of the gender identity in their societies. The novel, *Cracking India*, published in 1991 with the title *Candy-Man* (Tripathi 1), is a reflection of repressions of women in a male-dominated society told in the bold experimental narrative by Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa "vividly depicts the pathetic picture of women marginalized by the partition of India and Pakistan" (Harisree 1). This paper not only records the trauma of partition but also represents the

Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Biratnagar, Nepal

*Corresponding Author

trauma of female suffering. The subcontinent's history of abuses against women is too vast to be covered up in few pages. Women have been tortured, killed, and subjugated for ages. Although the novel reflects the society of the 1940s, the issues discussed here still seem contemporary. Nevertheless, her role distorts the Hindu/Muslim binarism, to stress ethnic neutrality (Tripathi 1). It also plays a key role in building an alternative point of view when reading the violence of the Partition from the feminist perspective.

Sidhwa manipulates the young narrator, Lenny as a Parsee to mirror the gender-based oppressions exercised for a long time in South Asian societies. A Parsee is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, nor a Sikh. The Parsee narrator remains neutral among her friends from different religions, ethnic groups in witnessing the violence imposed on the marginal gender groups. The readers are enabled not to attribute the sense of discrimination to any class or group. Bharat marked the importance of Lenny's position as a female and as a child during Partition, and places her as doubly marginalized and victimized (34). Here the concern has been addressed critically analyzing in detail many stories of women subjugation exemplified in Sidhwa's novel *Cracking India*. The writer has been able to address the issues of women and their suppressed desire to survive with a minimum level of self-esteem. Thus, this paper is an attempt to show some of the brutalities imposed against women because of the reinforcement of patriarchal system in South Asia with the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *Cracking India*. The rationale of the paper lies in the fact that it seeks to explore how the female characters of the novel stand as the representatives of the women in Nepal, India and other South-Asian regions as women in these regions are also internalized to adopt patriarchal norms.

Research Methodology

This study is based on the observation of the partisanship of women in Sidhwa's *Cracking India* from the theoretical paradigm of radical feminism theorized by Christine Delphy, Colette Guillaumin, and others. The primary data of this research was the novel, *Cracking India* by Bapsi Sidhwa. This paper applies an interpretative qualitative approach to research by using the primary resource, that is, the text, *Cracking India* itself, and secondary resources such as works of literature from journals, and websites commentaries to justify the working

Theoretical Framework

Radical feminism is a sub-type of feminist theory that emerged in the late 1960s. Materialist feminism is a specific kind of political practice, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism (Delphy 60; Tyson 96). Criticizing the ruling tendency of men in the patriarchal society, Delphy remarked, "husband's obligation is to provide for his wife's basic needs; in other words, he maintains her labor power" (61). Beauvoir criticized patriarchy for exploiting women in domestic services. Beauvoir suggested, "If woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes essential, it is because he herself fails to bring about their change" (10). Beauvoir further deems that "women are oppressed by direct physical exploitation" (62). Guillaumin denounced "the reduction of women to the state of material objects" (74). Radical feminism takes gender oppression as class oppression and the relationship between man and woman in society is similar to the relations between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *Cracking India*, has been the subject of many critical responses after its publication. Many critics have pronounced significant judgments on the theme, characterization, and setting of the novel. Tripathi noted that Sidhwa in *Cracking India* portrays the male and playful forms of desire as well as the violence imposed on men and women's bodies during the Partition (1). Jaidka believed that the 1947 Partition of India is the backdrop for this powerful novel, narrated by a precocious child who describes the brutal transition with great veracity (43). Jaggi remarked that seldom has that holocaust of the Partition been told as touchingly, as convincingly, or as poignantly as it has been by novelist Bapsi Sidhwa in *Cracking India*. In *Cracking India*, Sidhwa displays an ethos of community that transforms into the disintegration of groups, their perception of the old dogma, and the practice of brutality (Bharucha 58; Tripathi). A group of critics has observed the character of Lenny in many ways. Mitra marks Lenny as an independent character who "roams beyond the boundaries of her own Parsi family and community" (1). They noticed the narrator raising voice against the gender exploitation in these words: "Lenny's authority as a narrator incorporates the various voices that fill the gaps within male-centric historical narra-

tives" (29). In *Cracking India*, the prose is a bit lacking, but the story is powerful enough to overcome it.

In this way, the novel is observed from different angles by different critics. However, the text has not been thoroughly analyzed from the feminist discourse. Thus, the researcher's endeavor in this work has been to unveil the all-sided exploitation of women by analyzing this novel from the light of radical feminism.

Results and Discussion

The novel, *Cracking India*, nevertheless, delineates the partnership of women generated by the capitalistic patriarchal society through the narrative of the leading female characters. To record the unfair gender practices exercised in India and Pakistan by the so-called upper class males, the novelist narrates the sufferings and problems that arise in the lives of the young Parsi girl, Lenny, and her family, the Sethis who live in Lahore. In patriarchal society, women have been subordinated by the male members of their own families for a long time (Beauvoir 10). As the narrative progresses, it reveals that "Lenny's subjectivity is mediated by a community identity undergoing a dual crisis" (Sen 46). It is tragic to read that "Lenny suffers from polio at 8" (*Cracking India* 20). At the same time she experiences marginalization by the patriarchal norms prevalent in her society.

Lenny's mother is also made to realize that she is an inferior woman. Women are socialized to adopt their inferior values. Because of such norm, Lenny's mother also accuses herself of leaving Lenny with the Ayahs, her grandmother, instead of caring for the child herself. And she thinks that this is the cause of her daughter's illness. Lenny, however, reacts as a strong feminist from her early stage. She does not consider her physical deformity as a problem to her identity. Lenny thinks that "having polio in infancy is like being born under a lucky star" (*Cracking India* 20). Lenny's sense of unequal gender identity has not been formed during her operation and frequent visits to the hospital, operations, or during her disabled state. It is the gender-biased society that makes the disabled realize their issues (Dietz 399; Dunn and Shane 149). Lenny can't walk on her feet. But her society makes her feel her inferior. So, Ayah helps her walk on a pram. Lenny says, "While other children have to clamor and jump around to earn their candy, I merely sit or stand, wearing my patient, and displaying my calipers,

...m showered with candy”(Cracking India21). Lenny rather feels
...ed at the attention, compassion and sympathy received from the
...s-by.

Lenny does not assume her disability as her problem. Lenny
...to identify herself as a marginal lady or as a Parsi and a weak
...th a limited opportunity. Although the surgical operation on her
...as a painful experience for Lenny, she does not reveal her an-
...Rather Lenny “remains gratifyingly abnormal – and far from
... (Cracking India24). Lenny, without any sense of remorse, has
...to adapt her disability as a part of her life. Dunn and Shane opined
...coherent disability identity is believed to help individuals adapt
...ability including navigating related social stresses and daily
...” (148). Lenny has started to adjust herself to her disability.
...however, is not sure and confident whether she will be able to
...te with other children for attention, and whether her foot will
...e normal. As Lenny grows, she begins to feel about her low self-
...when she compares herself to her brother, Adi: “I am skinny,
...ed, sallow, wiggly-haired, and ugly. He is beautiful”(Cracking
...2). Here, Lenny identifies her as low and weak in front of the
...istic males. Lenny’s sense of low self-esteem of being a female
...erated by the insensitive remarks from the grown-ups around

And, as the years advance, my sense of inadequacy and un-
...ness advances. I have to think faster on my toes as it were offering
...er and lengthier chatter to fill up the infernal time of Father’s
...eals. Is that when I learn to tell tales? (Cracking India88) Though
...grows and becomes a teenage girl on the threshold of puberty,
...rrates her childhood memories to expose her perception of the
...sides of human nature in the patriarchal society. The women are
...ed to make them assume their marginal role in a patriarchal soci-
...ere males take the privilege of possessing property and women
...umin 73; Susan 291). The disabled Lenny realizes that “she be-
...o the so-called disregarded Parsi religious minority”(Cracking
...9). She thus represents the marginalized group in Pakistan, and
...against the masculine attitude towards the disabled and innocent
...uality from the female perspective. Sidhwa’s narrative
...quereplicates the harsh realities and poor situations of the women
...the India-Pakistan Partition. Thus, it is obvious that though the

novel is often considered as the Partition novel, the readers of the novel
can mark the subjugation of the women during the partition of British
governed India into India and Pakistan.

Unfair Treatment of Female Sexuality

The treatment of female sexuality in the novel itself hints at
how women are discriminated against in Indian and Pakistani societ-
ies. Lenny Says, “I learn fast... I learn of human needs, frailties, cruel-
ties and joys” (Cracking India29). Lenny can render her new erotic ex-
periences because of her feminine gender. Female sex has been subor-
dinated throughout time and patriarchy is probably the oldest form of
exploitation of one part of the population by another (Butler 87; Ruth
68). Just because of being a female, the girl children are not provided
the opportunities for high school education in Lenny’s society. Lenny
is dropped from her school after a few months because of her defor-
mity and sex. One may argue that Lenny’s disability is not connected
to her female body. That is why, Showalter called for ‘gynocriticism’
to proffer special space for the rights and equality of the females (367).
But if Lenny had been a boy, she would not have been dropped from
her school so early. It is ironic that even the intellectual doctors
recommended the fact that she does not need much education because
her sex indicates that she will get married and bear children and look
after her family rather than making a career.

Women have to stay covering themselves with purdahs. Ayah
in Cracking India tries to liberate herself from purdah. Abid believed
that the symbolic meaning of purdah stood for the ‘seclusion’ or sepa-
ration of the sexes (par. 1). Ayah, as a modern feminist, manages to live
an unveiled life for years, “wandering on the city streets alone,
socializing with other women, flirting and having sex with men” (Crack-
ing India 43). It is remarkable that Ayah’s social life and values are
determined by herself, and the men of her society pursue her rules.
Radical feminists take gender oppression as class oppression where
males behave themselves as bourgeoisie and assume women as prolet-
ariat (Tyson 96). Ayah is taken as the proletariat to be exploited by the
masculine bourgeoisie. Lenny also adopts the practice of this unveil-
ing from Ayah’s lifestyle, and as Ayah’s child, Lenny enjoys freedom
experienced by few other girls. In this way, Ayah and Lenny challenge
norms of the patriarchal society strongly. Rawat stated, “Patriarchy is
a social and ideological construct which considers men (who are the

chs) as superior to women” (44). But Ayah and Lenny challenge patriarchal society and seek freedom out of masculine dominance. They dare to live in their society without veiling themselves, without rendering themselves to masculine hegemony.

Sidhwa challenges the patriarchal society, by describing the feeling of being female in a society where women are taken as inferior beings and lacking the inner happiness that the male possesses. She argued that when the subjugation of women reaches its climax, the women attain epiphany to go against the hegemonic masculinity (54). Lenny goes against the patriarchal hegemony. When her father attempts to coax her into giving him oral sex and then masturbates in front of her, she no longer feels shy at penises. Instead, she becomes curious about how penises work. She does not even feel traumatized when her Cousin attempts to make violent sexual intercourse with her. Lenny, though feels bad at the time, resolves the bitter feeling and moves on.

There are principal male characters like the father of Lenny, Ice-candy-man, Imam Din and Cousin, who are sexually alarming. They all reacted against all kinds of exchanges and discrimination against women (47). Among them, the Ice-candy-man is a rapist, while Imam Din is depicted as a potential sexual perpetrator, discreetly “masochistic with a child, woman, or pet in his lap” (Cracking India 110). The father repeatedly attempts to have sexual intercourse with Lenny, but she does not really realize what the victim might feel. He certainly would have become a rapist had she not been so bold and smart enough at protecting herself from threatening situations. Ice-candy-man and Imam Din represent the lower-class rapists in a patriarchal society. There are some rapists and violent men, though they do not have major roles. Bapsi Sidhwa reacts against the oppression and sexual assault of the female members of her society gives strength for women of the future. If women have their own room, they can provide better services and display creative force (Wollstonecraft 165; Susan 291). Lenny’s mother represents the future woman because she displays creative force. In spite of the discrimination, and sexual assault, Lenny is capable of preserving self-respect.

Lenny’s knowledge and observation provide her the intellectual power to perceive that men are not better leaders than women and she cannot blindly trust all men to be moral leaders. Woolf ac-

cepted physiological and biological differences between men and women, but rejected physiological differences between men and women as the factor to repress women in society (191). Likewise, after the realization of Lenny, she “does not lower her eyes before men anymore, but looks at them and their world” (Cracking India 113). When the men mark the boldness and knowledge in her eyes, they, in turn, lower their own eyes. In this way, Sidhwa highlights the victory of the female eyes over the male gaze. Such achievements of the feminist movement are exposed in the novel. Lenny moves beyond the physical oppression exerted on her and gains intellectual freedom. Through Lenny’s character and actions, Bapsi Sidhwa challenges patriarchy and the masculine way of gazing at women.

Conclusion

Thus, *Cracking India* is a novel that speaks against the patriarchal trend of objectifying women. The actions of Ayah and Lenny in the novel display how women in the South Asian countries have been resisting against the partisanship of women to obtain their right to equality, liberty, and justice. Sidhwa narrates the dangers of the male-dominated society. Disabled women are raped, exploited and enslaved by the male who wrongly claim to possess the power. Lenny is not a marginalized character. Instead of being marginal, she is a brave feminist who strictly revolts against the cracks in the patriarchal society. She represents Bapsi Sidhwa’s voice in revolting against all the social norms that attempt to treat women as inferior beings. There are taints of the reinforcement of the patriarchal system in Indian and Pakistani society. Similar taints can be observed in the South-Asian societies. But Sidhwa’s voice stimulates the females of these regions to resist the patriarchal social norms. Thus, the research exposes how the novelist, Sidhwa, has been successful in revolting against the partisanship of women practiced both in India and Pakistan for years through this novel.

Works Cited

Adams, Michele. “Gender Inequality in Families.” *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, edited by Froyum Risman and Scarborough, Springer, 2018.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Vintage Books Edition, 1974.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. “The Early Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa”. *The Novels*

Partnership of Women 81
 Bapsi Sidhwa, edited by R. K. Dhawan, and N. Kapadia. Prestige, 1996.

Judith. *Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1999.

Mary, Christine. *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Experience*, translated by Diana Leonard, Hutchinson, 1984.

Arunima. "The Female Body as the Site of Male Violence during the Partition of India in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*." *Complutense Journal of English Studies*, vol. 26, 2018, pp. 27-45.

Mary E. "Current Controversies in Feminist Theories." *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 6, June, 2003, pp.399-431.

Dana S., and Burcaw Shane. "Disability Identity: Exploring Diverse Accounts of Disability." *RehabilPsychol*, vol. 58, no. 2, May, pp.148-157.

Alice. *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*. University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Colette. "The Practice of Power and Belief in Nature." *Sex and Gender: French Materialist Feminism*, edited by Diana Leonard and Lisa Adkins, Taylor and Francois, 1996.

HG. "Women Victims of the Code: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*". *Smart Moves Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp.11-17.

Parneet. "The Cracking Metaphors in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*". *International Journal of English Literature*, vol. 5, no.1, Feb. 2015, pp. 55-66.

Manju. "Hyphenated Perspectives on the Cracking of India: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*." *South Asian Review*, vol.25, no. 2, Dec.

82 *Pragati's English Journal Vol.22 No. 2*
 Mitra, Madhuparna. "Contextualizing Ayah's Abduction: Patterns of Violence against Women in Sidhwa's *Cracking India*." *Ariel*, vol. 39, no. 3, Jul. 2008.

Moi, Toril. "Feminist Literary Criticism." *Modern Literary Theory*, edited by Jefferson and Robey, Bastford, 1988.

Rawat, PS. "Patriarchal Beliefs, Women's Empowerment, and General Well-being." *Vikalpa*, vol. 39, No. 2, Apr.-June 2014, pp. 44-55.

Sen, Asha. "Child Narrators in the Shadow Lines, *Cracking India* and *Meatless Days*." *World Literature Written in English*, vol.37, no, 2, 1998, p. 46.

Showalter, Elaine. "A Literature of Their Own." *British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*, Princeton UP, 1999.

Sidhwa, Bapsi. *Cracking India*. Penguin Books, 1991.

Tripathi, Anjali. "Transaction from Inscription to Visual: A Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* and Deepa Mehta's *Earth*." *International Journal of English Literature and Translation Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, pp.1-5.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide*. Routledge, 2006.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. "A Vindication of the Rights of Women." *Critical Theory since Plato*, edited by Hazard Adams, Harcourt, 2005.

Woolf, Virginia. "A Room of Our Own." *Critical Theory since Plato*, edited by Hazard Adams, Harcourt, 2005.

The Resisting Potential of Graffiti : An Analysis of Graffiti Works in the Select Cities of Kerala

————— Parvathy Rajan*

ABSTRACT

“The Resisting Potential of Graffiti : An Analysis of Graffiti in the Select Cities of Kerala” tends to give a constructive view of graffiti in urban environments and also as an excellent tool in understanding behavior, attitudes and social processes of certain segments of the society. The paper mainly focuses in analyzing the graffiti works in the selected cities of Kerala – mainly describing the locales of Trivandrum, Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode. It also presents a comparison of the graffiti works and the growing trends seen in the graffiti works of the North, Central and Western parts of Kerala.

Keywords: graffiti, resistance, social process, Kerala ,

Graffiti as an expressive art form has a long and proud history. The street has become an explosive platform through which people can express themselves, often transmitting their personal feelings, values, and opinions on a daily basis. The term graffiti is derived from the Latin word ‘graphire’ which means “to write” and is directly related to the Italian ‘graffito’ for inscription or drawing; the noun literally means ‘to scratch’. Oxford Dictionary defines it as “writing or drawings scribbled, scratched or sprayed onto a wall or other surface in a public place.” Over the years, graffiti has emerged to be a local and global, post-photographic, post-Internet, post-medium ephemeral phenomenon. It is instantly achieved by appropriating and remixing imagery, and techniques from all possible sources. This form of com-

munication has, in advertently or not, become part of our daily visual culture. It's a community by practice with its own learned codes, rules and hierarchies of prestige.

Dirty streets, paan-stained walls and streaks of black paint sprayed all over, was the usual state of many streets in Kerala. But over the past few years, the youth have taken it upon themselves to clean certain localities and vandalize the walls with graffiti, thus introducing creativity and color into the streets. It is an art beyond any rules which is slowly gathering unfeigned attention in Kerala. The untamed essentiality of this lies in its spontaneity, publicity and ephemerality, taking the modern art form to a different level.

Kerala has been progressive for ages in its own way and the most enriching aspect of this was that the state acknowledged the importance of its rich heritage, both natural and man-made and hence made steps protecting it as a part of its developmental plan. The Kochi Muziris Biennale, launched in 12th December 2012 brought about a dynamic shift in the field of visual arts and culture. The introduction of graffiti into the cityscape was a well thought out move on the part of the Kerala State Government and Kerala Tourism. Now not only Fort Kochi, but each and every city in Kerala is on the way to create a certain destination for the art hungry travellers. The sometimes contentious art of graffiti has not only gained the approval of the visiting tourist but also the admiration of locals who realize the importance of this brilliant new addition to their area's fabric.

Fort Kochi holds in its palm a warm vintage with narrow lanes, old shops, houses with large square windows and a definite enervated pace of life. But now the walls in and around Fort Kochi are filled with graffiti works. Locals claim that the rapid growth of these wall arts as an after-effect of the Kochi Muziris Biennale in 2012, which was an International Art Festival that sprung up all across Kochi with exhibits at different locales. It aims to celebrate diverse artists, appreciate art in all forms and expression

*Sarasu Nivas , Mathra , P.O.Punalur , Kerala

g it a highly post-modern cultural artifice.

major graffiti works seen in Kochi was Guess Who's graffiti which seemed to be jab at the organized festival. These works are a clever mash-up of Western pop culture with indigenous art, often influenced by British street artist, Banksy's style. Guess Who uses street art as a subversive medium of expression to critique and participate in the creation of an ever-changing face of a city's visual landscape and experiment through ironic commentaries on social and political issues.

Guess Who represents a group of graffiti artists who do not wish to reveal their identity. They can connect and communicate with the image and subject while scheming political. It is about using public spaces as a platform to spread the foxy message of social issues prevalent in society. They use subversive art as a potent means for speaking about social realities. For Guess Who it's an effort as a visual artist to start looking for a new and meaningful ways to engage a wider audience and inspire more people to take up this as a powerful medium of free expression. The graffiti works of Guess Who artists shows a clash between Western culture and traditional ones. It acts as a mockery against the authoritarian policies. Colonel Slanders, the character of Kentucky Fried Chicken, flipping parottas; Che-Guevara wearing a traditional Kerala attire with shirt and mundu; Marilyn Monroe holding an oil lamp etc. shows the influence of Western art in India. Revolutionary political figures such as Karl Marx and Frederick Engels are portrayed as meditating on a tiger skin, representing the culmination of oriental philosophy with western artists. In some works, the evergreen actor of Malayalam cinema, Prem Nazir is depicted as James Bond holding a gun in his hand. The Lady in the famous painting Mona-Lisa of Leonardo da Vinci is sketched as a delicate pot-bearing village belle. A classical Bharatanatyam girl with the attire of Michael Jackson and a woman Shakuntala wearing heels etc. shows a derision that is meant to scorn the authority. A joker playing Ottamthullal with

dollar in one hand and knife on the other shows the vital influence of Western ideologies and figures in molding the minds of the common folks. All these graffiti works are purely intended as a reaction against the organized festival that is marked by its postmodern integrity.

The splurge of colours against the backdrop of water bodies has always been a visual treat for visitors. Some claim it as a reaction to Kochi Muziris Biennale while some others have commended Biennale's role in popularizing art in Indian art space. This sardonic street art and subversive adages, combining dark humour with graffiti has been executed in a stenciling technique on the streets of Fort Kochi, thereby showing similarity to Banksy's model of graffiti arts. These wall arts are creating a flutter in the social networking sites the world over.

Thiruvananthapuram is an emerging metropolitan city in the southernmost part of India with its rich and abundant cultural heritage. The city which has to be preserved for enhancing the uniqueness in cultural heritage and the pressure of development caused by the newly attracted investments are throwing fresh challenges in the formulation of the new master plan. The beautiful lush greeneries of the city has been blessed with wide varieties of graffiti works as a part of a project called Arteria, a joint initiative of District Tourism Promotion Council and Department of Tourism. The walls act as a long canvas for the artists to express freely their ideologies to the world outside and thereby enhancing the beauty of the city.

The painting on wall becomes a performance, where the artists are executing live at the open spaces enticing the audience. Arteria was able to bring high art to public spaces. It exemplifies the role of an artist and also helps in the beautification of the city. Most of the art works in the locale were story plots that were created with an intention to refine the beauty of the city. It projects the rich heritage and cultural diversity of the "Evergreen City of India". The graffiti arts propagated by Arteria give

for the artists to freely express themselves under the supervision of the authoritarian powers. They have multiple benefits such as enhancing the beauty by preventing vandalism and ugly graffiti and also provide a platform for artists who were hidden in the closed spaces of art galleries.

A new installed art has now been located in the city known as "Attention Please". They act as a means of protest against the authoritarian policies. It is a continuation of the graffiti works known as "Guess Who" artists in Fort Kochi that is being extended to Trivandrum also. These works displayed in the walls of Trivandrum has a visible sarcasm directed towards the playing of the National Anthem before the movies are screened. The Supreme Court has passed a rule suggesting that the moviegoers are required to stand in attention when the National Anthem is played in theatres. This provision has led to serious debates from the industry and the audiences at IIFK as to whether an increasingly assertive branch of nationalistic pride is strangling the civil liberties.

The "Attention Please" graffiti works seem to depict the influential film makers in the cinema history such as Alfred Hitchcock, Quentin Tarantino, Akira Kurosawa, Alejandro G. Iñárritu and Ang Lee dressed in patriotic attire used to depict prominent Indian political figures. It drives the onlookers' attention towards the pillars of Modern Cinema standing in attention during the National Anthem. It was made to ridicule the regulations propagated by the authoritarian institutions to develop a false sense of nationalism. For the artist they consider it as a failure to understand the meaning of his/her art work. Every passerby can interact with it in the way they want it to be. It is placed with a special sign that says "Attention: Everyone must respect this artwork". This is a challenge to the invincible power formulated by the authority to exert control over the nationalistic pride of the citizen. It is a tactic used by the artists to express their thoughts freely to the public.

In Kozhikode, the multi ethnic town whose walls which were

once filled with film posters, political commentaries, publicity messages and advertisements are gradually reinventing its strengths with innovative ideas by blending art, heritage and creativity. The District Corporation Council in Association with the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) has completed the artwork as a part of beautifying the city space. Using the wall as a canvas the architects painted the history and culture of the city emphasizing its rich heritage. The representatives were able to convince the civic body as it is a novel idea that adds more charm to the city. "Compassionate Kozhikode" is a project initiated by city's previous collector Prasanth Nair. The volunteers of the project have made sure that the city gets an artistic and aesthetic makeover. It acts as a medium to express ideas freely without any bias. These graffiti works help break set notions about art thus bringing back contemporary themes onto walls. During classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, Kozhikode was dubbed the "City of Spices" for its role as the major trading point of Eastern spices. There has been an illustration of Vasco-da-Gama looking through his binocular. This exemplifies the rich cultural heritage of Calicut. There are certain other graffiti works that describe about the rise in sexual abuse towards children, the pathetic condition of a woman who has to beg in the public to feed their children and an image of revolutionary Marxist leader Che-Guevara holding a red flag.

The crust of the paper gives an analysis of graffiti in the major cities of Kerala emphasizing the locales of Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Kozhikode. While viewing the works, it becomes clear that these city spaces act as a canvas for the artists to express their ideology without any bias. The spectators are also free to interpret the work of art. Fort Kochi's "Guess Who" was a reaction against the Muziris Biennale where they critically showcased a distinction between tradition and modernity. In Trivandrum, a mission named "Arteria" was organized to beautify the city; while the "Attention please" graffiti conveys a subtle scorn towards the policies of the government. In Kozhikode, the

It named 'Compassionate Kozhikode' enhanced the charm of the cultural heritage of the city.

Additionally, this analysis draws a clear idea regarding the employment of graffiti as a means of resistance. They not only shape resistance but also construct an alternative arrangement. The graffiti artists are usually viewed as anti-authoritarian and are seeking an identity to be seen, felt and heard by all. In Madras and Fort Kochi were flooded with graffiti works that were against the authoritarian pressures. In Kozhikode, the graffiti artists worked as per the orders of the surveillance structure. This provides a basis for the contradictory nature of graffiti viewing it as either legal or vandalistic. Graffiti, thus is common to every locale, and an exploration into the themes and ideas of these art pieces can provide insights into the universality of resistance literature.

Bhagwat Gita : A Way to Life

————— **Kunal Verma***

Abstract:

In this research paper, the researcher has attempted to analyse the Bhagavad Gita as a way to life. The Bhagavad Gita preached by Lord Krishna is one of the most revered text of the world. Majority of the people have a notion that Bhagavad Gita is only a philosophical or religious book but it is a living book which demonstrates essential and crucial ways to lead a better life. Modern world has witnessed a drastic increase in human sufferings such as dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression etc. The verses and teachings of Gita can act as guide not only for India but for all over the world. It inspired many people such as Mahatma Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, Lokmanya Tilak, Alduous Huxley etc. It contains words of wisdom. It speaks to a mind that has fought in life, a mind that is wandering all the time. It is a career guide which teaches us that every action has consequences and so it is necessary for a man to choose the right actions. Several aspects of life like how we can lead a better life, how we should behave, what is meant by karma etc. have been explained in detail from various perspectives in the Gita.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, Humanity, Scripture, Religion, Attachment

Introduction

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita which is literally known as the " Song of the Lord " is one of the essential Indian ancient scriptures like Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads. It is a divine book written in Sanskrit language which is spoken by lord Krishna for the troubled humanity and provides many solutions to our day to day problems. It occurs in

* Assistant Prof. Dept.of English, DAV College , Cheeka Kaithal (Haryana)

Arjuna Parva of the epic Mahabharata with eighteen chapters and hundred verses. It's a book which transcends all religions and seeing it as a book of religion does not quite explain its consistency in fact limiting it to a narrow boundary. Roopa Pai in her speech introducing the Gita, India's Book of Answers' expresses her belief that the Bhagavad Gita was written before any religion came into existence". So the Bhagavad Gita is not necessarily a religious book but a way to all the people around the world. It teaches us the way to a better life. People refer to the Bhagavad Gita generation after generation for a way to life, whenever they are in despair. The strength of the Gita lies in the fact that its tenets don't stop with the metaphysical but extend to the physical. It deals not only with the other world but also with this very world, not just with the after life but with this very life. It is not the Bible of hinduism but it is the Bible of all humanity. A common asset of all humankind. It is like river Ganga, in which knowledge, duty and deed are emphasised upon. As river Ganga has been flowing for many eras in this earth, quenches the thirst of every being without asking him about the caste, colour, and cult or to which country belongs to, so also Bhagavad Gita, like the river Ganga, flows for the welfare of mankind irrespective of caste, creed, religion and country. It helps humanity to attain the goal of enlightenment and self-realisation.

The entire gist of Gita can be considered as an allegory to the fundamental truths of life. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan opines "With a long history of spiritual power, it serves even today as a lamp to all who will receive illumination from the profundity of its wisdom which insists on a world wider and deeper than wars and religions can touch." Being an inexhaustible scripture, a fountain of knowledge and an ocean of bliss, it serves as a guiding star to humanity. It is an encyclopaedia which has penetrated human consciousness deeply. Modern age is an age of science and technology. Here people may doubt the utility of Gita in the present time. But as a matter of fact, perhaps it is in the present time that the Bhagavad Gita is urgently needed. It addresses and gives a way to modern human beings' problems; such as attachment issues, anger, wandering mind and so on.

From the moment we are born, we are hardwired to seek attachment to others. Most of life's problems faced by an individual can be linked to their attachment to people, places or worldly objects. This attachment is wrongly perceived as love and many times it results in hurt, mental anguish and disappointment. It holds a strong grip on our lives. It prevents us from being who we are and what we can be. We become limited and self-centred on account of attachment. Whatever attachments we have, are problematic whether it is with worldly objects, person to person, our mobile phone or anything else. It not only impacts our relationship with others, it also affects our relationship with ourselves and how we perceive the world around us. Today, we have become so habitual that we keep checking our mobile phone again and again. We can't remain detached from our mobile phone. No doubt, mobile phones have provided us numerous facilities and interactive communication opportunities. But our attachment to mobile phones can cause many problems in our life. This is to say, if a person stays in front of the screen for extended hours, he/she may experience a weak eyesight issue. Similarly, overuse of mobile phones can damage the muscular system of the neck if the phone is not kept at a proper distance and angle to face. Youngsters prefer to spend time using mobile phones in lieu of with family members. This attachment to mobile phones can put relations at risk. Our attachment to near and dear ones may sometimes manufacture a big problem. We get stuck in a dilemma as to which side we should favour. It can also lead to a fierce war.

We can take the instance of Mahabharata, where Dhritrashtra's attachment towards his son, Duryodhana, caused an awful war. Comparatively speaking, Dhritrashtra was not as evil minded as Duryodhana. Duryodhana was a person who would come up with all kinds of nefarious treats. And Dhritrashtra would sometimes resist, but half-heartedly. And if Duryodhana was adamant then Dhritrashtra would just give in due to the attachment of Duryodhana. Hence, attachment makes us feeble and it makes us manipulated by others. When we are subject to attachments, we react differently to different situations. We often suffer from conflicting emotions. Desires and

elements are at the centre of human sufferings, and the Bhagavad Gita rightly identifies them as such and offers a practical approach to overcome it. The below verses of Gita can be a way to overcome it: "Arjuna prasaktanam tayapahrita chetasam vyavasaya Mikah samadhau na vidyate. (chapter 2.44) "Those who are attached to worldly objects can't contain the determinate intellect and concentrate on anything else." Vahaya kaman yah sarvan pumansh cha nishpriyah nirmano nirahankara Sa shantim adhigachhati. (chapter 2.71) Here Bhagavad Gita said that " he who has given up all attachments and moves from attachments attain peace." Through self-discipline, one can restrain his senses and develop detachment from worldly objects. One should only attach to God which is real and permanent.

Detachment does not mean not loving and taking care of one's family, friends and world around you. Gita tells us to live like water on a lotus leaf which appears attached but in reality, it's not. It is not about having no emotions or desires, but having control over emotions, and being able to manage them. This detachment makes the individual realise knowledge of the self and makes him rational to think and act effectively in decision making. Modern man is surrounded by different types of fear. Negative aspects are given more importance than improving the positive aspects of life. He is greatly in need of an inner guide to light. He is groping. He sees only problems everywhere and no solutions are to be found anywhere. He does not know which way to turn, what course to adopt and how to move towards a better state of things. His life is filled with restlessness, unhappiness, and complications. Therefore, it is the need of hour that we must follow the message of Bhagavad Gita. It has a message addressed to each and every individual towards a bright future. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his book 'My India' " I find a solace in Bhagavad Gita that I miss even in the Garden on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and no ray of light I see not One ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita. I read a verse here and a verse there and immediately begin to mile in the midst of tragedies. My life Has been full of extreme tragedies and I have left no visible mark, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the Bhagavad Gita."

Decision Making

Decision making process is very crucial for any individual. Today, we as professionals face this problem. Many times in our workplace, we could not make decisions because of the fear of uncertainties or our decisions are biased because of inclinations. Sometimes, we make a notion of what other people will think and say. Everyone of us faces this problem somewhere or the other in our life. When we face difficult decision making situations, we seem to collapse like a pack of cards and try to run away from those situations. In some cases, we hide behind some other issues and avoid making decisions. Our success or failure, if it is personal, professional or social, are the results of the actions initiated by us depending upon our decisions. The quality of our life and destiny are directly connected with our decisions. But the most difficult and hardest thing in life is to take decisive decisions because it involves many tangible or intangible things which many times are beyond our control. It is true in everyday life that we have only one life and the decisions to be taken are ours " whether to wait for circumstances to make up our mind or to act, and in acting to live." Often we are exhorted to make the right decision.

Many a times, we may not want to take timely decisions, even if the decision is inevitable on most important matters. Simply because of the fear of lest we may become accountable for our acts of commissions or omissions and error of judgement. We often have a doubt whether this decision is going to be good or not. " What - if's " occurred every time while making decisions. Arjuna was also in the same state of mind " to be or not be " in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. He was grieving because his near and dear ones were going to die. And he felt he may sin if he went to war. He said, ' Sidanti mama gatrani mukham cha parishushyati... ' (chapter 1.28) seeing my own relatives I am trembling, my bow was falling down, I could not fight with them. At this point, Lord Krishna gave him knowledge of taking decisive decision, a way in the form of Gita: " Ashochyam-anvashochas- tvam prajna- vadansh cha bhashase gatasun- agatasunsh-cha nanu shochanti- panditah " (chapter 2.11) With this verse of Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna convince Arjuna not to do sorrow as he was the most knowledgeable and warrior. According to the Gita,

When a person's feelings are lacking or it shows attachment with an object then the person can't take decisions the right way because decisions made based on feelings will lead to the mismanagement of the system. Gita further says: "Asraddhaya hutam dattam tapastaptam na ca yat asadityucyate partha na ca tatpretya no iha" (chapter 2, 46) Here Bhagavad Gita meant to focus on belief and faith that whatever a person was doing was a noble deed that would benefit him after death. Hence, before taking any decision on any issue the person must think and put beliefs and faith in that decision.

Wandering Mind:

It is said that if a person cannot manage himself, he can't control himself, not to speak of the world. Just as iron is drawn to a magnet so are our senses drawn to material pleasure. Therefore, we must maintain that if we keep our distance from objects, it will become easy. This is not the case because it is our mind that leads us astray as mentioned in Bhagavad Gita in chapter 6, verse 34 *chanchalam hi manas*. Krishna pramathi balavad drdham trsyaham nigraham manye manasa shuduskaram "the mind is very restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate, it appears to me more difficult to control than the wind." We often get depressed due to negativity which comes through a wandering mind. Our mind is the seat of our desires, thoughts and feelings. A stable mind is characterised by egoism, attachments and desire-driven actions. We face many problems due to our mind because our mind does not allow us to act wisely. It compels us to indulge in certain pleasures. For example: A student knows if he studies hard he will get good marks. But as soon as he opens his book, within a few minutes he is taken and takes him to another world. His attention span is so short on account of the wandering mind. Mind is always wavering in nature and it is very hard to keep it under one's own sway. The instability of the mind is therefore the first problem, which an aspirant has to resolve to know himself and achieve liberation because the mind has the potential of shaping a man's destiny. We eventually become what we are of. However, how can one stabilise his or her mind? Here Bhagavad Gita paves the way to stabilise the mind - Gita teaches to control the mind through self-discipline and meditation.

In chapter 6, verse 35 of Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that the mind can be controlled by constant practice and detachment: *Asamsayam mahabaho mano drnigraham chalam abyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ch griyate* (chapter 6, 35) This does not mean that to leave the pleasures and pains of the world and become saint by sitting on a mountain somewhere far away. Bhagavad Gita gives clarity to it. One must train the mind to engage in worldly activities and at the same time must be able to withdraw the mind inwards whenever needed. If a person controls his mind, he/she can deeply concentrate on his/her work. He/she can also do wonders at work. Do your duty without expecting results: The world is becoming increasingly fast-paced. We want to be millionaires overnight. We are so goal driven that we do everything only on thinking about the results. For instance, we all do extra work during our appraisal time, thinking that our boss will rate us highly on our performance evaluation. We always have end results in our mind. We always expect an instant outcome for our work. If the outcome is to our expectation then we are happy, otherwise get disappointed and distressed. Whenever we are doing work keeping in mind the end result then we tend to live in tension and desperation. We may succeed, we may fail in our goals but in such a case we shall not be doing the work with a peaceful mind. Most of the students committed suicide when they don't get desirable result. Whenever we are not able to see much progress, we might be tempted to take a shortcut. Someone who is not seeing results from his diet, might overdo it and go on a crash diet in order to speed up the progress. But this is not the right way.

Instant gratification can feel good in the moment but it can often get you into a routine of seeking short-term fixes for long term problems. However, getting everything we want often when we want it is not necessarily good for us. Instant gratification can make us complacent and lazy. We don't want to wait and invest time and effort. If we study a new language, we want to be able to converse in a short time. People nowadays look for fast methods to get what they want. This attitude leads to superficiality in whatever they do and this kind of life leads not only impatience but to stress and lack of inner peace and might harm one's health. After describing the reasons for impatience, you probably ask, is there a remedy? Is it possible to

are impatient and overcome such problems in life? Yes, the teachings of Bhagavad Gita can be a way to overcome such problems. Here below the famous quote of Bhagavad Gita: Karmanye vashikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana ma-karma - phala - hetur bhur bhuvah sango stv akarmani (chapter 2,47) In the above verse, Shri Krishna said to Arjuna, “ you have a right to perform your prescribed duty but you are not entitled to the fruits of the action.” Basic meaning of the above verse is to do your duty and be detached from its outcome. The primary teaching is not to be driven by the end product but rather to focus on the process. The experience of getting there is more important than the end result, it teaches the same thing, “ life is a journey and not a destination.” So enjoy the journey not only the end result. Therefore, what we have to do is perform action to the best of our ability and not worry about the result. But it does not mean that one should work without accepting the wages. If we are able to perform action without being preoccupied with the benefits, we will be able to discharge our duties efficiently. The results will come to us naturally. Doing any work without keeping the present end result in mind shall relieve you from the disappointment of failure. It shall also relieve you from negative emotions, embarrassment, regret etc. in the end if the outcome is positive.

Anger Management:

We all know that getting angry is not good in life but all of us get angry at some point of time in life. In a state of anger, we hurt ourself and dear ones by speaking derogatory words. When anger gets out of control and turns destructive, it can lead to problems for oneself as well as for others. Anger is a deadly thing. It kills the one who is angry as well as each anger takes something or the other from him. It is like a virus because it poisons others and one's own mind. It burns the quality of virtue or positive karma. Excessive or uncontrollable anger causes problems in our relationships with friends and family. It can weaken our ability to think logically, and as a result, you can end up making poor decisions and using poor judgement. You can never end up enjoying something you later regret. It can destroy everything and therefore, it is often referred to as the most destructive negative mind. Because certain changes in the body as well - the blood begins to flow faster, the eyes become red, and some people even tremble

with anger. When anger takes control of anyone, it makes that person violent, aggressive, and unreasonable. The biggest fact is that the angry person refuses to listen to any sense and continues to burn within. He slams doors, kicks things, abuses and curses when we were angry. The most sensible person can turn almost insane for the moment when he is ruled by anger. It is like a tip of matchstick which when ignited can burn down the whole stick. In present times, anger in the worst form is seen when people turn violent killing their fellow mates, partners, lovers and even strangers on roads after an argument. It destroys one's peace of mind. Now how can we control this deadly anger ? There is no lock without a key, similarly there is no problem without a solution. The teachings of Bhagavad Gita are rightly applicable here. Below are few verses of Gita which explain why we should avoid anger: Tri- vidham narakasyedam dvaram nasanam atmanah kamah krodhas tatha lokhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet (chapter 16.21) Here, Bhagavad Gita declares that “ there are three gates leading to hell - lust, anger, and greed. Every sane man should give these up for they lead to the degradation of the soul.” Gita further states: krodhad bhavati sammoha sammohat smriti- vibramah smriti- bhramasad buddhi-naso buddhi-nasat pranashyati (2.63) “Delusion or wild ideas arise from anger. The mind is bewildered by delusion. Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered. One falls down from the right path when reasoning is destroyed.” Gita further added: dambho, darpo bhimanas cha krodha parusyam eva ch ajnanam chabhijatasya partha sampadam asurim (16.4) “ pride, arrogance, conceit, and anger - these qualities belong to those people who are of demoniac nature.” So, let's not be angry in our nature and let's not hurt our near and dear ones by our angry nature.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Bhagavad Gita is the way of life to all of us because it shows how to live life in a better way. In the contemporary world, when we all are racing against time to achieve our goals, simultaneously we are also running away from our inner consciousness too. And hence, even after having everything with us, we still are feeling deprived. This deprivation can be cured through the ways of Bhagavad Gita which teaches us to lead a good, healthy and balanced life without putting in much effort. We just need to follow the directions just like

follow the directions given by the doctor when we suffer. The Bhagavad Gita is such a didactic and moralistic guide for everyone. It provides the basic answers that most people have doubt, and the essential spiritual truths that can be used by anyone, everywhere and at any time in history. It teaches people to focus on their actions and the results. It tells us how we should conduct ourselves in our daily life, keeping God at the centre of activities performing our duties with a sense of detachment and as a way of sacrificial offering accepting God as the doer. It provides all that is needed to raise the consciousness of men to the highest possible level. It also provides a consistent practice of attaining it in a lucid manner that every individual in any situation can adopt. It is not just a spare wheel that is relied upon in times of trouble, but rather the steering wheel which provides a firm grip to guide the journey of our life. It also analyses about the characters of men and gives a clear vision for self-analysing teaches about the do's and don'ts of life. The verses of Bhagavad Gita showcase how one can cope with the stress of life. It guides us in all directions and helps us to live a positive life while building a strong and pure personality by following noble human values. The literature signifies the importance of performing a duty without renouncing it and attaining freedom. It gives a unique way of life that eases off our tension and we enjoy a happy life. The Bhagavad Gita, apart from being a religious scripture, is a way of life as well as a way of life based on faith and devotion.

Works Cited

Gandhi, Mahatma. Young India.

Pai, Roopa. Decoding the Gita, India's Book of Answers.

Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. The Bhagavad Gita.