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M.S. Kushwaha

### **Dr.Ram Bilas Sharma's Contribution to English Studies**

Dr. Ram Bilas Sharma is widely known as an outstanding Hindi scholar and critic. However, his fame as a Hindi scholar has, unfortunately, overshadowed his contribution to English studies. It is worth remembering that Dr. Sharma was basically a scholar of English. He had the distinction of being the first recipient of the Ph.D. degree in English Literature from Lucknow University (1940). He taught English literature for about 33 years – the first five years (1938-1943) at Lucknow University and the latter 28 years (1943-71) at B.R.College (rechristened as R.B.S. College), Agra.

Besides his unpublished Ph.D. thesis on 'Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites', Dr. Sharma has authored four books of criticism in English<sup>1</sup>:

1. *An Introduction to English Romantic Poetry* (Agra: N.R. Agrawal & Co., 1946).

2. *Studies in Nineteenth Century English Poetry* (Agra: Pustak Bhawan, 1960/1961. Second Edition published by Shival Agrawal & Co., Agra in 1965).

3. *Nineteenth Century English Poets* (Agra: Shival Agrawal & Co., 1965)

4. *Essays on Shakespearean Tragedy* (Agra: Shival Agrawal & Co., 1965; Second Edition, 1970)

While the first book is confined to the Romantic Poets, the second book includes also Victorian poets. However, the second

book is not simply an extension of the first; it is almost re-written. On the other hand, the third book is a revised and enlarged edition of the second, including a chapter on 'Pre-Raphaelitism'. It may thus be regarded as representing the final version of Dr. Sharma's studies in the nineteenth century poetry. It may, however, be noted that neither of these earlier books is insignificant; each is characterized by a distinct style and approach.

There is little doubt that these books were addressed to students but it would be a grave mistake to treat them as student-aids or guides. Coming as they do from the pen of a seasoned scholar they bear the stamp of a scholarly undertaking. Instead of relying on other critics, Dr. Sharma engages himself with the original works of the poet concerned, and draws conclusion from his own analysis. In the first book hardly any critic is mentioned. Even in later books when some critic is referred to or quoted, it is done simply to highlight the fallacy of his view or show the trend of prevalent thinking. In no way is Dr. Sharma influenced by them.

In this paper I intend to underscore some of Dr. Sharma's observations which speak of his independent thinking. In his preface to *An Introduction to English Romantic Poetry* (1946) Dr. Sharma suggests that "the best method of reading any literature and making a critical study of it is to rely on all possible help from one's own mother tongue". He adds further: "Everyone knows that many of our so-called vernaculars are older in origin than the English language. Many of them have a rich and growing literature that surpasses that of some European languages. It is almost callous on the part of our university professors to ignore all reference to Indian languages and literature when they are lecturing on the great English writers."

Needless to point out that even before Independence Dr. Sharma pleaded for the need of knowledge of one's native literature

for a proper critical evaluation of foreign literature. He deplores the apathy of Indian Professors of English to Indian literatures. This lack of rootedness in one's literature, he seems to suggest, is responsible for unoriginality and, derivativeness of Indian English criticism. "India has", he notes in the same preface, "produced no Legouis, no Cazamians, no Lofoucades."

Now, we may turn to the book itself and note some of his views on Romanticism and Romantic poets. Writing about the difference between Neo-classicism and Romanticism, he observes: "What distinguished the older school was its wit. What characterized the new school was suggestion" (228). Speaking about Wordsworth's mystic experience in his poem 'Tintern Abbey', Dr. Sharma comments: "Perhaps it was a purely sensuous experience which Wordsworth, for his intellectual needs, glorified into mystic ecstasy. We, in India, usually dissociate mystic experience from the normal activity of the senses. Mystic experience is hyper-sensuous. But in Wordsworth, the unfailing disciple of eighteenth century materialism, nature communicates through senses alone" (59-60). Similarly, about Coleridge's theory of imagination which places emphasis on the synthesis of opposites, he observes: "But Coleridge's dialectical approach hovers in the mists of Idealism and does not come down to the material earth to make poetry a socially useful activity by linking it with the material activity of the forces inside society" (41). It may be noted here that social aspect of literature forms the base of his critical canon. He looks for it in all works and authors. About Shelley he observes: "He talked of the people but he knew his Plato more than the people" (90). Speaking of his *Prometheus Unbound* he further remarks: "And it may be doubted if the fine lyrics of *Prometheus Unbound* inspire even the select few with a passion for reforming the world. They rather carry one away from the grim

realities of this earth and it is the character of their appeal that they make one forget about the problem of reforming the world as Shelley understood it” (101).

In this respect, he finds Shelley’s *Mask of Anarchy* more satisfying than his other works. “The Mask”, he observes, “shows the development of Shelley from Platonic idealism to a more progressive response to the needs of the common people” (127-28).

It should not be presumed, however, that Dr. Sharma’s criticism is confined to the social aspects of a writer’s work. He is as much attentive to artistic nuances of a work as to its social significance. Pointing out the difference between artistic approach of Shelley and Keats, he writes: “He [Shelley] is the great impressionist who catches all those subtle effects of light and shade and the fleeting combinations of objects always in movement which would escape the attention of a formalist like Keats whose sensibility is more of a sculptor than of a musician” (120-21). Of Keats, he further says: “In the case of Keats, we can speak of maturing of imagery, a picture or a landscape being gradually transformed and taking on a new significance according to the demands of his temperament” (156). Sometimes Dr. Sharma sums up the distinctive approaches of two writers in a very succinct and telling manner as, for instance, in the case of Shelley and Keats: “Shelley only suggests the body and dwells more on passion itself, while Keats could not think of passion without stressing the body” (226).

*Nineteenth Century English Poets*<sup>2</sup> presents a far more detailed account of the Romantic poets discussed earlier in *An Introduction to English Romantic Poetry* along with the treatment of Victorian poets. It offers further insights into the topics dealt with in the earlier volume. Take, for instance, this comment on Classicism

and Romanticism: “Critics arguing about the meaning of classicism and romanticism as general terms are like philosophers searching for beauty without caring to look at beautiful things. It would be much more profitable to study concretely and historically the features of Periclean age or the Augustan age or the age of Pope and Boileau instead of looking for an abstract classicism which might have predated all these periods” (3). Dr. Sharma further adds: “One cause of confusion is the effacing of distinction between literatures of Athens and Rome” According to him, “English classicism always means a return to the refinement of Romans and English romanticism has equally meant a return to the humanism of the Athenians” (3). He does not consider romanticism to be the antithesis of realism. To him, “it is the Romantic poets who show greater awareness of life and its problems than their neo-classical predecessors” (6).

There are also striking comments on individual poets, specially on Wordsworth. Dr. Sharma debunks the popular notion that Wordsworth was a lover of nature. “Wordsworth”, he writes, “had ‘loved’ nature neither in his childhood nor in his boyhood” (40). “Pain and fear were real”, he adds, “the dizzy raptures were a myth” (41). Wordsworth’s philosophy of the joy of nature lacks authenticity. As Dr. Sharma puts it, “Wordsworth’s philosophy of joy had a long life but the joy itself was short-lived” (37). “The Ode [*Immortality Ode*]”, he points out, “is a great poem not because it expresses joy but it reveals with great truth utter poignancy the loss of joy and the consequent sad plight of the poet” (22). Dr. Sharma is also unhappy with Wordsworth’s presentation of nature as a moral teacher. “The more he speaks of nature as his moral mentor”, he remarks, “the less he is convincing. This so-called philosophy of Wordsworth is the least creditable part of his achievement and is certainly detrimental to his poetry” (36).

Similarly, Dr. Sharma counters the prevalent view that Browning was an optimist. “His position”, he observes, “is not as firm as the optimism of some of his well-known poems would lead one to suppose. The optimism is very often the result of an effort to overcome doubt and despair” (323). He further adds that “Pippa’s innocent faith in God is more of an ideal for Browning than something that he attained in his own life” (316). “It is strange”, he points out, “that Pippa’s faith in God should be accepted as Browning’s statement of his own faith” (317). His comment on Browning’s poem *Prospice* is no less unconventional. “In *Prospice*”, he remarks, “there is more heroism than love” (329).

Writing about Arnold he says that “his poetry is not one long melancholy wail; it also voices his protest against the iron age in which it was his fate to live” (363). According to him, Arnold in his poetry “reflects, he meditates, he muses, he feels but he seldom ceases to think” (364). But, he adds further, that Arnold “does not think prosaically like Wordsworth nor is there a prosaic marshalling of details as in Browning. He may not always rise to great heights but he seldom ceases to be poetic” (365).

Of Tennyson he remarks: “In his art and sensibility he forms a link between Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites, and for this very reason it should be clear that he is a representative of the middle class intelligentsia in his most popular poems” (306). He feels that Tennyson “is remembered today mainly because of his romantic poems” (298). His over-all assessment is that “Tennyson’s music can rise about such effects as are achieved by skill. But on the whole he gives rather the impression of a clever craftsman than of an inspired poet” (302).

Dr. Sharma’s next work, *Essays on Shakespearean Tragedy*<sup>3</sup>, is not only based on a different topic but is also a far more ambitious undertaking, for Dr. Sharma had to contend here with established

Shakespeare scholars like A. C. Bradley, Granville-Barker and others. Besides a detailed analysis of four major tragedies singled out by Bradley, the book contains discussions on other Shakespearean tragedies, on Shakespearean tragedy in general, on the problems of studying and understanding Shakespeare, and on Aristotelian concept of tragedy. There are also two essays in the Appendix – ‘Marlowe and Machiavellism’ and ‘*The Tempest* - A Postscript to *King Lear*’.

Dr. Sharma opens his work by questioning Aristotle’s notion of tragedy as effecting the catharsis of the feelings of pity and fear. He does not think that either of these feelings is invariably unwholesome or undesirable. He clearly states: “Pity, however, is not a bad feeling in itself. It does not always involve an element of personal fear. The main thing is the experience of sadness at the situation of another person” (5). Similarly, “Fear, too, is not a bad emotion in itself. There is the fear of a coward which may be condemned. But there is Macbeth’s fear which shows the presence of moral strength in him . . . . Fear like Macbeth’s is desirable; in the play it makes him a hero deserving our sympathy” (6). Moreover, it is ridiculous to presume that people go to witness the performance of a tragedy simply to get rid of the feelings of pity and fear. “Normal healthy people”, observes Dr. Sharma, “should be free from such painful feelings and they should not require the spectacle of tragedy to free them from these disturbing factors” (4). The notion of catharsis, he seems to suggest, was invented by Aristotle just to answer “Plato’s criticism of expression of emotions in poetry and music” (4); it was not based on the practice of Greek dramatists who “fill our hearts with compassion for suffering humanity” (5). As he further points out, “Those who have been discussing the question of Katharsis in relation to pity forget the Christian background of English tragic poets” (5). The question is far more irrelevant in the case of Shakespeare who “considers pity to be the noblest of human emotions” (6).

But pity is not the only emotion that the spectacle of a tragedy evokes. As Dr. Sharma perceptibly observes, “Desdemona and Cordelia are helpless and we pity them. But Lear, Othello, Hamlet and Macbeth struggle against the situation which threatens them and hence we not only pity them but also admire them” (7). He adds further, “Tragic heroes are not pathetic figures. Pity is linked with the pathetic. We do not associate sublimity with the pathetic. Tragedy is sublime because it exhibits suffering which is not the result of helplessness, because it involves struggle and human responsibility, because it invokes not merely pity but also admiration. To the extent we admire the hero, our fear for his fate is overcome” (7). And so far as Shakespeare is concerned, even the question of the catharsis of fear does not arise. “Since fate does play as important a role in Shakespearean tragedy as it is supposed to play in Greek tragedy, a discussion of the question of Katharsis of fear is even irrelevant in relation to the former” (7).

Elaborating upon the aesthetic experience of the spectator, Dr. Sharma states: “But whether we pity the hero, or admire him or feel afraid because of his fate, in every such case there is always a sense of distance implied between the spectator and the hero. So long as this sense of distance is there we do not experience what is most moving in a tragedy. At certain moments we forget all about ourselves; a kind of identity is established between us and the hero and we share his agony. This empathy or sharing of experience is not covered by pity, fear or admiration” (7).

This aesthetic experience cannot be pleasant. Hence, some theoreticians, who believe in the pleasure theory of art, “attempt to find some justification for tragedy by denying in one way or another the truth that tragic experience is painful” (17). They “cannot conceive of man contemplating a spectacle of pain without believing that this

pain must be in some way another name for pleasure” (19). But Dr. Sharma clearly states: “The fact must be stressed that there is an element of pain involved in the reading and witnessing of all tragedies” (17). He holds that “Tragic art is an extension of the contemplation of painful situations in life. There is no gulf dividing the experience of art from similar experience in life” (22).

However, it should not be presumed that tragic experience is entirely painful. “In tragedy”, Dr. Sharma points out, “the dramatist seldom limits himself to one or two emotions of grief and fear. He generally weaves a complex emotional pattern where different types of feelings in their degrees of depth and intensity are constantly modifying the spectator's main reaction to the situation of human suffering. In other words, tragedy seldom offers a purely painful experience to the spectator” (24). He clarifies this idea further when he says that “tragedy basically evokes the feeling of sadness and this feeling may be supported by allied feelings of anger, disgust, wonder and heroics with a touch of comic and the emotion of love. The impact of tragedy is determined by the totality of its emotional content and not merely by its happy or unhappy ending” (25-26). Hence Dr. Sharma has no hesitation in asserting that “Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Ramacharitam* and *Malati Madhavam* are as great tragedies as any available in English or Greek languages” (25).

Contrary to the notion of catharsis, “tragedy”, As Dr. Sharma conceives it, “invigorates the emotional life of man” (21).

Dr. Sharma's discussion of tragedy, it may be observed, is marked by originality and boldness. No British scholar, including I.A. Richards, dared to challenge Aristotle's basic assumptions; they simply re-interpreted or reformulated his views.

Now we come down to the specifics. Speaking of Shakespearean tragedy, Dr. Sharma remarks: “Shakespearean tragedy is

essentially a drama of dissent. It expresses dissent not only with conventional morality and the general norms of social behaviour but also with traditional faith concerning sin, redemption, damnation, and God and the human soul” (185). “A Shakespearean tragedy”, as he notes further, “moves on two planes simultaneously; one is the social-moral plane of external world and the other is subjective plane of human consciousness” (191). “There is an element of poetic justice in tragedies of Shakespeare. Virtue may or not triumph but vice is never seen victorious” (195). “This concept of poetic justice”, Dr. Sharma observes, “is also a subtle artistic device for saving a tragedy from a totally pessimistic conclusion and for making it bearable to the spectators” (195).

Dr. Sharma’s analysis of individual plays is also very insightful. Here only a few of his comments on Shakespeare’s major tragedies – *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello* – are offered as a sample of his critical acumen.

#### ***Hamlet:***

- \* “There has been an over-emphasis on the internal conflict in *Hamlet*. This overemphasis is the result of isolating Hamlet from the rest of the play” (31)
- \* “The internal conflict cannot be explained without a reference to the external conflict. The determining factor is not Hamlet’s morbidity or procrastination but the general contradiction which exists between him and the world of Claudius” (31)
- \* “The father remains in the background; it is the mother that fills the mind of Hamlet” (47).
- \* “The crime of fratricide does not hurt Hamlet as much as the incest of his mother” (52).

- \* “The delay of Hamlet is a symptom of inner conflict” (52).
- \* “One reason of Hamlet’s suffering is his capacity to experience several emotions at once” (65).
- \* “Pain does not vanish but there is gentle lowering of the emotional curve at the end of the play.... A feeling of exultation permeates the pathos felt over Hamlet’s death” (67).
- \* “Towards the end he [Hamlet] has overcome his melancholy and contemplates human life and death with a certain air of detachment. In Indian poetics ‘nirveda’ or the feeling of renunciation is said to be the most joyous and peaceful. Hamlet is not completely happy in the last act nor is he ever completely resigned to fate. But he comes very near the feeling of ‘nirveda’ in the first scene of the fifth and final act” (66).
- \* “The social significance of the play is as great as its artistic appeal” (68).

#### ***Macbeth:***

- \* “More than in other tragedies the conflict here is internal. Macbeth has to fight greatest battles within himself” (141).
- \* “Macbeth is as religious as Hamlet. He is more religious than Lear and Othello. This increases his fears and suffering” (141).
- \* “The tragedy lies in the process of the hardening of the soul of Macbeth. But it never becomes completely barren and dry” (141).
- \* “In *Macbeth* Shakespeare indicates new developments in European literature which reached their high watermark in

Dostoevsky. He looks not only deeply into the internal world of man but also indicates a new sympathetic approach to the criminal. Macbeth is the first of those crime-heroes for which many nineteenth century novelists evoke our sympathy” (141).

### **King Lear:**

- \* “*King Lear* is the most painful of all the tragedies of Shakespeare. It is a challenge to all those theorists who hold that tragedy pleases us despite its pain” (69).
- \* “Love, rage, hatred, disgust and heroism modify the central feeling of pain in the play” (95).
- \* “The conflict between ‘moha’ and ‘vairagya’ continues in him [Lear] almost upto the end” (71).

### **Othello:**

- \* “In *Othello* we sympathise with Othello and laugh at him. We hate Iago and at the same time we admire him for his cool-headed intrigue and irrepressible wit” (124).
- \* “There is no catharsis of pity and fear at the end. We feel sad for Othello, Desdemona and Emilia but this sadness is relieved by our admiration for Emilia and the confidence that evil has been exposed and the evil-doer would be punished. There is no spiritual regeneration for the hero but self-realization there is. Othello dies fully aware of what he has lost and of his own responsibility in losing it. And that gives the tragedy its meaning” (138).

These excerpts from Dr. Sharma’s English works, it may be observed, demonstrate the same kind of independent and original approach that characterizes his Hindi criticism, Of course, they lack

the paraphernalia of modern scholarship but they deserve, by virtue of their originality, a place of honour in the realm of Indian English Criticism which, unfortunately, is swamped with works of unoriginal and derivative scholarship.

I would not like to conclude this sketchy article without referring to Dr. Sharma’s unpublished doctoral dissertation ‘Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites’. It consists of 429 typed pages and is divided into 16 chapters besides a review of the existing critical literature on the topic (which, I feel, should be made mandatory for all Ph.D. scholars). It not only studies the Pre-Raphaelite Movement in depth but also demonstrates amply the impact of Keats on the Pre-Raphaelites from various angles such as ‘Nature and Decoration’ (chap. 5), ‘the spiritual woman’ (chap. 6), ‘algotagniac tendencies’ (chaps. 7-9), ‘Symbolic and Allegorical use of Natural Phenomena’ (chap. 10), ‘Imagery borrowed from Art’ (chap. 12), ‘Some verseforms’ (chap. 13), ‘Art for Art’s Sake’ (chap. 14) and ‘Pictorial Epithets’ (chap. 15). Though written more than sixty years ago, it remains still unsurpassed in its range and depth of scholarship. There are very few Ph.D. dissertations in English approved by Indian universities which have such a high standard of erudition. The thesis also anticipates some of the traits of Dr. Sharma’s Hindi writings: his focus on the text, his refusal to uncritically accept the views of other scholars, and his tendency to rely on his own understanding. It can serve as a beacon for present day researchers who suffer from the lack of critical enquiry. I wish somebody takes the trouble of getting the thesis published.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>One of the reasons for neglect of Dr. Sharma’s English books may be attributed to the fact that all of them were published by



petty local publishers known for guides and help-books. Scholarly publications in English are seldom noticed by our English professors unless they are brought out by foreign or international publishers like Oxford/Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup>This book was republished in 1999 as *Nineteenth Century Poets* by Anamika Publishers, New Delhi. All page-references are to this reprint.

<sup>3</sup>All page-references are to the first edition, published in 1965. This book has also been republished by Anamika Publishers.

Sudhir Nikam

### **‘Thintelligence’ and the Capitalist Trinity in Crichton’s Techno-Thrillers**

Techno-thrillers are a hybrid genre, drawing subject matter generally from science fiction, thrillers, spy, action, and war. They include a disproportionate amount (relative to other genres) of technical details on its subject matter (typically military technology); only science fiction tends towards a comparable level of supporting detail on the technical side. The inner workings of technology and the mechanics of various disciplines (espionage, martial arts, politics) are thoroughly explored, and the plot often turns on the particulars of that exploration. Michael Crichton is considered to be the fathers of the modern techno-thriller. Crichton’s book *The Andromeda Strain* and Clancy’s book *The Hunt for Red October* set out the type example which defined the genre, although many authors had been writing similar material earlier, such as Craig Thomas, whom BBC News also credits as an early innovator. Thintelligence is the state of mind where a person does something without considering the consequences. The idea may seem brilliant at first, but the after-effects usually prove to be deadly. This phrase was invented by Michael Crichton in his book *Jurassic Park*.

\*\*\*

Discovery is always rape of the natural world. Always. (*Jurassic Park* 57)

In the dinotainment world depicted in Michael Crichton’s *Jurassic Park*, Ian Malcolm coins the term ‘thintelligence’ referring to the type of scientific approach that he views as responsible for

disasters such as *Jurassic Park*. He believes that science is increasingly progressing into theoretical jargon and statistics that they are literally complex to human mind. This limited view, narrow vision is identical in Arnold and Henry Wu, who fail to foresee the consequences of their research and action, but go ahead and do it anyway, merely because they can. Ian Malcolm a Mathematician and expert in Chaos Theory contends this kind of scientific thinking—

He's an engineer. Wu's the same. They are both technicians. They don't have intelligence. They have what I call 'thintelligence'. They see the immediate situation. They think narrowly and they call it 'being focused'. They don't see the surround. They don't see the consequences. (*Jurassic Park* 29)

Michael Crichton's techno thrillers are built around the capitalistic trinity-science, business and entertainment. This trinity is also at work in Crichton's *The Lost World*, *Timeline*, *State of Fear*. He began publishing fictions under the pseudonyms like Michael Douglas, John Lange, and Jeffery Hudson. 'Each of Crichton's novels displays his detailed knowledge of particular and very specialized subjects, including genetics, biophysics, primatology and international economics, and he is known as the creator of the techno thriller' (Bloom 84). His first novel as Michael Crichton was *The Andromeda Strain* (1969), which became the fifth bestseller novel of its year in U. S. A.. Subsequent novels of Crichton did well enough. His success also comes from work in other media especially television and film.

Crichton in his latest science fiction *State of Fear* make use of the technique called false document. This novel is designed to discredit concerns about global warming. Here Crichton refers to scientific papers, calculations, statistics and in the introduction the writer claims that his footnotes are real. Does he really use the

scientific method? In *State of Fear* Crichton depicts a lightning paced techno thriller that turns on a controversial notion: Global Warming. It is the fictionalization of a speech that Crichton delivered at Commonwealth Club. He has long been renowned for choosing controversial technologies and surrounding them with the trappings of a thriller.

Crichton's *Timeline* is another science fiction which is a story of a team of archeologists studying a site in the Dordogne. They time-travel back to 1357, to uncover some startling truths. The author refers to quantum physics, and time travel. This novel quickly inspired *Timeline Computer Entertainment*, a computer game developer that created the *Timeline PC game* published by Eidos Interactive. Crichton pointing out the inter relations of science, business, and entertainment writes in his *Timeline*—

In other centuries, human beings wanted to be saved, or improved, or freed or educated. But in our century, they want to be entertained. The great fear is not of disease or death, but of boredom. A sense of time on our hands, a sense of nothing to do. A sense that we are not amused. (*Timeline* 98)

His techno thrillers are precisely about the ways in which the careful plans of uncontrolled economies become dangerous and in *Jurassic Park*, this is spectacularly imagined. *Jurassic Park* is not simply a dinosaur novel in the tradition of Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912), it is instead a dinosaur theme park novel. Its Isla Nublar island setting is effectively turned into a kind of scientific industrial estate. John Hammond is the architect of this theme park. Hammond arguing with Henry Wu says in a declaring style—

Face the damn facts Henry... This isn't America. This isn't even Costa Rica. This is my island. I own it. And nothing is

going to stop me from opening Jurassic park to all the children of the world...at least, to the rich ones.( Jurassic Park 119)

Hammond fetches the expert scientists from all parts of America. Henry Wu, cloning expert, from Stanford University is recruited in exactly the same way Mitch in *The Firm*- by offering him a large amount of money. Wu had dreamed to become a university researcher ,but John Hammond's response captures the sense that real research takes place elsewhere. Hammond in *Jurassic Park* says-

'Universities are no longer the intellectual centers of the country...Universities are backwater. Don't look so surprised .I'm not saying anything you don't know. Since World War II , all the really important discoveries have come out of private laboratories....If you want to get , something done, stay out of universities'(Jurassic Park 128)

In *Jurassic Park* , the writer's knowledge of genetic engineering and cloning seems impressive. There are some scientific errors and inconsistencies in this techno thriller. The Park has electric tour –cars with clutches and transmissions .Electric cars don't need these devices. The cloning of dinosaurs, the very idea is far- fetched. Reconstructing the DNA of a dinosaur from base pairs would be a wild goose chase. Michael Crichton writes-

'But now science is the belief system that is hundreds of years old. And, like the medieval system before it, science is starting not to fit the world any more. Science has attained so much power that its practical limits begin to be apparent. Largely through science, billions of us live in one small world, densely packed and intercommunicating. But science can't help us decide what to do with that world or how to live. Science can make a nuclear reactor, but it cannot tell us not to build it.

Science can make pesticides, but cannot tell us not to use it. And our world starts to seem polluted in fundamental ways...air, water and land...because of ungovernable science.(Jurassic Park 232)

Crichton sets his Jurassic Park in the immediate past to make the danger of science appear even more terrible. The whole system in the park runs on a single computer-telephone, fencing, dinosaurs and so on. The closure and destruction of Jurassic Park comes about

because of these and other implausible blunders in its design.

Ian Malcolm becomes the spokesman of the author to criticize the use of capitalistic trinity and to propound his innovative approach to science called 'thintelligence'. The readers are made to believe that such projects are doomed from the start because complex systems cannot be controlled and because it is not nice to fool Mother Nature. "Science is more like a competition between various theories that are incommensurable with one another"(Weaver 73). Incommensurability is a term Kuhn introduced to suggest that scientific theories represent different cultures, values ,beliefs and laboratory techniques that cannot be compared to each other because of these differences.

In the opinion of Ian Malcolm , scientists don't have humility. He tells Dr. Ellie Sattler, a paleobotanist- 'There is only a get-rich-quick, make-a-name-for-yourself-fast philosophy. Cheat, lie ,falsify-it doesn't matter'(Jurassic Park 234).

Techno thriller blends together science fiction , war novel and action thriller. It focuses on real world or plausible near future technology and an emphasis on business , entertainment or science. Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* and Tom Clancy's *The Hunt for Red October* set out the genre of techno thriller. Hence

Crichton and Clancy are called the fathers of modern techno thrillers. *The Andromeda Strain* recorded the efforts of a team of scientists investigating a deadly extraterrestrial microorganism that fatally clots human blood, infecting the sufferer causing death within two minutes.

Dinotainment in Jurassic Park is not the first phenomenon, dinosaurs have been able to combine entertainment, commerce and science. Peter Wollen brings out that the first large scale dinosaur models were in fact built in the 1860s in Sydenham, South London, on a small artificial island. In *Jurassic Park* the simplicity of the narrative method perhaps sits awkwardly alongside the complexities of descriptions- scientific, technical, and anthropological. The dinosaurs in this theme park may look natural enough, but they are creatures of commerce, created to entertain. Though Henry Wu is something of a villain in the novel, he gives the best account of this topic as he argues with John Hammond-

‘The dinosaurs we have now are real,’ Wu said, pointing to the screens around the room,’ but in certain ways they are unsatisfactory...

‘But Henry, these are real dinosaurs. You said so yourself. ...Nobody wants domesticated dinosaurs, Henry. They want the real thing.’

‘But that is my point,’ Wu said ....’You said yourself, John, this park is entertainment. ...And entertainment has nothing to do with reality. Entertainment is antithetical to reality. ...Why not push ahead to make exactly the kind of dinosaurs that we ‘d like to see?...A slower, more docile version for our park?’

‘But they are not real now,’ Wu said’. That’s what I’m trying to tell you.

There isn’t any reality here’ (Jurassic Park 121).

Science is not the enemy of humanity but one of the deepest expressions of the human desire to realize that vision of infinite knowledge. It has no stable and fixed place on the constellation of human life as do commerce and entertainment. “Michael ‘s talent out scaled even his own dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park*. He was the greatest at blending science with big theatrical concepts, which is what give credibility to dinosaurs again walking the earth... Michael was a gentel soul who reserved his flamboyant side for his novels. There is no one in the wings that will ever take his place.” (Itzkoff08). Crichton wrote elsewhere that science is a wondrous but fragile enterprise. Unlike commerce, entertainment and religion, which are as old as human civilization, science is a recent activity- practiced well for a few centuries, no more. It is not resilient as religion, entertainment, or commerce.

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A K Chaturvedi

### **Aesthetics of Spirituality in Rabindranath Tagore's *Sadhana – The Realization of Life***

Tagore's prime objective of writing *Sadhana-The Realization of life* ( hereafter referred to as SRL), as he himself asserts, is to provide the western readers, "an opportunity of coming into touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in our sacred texts and manifested in the life of today."(SRL,3) Tagore is of the view that the aim for which the ancient Indian sages lived in forests was to expand their consciousness by growing with and growing into the surroundings. They wanted to harmonize between man's spirit and the spirit of the soul and this work, they believed, was possible only through identification with the objects of nature. Man's superiority in ancient India consisted not in the power of possession but in the power of union between soul and super soul. To achieve this power, those who were once meat eaters gave up taking animal food as a mark of sympathy and love for life. Having experienced the presence of the divine in their heart, they were free of all selfish desires and having seen God in all activities of the world had attained calmness, got united with all and entered into the life of the universe. This sublime state is considered by Indian sages and rishis as the ultimate end of all human activities. Enveloping soul in a dead cell of callous habits amounts to spiritual death for them. Man's spirit can comprehend all and this faculty of comprehension leads him to love all as members of one family. Such a loving person attains the supreme goal of union with God and is in perfect harmony with man's nature. On the contrary, those who believe in the power of possession thoughtlessly and aimlessly accumulate wealth. Having inflated ego and a deep sense

of pride in illusionary possessions, they close for themselves all doors to the kingdom of God. They fail to expand their consciousness and miserably lose the golden opportunity of finding connection with the Light of God which is imminent in space as well as in our spirit. As Tagore says, "He is all conscious in space, or the world of extension, and he is all conscious in soul or the world of intension."(SRL,15) The rishis of India asserted emphatically, "To know him in this life is to be true; not to know him in this life is the desolation of death." (SRL, 16) These rishis felt that the same energy which vibrates in the limitless forms of the world manifests itself in our inner being as soul. They considered birth and death as life in its aspect of appearing and in its aspect of departure. William Wordsworth puts forth an identical concept of life and death in these lines of his famous poem 'The Immortality Ode',

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

To develop broad outlook towards life, we should realize some central truth. This is what the Upanishads lay emphasis on when they say, "know thine own soul", and this is what is needed for establishing a contact with deeper reality hidden in every man. The key to contact with super consciousness lies in the consciousness of soul. To detach our soul from the limited self is the first step towards realizing the cosmic consciousness. To achieve success in this objective, one need not renounce the worldly life and the great teachers of India have never preached for the renouncement of the world. Gautama Buddha says to Sadhu Simha, "It is true, Simha, that I denounce activities but the activities that lead to the evil in words, thoughts or deeds. It is true, Simha, I preach extinction, but only the extinction of pride, lust,

evil thought and ignorance and not that of forgiveness, love, charity and truth.”(quoted in SRL,21) The limiting of consciousness within the boundary of personal self creates ego and thus becomes the source of all evils. When we succeed to shake off our limited self and attain the expansion of consciousness, we can achieve Bodhi and become Buddha. As Tagore ruminates, “When the heat and motion of blind impulses and passions distract soul on all sides, we neither give, nor receive anything truly. But when we find our center in our soul by the power of self-restrain, by the force that harmonizes all warring elements and unifies those that are apart, then all our isolated impressions reduce themselves to wisdom and all our momentary impulses of heart find their completion in love, then all the petty details of our life reveal an infinite purpose, and all our thoughts and deeds unite themselves inseparably in an internal harmony.”(SRL, 23)

Suppression of worldly desires and deep passion for connection with God consciousness is the key to the realization of soul. Hence, the sincerest prayer that has arisen from the human heart says, “O thou self-revealing one, reveal thyself in me. We are in misery because we are creatures of self- the self that is unyielding and narrow, that reflects no light, that is blind to the infinite. From unreality lead me to the real, from darkness to the light, from death to immortality.” (SRL, 25-26) The devotee in Tagore prays to God for sweeping away all his sins which invariably cloud the purity of consciousness. Sin makes man go with the finite at the cost of his connection with the infinite that is in him. This deviation is the defeat of his soul by his sinful self. In sin we run after fleeting pleasures which, although undesirable, appear as desirable because of our wrong perception of the reality and the pressure of passions. This false projection of temporal priorities breaks the harmony of life with the

result that we miserably lose that which is good, the good which is the daily bread of our souls. In sin we are confined to ourselves but in the good we belong to all. Righteousness is our divine food which can help us in our movement towards the eternal. As regards the genesis of misery, Tagore says, “The real misery of man is in the fact that he has not fully come out, that he is self- obscured, lost in the midst of his own desires.”(SRL,27)The longing for merger into God is more deeply inherent in the soul of man than his hunger and thirst for bodily sustenance, his lust for wealth and high position. It is through his thirst for this merger that man’s self attains ultimate meaning which lies in the realization of soul. Such a man’s soul seems to watch the Creator in the very act of creation of a new world, when his soul draws her heavy curtain of self aside, when her veil is lifted and she is face to face with her eternal lover. Before he attains this sublime state, his life remains a life of habits and appears to him as a machine to be mastered when it is useful and to be guarded against when it is dangerous.

In the chapter titled ‘The Problem of Evil’ Tagore emphatically points out that evil is not a problem but a necessity to maintain balance. It is like the firmness of earth that hurts the falling child who is learning to walk. Human life is like the river whose banks give its water an onward motion. In the depth of human experience what appears as imperfect is nothing but the manifestation of the perfect. Evil is like the shutting of eyes which does not count. What counts is the opening of eyes. Good is what constitutes our expanded self. To run the life of goodness is to have love for others. As Tagore says, “Pleasure is for one’s own self, but goodness is concerned with the happiness of all humanity and for all times.”(SRL,35) The life of the self is undesirable and if lived in accordance with the universal law, life is desirable. As he puts it, “It is our life of the self that causes conflicts

and complications everywhere, upsets the normal balance of society and gives rise to miseries of all kinds.”(SRL,38) In order to be good and happy, we have to surrender our individual well to the sovereignty of the universal will and that is why true freedom lies in the freedom of surrender to the will of God.

Man has two selves- collective and individual. His collective self has to acknowledge the rule of universal law and submit to the dictates of his surroundings. But his individual self, being separate from all, stands alone as an incomparable and unique despite the tremendous gravitation of all things. The annihilation of individual self is the highest ideal of humanity. That is why the ideal of selflessness is taught with all fervor in all faiths. Selfishness is the result of our ignorance. When we make self the ultimate object of our life,” we are doomed to disappointment like the man who tries to reach his destination by firmly clutching the dust of the road. When a man exclusively arranges for an enjoyment of the self, he has fire but has no dough to make bread with.”(SRL, 42) All wise men tell us, “Set yourself free from *avidya*; know your true soul and be saved from the grip of the self which imprisons you.”(SRL,42) The highest idea of self is to reveal itself and become perfect like a flower that has blossomed out from the bud, pouring its sweetness all around. Self is like a lamp which when lighted finds the meaning of its existence and its relation with all things around it is established. As long as it does not sacrifice its fund of oil, it keeps itself dark. But the purposeless sacrifice is what the enlightened persons like Buddha have never taught. Sacrifice for the widening of love leads to self-abnegation and herein lies the true meaning of the Vedic teachings. The freedom of self lies in working for love regardless of pain it may cause and herein lies the essence of the teachings of the Gita. The meaning of self lies in the realization of yoga, of union with God and His creation

and not in separateness or individuality which symbolizes *maya* or illusion. In its finite aspect the self is conscious of its separateness and is persistent in its attempt to become better than others. But in its infinite aspect it desires to connect with its source and as a result of divine connection it attains perfection. Thus, the annihilation of selfishness leads to illumination and revelation of infinite joy by the light of love. To seek union with the infinite is the true end of self. To realize this end, it must bend its head low in love and humility and take its stand where the infinite and the finite meet. “It has to gain by loss and rise by its falling to the feel of God. We must know that it is only the revelation of the infinite which is endlessly new and eternally beautiful in us, and which gives the only meaning to our self.” (SRL, 52)

The fifth chapter titled ‘Realization in Love’ talks of the co-existence of the infinite and the finite, God and soul. According to some of our philosophers, “There is no such thing as finite; it is but *maya* or illusion. The real is the infinite and it is only *maya*, the unreality which causes the appearance of the finite.”(SRL,53) These philosophers unanimously accept the fact that the world in its essence is a reconciliation of pairs of opposing forces. These forces, despite acting from opposite directions, act in harmony. The principal of harmony in the diversity of nature is the mystery of all mysteries which is at the back of all our delights. Outwardly, nature is busy and actively at work but has a secret chamber within the heart where the noise of her factory is heard like music. These two antithetical aspects of nature make us feel astonished at its working. Externally, she is restless but internally she is all peace and silence. We see her restlessness when we see her external aspect but within her is a limitless silence. The tragedy of man is that he is focused on the external natural upheavals, oscillations and variations and is totally unaware of the gems of creative and all sustaining joy, underlying the visible aspect of nature. That is why our seers say, “From joy

are born all creatures, by joy they are sustained, towards joy they progress, and into joy they enter.” (SRL, 58). It is the nature of abounding joy to manifest and realize itself in forms which represent the world of law. While the joy with form is law, the joy without form is love. No doubt, we are separate but this separation is not absolute otherwise there would have been absolute misery and unmitigated evil in the world and we could never find a medium through which we could unite with our Creator. Our soul has been separated from God because of the fullness of love and that is why it can not only defy sufferings and evils but also transform them into beauty. Since its separation from God, soul is on its journey from law to love, from discipline to liberation. The love which is the ultimate meaning of everything around us is the feeling of joy which is at the root of all creation. Love induces us to attach greater importance to the giver than to his gifts. While our body and mind which are gifts are within boundaries of law, our spirit being love has the power to transcend the limits of law.

The ideal of desirableness taught by Gautama Buddha finds expression when Tagore says, “It is our desires that limit the scope of our self-realization, hinder our extension of consciousness, and give rise to sin, which is the innermost barrier that keeps us apart from our God, setting up disunion and the arrogance of exclusiveness. When we look at the world through the prism of our desires, we make it small and narrow, and fail to perceive its full truth.” (SRL, 62). Man’s true freedom lies in his association with the whole world. As Tagore puts it, “When man feels the rhythmic throb of the soul life of the whole world in his own soul, then is he free, then he enters into the secret courting that goes on between this beautiful world bride, veiled with the veil of the many colored finiteness and the bridegroom in his spotless white. Then he knows that he is the partaker

of this gorgeous love festival, and he is the honored guest at the feast of immortality.” (SRL, 63) Like God, joy is everywhere. It is “in the earth’s green coloring of grass, the blue serenity of the sky. Joy is the realization of the truth of oneness, the oneness of our soul with the world of the world soul, with the supreme lover.” (SRL, 65). Like joy that expresses itself through law, soul expresses itself through action. To release itself from the mist of vagueness, soul creates fresh fields of action and remains busy devising new forms of activity even such as are not needed for the purposes of its earthly life. The Upanishads say, “In the midst of activity alone will thou desire to live a hundred years. The realization of the infinite without the world of action is not possible. Our great teachers warn us, “to work we must live, to love we must work; life and activity are inseparately connected.” (SRL, 69). Like the body that despite remaining busy with its inside activities seeks external objects for its fulfillment, our soul lives on its internal feelings and imaginations and at the same time is in the need of external objects to feed its inner consciousness. Thus, true spirituality stands for balance in the co-relation of the within and the without. That is why Tagore puts forth the view that the true striving in the quest of truth, of dharma, consists not in the neglect of action but in the effort to attune it closer and closer to the external harmony. Tagore is also of the view that joy reigns supreme when all work leads to God and the union of soul and God is not possible without action accomplished with devotion to God. He who thinks to reach God by running away from the world cannot expect to meet Him anywhere. He exhorts us to be able to say that we are reaching Him here in this very spot, now at this moment. We must be able to assure our self that as in our actions we are realizing ourselves, so in ourselves we are realizing Him who is the self of self. We must be able to say, “In my work is my joy, and in joy does the joy of my joy abide.” (SRL, 78) Since we fail to give ourselves



joyously and entirely to our work, we fail to find our work as holiday like the river finds its holiday in its onward flow, the fire in its outburst of flame, the scent of the flame in the permeation of the atmosphere. As regards the realization of beauty Tagore holds the view that unless we develop the ability to see harmony and truth everywhere and in every object, we cannot understand the beauty of things which actually lies at the core of things irrespective of their external aspect and requires us to have penetrating eye. As he says, “The more we comprehend the harmony in the physical world as well as in our soul, the more our life shares the gladness of creation and our apprehension of the blissfulness of the spirit becomes universal. This is the ultimate object of our existence.”(SRL,78)

The subject of the realization of the infinite has been treated by Tagore as the most important issue of human life. Life without this realization, according to him, is meaningless. As he puts it, “Man becomes true if in this life he can apprehend God; if not, it is the greatest calamity for him.”(SRL,78) Tagore is highly critical of those people who look to God as an ally to favor them in politics, warfare, money making or in social obligations and put Him in the same list with their summer houses, motor cars, or bank balance. When we know that whatever we have is His gift, we realize the giver in the gifts. Hence, our possessions have significance not in themselves but in relation they establish with God. The realization of God does not lie in attainment of something like worldly objects. Instead, it lies in losing our own self. The Upanishads say, “Be lost altogether in Brahma like an arrow that has completely penetrated its target.”(SRL, 82) Echoing this sense, Tagore says, “Our daily worship of God is not really the process of gradual acquisition of Him, but the daily process of surrendering ourselves, removing all obstacles to union.”(SRL, 82) We seek infinite pleasures infinite things and herein lies the tragedy

of human life. When we know that our soul is above the worldly possessions, we become free from their bondage. Our abiding happiness is not in getting anything but in giving ourselves up to what is greater than ourselves. The desire for getting belongs to our finite self but the side of existence whose direction is towards the infinite seeks not wealth but freedom and joy. In the region of materialism which is the region of diversity we grow by getting, but in the spiritual region which is the region of unity we grow by losing. Our life is like a stream which says, “I shall become sea.”(SRL,86) On both sides of its banks it has numerous fields and forests, villages and towns; it can serve them in various ways but it can have only partial relation with these because it has its affinity with the water of sea and finds its finality when it reaches the sea. The truth of our soul is that she must ever be getting closer and closer to God and that all her movements should be modulated by this ultimate idea. The truth is to be realized by soul, by joy, by love and not by intellect. Love brings about union whereas intellect sets us apart from the things to be known. The Upanishads say, “he who knows Brahma, the true, the all-conscious and the infinite hidden in the depths of the soul, which is the supreme sky (inner sky of consciousness) enjoys all objects of desire and union with the all-knowing Brahma. When soul feels connected with God, she considers the world as her own household by the right of knowing the Master of the world as her own lord. It is only then that all her services become sacrifices at the altar of love, all her trials and tribulations become the sweet will of God. So long as she remains in dark, lifts not her veil and does not recognize her lover, she weeps in sorrow and “passes from starvation to starvation, from trouble to trouble, from fear to fear.”(SRL, 90) Unable to get rid of this predicament by her efforts she inconsolably cries, “take me across to the other shore.”(SRL,90) Like a child dissatisfied with its dolls, her heart pathetically utters, “Not this, not this.”(SRL, 90) But what

is the other? Where is the further shore ? In truth this and the other shore is one and the same in God, waiting to be recognized in love. Indeed, she is taken across to the other shore the moment she is able to say that this home of mine is thine, that all my work is thine.

To conclude, Tagore's views on soul, God, beauty, action, dharma, salvation etc. are extracts from the Upanishads and represent the Vedic philosophy. Like *Gitanjali*, Tagore's creation under discussion constitutes one of his precious gifts to the world, especially the western countries. For the students of Vedic philosophy this creation is a guiding star as it reflects on the meaning of the esoteric experiences that our rishis felt for themselves and expressed for the benefit of the seekers after truth. Impressed by his spiritual depth discernible in *Gitanjali*, WB Yeats says, "I read Rabindranath Tagore every day, to read one line of his is to forget all the troubles of the world.... He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of life itself, and that is why we give him our love." (Introduction to *Gitanjali* V-VI)

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Jyotsana Shukla

### Irving Layton's *Fortunate Exile*: A Study in Moral Effect

*Fortunate Exile* is the title of a collection of poems composed by Irving Layton. Although the poems in this collection highlight the persecution, oppression and exploitation of Jewish people, the substance of these poems is closely associated with the sufferings of oppressed and down trodden humanity anywhere on this planet.

In the present paper, we study the salient features of this collection associated with the humanitarian theme selecting the main kernel of a few poems composed by Irving Layton. Also, we identify the basic concepts of these poems in the age old Vedic scriptures. This study paves the way to explore some other valuable themes in the poems of Irving Layton.

A collection of poems entitled *Fortunate Exile* composed by Irving Layton has a deep significance for humanity. It is beyond dispute that Jewish people have the longest record of suffering, exploitation, and persecution on this planet. It is well known that they were uprooted from their native land by the Roman legions and ever since have been wandering from place to place for the sake of a safe shelter. The poet considers all those Jews as fortunate, who escaped the pogrom and holocaust during the Nazi regime in Germany. He writes, (5 : 99),

I was not there  
When you ripped open the bellies  
of pregnant women.  
Nor when you laughed uproariously  
at the spectres

clawing one another for offal.  
 I was not there when you made skeletons  
 dance for you  
 and grief-crazed Jewesses to sing.

This collection of 128 poems entitled *Fortunate Exile* was published by Irving Layton in the year 1987. Although in a number of poems it narrates the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi Germans during the Second World War against the innocent, peace loving and industrious Jewish people, it has universal appeal for all the oppressed, exploited, tortured and enslaved human beings living anywhere on this planet. Layton firmly believed in the power of 'Fighting Words' (2, p. 309) to set right this unjust world. He was a bard of oppressed humanity to provide will power and determination to shake off the lethargy and react forcefully against all kind of exploitation.

Layton's writings are closely associated with his Jewish roots and family background uprooted from a remote Romanian village, named 'Tirgul Neamt', situated at the foot of Carpathian mountains mainly due to fiercely anti-Jewish government and oppressive tyranny of the majority Christian population. As early as 1913, the family migrated to Montreal in Canada, but discrimination persisted even in the country of emigration too. As Elspeth Cameron writes, (2 : 20-21):

They (Jews) were excluded from heavy industries, and from positions in many large firms and elsewhere; they were ineligible for clubs and hotels and other recreational facilities, where business contacts are often made and maintained; some companies refused to employ them.

Living under such circumstances, Layton had a variety of experiences, which used to appear in his poems according to the

demand of the theme. From the very beginning of his literary career, he always had great sympathy for the poor, downtrodden and oppressed people irrespective of their tribe, clan and creed. His collection of poems under the title 'Fortunate Exile' amply demonstrates his thoughts remonstrating the tyranic rule against the weak and helpless people. The poet is so much upset from the wide spread violence and bloodshed that he is longing to return to primitive times. In his poem entitled 'Adam', he expresses his desire in the form (5 : 126):

I wish we could go back  
 to the beginning.  
 When there were no hospitals  
 and no Churches dispensing  
 the analgesics of religion,  
 and no bloated greedy guts  
 stuffing their diseased bladders  
 with paper money and gold.

The poet wishes to escape to a world without hospitals and churches, which dispense people the analgesics of religion. He is fed up of bloated greedy guts, who fill up their coffers with paper money and gold by corrupt methods.

The poet appreciates a world of his imagination, which was in existence (5 : 126) :

Before Caesar crossed the Rubicon  
 because there was no Rubicon to cross  
 and no Alexander the Dardanelles  
 because there was no Dardanelles  
 and no Alexander handsome and made,  
 no Darius, no Sarpedon, no Xerxes.

The poet dislikes the kings and their armies, who forcibly subjugate people for the selfish ends and curtail their freedom. A great Hindi poet, Ramadhari Singh Dinakar, presents the pertinent question (3 : 82), :

“कौन यहाँ राजा किसका है ?  
किसकी कौन प्रजा है ?

नर ने होकर भ्रमित स्वयं ही  
यह बन्धन सिरजा है ।”

*kaun yahâm râjâ kiskâ hai ?*

*kisak» kaun prajâ hai ?*

*nar ne hokar bhramit svayam hi*

*yaha bandhana sirajâ hai.*

(That is, who is king and who are subjects ? Man has created this bondage due to his own illusion)

Layton imagines a situation, when he is alone with the God and talks freely about the creation of this universe. He writes :(5 : 127):

There's only God and myself  
in the cool first evening in Eden  
discussing his fantastic creation,  
the moon and the stars,  
and the enveloping stillness.

About the woman  
he has in mind for me  
we talk softly and for a long time  
and very, very carefully.

In this verse the poet is in one to one correspondence with the God, which indicates that peaceful natural atmosphere appeals to him by its harmony and he thinks according to his conscience about

the creation of universe without any imposed postulate. The surroundings of scenes selected by the poet as a venue to meet the God is sacrosanct from time immemorial. Yajurveda, for instance, categorically ordains (9 : 330):

“उपह्वरे गिरीणं संगमे च नदीनाम् ।

धिया विप्रो अजायत् ।।

*(upahvare gir»<sup>a</sup> am sangame ca nadinâm |  
dhiya vipro ajâyat.)*

(That is, in the solitude of mountains and confluence of streams a learned person develops his spiritual power for contemplation on God.)

But sensing in the real physical world, the poet is much depressed on fall of the garden of Eden. He laments (5 : 18):

The garden of Eden  
After the fall  
too traumatized to flutter a wing  
butterflies and birds drape  
the gangrenous vegetation  
like monstrous black snow flakes.

Although in allegorical form, in the above verses the poet describes the pitiable condition of the people of Israel. Their hey day is bygone and they appear as (5 : 18) :

The sour taste of themselves  
is manifest on their mouths,  
in their unfocussed stare.  
From them joy long ago has fled  
Living, they are as dead.

The poet points out that the exiled people of Israel have no solace in any corner of the world. They are aliens to it as spirit to human body. He asserts (5 : 14):

Exiled into the world  
you are aliens in it  
as spirit is alien.  
For the cosmos itself framed you  
to mock God's pretense  
to infinite Justice and Love.

The philosophical lore that spirit is alien to the material world is an age old Vedic concept. Atharvaveda, for instance, categorically declares (1 : 419):

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया  
समानं व क्षं परि भास्वजाते ।  
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादवत्त्यन  
ऽश्नन् न ऽन्यो अभि चाकशीति ॥  
dvâ supar<sup>a</sup> â sayujâ sakhâyâ  
samânam vrk-am pari ॥asv<sup>1</sup>jate|  
tayoranyah pippalam sv<sup>1</sup>dvattyan  
's' nna 'nyo abhi c<sup>1</sup>ka-iti||

(That is, living together, knit with bonds of friendship, possessing fine knowledge and power are God and soul like two birds, dwell on the same pippal tree (of Matter). One of the twain, the soul, eats the sweet fruit of its actions, the other, God, eating not, acts as a seer.)

This verse preaches that the soul may enjoy the sorrow and happiness of this material world, while remaining alien to it.

Ever since the Roman capture of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E. the dispersion of Jewish people from their hearth and home

forms an integral part of the pathetic history of Europe and the semitic land. Layton, in the poem entitled 'Galilean', presents such a pathetic picture of the fleeing Jews from their homeland that it is more than enough to shake the soul of any sensible human being. He writes (5 : 47):

Past houses, past barren outlying hill  
there's nothing for his eyes to see....nothing,  
and nothing is in the red folds of the sky,  
no Father's voice to call or comfort him  
though they'd raised him high enough to hear it,  
only the demented noise of the insect  
and below that, the Roman soldiers  
dicing loudly for his mud-bespattered garments.

The poet, in the above verse, laments that at the hour of great peril the fleeing Jews, disappointed from all sides, raised their voice in the prayer of God for saving them, but all in vain. They could hear only the demented noise of the insects above and Roman soldiers below dicing loudly for his mud-covered garments. The anguished poet, therefore, puts a prominent question (5 : 136) :

Where is the Almighty  
if murder thrives?"

Samaveda, on the other hand, categorically states (7 : 116) :

"आ घा गमद्यदि श्रवत्सहस्रिणीभिरुतिभिः ।  
वाजेभिरुप नो हवम् ।।"  
'a ghâ gamadyadi sravatsahasri<sup>a</sup> »bhirutibhij|  
vâjebhirup no havam|'.

(That is, if God will hear our call, He will come with succour of a thousand kinds, and with riches.)

Thus the above statement implies that the God does not hear the cries of the oppressed and downtrodden, because (5 : 78) :

Your cries of torment  
are what keep the Almighty  
from hearing his sobs.

The jubilant cries of the oppressors and murderers, on the other hand, leave no space for the sobs of humanity. The poet, therefore, implores to Jesus Christ (5 : 72) :

Your stoutest, most selfless partisans in Europe  
laboured nearly two thousand years  
to twist your Cross into the Swastika  
that tore into our flesh like a fish hook.

The poet puts forward in nut shell the history of the Jewish oppression by Swastika for more than two thousand years. Persecuted and uprooted by the adherents of the great religions born in the semitic land, the Jews were scattered throughout the world to keep their body and soul together. They were barred by a number of rulers from owning land and from taking part in industry. Surrounded within congested ghettos and narrow lanes, the Jewish people have demonstrated wonderful vitality and energy to maintain the continuity of their racial and cultural traditions, the age old rituals and social systems. The survival and flourishing of the Jewish people paves the way for the progress of all tormented humanity on this planet.

The poet has great compassion even for a wounded fox lying in a pool of his own blood. He writes (5 : 34),

The little fox  
was lying in a pool of blood,  
having gnawed his way out to freedom.  
Or the farm hand,

seeing his puny, unprofitable size  
had slugged him after with a rifle butt.  
And he had crawled  
to the country roadside  
where I came upon him,  
his fur dust - covered.

The grief-stricken poet at the suffering of the little fox consoles him (5 : 95),

Ghost of small fox,  
hear me, if you're hovering close  
and watching this slow  
red tickle of your blood.  
Man sets even  
more terrible traps for his own kind.  
Be at peace,  
your gnawed leg will be well-revenged.

It is interesting to mention here that in the hoary past a great Sanskrit scholar, Valmiki, at dawn was going to take bath in the holy river 'Tamasâ'. In the way on a tree two 'Kraunch Birds' were engaged in love. A hunter aimed at the male-bird and shot him down. The female-bird, full of grief, cried loudly. Valmiki could not bear this gross injustice against a hapless bird and cursed the hunter :

"मा नि ाद प्रति तामि त्वम् गमः ाश्वती त्मा ।  
यत्क्रौन्च मिथुना देकं वधिः काम मोहिताम् ॥"  
'*mâ niâda pratis-hâm tvam gamah sâ-vati samâ|*  
*yatkraunca mithunâdekam vadhih kâma mohitâm||*'

(That is, O Hunter! having killed a Kraunca mesmerized in love, you must not survive for long time.)

Maharsi (Great Scholar) Valmiki had renounced this physical world and was leading a life of austerity and penance. Nevertheless, he could not tolerate the killing of an innocent bird by a hunter and cursed him to die soon. In an analogous case, Irving Layton observes an innocent fox lying in a pool of his own blood hit by someone by a rifle butt. The fox was left there to die due to his puny and unprofitable size. Watching slow red trickle of blood from the fragile body of the fox, the furious poet pledges that the injustice perpetrated against the helpless fox will not go unrevenged. The poet is perplexed by the cruelty perpetrated by the human beings on their own kind. The crime and cruelty of man surpasses even that of ferocious animals. In the form of a beautiful poem with pleasant rhythm and rhyme, he writes (5 : 88-89):

I tell my class  
 What man can do  
 No cobra can  
 And no wild dog.  
 Or other kinds  
 Of Vicious beast  
 The prowling wolf  
 And the mongoose.  
 Strong in cunning  
 and implacably cruel  
 Man slays his kind,  
 kills them without pity or remorse.  
 Yet their numbers increase  
 till they cover the earth.

The poet highlights the exploitation, oppression and slaying of man by man without any compassion, which is not confined merely to Jewish people, but is wide spread on the global level. Man is said

to be the crown of the creation of God. But his sadistic pleasure and cruelty can surpass any ferocious animal on this planet. In a poetic form, Layton combines artistic consciousness with those humanitarian problems, which has been tarnishing the image of true mankind from time immemorial. Irving Layton, a poet deeply involved with the problems of humanity, cannot remain impervious to the suffering of the people. He categorically declares (5 : 16):

I write for the young man, demented,  
 who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima,  
 I write for Nasser and Ben Gurion,  
 For Kruschev and President Kennedy,  
 for the Defense Secretary  
 voted forty-six billions for the extirpation  
 of humans everywhere.  
 I write for the Polish officers machine-gunned  
 in the Katyn forest,  
 I write for the gassed, burnt, tortured,  
 and humiliated everywhere.

In this verse the poet manifests his passion to embrace the reality of this physical world and aversion for all those who hurt the humanity in any form. During the Second world War, when Atom Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima without any warning, thousands of innocent civilians were killed on the spot and a large number of persons died in due course due to radiation. The poet pledges to write about these hapless people. He writes about the murder of Polish officers in the Katyn forest by the Soviet soldiers. He declares to write for the gassed, burnt, tortured and humiliated everywhere on the earth. The poet condemns all those poets, who write in appreciation of oppressors and tyrants. He calls them toadies and trained seals. The poet writes (5 : 16):





any one and no desire for revenge even against the oppressors. He suggests to the youths (5 : 144):

Reflect well on this, my sons :  
that when you look and speak like a god,  
your face handsome for the sun  
your eyes bright with health and goodness  
and the ventricles of your heart  
dilating with goodwill for all mankind.

In the above verse the poet seems to share his intimate thoughts with the youths for the welfare of the humanity. He endeavours to motivate them to shake off the animosity, if any, and develop good will for all mankind. In modern times, when socio-economic formations are changing rapidly, the poet tries to inculcate the positive human values among the youths. The poet manifests the idea that hatred and enmity can be overcome by compassion and love more easily than by reciprocated enmity and hate. As a great philosopher, Spinoza, categorically writes (4 : 139),

He who wishes to revenge injuries by reciprocal hatred will live in misery. But he who endeavours to drive away hatred by means of love, fights with pleasure and confidence, he resists equally one or many men, and scarcely needs at all the help of fortune. Those whom he conquers yield joyfully. Minds are conquered not by arms but by greatness of soul.

These are the age old ideas of non-violence and compassion for the welfare of humanity. Srimad Bhagavadgita appreciates these qualities in the form (8 : 151-152),

“अहिंसा सत्यम क्रोधस्त्यागः तात्तिरपैशुनम् ।  
दया भूते व लोलुप्तवं मार्दवं हर चापलम् ।।”  
'ahimsâ satyam krodhastyâgah santir paisunam|

*daya bhutesva loluptvam mârdava hriracâpalam||* '

(That is, non-violence in thought, word and deed - truthfulness geniality of speech, absence of anger even on provocation, compassion towards all creatures, mildness and abstaining from frivolous pursuits are the mark of those who are born with the divine gifts.)

The poet, in a sarcastic way, presents the hollowness of a historical enmity between Jews and Christians during an imagery talk with an Anglican priest, who states (5 : 46),

Every unbelieving Jew  
puts another nail in our Lord's cross,  
you're all guilty for his death  
each one of you, now and always.

The poet protests, "Is Yehudi Menuhin also guilty?" Pleading his innocence, the poet says (5 : 46),

At least I'm in good company  
with Spinoza, Freud, Disraeli Gertrude Stein  
and immortal Einstein.  
Further, he puts a pertinent question (5 : 46):  
Is the death of Socrates on all Greeks  
and that of poor  
Joan on all Englishmen?

The priest is unrelenting and, ultimately, the poet asserts: "Not Jeshua but each racked Jew /in on that cross."

Although the poems in *Fortunate Exile* point out towards the unending sufferings of Jewish people, these provide universal appeal for the entire humanity on this planet either in the form of oppressor or oppressed. The poet in the form of beautiful verses condemns the victimization of poor, exploited and down trodden

persons on a global level. He cannot remain aloof to the torture, exploitation and violence perpetrated against the innocent human beings.

Although the persecution and suffering of the Jewish people occupy a prominent position in the poems entitled 'Fortunate Exile', these 'fighting words' of the poet have moral effect at the global level for Jews and non-Jews both. The poet with his vivid and forceful description of the sadistic cruelty perpetrated against the Jews attracts the attention of all noble souls and impress them to think deeply about the human perversity, cruelty, exploitation and oppression against innocent people. The poet, of course, is not pessimistic at all. He visualizes a bright future for the mankind with peace, prosperity and happiness on this planet. The poet categorically writes (6 : 79),

One day, my love,  
a blessed day will come  
when there will be no war  
between intellect and instinct.

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Madhavi Nikam

## **Mental Disorders and Alienation in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks***

Frantz Fanon in his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* has analysed the consequences of colonialism on the African minds as he considers it as resulted in mental disorders and psychological alienation of the colonized people. He as a psychiatrist and a political revolutionist has personally experienced the effects of colonialism during his participation in the war in the French army. While analyzing the psychology of colonialism and its effects in the same book he has concentrated and examined how colonialism has been internalized by the colonized, an inferiority complex is inculcated and through the mechanism of racism, black people end up emulating their oppressors.

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Frantz Fanon, born in 1925 in Carribbia then the French territory of Martinique was a psychiatrist and political theorist, revolutionary in Africa. He, as a psychiatrist, has studied as well as experienced the psychological consequences of colonialism on the African people. His book *Black Skin, White Masks* is the result of his own experiences of colonialism and in it as LaRose Parris says that he “ostensibly employs psychoanalytic methods to probe the colonized subject’s “abnormal” psyche” (LaRose 6). It describes how colonialism has its deep psychic effects on the mind of Africans which resulted in mental disorders and alienation of the colonized. Besides in understanding and analysing the mental disorders and alienation of the black people, for Fanon, Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis helped him to investigate the psychological process

of colonialism and its effects on the mind of the colonized and the colonizers.

In order to understand Fanon’s psychological investigation of colonialism in his *Black Skin, White Masks*, it is first essential to discuss the evolution and definition of the concept of alienation because it is the result of colonial policies and dominance of the colonizers and is closely connected with the mental disorders of the colonized people. Alienation, as an online Oxford dictionary defines it as “the state or experience of being alienated: a sense of alienation from our environment unemployment may generate a sense of political alienation” (Oxford Dictionary). Further, Webster’s online dictionary also defines it as “a state of being cut off or separate from a person or group of people” (Webster). In short, it is a state or an experience of being alienated or isolated or a distance or separation from one’s natural environment as well as social and cultural human relations due to outsider’s exploitation and dominance. It may be social, personal, cultural, economic or psychological. From the Marxist point of view alienation is concerned with “a condition of workers in a capitalist economy, resulting from a lack of identity with the products of their labour and a sense of being controlled or exploited” (Oxford Dictionary). However, Renate Zahar argues when her discussion of colonialism and alienation and the application of Marxist concept of alienation to colonial situation in her work *Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and Alienation* as she says:

To begin with it has to be clarified whether the concept of alienation as evolved by Marxist can be applied to the colonial situation, and whether the colonies, or the countries of the Third World in general, can be aptly analysed with reference to the economic categories Marx derived from the capitalist commodity production, or whether the criteria of pre-capitalist

conditions of production are not actually more suitable. (Zahar 1)

Renate Zahar, further, when she discusses Marx's concept of alienation while considering man's self-alienation in the same book states:

Man is alienated from himself, since under capitalist conditions of production he is incapable of objectifying himself through labour: 'Alienation manifests itself both through the fact that my means of subsistence belongs to another, that the object of my desire is the inaccessible property of another, and through the fact that each object as well as my own activity is alien to itself, since everything and everybody, the capitalist not excluded, is dominated by an inhuman power. (Zahar 5)

In fact, Marx's concept of alienation is concerned with an economic process of the capitalist society which always attempts to control the economic power in their own hands while suppressing and dominating the other people. Besides, Fanon is not concerned with an economic alienation which is described by Marx but he is concerned with an intellectual or psychic alienation which is resulted into mental disorders of the black people. So he before proceeding towards his analysis of the Blacks in his *Black Skin, White Masks* says that "I am speaking here, on the other hand, of alienated (duped) blacks, and, on the other hand, of no less alienated (duping and duped) whites" (17). At another place he states about his theme of the book:

My theme being the disalienation of the black man, I want to make him feel that whenever there is a lack of understanding between him and his fellows in the presence of the white man there is a lack of judgment.

A Senegalese learns Creole in order to pass as an Antilles native: I call this alienation. (25)

Colonialism, for Fanon, has created a sense of mental disorder and intellectual alienation of the colonized people. There is a close relation between alienation and colonialism because the colonizers have always spread disparities in the colonized countries. They have created inferiority and superiority complexes among the colonized. About his concern with an intellectual alienation and an individual's inability to understand and develop himself and his potentials, Zahar says:

As the absolute inability of the individual to recognize and develop himself and his own potentialities, alienation always has both economic and intellectual aspects. Fanon's interest is mainly focused on an analysis of intellectual alienation (*alienation intellectuelle*). (Zahar 14)

The colonial situation first created a sense of economic alienation of the colonized people. In this context Zahar further states about his conception of alienation as "all colonized people are subjected to the economic conditions of alienation, which he considers the constitutive elements of psychological phenomena of alienation; however, certain types of intellectual alienation can also appear in various forms in most of the colonized" (Zahar 14). Further, LaRose Parris writes that "a colonial subject, himself, Fanon understood colonialism as the historical, ideological and material deviation that breeds what he terms psychological "disalienation" or (alienation) in colonized subject" (Parris 8). While, when Gerald Taiaiake Alfred in his paper "Colonialism and State Dependency" when he discusses the effects of colonialism states that "in Fanon's analysis, colonized people who mimic the ways of the colonizer – who assimilate to the mainstream -and suppress their natural selves on a conscious and

unconscious level begin to suffer from various psychological disorders” (Fanon, 1982, Alfred 48). Besides, Nigel Gibson argues that “in the colonial situation, Fanon maintains that the native acts in a way akin to a neurosis. If dream formation is the retrogressive movement of a desire, tracing the dream backward reveals the source of the neurosis” (Gibson 9).

Ziauddin Sardar in his foreword states that how a black man’s psyche is distorted and alienates him from his fellow Negroes citing from Fanon’s book. For instance, he says:

When the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man. It is the dynamic of inferiority that concerns Fanon; and which ultimately he wishes to eliminate. This is the declared intention of his study: to enable the man of color to understand . . . the psychological elements that can alienate his fellow Negro. (xiii)

There is a severe effect of colonialism on the lives of the Black people because it has psychologically changed the psychic structure of the blacks and alienated them from their own self, language, culture and traditions. When he treats his patients and discusses the subjects of his study he says that how normal people can behave abnormally due the colonial situations and the attitudes of the whites towards the Negroes as he states:

. . . the subject of our study is the dupes and those who dupe them, the alienated, and that if there are white men who behave naturally when they meet Negroes, they certainly do not fall

within the scope of our examination. If my patient’s liver is functioning as it should, I am not going to take it for granted that his kidneys are sound. Having found the liver normal, I leave it to its normality, which is normal, and turn my attention to the Kidneys: As it happens, the kidneys are diseased. Which means simply that, side by side with normal people who behave naturally in accordance with a human psychology, there are others who behave pathologically in accordance with an inhuman psychology. (19-20)

He further while discussing the relationship between the man of color and the white woman, he states that the character of “Jean Veneuse is a neurotic, and his color is only an attempt to explain his psychic structure. If this objective difference had not existed, he would have manufactured it out of nothing” (57). Besides this, he asserts:

He is neurotic who needs to be emancipated from his infantile fantasies. And I contend that Jean Veneuse represents not an example of black-white relations, but a certain mode of behavior in a neurotic who by coincidence is black. So the purpose of our study becomes more precise to enable the man of color to understand, through specific examples, the psychological elements that can alienate his fellow Negroes. (58)

The blacks are always suffering from the neurotic changes in the structure. And for Frantz Fanon, this neurotic structure of an individual black is one of “simply an elaboration, the formation, the eruption within the ego, of conflictual clusters arising in part out of the environment and in part out of the purely personal way in which that individual reacts to these influences” (59). So, he at another place states that how a black man stops functioning when he “makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place.

If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an actional person” (119). On the other side, while investigating the psychopathology of the Negroes, he says that even a normal child who has been born and brought up in a normal family environment becomes abnormal with the slightest contact with the white world. Immediately, he starts behaving differently than previously. His ego collapses and suffers from the psychic disorders as not being a white.

The colonial situation has also created a sense of inferiority complex among the Negroes and the white superiority complex, according to Fanon. This kind of inferiority has led to the blacks' alienation and neurotic changes. Therefore he states that:

This work represents the sum of the experiences and observations of seven years; regardless of the area I have studied, one thing has struck me: The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation. Therefore I have been led to consider their alienation in terms of psychoanalytical classifications. The Negro's behavior makes him akin to an obsessive neurotic type, or, if one prefers, he puts himself into a complete situational neurosis. In the man of color there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence. Whenever a man of color protests, there is alienation. (43)

Fanon's investigation of the colonial situation and the psychic suffering of the blacks leads us to understand how since the entry of the white man into the African land, the neurotic process of the black has begun, how his ego collapses immediately and he too suffers because of his desire to be white. The colonial situation has made psychic changes in the mind of the blacks. And due to this he suffers

from mental disorders for not being a white man. This is what Fanon asserts that resulted and reflected through dreams. For instance, Fanon says when he treats his patient who tells him what he sees in his dream:

I had been walking for a long time, I was extremely exhausted, I had the impression that something was waiting for me, I climbed barricades and walls, I came into an empty hall, and from behind a door I heard noise. I hesitated before I went in, but finally I made up my mind and opened the door. In this second room there were white men, and I found that I too was white. (74)

This dream of the patient implies that how deeply the Negroes are suffering from the mental disorders since their contact with the white world and their desire to be a White. This has also led them to accept an inferior position and how severely his psychic structure is in danger of disintegration.

Thus to sum up, Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin White Masks* has investigated the psychology of colonialism and how it has resulted into mental disorders and alienation of the Black people in African countries. According to Fanon the black man as soon as he comes into contact with the white world he starts behaving differently. His ego collapses immediately and he began to behave like a neurotic person who is suffering from mental illness. He has further discussed not an economic and political alienation in this book but one of an intellectual alienation. Fanon thus has depicted that how colonialism has resulted into mental disorders and an intellectual alienation of the Black man in this book.

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Anuradha Bhattacharya

### **Difficult Mothers: *The Lowland* as a Study of Changing Trends in Indian Women**

The women's issues are manifold. They have competed for recognition of their brains, their prowess and their managerial instincts. Women have fought for equal rights in decision making at home as well as in the society, by way of representation in governing bodies. In all these issues, women have identified men to be their antagonists. It is patriarchy, male chauvinism and many more such attitudes of society that women have been considering as hindrance to their growth as individuals.

Jhumpa Lahiri has focused on a woman who is not taking up women's issues as her concern. She is merely being herself. Although in the greater part of the narrative, she remains unfocussed about her goals, she is vibrant and decisive about certain steps she takes in the course of her life. For these decisions she takes no one into consideration, consults no one, needs no one's permission or approval, but carries on determinedly out of her own accord, to satisfy her spirit, feeding her instincts and her intellect both by turns. But in doing so she turns out to be a difficult mother.

The children have never been treated as entities directly in conflict with the mother. In Manju Kapoor's *Difficult Daughters*, we encounter a woman whose sole occupation is reproduction and feeding of her young ones. In her daughter we see a woman who revolts against this role. She is difficult because she cannot gel with the institutions in a proper, more regulated way. She tries to be an individual but in the course becomes wayward. In Arundhati Roy's

masterpiece, the woman acts whimsically when she marries a man from an altogether different community and when divorced, she again falls in love with a man from a different community. That is a woman's revolt against societal norms, the dictates of her family and the claustrophobia ensuing from that. In being a woman, in claiming her body as her own and in wandering off at her own sweet will, and in forgetting that her children hang on to her words and her actions for sustenance every step of their growth, she is merely being herself. So she is still a woman at war with the society and harming her beloved children only as a side effect.

A difficult mother is at war with her own child. Gauri in *The Lowland*, sees her child as a burden, a restriction and pushes the child away from her by several maneuvers. She encourages the child to be independent prematurely. She lies to her. She steals time away from her. She plays hide and seek with her and she discourages her attachment to her. She wrings her hand off the clasp of the tender hands of her child. In this way she recognizes the antagonist in her child, rather than in her husband or in the society. She views the child as a binding, as a bidding relation whose wishes are her command and she has to disobey these injunctions to be free, to be herself, to be independent.

With Bela, she was aware of time not passing... She was failing at something every other woman on earth did without trying. That should not have proved a struggle. Even her own mother, who had not fully raised her, had loved her; of that there had been no doubt. But Gauri feared she had already descended to a place where it was no longer possible to swim up to Bela, to hold on to her. [163-4]

On a particular day when her child refuses to go to school Gauri resents it. "Another mother might have indulged her... let her

stay home, skip a day of school. Another mother, spending the time with her, might not have considered it a waste." [169]

The child grows up to offer her free space. Bela is not grown up enough to roam around on her own, but Gauri allows her.

Bela had prided herself on being unsupervised, finding the way home without having to ask. . . She'd mentioned nothing of these occasions to her father. Knowing that he would have worried, she'd kept them a secret from him. . . these afternoons remained a bond between Bela and her mother, a closeness based on the fact that they spent the time apart. She'd given her mother those hours to herself, not wanting to fail at this, not wanting to threaten this link. [203]

It is pathetic to see how the child is deceived about the loveless relationship between her mother and father. "Every morning she went upstairs, down the short hallway, and knocked on her parents' door to tell her mother she was leaving (for school), not wanting to disturb her mother but also hoping she'd been heard." Until one morning she discovers that Gauri actually slept in her study and her father slept alone in the bedroom. [ 204]

It has been observed by critics that *The Lowland* is a reproduction of the atmosphere in Calcutta during the Naxalite Movement of the early nineteen seventies. The novel opens with an acute observation of the life of two brothers, who are intelligent and sensitive individuals. They are good scholars irrespective of their humble upbringing. They pursue their goals independently. They pursue their women too, independently and they treat their feminine partners as equal.

The dominant woman construct in this book is Gauri. She is wooed and married by one brother who dies in two years and then



the other brother proposes to her that to escape the atmosphere in Calcutta, she should accompany him to America as his wife. In 1972 for a woman to agree to this proposal itself is an act of willfulness. And all her life she avowedly acknowledges that she never loved the second husband. The picture of a selfish woman intensifies when she stays on in this loveless relationship as long as she is a student. The moment she gets a job in a different part of the country, she runs away. She abandons her child and sneaks off leaving only a letter behind. [210-13]

In India, gratitude is uppermost in a woman's virtue. It may be misconstrued, created by a male dominated society to keep a woman subordinated, inferior as well as humiliated in many ways, but women exalt in being grateful to the man who 'saved' her life or the man who rescued her from distress. Gauri is far from grateful. She only takes advantage. [175]

On the flip side, Gauri is a brilliant scholar. She is rather ashamed of her callousness about family and child but passionately pursues her study of philosophy as well as the independence she has earned through it. She refrains from keeping in touch with professor Otto Weiss who had initiated her into pursuing the doctoral program on Hegel and who used to ask her often how her child was. She avoids the professor so that she does not form a bad impression on him. It has no link to the child as such.

Gauri never enquires about the child's wellbeing. She writes in her farewell letter that she believes that Subhash, its uncle-cum-step-father was the best father it could have got. She even ignores the fact that the child is a daughter on the verge of reaching the age of puberty, a twelve year old girl who needs a mother's guidance most at this time.

While Gauri lived in California and he in Rhode Island, Subhash never contacted her. "It appalled him that she had never contacted Bela, never sent a note. That her heart could be so cold." [223]

Gauri is ambitious so far as her passion for philosophy is depicted. It comes to her naturally, as a kind of love, not in the form of rebellion against norms, the Indian society of the 1970s. However, her swift transition from being an Indian wife to an Americanized woman is not associated with her love for philosophy. It is more of an assertion of her detachment from home and in this she actually does not belong either to India or to America.

Gauri's behaviour is explained in the last chapters of the novel. She acts as a woman who has disadvantageously confused her love for her first husband and the guilt of having plotted in killing a man, the father of a boy. It was a guilt she shared with her first husband and therefore, when the child of her love is born, she cannot hold her and cry like the woman in Tennyson's memorable poem, *Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead* with 'Sweet my child, I live for thee'. She is loyal to her first husband both in love and in guilt.

Real life does not allow a human being to cling to the ephemeral past lifelong. The plot of the novel hinges on this prolonged adherence to the past which was a period of about three years in Gauri's life. Compared to that, any human being who has been treated kindly and lovingly by a husband and a child she has borne, that too who is by blood the child of the earlier beloved husband, would not fail to reciprocate that kindness and love. She suffers no clash with any authority, no restraints on her movements, no norms to kill her ambition, no husbandly jealousy to encounter and still she fails to be a good mother. That is how she turns out to be a difficult mother who refuses to take any responsibility or to sacrifice her ambition for the sake of the child. The child is her only adversary in this novel.

The weakness of the novel also rests on the same hinge. The narrative struggles to sympathize with Gauri but it is ingrained in the art of the novel to betray a deeper truth. It is by far the story of a woman who cannot be sympathized with. An American woman, Holly too takes her child's wellbeing into account regarding every decision she takes. When he recounts to her how frightened his parents were when once as children he and his brother had high fever, Holly says to Subhash, "That's what happens when you become a parent... Time stops when something threatens them. The meaning goes away." [78]

Gauri's daughter, Bela too looks forward to a relationship where her child's happiness would be taken into account. [pp. 264-5] The novel details the difference between the occasional flings to feed the senses and love that involves care and concern. Bela bears the child of a man who had no love to spare. Later on she finds a friendly man as a caring companion. The fine distinction between having parents who love each other and parents who only tolerate each other is drawn in this novel to show that blood ties do not matter for the child. The child loves only those who love it.

Wedge between Holly's attitude and Bela's maternal attitude, Gauri's decisions and actions are unforgivable, irrespective of the episode of the murder of a policeman that comes up later by way of an explanation to her unusual conduct.

Gauri and her lover were involved in an aimless murder of a young policeman, only to get him out of the way so as to be able to hide political activists. In doing so, they render his son fatherless. The couple cannot overcome the guilt of this murder. The night following the murder of the policeman, the night before the police killed him, Udayan in fever, says: "I can't become a father, Gauri... Not after what I've done." [322]

How an Indian woman, who has been late by over a century, compared to the women in America, in growing awareness regarding the injustices that she has been taking for granted, would read this novel is a rather dicey question. Most Indians who are ingrained in the virtues of loyalty and gratitude would click their tongues. Most educated and working women would long to have a husband like Subhash who gives Gauri immeasurable personal space. Almost all Indian women who have borne children would be appalled by the fact that whoever her husband might be, so long as it is one's own child, there is no possibility of Gauri being callous and irresponsible the way it is depicted in the novel. In India there is only a small fraction of the Indian society who has suddenly developed this opinion that raising a child is a great responsibility and an ambitious woman does not want to have a baby at all. But this disinclination to bear a child is a growing trend of the present. Jhumpa Lahiri has situated her story in the nineteen seventies and eighties and created the image of a woman who is born Indian but who quickly adopts a western attitude in dress and bearing. Pretty much in a forced hindsight, Lahiri foresees the beginning of this trend. Critically thinking, this miscalculated foresight is perhaps the result of her trying to juxtapose the two themes of the historical Naxalite Movement and the woman's issue.

*The God of Small Things* is a story based on the same period of the Naxalite Movement. The central conflict is social. It is the story of a union between a Touchable and an Untouchable that the society does not permit. The twins with whom the author's empathy is invariable are victims of the punishment their mother suffers in the hands of society. There is no other clash between the mother and the children. They are loved by her lover and they like him very much. They are not represented as burdens on her, nor do they in any way restrict her freedom. Whatever she does, even to gain her freedom,

she includes them as part of her. There is no question of a mother wishing or trying to abandon the children. The entire novel receives the sympathy of the reader on account of the various depictions of love in every quarter of the society. *The Lowland*, by comparison, depicts calculated love in almost everyone. This is also true of the parents of Subhash and Udayan. They cannot overcome the shock of being abandoned by their sons. However, the relationship that triumphs at the end is that of Bela and her step-father Subhash, which is selfless love. It is as if the role which a woman is attempting to relinquish in order to secure her independence is getting into full view. The role is so important that if she abandons it, the father has to take it up immediately. Earlier it could be assumed that the father was more or less an incompetent and less asked for parent. He stayed on the frontiers, guarding the family from the world outside. He loved but expressed it in unfamiliar terms. So the child clung to its mother. It recognized her as the object of its love only because she attended to its daily needs. Now it can be assured that if the father too attends as much to a child, the child is bound to acknowledge his love. This does not basically set the mother free. It only helps the mother in some ways. The tie between the mother and the child is umbilical.

Thus, if a mother severs this tie the child undergoes a trauma, needing psychotherapy as Bela does after Gauri leaves her. Bela returns to her father only after much deliberation. A woman should not refuse to take her position as mother as ordained by nature. In trying to bring gender equality in the society, it is more important for a man to assume many feminine virtues/roles than for a woman to become as thoughtless and detached from home as men are accustomed to be.

It is also a lesson worth remembering that in the animal kingdom too, gender roles are quite divided, as zoologists would

validate. It is only human species that have overcome the natural inclinations and handicaps with the help of developed technologies making everyone almost equal in caliber. But then humans have also trapped themselves in expansive philosophies.

It is truly said that unlike animals and birds, human beings have a memory and a forethought that constantly impinge on the present and the memory of bad things as well as evil foreboding always spoil happiness in the present. *The Lowland* is a remarkable tale of such human behaviour.

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Anurakti

## Costume as Language in Alice Munro Stories

Alice Munro, is a kind of Super-realist artist whose concern lies in suggestion of something significant, contained in the seemingly ordinary scenes and objects; something which is not blatantly expressed but sensitively felt and sensed by the viewer. Details in her stories gain metaphoric significance and she uses these details so vaguely and subtly which gives the impression of being a realist writer concerned only with the “Surface of life”. (Gibson 241) The full impact of these ordinary details is understood only after a careful reading which shows how interwoven these details are to the meaning and feeling of the story. One such detail is description of the clothes of her characters which this article endeavours to study in this light.

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In an Interview with Graeme Gibson, Alice Munro makes a very interesting comment about her writing and the way in which she develops her characters. “But you see that I do not write about, I can’t write about states of mind. I have to write about ... I can’t have anybody in a room without describing all the furniture you know... I can’t yet get into people or life without ... having all those other things around them.( Gibson 257)

These ‘other’ things that surround Munro’s characters and contribute to their vivid portrayals develop into images that enrich the particular theme, the meaning, or in Munro’s own world, ‘the feeling’ of the story. Munro’s stories deal with the human condition, the complexity of life, caprices of human heart, moments which change the whole course of life for its characters and alter the reader’s perspective altogether. Such subjects might need a very close

examination of the individual’s thoughts and motivations, their states of mind but Munro offers another method, more complex method of studying the human condition. She makes subtle use of details and descriptions which is very complicated. If I use the favourite verb of Munro-”seems to be”, I would say that she ‘seems to be’ excited about ‘the surface of life’. Like her own character, Del, she wants “every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark of walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together—radiant, everlasting”. Munro attempts “to get it all down”. This ‘all’ includes every little thing—be it the description of atmosphere, the surroundings, the manner of walking and talking of characters, their gestures, their clothes, their other possessions. These descriptions serve a narrative purpose; they may appear to be an unnecessary diversion that the reader wants to neglect in anticipation of what happens next or to get a privy into characters’ minds, but the reader can neglect these details at a cost. At the end, the story might baffle the reader; it might sound confusing, but once re-read, many of the seemingly stray pieces of information gain significance that readers may not at first consciously detect. One such detail is description of the clothes worn by her characters or the comments made by the narrator on the clothes of characters.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate, with excerpts from few of her stories; how her description of the clothes and dresses of characters enriches and enlarges the reader’s understanding of the story as a whole and at the same time, understanding of Alice Munro’s sensitive and intricate investigation of “the surface of life”.

One of her early stories, *Walker Brothers Cowboy*, is narrated from the point of view of a child who cannot explore the states of mind; cannot speculate or judge the things. So, it is the guileless presentation of surface and ordinary things around the daughter that

depicts the special mood and tension that exists in the Jordan family and a peek into the characters to understand the reason of this tension. Munro just details those things that the characters react to and against. Early in the story, young daughter describes the dress her mother is making for her:

“She has to cut and match very cleverly and also make me stand and turn for endless fittings, sweaty, itching from the hot wool, ungrateful”(3).

The child reacts to her mother sensually, she rejects the texture, colours and discomfort the dress causes and transmits much of this dislike to her mother. Her mother is not a housewife in “loose beltless dresses torn under the arms”(6), but a lady, whose daughter is “her creation, wretched curls and flaunting hair bow, scrubbed knees and socks”(6), all that she does “not want to be”(6).

The mother wears a “good dress” to town when she goes shopping, one that is “navy blue with little flowers, sheer, worn over a navy blue slip” (6). The mother is given to social pretension and does not spare her daughter in her desire to appear smartly dressed, socially accepted woman. Mrs. Jordan is surrounded by the superficiality, revealed through her dress, her ‘delicate condition’ and her joyless response to life. On the other hand, the images surrounding Ben Jordan are light and happy: “white shirt, brilliant in the sunlight” (7), the jokes and songs he makes up for his children. This contrast is intuitively felt by the child and the reader. We see that Ben Jordan’s gaiety is not shared by his wife but by Nora who, the child observes; wears a dress “flowered more lavishly than anything my mother owns, green and yellow on brown, some sort of floating sheer crepe, leaving her arms bare”(11). The riot of colors which Nora chooses contrasts the subdued, elegant costuming of Mrs. Jordan. This contrast in costuming along with some other images in the story reflects the

contrast in both the personalities and also explains in whose company Mr. Jordan feels happier and thus what is the cause of all the tension at home.

In another story *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, the whole buying excursion of Johanna for the wedding dress gives us a hint of her personality. The story begins with what was once traditionally the most important expectation a fair young maiden has—marriage. However, this woman is neither young (just under forty) nor fair—”No beauty queen, ever” (2), as the agent at the railway station thinks of her, The first description we have of her is that her “teeth are crowded together in the front of her mouth” (1) and that she is a woman “with a high, freckled forehead and a frizz of reddish hair” (1). There is something grotesque about the woman’s physical appearance. And she is very well aware of all her deficiencies, she never has had high hopes for herself. When she goes into the Milady’s store and looks at the elaborate evening dresses of dreamy colours, nice fabrics and delicate embroidery, she does not feel tempted and thinks that when she was younger, she could not have contemplated such “expectations”, could not have had the “preposterous hope of transformation, and bliss” (6). When she has entered into the store, we see a mirror which reflects Munro’s sense of proportion and distortion; the mirror

“showed her in Mrs. Willet’s high-quality but shapeless long coat, with a few inches of lumpy bare legs, above the ankle socks”(6).

“They set the mirror there so you could get a proper notion of your deficiencies, right away, and then-they hoped-you would jump to the conclusion that you had to buy something to alter the picture.” Again, Munro comments, “Such a transparent trick that it would have made her walk out, if she had not come in determined, knowing what she had to get”(6).

It shows how determined she is, despite of knowing about her misfit in a certain situation, she does not budge and feels that she shall get something of her choice that fits her and even if not, she shall not go back empty handed. When she goes to Ken, all her romantic notions get shattered but determined as she is, she takes charge of the whole situation and turns everything in her favour by getting married to him.

She also seems to be well prepared for everything; she comes to the shop having “rehearsed” her request for the green dress in the window. She has worn “clean underwear and put fresh talcum powder under her arms”(7), as she knows that she has to try on different dresses, this reminds us of an event having occurred in the story earlier and one that shall happen later. When the ticket agent asks if someone is coming to meet her, she does not hesitate, but says “Yes”, although she has no knowledge that this is true. She seems so certain about the future. Later, when she reaches at Ken’s place, we see how soon she manages and takes control of things.

Here, in the store we are treated to the salesgirl’s eye for detail on fashion. But throughout, we are treated to Alice Munro’s flawless eye for detail.

“It feels as light as silk, but it wears like iron. You can see it’s lined throughout, lovely silk-and-rayon lining. You won’t find it bagging in the seat and going out of shape the way the cheap suits do. Look at the velvet cuffs and collar and the little velvet buttons on the sleeve” (7).

Johanna tries this green suit that exposes her physical figure. Once again we know that she is clearly aware of her own imperfections and is a realist. She knows that the problem isn’t the outfit, the reason why something looks off is—”her neck and her face and her hair and her big hands and thick legs” (8). She has no illusions about herself,

calling herself a “sow’s ear” regardless of the “silk purse” dress she tries on. Later in the story, we read that she knows that she cannot take anybody in, if she had been the salesgirl in the same store, she could not have attracted any customer as she cannot “entice” anyone. When she had left her previous employers, no one in the family shed any tears for her, so, just as she got the right dress, or say, the person who showed little affection to her, though in the forged letters, she decided to seize the opportunity. Johanna is not just a naïve spinster who ridiculously changes her life because of some fake letters written as a cruel joke by two nasty teenage girls. She recognizes Ken’s limits, but realizes that she can make the most of it and that by nurturing him she might in turn achieve her unspoken goal of gaining significance and of having a family. She is both a romantic and a realist.

Eventually, the salesgirl provides her with an alternative; she has sized her up (literally and metaphorically) and created a space for the new Johanna to inhabit.

“A brown wool dress, lined, with a full skirt gracefully gathered three-quarter sleeves and a plain round neckline. About as plain as you could get, except for a narrow gold belt” (8). This plain prize is exactly what she gets-Ken as a husband. “At least the skirt was a more decent length and the fabric made a noble swirl around her legs”(8). She looked in the glass. “this time she didn’t look as if she’d been stuck into the garment for a joke” (8).

Since we know that the crucial events of the story are created by a “joke” that two young women play on Johanna, we have here the first intimation of the theme of a joke that has motivated Johanna’s expectations; ultimately it is the joke that fuels her desires and gets her into a marriage with Ken, but she makes the marriage a perfect fit, just like the fit of this brown dress.

Apart from this, the specific observations that the station master has made of Johanna are also rooted in clothes to some extent. When he looks at her, she is in her long drab coat, clunky laced up shoes, ankle socks, and not stockings, she neither has a hat nor the gloves; to him, she looks like a “plainclothes nun” (5) and the new “brown wool dress” she buys is also “as plain as you could get”, affirming the likely look of such a nun. She finally serves Ken just like a nun when she finds him deadly sick and she has already served Mrs. Willets for twelve years like a nun.

In the story *Red Dress*, we feel a tension in the relationship of mother and daughter and that is sometimes revealed through the description of dresses. The narrator says, “I had worn these clothes... when I was unaware of the world’s opinion. Now grown wiser, I wished for dresses like those my friend Lonnie had, bought at Beale’s store.” Now that the daughter has grown up, she resents being a dummy to her mother; she wants to overcome the influence of her mother by saying that earlier she enjoyed wearing what her mother made for her, but now she is a young girl, having her own choices and is affected by how the world sees her.

Again in the same story, awareness of womanhood and female sexuality is described through another red dress “it was too grown-up looking... I saw how my breasts in their new stiff brasserie, jutted out surprisingly with mature authority, under the childish frills of the collar”.

In *Something I’ve been Meaning to Tell You*, Et “had set up in the dressmaking business. She had a long narrow room in the Square ... where she did all her fitting, sewing, cutting, and pressing”(62). We see that in her real life also, she uses every stuff like material; she fits Char and Arthur in her conceived design. Very early in the story, when we get to know of the means of Et’s livelihood,

we notice that “She has had a couple of promises of jackets needing letting out” (50). She alters and makes do, this is an exact parallel to the way she leads her life. In the end, she does not have a husband of her own, but she makes do with Char’s. Et is a dressmaker and Char is the wearer of the dresses. Char gets everything new and served up to her on a plate-everything except happiness while Et makes do with others’ things and achieves her own happiness.

In *Gravel*, a woman’s decision to leave her husband for a man, Neal, whom she meets in the local theatrical group, is signalled by a telltale alteration in her fashion sense: “She’d begun to dress like an actress too, in shawls and long skirts and dangling necklaces. She’d let her hair go wild and stopped wearing makeup”. Such changes, which reflect the belated influence of the era’s “liberating styles” on conventional southern Ontario, seem rebellious if we see the heroine’s situation.

Munro uses clothing as a way to convey realities that her characters face. For the women in Munro’s *Runaway*, clothing is used to convey complex realities that lie underneath. Carla is shown to be intricate and complex. The initial introduction to Carla through clothing is deceptively simple: “Carla wore a wide-brimmed old Australian felt hat, every time she went outside, and tucked her long thick braid down her shirt”. The neat and “tucked” manner of her clothing belies the challenges she feels in her marriage and in her life. The use of clothing in these descriptions is symbolic of the life that Carla leads. It is one with the outward appearance of contented domesticity, reflective of a dutiful wife who does not want to create controversy for fear of disrupting her husband’s business. However, inside like the clothes, there is something else that lingers, the frustration and loneliness. Again, when Carla tries to escape, something “doesn’t fit right” about it. This is accentuated when she confesses to Sylvia

about the troubles in her marriage and is offered a way out. Sylvia advises Carla not to go home and rather wear the clothes in Sylvia's house. Even though Carla protests that Sylvia is "ten times skinnier" than she, Carla wears Sylvia's clothes: The disjointed appearance of the clothes is reflective of how Carla is not really ever able to escape, reflective of a world in which she, like the clothes, does not fit. In Carla's case, clothing is the symbol for an emotional condition that is out of balance.

In *Passion* Grace is reflective of Carla's inability to "fit" within the contours of her life. Grace finds herself unable to escape the "old confusions and obligations" that plague her, hanging over her like the clothes that did not fit Carla. In the exposition of Grace's characterization, it becomes clear that she is at odds with the world around her. She is a working class girl, a waitress, who yearns for something more. The economic condition in which she lives prevents her from fully recognizing and achieving the wealth. Grace understands the world that Maury comes from is one of wealth and privilege, reflective of opportunities that Grace would like to experience. So when she meets him, she dresses up according to his class, his world. Grace's own subjective sense of "passion" within her identity collides with the material reality that envelops her. For Grace, this is evoked when Munro describes how she looks on her first date with Maury: "Grace was wearing a dark-blue ballerina skirt, a white blouse, through whose eyelet frills the upper curve of her breasts was visible and a wide rose-colored elasticized belt". Clothing is used to highlight a sense of "pert" and "style." Yet, this is the diametric opposite of her reality. There was a discrepancy, no doubt, between the way she presented herself and the way she wanted to be judged. But nothing about her was actually dainty or pert or polished, in the style of the time. A bit ragged around the edges, in fact; giving herself Gypsy airs, with the "very cheapest silver-painted

bangles, and the long, wild-looking, curly dark hair that she had to put into a snood when she waited on tables". Clothing covers only the grit and grime of waiting tables, of her "strong Ottawa valley accent," and a world of economic challenge. She has actually nothing but disdain for girls of that economic class. Grace uses clothing to cover her reality, one that is the embodiment of the collision between desire and reality.

In each of these settings, clothing is the means through which a protagonist's complexity is conveyed. It is reflective of something more than apparel. Munro uses clothing as a portal into the psychological nuances of her characters' sense of identity. The plot in Munro's stories is nothing more than five-six paraphrased sentences, but reading her stories thus is a great injustice to the story as well to the reader himself. There is so much more going on in the descriptions; she just seems to glory in surfaces and textures, but there is a kind of "magic about everything.....a feeling about the intensity of what is there". To feel this magic and get the deep meaning and feeling of the story, her stories demand a lot of attention, or sometimes, a re-reading and once the overall design is known, the details, in Poe's words "break out in all directions like stars, and throw quadruple brilliance over the narrative" and achieve "a gestalt like completeness in the representation of life" (Franzen).

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Y. Aparna

## Sri Aurobindo Ghose's Approach to Transcendental Levels of Consciousness

Consciousness is uniquely a busy term with its roots yet untraced to the depth of origin. It is beyond a concept explored at multi levels from scientists to Seer poets. Literature has been exploring it through the gifted poets with mystic souls. Sri Aurobindo Ghose is one such poet, a divine incarnate whose poetry ascends with superfluous levels of consciousness beginning at the Supermind reaching to the height of Supramental level of consciousness. 'Savitri' is a classic epic and the paper aims at exploring the levels of consciousness by Aurobindo connecting his philosophy and concept of spiritual consciousness making it a remarkable work not less than its source *Mahabharata*.

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For years the term 'Consciousness' has been a stirring concept for one to dive in to understand. In different disciplines of knowledge the term consciousness is defined in different connotations. Consciousness can be analyzed from two sides, from rational analysis and from internal experience. Science explores it as the awareness of all the influences of the outside world and how we perceive them or how they lay impact on us. On the other hand Psychology goes ahead by exploring it as 'an enquiry of mind.' It says that the intellectual construction of our mind demands something beyond the physical matter that appeals to our mental perception.

But it is interesting to observe that religious outlook has far wider and vast perception of consciousness which varies from all the possible scientific studies for it goes beyond all the sciences. In

Sanskrit the term 'Consciousness' is defined as 'CHAITANYAM' which means 'inner power of attaining bliss.' The religious outlook says its wisdom is beyond all imagination. If we analyze the question 'awareness of what?', we can observe three types of consciousness at three levels.

1. Material Level
2. Mental Level
3. Spiritual Level

The first basic stage with reference to the levels of consciousness is the material consciousness which is concerned with the physical aspect i.e., body. Eminent scientist Charles Darwin analyzes this level of consciousness as basic awareness found in all. This kind of objective analysis deals with consciousness as a phenomenon that exteriorizes the things that our mind perceives which eventually arrests our mind to go beyond the physical experience.

The second level of consciousness refers to mind. According to Sigmund Freud who is the Father of the Modern Psychology, our mind is structured in three stages.

1. Consciousness in wakeful stage
2. Sub conscious stage
3. Unconscious stage

If we observe the words of Sri Aurobindo who was a saint, explains the levels of mental consciousness in a vivid manner. He says that this level in a man is a progressive stage to higher consciousness. This includes a rigorous function of intellect and heart. Sometimes mind ascends and opens to higher levels close to spirituality but again falls down because a man according to Aurobindo needs a Supermind between him and the higher level of consciousness. He explains the further levels of mind ascending it towards spiritual level.

In the third level Sri Aurobindo explains about Supermind which is a connection between the world of bliss and the world of matter. According to Aurobindo, Supermind is a form of divine being itself in action. He says that when the Supermind, the Truth – consciousness in other words, manifests itself as a spirit current without projecting itself into the physical world while creating itself is the abode which we can call as the Supramental plane of consciousness. And when man is united with that power, he can reach the highest point of wisdom that our mind can possess and eventually it aspires to uplift the spirit which can attain the experience of pleasure beyond the physical senses could feel. We can observe that Sri Aurobindo felt the whirlpool of spiritual experience within him. He says "Since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences but those were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies." (1988.13) We understand that the level of consciousness in such saints is greatly higher for an average man to perceive.

Aurobindo's concept of Supermind is generated and grew as a philosophy attaining the complexity not realized by his own self. Critic S.K. Mitra says, "The conception of the Supermind is the pivot round which the whole of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy moves." (82) Aurobindo further says, "Nobody can write my life because it has not been on the surface of a man to see." (6)

Aurobindo says that, to experience that blissful level, our mind has to ascend towards higher consciousness.

If we analyze the literary shade of Sri Aurobindo, we can see that he revealed four levels of consciousness of our mind relating it to the literary expression that emerges from us.

1. Higher Mind
2. The illumined Mind
3. The Intuitive Mind
4. The Overmind

In the first level he says that Higher Mind is the initial spiritual plane. It is lofty, eminent, and influential. It influences our own self. Here one becomes aware of the self and the constant self analysis makes us ascend beyond the average level and our mind starts thinking of some force working behind it.

In the second plane, Aurobindo says that we realize that we should bring our mind under a divine vision and gradually we experience some revelations of the divine and we are surcharged with some power working behind us. In this context he talks about poetry. He says, "The outflow of the illumined mind comes in a flood brilliant with revealing words or a light of crowding images, sometimes surcharged with its burden of revelations, sometimes with a luminous sweep." (60) He says that the kind of poetry that emerges in this level is highly illumined and brilliant in expression as if witnessing some divine power within. So his poetry was eventually suffused with the refulgence of the divine power. It is instructing, enlightening and revealing. He says, "... Day after day He showed me His wonders, things were opened to me which no material science could explain." (1972.51)

In the third plane, the poetry that emerges from this level is beyond the understanding of an average man because it is a revelation of the soul's bond with the ultimate Truth and it is highly sublime. Aurobindo says "The poetry of the intuition may have a play of colour and bright lights, but it does not depend on them. It may be quite bare; it tells by a sort of close intimacy with the Truth, an inward expression of it." (1988.60) Sri Aurobindo's legendary work *Savitri*

is an example for this about which he says, "The poem was originally written from a lower level, a mixture perhaps of the inner mind, psychic, poetic intelligence, sublimised vital, afterwards with the Higher Mind, often illumined and intuitivised, intervening." (61) We find that *Savitri* is not a poem of universal appeal like its original source; it is rather a revelation of intervening flashes of occurrences felt by Aurobindo which were penned down in vast fragments of time close to fifty years.

In the fourth level, Aurobindo takes us even higher and he says that in this stage a literary work is beyond a composition for it is a revelation of spiritual experiences. The guiding force is essentially a spiritual power. It experiences universal beauty, delight and love. If we observe his lines, he says, "Everything I wrote came from yogic experience, knowledge and inspiration, so too my greater power over poetry and perfect expression was acquired... from the heightening of my consciousness..." (1972.86) It is because of this he is known as a poet of cosmic mysteries. He says that when the voyage of self – discovery begins from lower plane of mental consciousness to overmental and finally reaches the Supramental where the consciousness finds the supreme self fully and truly, then emerges a spontaneous flow of poetry. Dr. Nikhil Kumar quotes from one of the letters of Aurobindo, "Infact *Savitri* has not been regarded by me as a poem to be written and finished, but as a field of experimentation to see how far poetry could be written from one's own consciousness and how that could be made creative." (2007.1)

According to Aurobindo science and philosophies are the smallest part of Cosmic thought. The concept of consciousness has always been a hard nut for many wise researchers to crack, mainly because experiencing the highest level of consciousness needs the mind to go beyond the matter. Although many of us know what it

indistinctly is, we feel hard to describe. In one of his letters, he says, “Certainly if you want to achieve a greater poetry, more unique, you will yourself have to change, to alter the poise of your consciousness.”(1988.58) What we perceive through the words of Aurobindo is that consciousness is experiential and not experimental because it is all about ascending our soul from the lower layers of the creation and reach the real abode and such realization we can call as the highest level of consciousness, and such is the level of his poetry heading towards Supramental level of consciousness.

*Savitri* is a classic example that reflects his transcending poetic growth. He started the grand epic *Savitri* when his level was Highermind. It grew to the Overmind as the divine revelations eventually bestowed upon him. This is perhaps why *Savitri* grew as his level grew. It has crossed all the boundaries to achieve the Supramental level of consciousness. Writer Prem Tyagi quotes “He does not deliberately choose or arrange word and rhythm but only sees it as it comes in the very act of inspiration. If there is any purpose of any kind, it also comes by and the process of inspiration...he feels or intuit, and the reader or critic has to do the same.”(87) Since Sri Aurobindo was a soul of saint, he took no time in crossing the average level to reach the state of Supramental consciousness.

V.K.Gokak rightly explores Aurobindo, “As Seer and mystic Sri Aurobindo was the Columbus of the Supramental Consciousness, linking it with the world of human life, thought and aspiration.”(83) Aurobindo was a poet born under divine contemplation. Prem Tyagi brings out the sublimity of Aurobindo’s source of inspiration that answers, beautifies and completes the whole concept of his poetry with these lines, “The dynamic power of inspiration descending from above his head came down to cooperate with his conscious and dynamic desire to make every line of his poetry a perfect expression.”(59)

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Seeta Rani

### Creative Use of Language in the Poetry of A.K.Ramanujan : A Stylistic Approach

A.K. Ramanujan (1923-1993) is a tri-lingual poet, for he has written in three languages- English, Tamil and Kannada. His best works are done in English language. His academic background in linguistic helps him to handle language easily and feels comfortable with it. He holds that English and his disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give him his 'outer forms'—linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways of shaping experiences. His first thirty years in India, his frequent visits and field trips, his personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklore give him his substance, his 'inner' forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other. He himself says: "Everybody uses languages, yet when I use it, I must use it in such a way that it says something new, innocent. Language is full of stock phrases, clichés—you fall back on them whenever you are really thinking. It is exactly like perception... The words, when they appear in a particular order, surprise you, as though you had never seen them before. That's when you know you can't change it any more" (Dasgupta,33). The present paper aims at making an assessment of the poetry of A.K. Ramanujan in the light of the creative use of language. This attempt unfolds how Ramanujan makes use of phonemes, lexical device and semantic devices to convey the message in his poetry.

Let us begin with the use of lexical and phonemic devices. Ramanujan uses the simplest possible words, mostly monosyllabic, thus achieving a concentration of vowel sounds which makes his diction musical and sweet sounding. His poem, "Still Another View

of Grace" one of the best love poems is important in this regard in he poeticizes his experience:

I burned and burned. But one day I turned  
and caught that thought  
by the screams of her hair and said: 'Beware.  
Do not follow a gentleman's morals...

(Still Another View of Grace, 15)

Here the poet flings a mild satire on Hinduism by drawing the image of a so called "wild-bred brahmin". The poem is full of passion intensity and is notable study in cultural contrast between the Hindu and the Christian. It shows the conflict of attitudes in the poet's mind between two dissimilar traditions and backgrounds. He makes the past and the continuity of tradition run into present and shows how age-old traditions are defeated by passion. Thus the poem presents the picture of two different traditions and cultures which have a great effect on his life. In order to exhibit this effect, he narrates an incident when he meets a prostitute in the street who makes advance to him but the poet is conscious of his moral background that he is an orthodox Brahmin. So he chides her for pursuing him. He says:

Find a priest. Find any beast in the wind.  
for a husband. He will give you a houseful  
of legitimate sons. It is too late for sin,  
even for treason.

(Still Another View of Grace, 15)

The use of 'burned', 'turned', and 'caught' 'thought', and 'find' 'wind', 'kind', 'mind', and 'land' 'hand', and 'priest' 'beast', 'treason' 'reason', and 'crumbled', 'tumbled', and 'look' 'took', and 'shook provide a phonetic pattern. They are highly rhythmic and greatly explosive in nature. These are the examples of internal

rhyme. The poem has a consonantal pattern with its repetition of consonantal sounds and clusters. The phonemes /t/, /n/, and /d/, are repeated in the poem and it adds the charm in the meaning of the poem. The very first line of the poem is too much poetic due to its use of repetitive vocabulary “I burned and burned” which reveals the heat and intensity of passion by which the poet burns. The change of phonetic pattern shows the changes in his behavior to suggest his act of submission before passion. Here the use of verb is also very important which contributes to the meaning. There are altogether twenty-two verbs in seventeen lines - five verbs in the beginning of the poem and five in the end occur in the past tense. The rest of verbs, which occur in the present tense, indicate the change of mode from the narrative to the dramatic and all the sentences in which the present tense is used are in imperative like: “Do not follow a gentleman’s morals”, “Find a priest”. “Find any beast in the wind for a husband”. The dramatic presentation lends authenticity and intensity to the experience presented. The finite verbs in simple structures contribute greatly to the pithy quality of the poem. For example the finite verb “Beware” indicates that the poet warns to her and says: “Do not follow a gentleman’s morals”.

Ramanujan’s another poem “Looking for a Cousin on a Swing” is also a good example of the creative use phonemes in accordance with the message. There is a repetition of /s/ sounds. The repetition of this phoneme tells about the strange sensation felt by a premature girl and a small boy while they were on a ‘village swing’. Experiencing this strange sensation, they climb a tree which is not very tall and yet full of leaves. The phoneme /s/ is a good example of alliteration in the expression like “someone suddenly sneezed” and in the words like ‘she’, ‘sat’, ‘swing’, ‘six’, ‘seven’. This repetition adds beauty to intensify the emotion. He uses /s/ phoneme not only for strange sensation but also to

indicate about the age of her cousin who is six and seven. They are innocent about what they do on the tree. The poet tells that the same girl now having grown into a mature woman lives in a city and goes on haunting for companions of her lust. She is ever ready to give herself to anyone who wants her. Very aptly, the poet has shifted the scene from ‘village’ to ‘cities’ and the innocent girl to a mature woman. The repetition of phonemes like, /n/, /b/, /s/, /z/, /v/ and /f/ contribute to the changing patterns of emotions of the girl. The following poem is impregnated with this feature:

When she was four or five  
she sat on a village swing  
and her cousin, six or seven,  
sat himself against her;  
with every lunge of the swing  
she felt him  
in the lunging pits  
of her feelings;  
and afterwards  
we climbed a tree, she said,

(Looking for a Cousin on a Swing, 19)

The poem “Snake” is notable for its sweeping internal rhythm: “The clickshod heel suddenly strikes/and slushes on a snake: I see him turn...” The poet continuously uses this device in the poem. Please mark these lines:

My night full of ghosts from sadness  
in a play, my left foot listens to my right footfall,  
a clockwork clicking in the silence  
within my walking.

(Snakes, 5)

The repetition of phoneme /f/ and /I/ sounds in the first two lines, and /k/ and /ai/ and /w/ sounds in the last two lines is noteworthy. The use of the rhythmical harmony of the words, phrases and expressions and the fine application of rhyme shows his artistic creations. The placement of ‘night’, and ‘right’, of ‘full and fall’, of ‘clockwork and clicking’, and ‘within.....walking’ shows the fine example of words rhythm.

Similarly the poem “Breaded Fish” is rhymed with a usual scheme of aab, ccb, aab, aab, written in the recurrent triplet stanza form, consisting of only two sentences. The first full stop comes almost after eleven and a quarter lines and then follows the concluding line making a total of twelve lines with four stanzas of one triplet each, unfolding a rather gruesome, unhappy tale. Two dissimilar, unconnected incidents light up each other; both belong to the past; both are sad: a woman, the wife, lovingly thrust a breaded fish into the poet’s mouth. The fish smells obnoxiously, opening the hood memory in his mind of the dead body of a woman rolled to the shore by the ebb, breaded by sand. The poet’s heart beats in his mouth. Both the experiences leave a bad taste in the mouth. The poem in full is quoted below to show this effect:

Specially for me, she had some breaded  
fish; even thrust a blunt-headed  
smelt into my mouth;  
and looked hurt when I could  
neither sit nor eat, as a hood  
of memory like a coil on a heath  
opened in my eyes: a dark half-naked  
length of woman, dead  
on the beach in a yard of cloth,

dry, rolled by the ebb, breaded  
by the grained indifference of sand. I headed  
for the shore, my heart beating in my mouth.

(Breaded Fish, 7)

Ramanujam skillfully employs the device of playing words upon words to create an effect as well as to suggest the meaning that he intends to convey. His poems abound facilities of words for the sake of effect. He coins new words by the process of combining two existing words. By employing denotative and connotative devices, he creates new meaning without losing their original meaning. For example, in the second sentence of the poem “Still Another View of Grace” the object “that thought” is an abstract noun but is referred to as ‘her’ in the next phrase. The words “husbands” and “sons” also give the impression that the poet is talking about a lady. By subtle interaction of the abstract and concrete nouns, Ramanujan presents the common human predicament through the vivid delineation of a particular experience. The woman who appears here is a prostitute who roams beyond the constable’s beat but she is also a thought, that thought which arises in one’s mind, time and again, escaping the controls of conscious mind. The words “commandments” and “walls”, are made suggestive by the use of “crumble” and “behind” but they cannot contain the temptation once it is unleashed. One enchanting glance from her dissolves his determination in the flash of a second; his anger is quickly reduced to the shivering of uncontainable passion as her hair tumbles into his hand. The same mixing of the abstract and concrete nouns is evident in the neat balancing of “shudder to the bone” and “hungers that roam the street”. Ramanujan uses the right words in the right place, and not a single word is superfluous. He uses extreme economy of means to achieve terseness and condensation. He uses the simplest but meaningful words to express his views. The word “look’ in the poem “Still Another

View of Grace” is a very common word but he inserts this word very carefully. This word indicates her straight ‘look’ into his face, which is both inviting and challenging. In the same way, he also uses the word “beware” which are full of warning to that woman about his moral background.

The poem “Looking for a Cousin on a Swing” is also pleasantly readable for its skillful use of words. The following lines exemplify his skillful use of words:

not only on the crotch of a tree  
that looked as if it would burst  
under ever leaf  
into a brood of scarlet figs...

(Looking for a Cousin on a Swing, 19)

Here the poet remembers how with age, the body of his playmate cousin becomes flabby. She comes to have a bulging belly, like the “fork of a fig tree” and it seems that she will burst out with “a brood of scarlet figs”, even at the least shock. She receives even as slight as a “sudden sneeze”. In the poem, the word ‘crotch’ means both the “fork of a tree” and the “bifurcation of the human body” carries erotic suggestiveness. Here the image of a ‘fig’ tree suggests sexual feelings and experiences. The poet, finds sexual implications in this swing and feels that the boy and girl enjoys swing because they are having a physical contact sitting against each other.

Ramanujan also uses sentences artistically and aesthetically. In the poem “Still Another View of Grace”, he uses a number of short and pithy sentences like: “It is too late for sin, even for treason”. “Find any beast in the wind for a husband”. In the same way, the last sentence “behind the laws of my land” left dangling at the end of the

poem summarizes the final decision and foregrounds the “Grace”. The poem as a whole consists of seventeen lines and four stanzas of four lines each and a single dangling line at the end of the poem, which has a clinching effect. The poem also has a high proportion of nominal phrases and embedded prepositional phrases: “of her hair”, “in the wind”, “of legitimate sons”, “of shivering hymns”, “beyond the constable’s beat”, and “of my land”. The proportion of the abstract nouns, as in the poem, “that thought”, “morals”, “treason”, “sin”, “a nightlit april mind”, and “commandments” is kept low despite the subjective nature of the experience presented. These formal features of the style contribute to the great visual quality of the poem.

Ramanujan’s creative use of language also includes a number of other devices to convey his meaning precisely and accurately. He uses the ‘negative of caution’ to warn his reader against stock phrases and responses. There are few examples of his use of ‘negative of caution’:

1. No, not only prophets  
walk on water.

(The Striders, 3)

2. No, it does not happen  
when I walk through the woods.

(Snakes, 4)

3. he will acknowledge the wickedness  
of no reminiscence: no, not  
he burning end of the cigarette  
in the balcony,

(Love Poem For a Wife I, 66)

4. No, no give me back my archaic despair:  
It’s not obsolete yet to live  
in this many-lived lair



of fears, this flesh.

(Convention of Despair, 35)

5. Not branchless as the fear tree,  
it has naked roots and secret twigs.  
Not geometric as the parabolas  
of hope, ...

(Anxiety, 29)

The use of syntactic devices is conspicuous in Ramanujan's poetry. He employs 'reduplication' i.e. the use of a word twice consecutively, generally with the same meaning in the same sentence. Some examples of reduplication have been selected from Ramanujan's poems in order to exemplify the point of view:

1. in your father's father's house  
in Aleppey.

(Love Poem For a Wife I, 66)

2. Beautiful, beautiful',  
he says, shaking his marmoset head.

(A Minor Sacrifice, 145)

3. Connect! Connect! cries my disconnecting  
madness, remembering phrases.

(Connect!, 178)

4. Wait, wait  
(No Fifth Man, 244)

5. ... Fall, fall  
you'll never fear a fall again,  
fall now!

(Fear No Fall, 277)

These reduplications intensify the idea and make the language poetic. This kind of reduplication makes his poetry interesting, and different. This can be well recognized if one reads

the sentence after having removed the reduplications. Another favorite syntactic device used by him is the creation of picture like effects. Ramanujan's poem "Poona Train Window" evokes pictures to intensify the effect of the poem.

1. every summer  
a river dries to a trickle  
in the sand,  
bring the sand-ribs,  
straw and women's hair  
clogging the watergates  
at the rusty bars  
under the bridges with patches  
of repair all over them,  
the wet stones glistening like sleepy  
crocodiles, the dry ones  
shaven water-buffaloes lounging in the sun.

(A River, 38)

2. Three women with baskets  
on their heads, climbing  
slowly against the slope  
of a hill, one of them  
lop-sided balancing  
between the slope and  
the basket on the head  
a late pregnancy.  
Buffaloes swatting flies  
with their tails.

(Poona Train Window, 80-81)

The artistic effect of these cameo-like pictures is like the impression made by nature paintings. They reveal not only an eye

for detail, but also an ability to recapture it with photographic fidelity.

The devices include the use of interrogative mark also. His poem “Birthdays” displays this feature. The poem ends on an interrogative note revealing the poet’s rather ambivalent attitude towards depth. Here depth as “dispersal of gathered energies” is more a trope of deconstruction than reconstruction. In the second example both parts of the poem end in interrogation obviously suggesting lack of firm belief and a note of uncertainty. It is full of questions such as “why now, why here, why the Down’ syndrome in the genes of happiness.” The probing can be terminated is through the interrogative mode ending with a question mark. In the third example, the poem “From Where?” begins on an interrogative note. Here, “task” stands for the act of poetic creation, which the poet accomplishes by untangling a host of images that flash across his consciousness. There are some other examples in this regard:

1. but death? Is it a dispersal  
of gathered energies  
back into their elements,  
earth, air, water, and fire,  
a reworking into other moulds,  
grass, worm, bacterial glow  
lights, and mother-matter  
for other off-spring with names  
and forms clocked into seasons?  
(Birthdays, 207)
2. why the fall into bliss on a cloudy afternoon?...  
...of earthy light, infected air?  
(Questions, 130-131)

3. When, well or ill, the task is done,  
the images lose their spin,  
lose their hum, as they wobble, roll, lie still.  
I ask, where did they come from?

(From Where?, 271)

The use of capital letter is also employed by A.K Ramanujan in his poems to get the attention of the readers. There following examples are indicative of the use of capital letters:

1. It is a single summer woodpecker  
peck-peck-Peck-pecking away  
at that tree  
behind the kitchen.  
(A Leaky Tap After a Sister’s Wedding, 9)
2. ...had burst into flower and given Mother  
... but Mother, flashing her temper...  
(Ecology, 124)
3. Bred Brahmin among singers of shivering  
hymns...  
(Still Another View of Grace, 45)
4. But She had in a row four pairs of breasts,  
where blind mouths plucked and swilled their fill  
till mouths had eyes, and She was full of flies.  
(Epitaph on a Street Dog, 43)

In the first example the sudden use of capital ‘P’ for the peck implies the usage of the word ‘pecking’ in a specific context. The woodpecker’s peck attains sexual connotations. Similarly in the second example, throughout the poem the poet uses capital letter ‘M’ for mother to depict that she is caring mother for her children. In the third example, the use of capital ‘B’ has ironic

connotation. In the last example, the use of capital letter in ‘She’ explain her inherent divinity.

The use of conjunctions is also the part of these devices used by A.K. Ramanujan. He uses them in his poetry to place the reader in a thoughtful mood. Let us see how the poem “The Striders” begins with the conjunction to search the things that might be said before this phrase. The following line of “The Striders” proceeded by conjunction: “And search/for certain thin-/stemmed, bubbled-eyed water bugs.” makes the opening of the poem dramatic. It is Ramanujan’s favorite trick of beginning his narration in the middle of the incident. In addition, he also uses inversion, which is a dialogic device. The poem “Second Sight” which concludes the message with “and strike a light to regain/at once my first, and only, / sight” has a note of inversion. Here the emphasis on “first” and “only” is an indication enough of how precariously the poet is caught between his inherited *dharma* and the acquired postmodernism.

Now we come to the semantic level how it finds marked expression in Ramanujan’s creative use of language which consists of imagery, similes, metaphor, symbols, images and myths, etc. They are frequently used by him in order to concretize or to symbolize the object. His images are precise, accurate, real, visual, tactile, auditory sensations, highly suggestive and striking. He achieves concreteness, sensuousness, and precision in the use of images. His images are a powerful means of semantic extra positions and they are employed in such a way that the object moves on, reflecting in a number of different aspects. It is the images that concretize the object. They give them life and form and make its spirit visible. In the poem “Snakes”, Ramanujan uses figuratively onomatopoeia in the form of auditory images:

...their hisses.../ a sibilant alphabet.../clockwork clicking in the silence... Here he employs the words like ‘hisses’, ‘sibilant alphabet’, ‘clockwork’, ‘clicking’ and ‘silence’ to present an auditory image of the snakes, which can be heard. Similarly a ‘sibilant alphabet’ /S/,/s/ suggests the structure and shape of a snake. He describes the structure of the snakes with the help of this ‘sibilant alphabet’. The zigzag movement of the snakes as seen by him as a child is fully brought out through the concrete images. The auditory image of the ‘clockwork clicking in the silence’ is used to compare the movement of the snakes in the silence, which creates terror in his heart. Thus, the description of the snakes reveals great skill in the use of images that are highly concentrated in their effect.

Ramanujan also uses symbols abundantly in his poems. Various objects of nature like animals, birds, trees, river etc. are used symbolically as they stand for many other things like love, life, death and poetry itself. Animal’s symbols have been basically one of the most important types because of their affinity with man. In the words of Kritika Ramanujan: “Animals appear everywhere in the poems, but the poems are not ‘about’ animals. They have a double vision. The poems are about life, death, and cycle of birth, pain and love. They are full of irony, humour, paradox, and sudden reversals”(Kritika, XVI). In the poem “Snakes”, snake symbolizes the deep-rooted fear that every man has in his heart. In the poem, Ramanujan has succeeded in evoking some of his childish terrors at the sight of the snakes and conveying them to his readers. Though snake is an object of worship for the poet’s mother who offers it milk in saucers, and all the family members feel it a source of enjoyment when they see the snake round the neck of a snake charmer. But on the other hand, the braid of his sister reminds him of snake and he screams:

The snakeman wreathes their writhing  
 round his neck  
 for father's smiling  
 money. But I scream.

Sister ties her braids  
 with a knot of tassel

(Snakes, 5).

Thus After putting Ramanujan's poetry to test of stylistics one comes to know that Ramanujan has skillfully made use of phonemes, lexical devices, grammatical devices and semantic devices. With the help of these devices he has created his distinctive and personal style and it is through his personal style he represents the most the personal experience of his life. He has oblique, clinical, and his own personal style. It should be noted that he has developed personal pliant English which retains its normal power of rational analysis yet is also internalized to achieve a resonance of Indian feelings. He is not only very much conscious about the use of stylistic devices but also very much conscious about their placement in the poem. No device is unnecessary and superfluous.

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Aradhana Goswami & Monika Gupta

### **Alienation and Homelessness in Toni Morrison's *Home***

Toni Morrison (1931- ) possesses a unique ability to create layers of significant meanings in her works. Her creations are not only rich in themes but she also masters in creating dynamic plots. Apart from the many particular themes that apply to specific novels, Morrison also runs many common themes prevalent in American setup in her novels. By taking a closer look at some of these common themes-such as racial tension, sexism, alienation, classism etc-it is evident that Morrison is extremely dedicated in her writing and quite successful in reflecting an overall message of harmony, left for the readers to discover in the end.

Morrison's longstanding greatness resides in her ability to animate specific stories about the Black experiences and simultaneously voice all her experience. It's precisely by committing absolutely to the first that she's able to transcend the circumscribed audience it might imply. She writes about psychological violence with an engineer's accuracy and a poet's expansiveness. That's what makes works like *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Beloved* (1987) so hard to put down. Readers of her novels have to be willing to go along for a journey through the lower chambers of sadness, and witness graphic scenes of conflict and disillusionment that are both particular to the African-American experience and universal in their symbolism .She writes about the suffering, challenges and pain of Black Community especially of females but she is also regarded as a skilled psychologist who draws the inner and outer conflict of her characters very realistically.

From her first novel *The Bluest Eye* to the latest *Home* (2012), she has presented the dilemma and trauma of characters in an incredible way. Such is the case with her latest, all-too-brief, 145-page novel, *Home* the story of a traumatized young, black Korean War veteran who returns from the battlefield in a psychic haze, only to confront the perils of racism and oppression in his native country. The work's accomplishment lies in its considerable capacity to make us feel that we are not only resident but co-owner of, and collectively accountable for, this land we call home.

One of Morrison's strongest qualities is her ability to wield symbols better than any other writer. With the latest novel (which is really a novella masquerading as a longer work) she places the symbol and the notion of 'home' under great scrutiny. Though it is simple in its title and theme, yet the complexity of the prose and the ideas are confronted when go through the story. To every individual and family, the term 'home' is at once universal and decidedly specific; it is a unique physical place as well as a concept that we all understand. As banal as it may seem, the gap between the terms 'house' and 'home' become essential to the bifurcated journeys of main characters Frank and Cee Money. In many of her novels she has chosen female characters as the main protagonists like Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, Sula and Nel in *Sula*, Sethe in *Beloved* and in many other novels. But her latest novel *Home* is a male centred story which moves around the main character Frank Money.

The title of the novel is very simple, striking and interesting. It gives an emotional connectivity to its readers. Home is the symbol of shelter, love, care and togetherness. Home is very essential in human life. In this novel Morrison has pointed out what happens when one becomes homeless, aimless and hopeless and leads the life of a vagabond. Home is the identity of our existence. Not only when we are alive we require a shelter but also when we die we need a specific

place (grave) to maintain our identity after death. This message is presented in a very beautiful, psychological and heart touching manner by Toni Morrison. This novel is also the story of a brother who starts his unknown journey to save his younger sister's life who is the only reason of his life, "She was the first person I ever took responsibility for; down deep inside her lived my secret picture of myself" (Morrison, *Home* 104). *Home* begins with a short chapter in the first person, narrated by Frank Money, who is suffering from memory loss. He reminisces about his childhood with his sister Cee in Lotus, Georgia. *Home* tells the story of Frank Money, 24 year-old Korean War veteran, as he embarks a reluctant journey home.

Frank and his sister Cee are both completely alienated characters of the story. They had an orphaned childhood as their parents were nearly absent from their lives, always busy in earning their livelihood. Cee, being very, small was 'looked over' (also in the literal way) by her step grandmother who infused the sense of inferiority in the poor girl. They had a radically uprooted family artificially placed in an unknown environment where all they had was sense of alienation and homelessness.

When Frank was four years old his family and neighbours were kicked out of their homes in Bandera county Texas because they were Black. They moved to Georgia. At that time Frank's mother Ida was pregnant. Frank remembers this time as one of the most difficult time of his life when they were homeless and jobless. They had to leave their household goods, pet animals, fields, property and home. Through Frank, Morrison has presented a very heart touching scene, "Mama cried, but the baby she carried was more important than kettles, canning jars, and bedding." (39) On the way his mother gave birth to a girl child whose name was Cee (Ycidra). Frank's family reached Lotus, Georgia where they lived in the home

of their grandfather, Salem and step grandmother, Lenore. Cee was badly treated and hated by Lenore because she was born on road, “Lenore took it as a very bad sign for Cee’s future that she was born on the road” (44). Frank’s parents start to work as field workers to earn the livelihood. It was Frank who looked after little Cee in their absence. When Frank went off to serve Korean War, Cee ran away with a boy named Prince. They left Lotus and went to Atlanta by Lenore’s car which they borrowed from her. After sometime Prince left Cee and ran away with the car, for which he had married her. Afraid of Lenore’s anger Cee decided to live in Atlanta and not to return to the only home she knew. She searches a job of an assistant to a white doctor named Dr. White.

Frank was serving in Korean War with his two childhood friends Mike and Stuff who were killed in action. These two deaths shook Frank badly. He considers himself responsible for their death. He thinks that he could not save their lives. Feeling of guilt always haunts him. Another incident which horrified Frank was a little Korean girl who was shot dead by Frank who had come to steal food from the dump. This girl reminded him of Cee. One day the girl touched Frank’s crotch and he shot the girl in the face. Later he accepts that the little girl aroused his desire he feared that he would act on his desire that’s why he killed the girl, “how could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn’t know was in me?” (134)

After returning from the Korean War, Frank describes how he became homeless and jobless. He had no fixed direction in his life. He had been drinking and gambling most of the time. During this period he met a girl Lily, who was working at a dry cleaner’s shop. Lily and Frank started a relationship. Their relationship was glorious at first but it soon fall apart. Lily realized that Frank was still traumatized by his experience in the Korean War. According to Lily,

Frank seemed to have no goals in life. For Frank she was the most important thing in his life, “It was the third woman who changed everything. In her company the little wishbone V took up residence in my own chest and made itself at home” (68). But soon he receives a letter which informs that Cee is in some kind of trouble and her life is in danger. She will die if he does not rescue her, “Come fast, she be dead if you tarry.” (8). He leaves Lily to save his sister’s life. He thinks that he would still be with Lily if he had not received that letter. For Frank, Cee is the only family he has left. He tells himself that Cee’s safety is his responsibility. Even as a child, he always take care of her when she was badly treated by her step grandmother Lenore, “He was always protecting her as though she were his pet kitten” (88). During his journey to Atlanta Frank spends most of his time thinking about the experiences and episodes of his past life. As he thinks all this he repeatedly catches glimpse of a small man wearing a zoot suit who does not seem to be real. Frank goes to Atlanta at Doctor Scott’s home where he finds Cee laying unconscious on an examine table. The doctor has been feeding Cee drugs and performing mysterious surgical researches on her body. It was Sarah an employee and friend of Cee who sent that letter to Frank informing that Cee’s life was in danger. Frank returns to Lotus, Georgia with Cee, where she is cured by the women of Lotus. After a couple of months she gets full recovery but was unable to bear any child.

Morrison uses couple of incidents that provided a haunting background to the alienated and guilty souls of Frank and Cee. Racism encompasses the novel like a ghostly power. Frank Money who is a black boy is the victim of racism remembers an incident which happened in his childhood. One evening when he was with his younger sister returning to home he witness a group of white men pushing a dead body of a black man in a wheelbarrow into a hole. “...we saw them pull a body from a wheelbarrow and throw it into a

hole already waiting.” (Home 4) This incident chases Frank throughout his life as a shadow. The novel ends the same point from where it began. This incident haunts Frank for the rest of his life until he makes up his mind to identify the buried corpse. His grandfather Salem reveals that Black men used to be forced to fight each other to the death for the entertainment of Whites. He tells a story that before ten or fifteen years ago a boy, Jerome, from Alabama, who was forced to kill his own father. The father unable to face the idea of killing of his own son demanded that Jerome kill him instead, and Jerome did so. The novel ends with Frank fulfilling his duty of digging a proper grave for this dead man and performing the rites on his skeleton. Frank nails a marker on the tree, “Here stands a man” (145). Conceptually bringing a homeless soul to rest is the central idea behind the novel. The most interesting thing is that the novel ends in a symbolic manner. Frank buries the unknown black old man who could not get an honourable death and grave. Frank gives him a proper place (grave) that was the home of dead man. At last Frank and Cee get their own home which was full of care, love and bonding of relations.

Through this novel Morrison has again depicted the pain and suffering of Black people who are tortured by White people. These innocent people become the victim of the cruelty of white folk. The childhood of Frank and Cee was spent like refugees who have to leave their home because of the reason that they were Black. Frank’s girlfriend Lily wanted to buy a house for a down payment but she was not allowed to buy because she was Black. Another touching point which is raised by the novelist is that she has presented a pathetic scene where Black people are forced to fight like animals and kill each other for the amusement of white people. Like her other novels Morrison has interwoven themes like neighbourhood, women bonding, superstition, and identity crisis in the present novel.

Whole novel runs in first person and third person narration. The novel ends not only in a symbolic manner but in a humanistic manner with universal appeal. In a starred review, *Publishers Weekly* described Morrison’s novel as, “[b]eautiful, brutal, as is Morrison’s perfect prose.” Leah Hager Cohen writes in the *New York Times*, “this work’s accomplishment lies in its considerable capacity to make us feel that we are each not only resident but co-owner of, and collectively accountable for, this land we call home.” According to Herman Melville, all voyages are homeward bound. Whether or not this is true, it is a fact that several of the most important epics in Western Literature employ the theme of returning home. As Frank Money is a war hero (he earned a medal for his military service abroad), we might see him as an updated version of Odysseus or Aeneas, and just like the epic poems in which their tales were immortalized, we join Frank’s narrative *in medias res*, shortly after he returns “home” from war. There are many trials and tribulations (problems with alcohol, a lack of money, a few violent outbursts and a run-in with the cops) that Frank must confront on the road to South Georgia. These tests not only underscore his mid-century American odyssey, but they also intensify the ambivalence he feels toward the place of his youth and the people still occupying that town.

Although time experimented with over the course of the narrative, there is a nice and natural story arc with which Morrison fleshes out some of her larger ideas. The exploration of one’s homecoming not only celebrates the return of Frank to his community; it also resonates on a larger socio historical level. Home presents a vision of return that is not predicted on regression. When Frank and Cee eventually reunite and take up occupancy in the rented house abandoned by their itinerant parents, they are changed individuals whose unique experiences have altered their views and behaviours somewhat. The important distinction that Morrison makes, though,

is that thus by making Frank Money a lower-class soldier instead of some kind of modernized Odysseus, Morrison not only extends her tradition of telling the stories of the voiceless and the forgotten, but she also champions and campaigns for the values of one's own people, of one's own roots respective metamorphoses cannot sever the bonds they share with their community and with each other.

*Home* is not just a song about the arms and the man from Lotus, Georgia; it is a call to action, a goading work reminding its readers to tend to their own gardens, to turn back toward their own communities, and to repair the dilapidated structures of this land. In the end, *Home* is also a return to form for Morrison. The novella is fuelled by the potent blend of fact and fantasy about times gone by, but the objective is both contemporary and eternal. There are few themes as immutable as the quest for home and there have been very few moments in our recent history when this notion could be discussed without cynicism. As conservative idea as the preservation or restoration of home may seem to some readers, Morrison eludes this sort of reading by showing how radical the reinvention and rediscovery of home can be.

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Reshu Singh

### Woman and Society : A Study of Manto's Short Stories

Most of the contemporary writers see an empowered woman with the emerging opportunities of education, economy, corporate sector, government sector and such other professional matrix. But there are also some writers like Mahashweta Devi who go beyond the common framework of empowerment and see women empowerment in a radical way. Such writers choose women characters not from the framework of family and society but from the forbidden sectors like prostitution and make their presence conspicuous by their radical attitudinal shift, a bold expression of women empowerment. Saadat Hasan Manto is such a writer who, with his penetrating search, unfolds how a woman is helpless to be empowered due the ill face of society. Simultaneously he also holds that whatsoever and whosoever may be, man behaves like a predator, considering women the weakest part of society. They are beaten up, raped and killed. Whether the ground is family, market, disturbances or communal riots, woman is a common prey. Manto presents these women as a symbol of pain, sufferings, anxiety and frustration in his stories. He, without yielding to any social and cultural curtsy, unfolds how woman becomes the victim of society and how she is exploited and used cruelly by man for his satisfaction. In some of his stories, these young girls and women are circumstantial helpless characters who undergo horrifying experiences during partition of India in 1947. In this way Manto's each story is a 'document' and not just fiction. His collections of stories



*Kingdom's End and Other Stories*, *The 'Naked Voices Stories & Sketches*, *Mottled Dawn*, *Toba Tek Singh: Stories Saadat Hasan Manto* and *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto* are 'document' of young girls' and women's sufferings. "Kaali Shalwaar", "A Woman's Life", "Sharifan", "Khol Do!", "Bismillah", "By The Roadside" and many more are Manto's representative stories which compel to think about women empowerment. The present paper is a modest attempt to show that, in spite of all social, political, legal, development, women empowerment is just a façade in society as the women are brutally raped and murdered and are just left as the subject of news papers and courts, that too for few to show compassion. The paper focuses on "Kaali Shalwaar" and "A Woman's Life" in which there is no room for their empowerment.

"Kaali Shalwaar" the story of Sultana, professionally a prostitute, comes out with the life-long difficulties. Her story reveals the reality of human basic needs. She sells her body to get money so that she can pay rent for her brothel and for her food. She meets Shanker, a pimp and becomes his intimate friend. Both of them do not charge from each other. She only requests him for a *kaali shalwaar* for Moharram and the pimp asks for her earrings which she is putting on. She does not bother and gives that to him. On the day of Moharram, she receives the gift *kaali shalwaar* (black pant). She is very happy. After sometimes her friend Mukhtar comes. Both of them praise each other for new apparels. Sultana praises her earrings which resemble her own earrings, sometime back given to the pimp. Mukhtar praises her black *shalwaar* which is like that of her except currently dyed. It was not all. Now the undertone of the situation start troubling both of them because it is the same person who had collected both the items from Sultana and Mukhtar and had exchanged as gifts. He took the earrings from Sultana and the

*kaali shalwaar* from Mukhtar and on the day of Moharram he gave the earrings to Mukhtar and *kaali shalwar* to Sultana. The surreptitious exchange of the *kaali shalwar* and the earrings is worth noting:

Why they considered her worth visiting she couldn't say. Anyway, by the time the sixth man turned up, she had decided to save her breath. 'Look,' she had told him in her non-nonsense voice, 'Three rupees is what I charge and not a penny less. Take it or leave it.' The man had said nothing and stepped into her room. When he was taking off his jacket, Sultana had said, 'Let's have an extra rupee, shall we? Instead, he had given her a newly minted eight anna coin with the Emperor of India's head on it. Sultana had accepted it on the sound principle that something was better than nothing. (KE 111)

Here her need of money for her basic need drags her into this situation. It was her helplessness of paying rent for which she innocently and honestly falls entrapped. She requires money for her petty need of life and so she sells her body. But her consciousness pricks her and realizes at crossroads. She contemplates herself and scrutinizes the situation. Here is an account of her psychic state which unlocks her mental agony:

There were always engines blowing their steam hooters, their rhythmic chug chug fading in the distance. When she came out on the balcony very early in the morning, she was always struck by the sight. Through the hazy light, she would see an engine belching smoke, then she would look up at the sky and watch it rise in a thick column. Sometimes she would see a long wagon just disconnected from an engine, which would be sent rolling down the

track, and would think of herself. Had she too not been pushed on the track, of life? She was moving but not of her own volition. The levers were in the hands of others and one day the momentum would begin to weaken and, at some unknown point at an unknown place, she would slowly come to a stop, never to move again. (115 KE)

This contemplation helps knowing the condition of woman of compassion, self-realization, independent thinking. Even if she sells her body, she does not beg, she does not play cunningly. In a way it was all out of her self-respect. She compares her situation with the engine and with the steam rooters. The “rhythmic chug-chug” sound of the engine is the object to evoke the dominant emotion of pathos. She further compares her clients, the rich *goras* and *seth* with fat engines as they used to come to her with loaded material, but left her empty after all. These lines explain her pain and sorrow which come out in the form of the comparison of the train. Here, her character as prostitute comes out with the genuine feelings. Here we should not discriminate her situation on the basis of her profession. Hunger is that state of human being which makes a person to do anything. Her situation is more pathetic because she sells herself many times for her basic needs. A society needs status, class, it needs human as well. Her situation Manto depicts realistically, which we can observe in the following lines.

Strange thoughts would crowd her head. In the Ambala cantonment, her house was not too far from the station but she had never noticed trains or anything of the sort. There were times now when she felt that the railway yard like a vast, smoky, steamy brothel, its fat engines much like the rich traders who would occasionally visit her in Ambala.

Sometimes an engine, all by itself, slowly shunting past stationary wagons, would look to her like a man walking past women sitting at their windows waiting for customers. Such sensations were disturbing in the extreme and she had stopped going out on the balcony altogether because it distracted her.(115-116 KE)

Here Manto presents blankness and hollowness of her life, by exposing her pathetic condition. After reading this description one can understand the plight of woman. It is not the story of a particular woman of a particular time but represents a woman of all time who falls entrapped my man in one way or the other. It is really a dark picture of society.

Similarly, the story “A Woman’s Life” is also about a prostitute, Saugandhi, who experiences the same trauma due to her financial crisis but her situation is little different from that of Sultana of “The Gift”. Sultana wrestles with the society for her basic needs while Saugandhi tries to find her identity in the society. She realizes her existence when she is rejected by her client. A client, Madhu, falls in love with her, he praises her and requests to leave this profession. He also promises to send money for her, but he does not come back. After a very long duration since this incident of her life, Madhu comes back. But this time she becomes revolutionary. She reacts harshly, she shouts on him. And she pushes him out of the house. She remains alone for a long time. The story reveals the basic reality of a woman’s life which at any turn of life may become blank and dark. The following description exemplifies this scene:

The street was very still. The light had been dimmed because of the war. In the distance, she could see the outline of a car. They walked up to it and stopped.

Ram Lal stepped forward and said, 'Here she is, a sweet tempered girl, very new to the business.' Then to her, 'Saugandhi, the Seth sahib is waiting.'

She moved closer, feeling nervous. A flashlight suddenly lit her face, blinding her. 'Ugh!' grunted the man in the car, then revved up his engine and drove off without another word.

Saugandhi had had no time to react because of the torch in her face. She hadn't been able to see the man; she had only heard him say, 'Ugh!' What did he mean by that? (KE 61)

Here, Manto makes her contemplate herself and puts forth the questions which are arising in her mind. Saugandhi feels her identity shattered and to overcome this trauma she tries to hide in a cupboard the way she used to do in her childhood at her father's home. The recollection is evocative of the helplessness of a woman at physical, psychological and mental levels:

Saugandhi, she said to herself, you are not ugly. While it was true that the bloom of her early youth was gone, nobody had ever said she was ugly. In fact she was one of those women men always steal a second look at. She was young and she had a good body. She was nice to people. She couldn't remember a single man in the last five years who hadn't enjoyed himself with her. (62 KE)

It is very difficult for a woman to forget what has happened adversely in her life. The feeling of revenge comes out when she expresses her feelings. She feels herself like a 'sheep in a farmers' market' who has been rejected with the 'Ugh' sound 'if she has any flesh on her or whether she is just skin and bones'. The following lines from the story, suggestive of woman's psychic agony:

She just couldn't forget what had happened. She had been called out to the street and a man had slapped her across the face. She had been looked at as they look at sheep in a farmers' market. A torch had been shone on her face to see if she had any flesh on her or whether she was just skin and bones. And then she had been rejected. (KE 63)

She further expresses her trauma "If that man came back, she would stand in front of him, tear up her clothes and shout, 'this is what you came to buy! Well, here it is. You can have it free, but you'll never be able to reach the woman who is inside this body!'" (KE 63).

Saugandhi now looks up startled, as if she has come out of a reverie. The room is steeped in an eerie silence- a silence she has never experienced before. She feels as if she is surrounded by a vacuum- "as if a train on a long haul, after depositing the passengers en route was now standing in the loco shed, looking deserted and forlorn. An emptiness seemed to have taken root in her heart." She feels all the more shattered when Madhu, pacifies her just for the sake of taking money. This is nothing but a façade, Saugandhi now knows. Her aggressiveness and anxiety come out when she hears Madhu's fake words 'Look, Saugandhi, it seems to me you have gone back to that dirty old profession of yours. I am telling you for the last time. . .' (KE 66). Kindly mark the helpless reaction of Saugandhi:

Saugandhi mimicked him, 'If you return to that dirty old profession of yours, that'll be the end. And if I find out that another man has been in your bed, I'll drag you out by your hair and throw you out on the street. As for your monthly expenses, a money order will be on its way as soon as I

return to Poona. And what is the monthly rent of this kholi of your?’

Madhu listened in total disbelief.

Saugandhi had not finished with him yet. ‘Let me tell you what it costs me every month— fifteen rupees. And you know what my rental is? Ten rupees. Out of that two rupees and eight annas go to Ram Lal, which leaves me with seven rupees and eight annas exactly, in return for which I sleep with men. What was our relationship anyway? Nothing! Ten rupees, perhaps. Every time you came you took away what you wanted— and the money too. It used to be ten rupees; now it is fifty.’ She flicked away his cap with one finger and it fell to the floor.

In Manto’s stories there are number of such women characters as Sultana, Mukhtar and Saugandhi . The short story “Bismillah” has a woman called Bismillah who is forced to become a prostitute. “By The Roadside” is a beautiful elegy of a mother, who is forced to abandon her illegitimate baby. A young girl in “The Return” who has been recovered from the riot is raped brutally and unconscious. The story “Sharifan” , is about the cruel act of rape of Sharifan resulting into her death.

Thus, Manto presents a big account of the psychology of the society wrapped in inhuman deeds which make the woman cry. This picture is not of a particular time. Even today, in spite of remarkable changes in the status of woman due to economic liberty, educational changes and constitutional rights, these scenes are taking place. The real empowerment shall take place when such women shall be treated with compassion and given favourable ground to self actualize like Vasavdatta, a *varangana*

(prostitute), a peerless beauty in Mathurapuri, who , after undergoing the sexual absurdities, when actualized her real self, took shelter of Dharam and passed her life in peace, Amrapali, a *ganika*(prostitute) of Vaishali, who too after undergoing the absurdities of life, actualized her self and as a result she engaged herself in the social service and for the welfare of society., Kuvalaya, again a beautiful *ganika* (prostitute) from the south, when in the course of her life, realized her real self, gave up her dirty profession and became a Buddhist Nun engaging herself for the welfare of society.

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Archana Bhatnagar

### Individual and Society : Woman's Space in Indian Literature

The space and image of woman in society has differed from culture to culture and from age to age, yet one common fact to almost all periods in Indian Literature and culture is that woman has never been considered equal to man. Rather, she has always been a subject of subjugation and subordination and has therefore been treated not as a person but a thing except in those in-between and scattered phases of culture and civilization when woman was held in high esteem ranging from the ancient times till the modern period.

Women population today constitutes 50% of the human race. Within the social structure and the male-female relationship itself, what woman in the society of patriarchal values seek is the fulfilment and self expression within marriage which should be strengthened by mutual love, trust and understanding and if not, then, they step out of this world of role models of being someone's daughter, wife, mother or sister and strive for recognition of their emotional needs and struggle for their equal footing vis-a-vis their male counterparts in society. Such a bias of subordination and female servitude strengthened from the very beginning of creation where man (Adam) was created first and the woman (Eve) was placed thereafter. As Adam, the first man on the earth states about Eve: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" (Krishaswamy 73).

But the stark reality of considerable change and the widening of Indian woman's space and image from pre-colonial to post-colonial Indian English writings and from ancient to modern times is distinctly

evident. A brief sojourn through the different periods of Indian literary history will suffice to throw light on the fact.

The Pre-Vedic and the Vedic Ages (C.1500-600 B.C.) reveal that it was an age of woman glorification. "Woman enjoyed considerably high status and freedom of thought and expression. There is mention of some highly educated and learned women like Sulabha, Maitreyi and Gargi" (Singh 9-10). Women during this age enjoyed full glory of participating in aesthetic, intellectual or even chivalrous pursuits. They had the freedom of being part of all religious practices. "The secular as well as religious scriptures of the age speak of the various aspects, status and individual position of women in the era. The sculptures of Saraswati, Gajalakshmi, Gauri and Mahishasuramardini were derived from the image of woman who led an independent life in society" (Sengupta 18).

Women during the pre-Vedic and Vedic times were held in high esteem and the concept of woman as Shakti was highly emphasized. The entire Vedic pantheon mainly comprised of female deities such as *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Durga*, *Kali* etc. suggesting the matrilineal hierarchy of a female during that age. But, at the same time certain roles were assigned to the women such as that of a wife under the husband's subjugation as is evident from the *Vishnu-Lakshmi* image. Not only this the *Svayamvara* and the widow re-marriage are examples of the high esteem and freedom women enjoyed during that period. "The Rigveda hence, speaks of a life of freedom and strength lived by men and women as equal partners in the great task of home and nation building" (Sengupta 20).

But as all things must change, a general decline could be traced in the status of women due to the imposition of the laws of Manu (c. 200 B.C. -200 A.D.). Laws of Manu describe woman's position completely in association to her male relatives : father, husband and finally the sons after the death of her husband.

*pita rakshati kaumarye, bhārata rakshati yauvane  
rakshanti sthavire putrah, na stri swatantrayam arha*”<sup>5</sup>

i.e. father looks after her during childhood, the husband protects her during youth and sons take care of her when she grows old. The woman is never fit for freedom.” (Manusmṛiti : 5148).

The woman was thus tagged with the ‘Sati Savitri Parampara’ as Sudher Kakar quotes Manu and the view he held of man’s status:

Though destitute of virtue or seeking pleasure elsewhere or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife and by violating her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world; after death she enters the womb of a jackal and is tormented by the punishment of her sin – Kakar 62

According to Manu, women are highly susceptible in deviating from virtue and hence must be under male domination. The ideals of femininity as displayed by Sita the *Pativrata* with suffering in silence was the role model for women implying women have to suffer gender - differentiation, caste and class disparities and religious sanctions.

However, a journey from Vedic to post-Vedic times reveal that under the canopy of Buddhism (566 B.C.) women again found a breathing space in asserting their rights. The women were allowed to participate in religious pursuits and were known as *Bhikshuni* and their organisations as *Bhikshuni Sanghas*.

It seems this fluctuation or the rise -fall situation of women’s status and image kept persisting with the Muslims (the Arabs and the Turks) coming into power in the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. and the Moghuls in the 16th century A.D. with the evil and rigid practices of the *purdah* (the veil), *jauhar*, *sati* and child-marriage being enforced on them.

Another undesirable institution which grew up in the Post-Vedic period was of the institution of the temple - dancers or the *Devdasis* i.e. the slaves of God This practice was particularly prevalent in medieval India in which the *Devdasis* were involved in the auspicious act of offering service to the Gods through singing and dancing.

This status of women subjugation further stretched for nearly 200 years under the British Rule of India where *purdah*, self-effacement, tolerance, self-sacrifice, submission, stoicism (and the complete) tutelage and control of the father - husband - son triad persisted. However, the reformist movements of the 19th century did bring certain reforms through movements related with the status of women. The British government also started framing laws to this effect and tried to curb the social evil of *sati*, female infanticide, polygamy, child marriage, widow ill-treatment and neglect towards female education by enforcing different acts from time to time, One name among a whole host of Indian leaders to uphold the cause of women’s rights to education, equality and opportunity was that of Mahatma Gandhi. He wanted to put an end to all the social evil practices which undermined the women identity in man - dominated society: “The woman, as the object of the male desire has been subversive and spurious in her silence. Feminism has among its other concerns, the urge to break the silence and the taboos on the woman’s body and on her pleasures, to disintegrate the male version of the woman and repair the psychic damage in society “(Jayati ix-x).

The early years of the seventh decade of the last century witnessed the victory for the first woman Prime Minister of India and hailed her in the name of *Durga*. In the second half of the twentieth century emerged a whole galaxy of female writers such as Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee, Bhabani Bhattacharya,

Kamala Markandaya, Namita Gokhale, Arundhati Roy etc. writing for or about women characters. They presented women in the framework of daughters, wives, mothers, sisters and mistress but always in contwxt of men's lives. To quote Shashi Deshpande; "More important than knowing what we are not is to know what we are, what is possible for us" (Deshpande 4).

What is depicted in the novels of these female writers writing in the twentieth century is the self of woman divided between the self and the society. The problems arising out of this divided self are an outcome of any of the factors of alienation, marital disharmony, temperamental incompatibility, clash of expectations, wishes and desires, sexual maladjustments, cross-cultural conflicts, inner disintegration, silent suffering, repressed feelings, suppressed desires, a sense of meaninglessness, frustration and the like. These female characters either compromise or end themselves by taking their own lives. At the same time we have characters like Rosie, the female protagonist of R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* (1958) making an earnest search for self-identity, nurturing her talent in dancing and coming out victorious as a self-asserting modern woman with a free, strong and independent will.

From the traditional roles of daughters, sisters, wife and mother, the female protagonists emerge as individuals in their own rights. They achieve this not by being brazen feminists or iconoclasts but by a gradual process of introspection and self-realization... Faced with dilemmas of life, they search a path that allows the individual freedom and growth... Without succumbing to pressures and without breaking away from accepted traditional, social institutions, these protagonists succeed in being individuals. (Deshpande 4).

Hence, woman is no more to be marginalised and made to suffer in the conventional, patriarchal norms of society. Her literary sojourn has already widened her space and image from ancient to the modern period. "Today women are on equal footing with men in almost every sector of society. Be it the territory of scholasticism or literature, be it politics or power, be it police or army.... judiciary or legislature, be it journalism or media.... be it science or technology, woman's presence can be felt everywhere" (Singh 150). The truth stays that men and women together complete the circle of humanity. We must accept and respect each others individualities. Post feminism has been a phase of change, period of transformation and also not very successful. But still, the fact cannot be denied that it has helped women in asserting their rights. In India itself it has been a motivating factor in making women conscious of their rights. With the result that today's woman stands redefined.

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Suresh Kumar

### **Images of Dalit Women in Dalit Autobiography: A Study of Sharankumar Limbale's *The Outcaste***

For dalits, writing is not a way of expression but an act of opposition or a means of protest against social, political, cultural and economic exploitation in India. Dalit writers write about their lived experiences and aspire to break long imposed silence on them as they have been relegated to the absolute bottom of social hierarchy. Dalit literature, which emerges from the womb of pain, anger and protest gives the detailed description of dalit society and radically question their alienation from education, political power and ultimately from the mainstream society. Dalit writing as whole expands new horizons in Indian literary landscape. The rising of dalit voices mark on exciting phase of social and intellectual transformation that reflects and encapsulates a very large universe of change and social reality. These voices seek to bring out the stamina of dalits with which they can lead an authentic life and attain equal status in a caste dominated society. The appeal for humanism, equality and justice is strongly predicated in literary writings of dalits. The dalits literature is written out of social commitment its purpose is not simply to spread hatred and vengeance against the caste Hindus. This paper is focused on the study of the images of dalit women as they appear in the autobiography of dalit male writers. Further, it seeks to examine the impacts of patriarchal laws on the lives of dalit women. The autobiography of Sharnkumar Limbale entitled as *The Outcaste* is considered for the analysis in this paper.

Autobiography as a literary genre has never been popular in India because conventional Indian literature celebrates god and ignores

the self. It is only from nineteenth century onwards that the personal narrative came to the literary circle in India. The Indian autobiographies which widely attract the researchers and academicians are *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* 1927 by Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi, *An Autobiography* 1936 by Jawahar Lal Nehru and *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* 1951 by Nirad. C Chaudhuri. These autobiographies have been popular as they were easily available in English and moreover, they were written by the upper caste educated men. But the dalit autobiographies which began to appear after 'Dalit Panther Movement' of 1970s in Maharashtra, have been neglected in popular academic circles. Raj Kumar observes that the possible reason for this neglect could be the fact that these voices challenge the hegemony of upper caste/ class and make a way for the assertion of marginal self (1). Dalit writing has been more powerful in Maharashtra as compared to the other regions. The early phase of Marathi dalit writing is dominated by male writers. The autobiography as a genre became popular with the early dalit writers such as Shankarrao Kharat, Vasant moon, Daya Powar, Laxman Manne, Laxman Gaikwad, Narendra Jadhav and Sharnkumar Limbale. The caste body is always put at the centre in dalit autobiographies as it problematizes the relationship between individual and society. Opposition, rejection, contest and the aspiration of changes are the chief thematic constituents in such writings by dalits male writers. They aspire to bring revolutionary changes in social sphere so that the caste as an exploitative unit can be abolished completely and the history of Dalits and their heritage can be constructed. The dalit past is neglected and their history is marginalized as the recent dalit autobiographies seek to provide the record of neglected social history of the lowest section of Indian society termed as dalits.



Dalit women writers and critics are of the opinion that they have been neglected or misrepresented in the dalit literature composed by dalit men since the very beginning of dalit literary traditions in India. Eminent dalit woman writer and activist Jyoti Lanjewar concludes, “The attitude of dalit writers to Dalit women characters and dalits women in general is not one of exclusive idealism or intemperate exaltation” (193). Lowest of the low in Indian society, dalit women are the most common victims of caste and untouchability as they are exploited on the account of their caste, class and gender. Dalits women are denied even the basic necessities of life and Hindu religion degrades them and assigns a status of sub-human beings. *Manusmiriti* justifies even the killing of dalit women by Brahmins. From the time immemorial, dalit women have worked as slaves and their subsequent marginalization and sexual objectification resulted into an ultimate vulnerability and an acute silence both in literary and non literary spheres. The dalit male writers could not account for the concern of dalits women and to address their issues authentically. Dalit men in their autobiographies present the dalit women as they are being looked down upon both in conventional rural and modern urban society. They still appear as the victims of molestation, rape, nude parade, acid pouring and murder. Most of their sentiments, feeling, aspirations and their womanhood are trampled. So dalit women initiated their own movement to assert their rights, to articulate an autonomous voice and agency and to attain a complete liberation in every sphere of life. But the autobiography of Sharnkumar Limbale entitled as *The Outcaste* is entirely different from the other dalits male autobiographies in terms of its treatment of dalit women and its critique of dalit patriarchy that discriminates and degrades dalit women. In introduction to the outcaste by Sharnkumar limbale G.N.Devy writes, “The most memorable element of Limbale’s life story is his attitude to women. There are many women characters in it, and not

one of them without a serious complication in her life. There are widows, childless women, deserted women, and as the ultimate of all this divine and social injustice, Limbale presents his own mother who has been cheated again and again, exploited most blatantly in every relationship she strikers, burdened with a roll call of children and their upbringing. The author however shows a remarkable understanding of their situation. There is no cursing or blaming them in his narrative, there is not even a tone of pity for them in it. (XXV-XXVI). Limbale finds both Hanmanta and Ithal Kambla equally responsible for his birth, his selfless existence and the ultimate ruin of his mother. States Limbale:

“Hanmanta had been responsible for wrecking Masamai’s married life. It was because of him that Masamai was divorced and since then she had been Hanmanta’s keep. This is almost a tradition- a Patil, always a big landowner, has a dalit woman as his whore” (58).

Limbale does not approve the act of Ithal Kamble, the husband of Masamai, when he deserts her after her rape by Hanmanta. He criticizes it through the eye of a staunch feminist. Thus writes Limbale: “Ithal Kamble married. A man can eat paan and spite as many times as he likes, but the same is not possible for a woman. It is considered wrong if a woman does that. Once her chastity is lost it can never be restored” (36).

Limbale condemns the objectification of dalit women and a dual set of rule and values for men and women. He shows dalit women as the victims of both internal and external patriarchy. His own mother is the victim of rape by an upper caste man named Hanmanta Limbale at her work place. Ithal Kamble divorced her and left her to be humiliated and exploited in the every movement of her life. His grandmother, Santamai too is a deserted woman who is

forced to live with a Muslim to have a feeling of social security in caste and male dominated society. Limbale in his autobiography considers the issue of dalit women as he believes that the articulation of dalit women's issue is crucial for the liberation of whole dalit community.

Dalit women, as one of the most silenced group in India, are not allowed to articulate their issue with their own perspective independently. Conventionally they are positioned at the literary margins as they had no access to education. But it is from 1990s onwards that they are trying to be vocal and to address their issues themselves. Many autonomous socio-political organizations of dalit women both at regional and national level came into being. It is through these organizations and forums that dalit women have started to articulate their voices. These organizations do not urge passively for mere acceptance but revolt strongly for an absolute freedom of dalit women. On 25 December, 2003, the *Dalit Bahujan Mahila Vicharmanch* publically burned *Manusmriti* as it denies both equality and education for women. In recent postmodern era dalit women have started an autonomous literary movement that gives expression to the unheard voices of dalit women for centuries. Dalit critic and writer M. B. Gaijan writes, "Postmodern era, globally, gave a voice to all unheard agonies, sighs and tears of women through their literature. In India, regional literatures - mainstream and marginalized stream - are also influenced by the new literary trend. As a result a multicolored art is created. Marginalized Dalit writings are now also a multicolored art" (301). Many dalit thinkers and critics generally argue that the patriarchy practiced within dalit community is more democratic as compared to brahminical patriarchy. They opine that the practices such as *Purdah* system, *Sati* system and the dowry are not prevalent within dalit community. The dalit women are free to divorce and to marry the men of their

choice and within their family life they had a voice to assert their identity and can thus exercise their decision making power. But dalit women have their own views in this regards as they find dalit patriarchy as an oppressive unite. No oppressive or exploitative agency can be democratic. Dalit women view that they still are the victims of domestic violence, rape and gang-rape by the men of their own community. In their writing dalit men writer can claim that the dalit women are in a better position as compared to upper caste women in terms of restrictions and prohibitions but dalit women critics deny it. Subhadra Mitra Channa concluded that the male autobiographies as that of Hazari, do not indicate that there is something positive in the lives of women expect for hard toil and a passive voiceless existence (76).

Sharnkumar Limbale in his autobiography exposes the dalit patriarchy and the taboo within dalit community. It is the poverty and caste that make Limbale to lead a life of humiliation and deprivation but it is the patriarchy that makes him a bastard, an illegitimate child. In his school he is often insulted for not having a father. He argues that dalit patriarchy is as strong as the non-dalit. Limbale and his mother are not accepted by the Mahar community as there too exists a rigid patriarchy. Dalit women are the victims of sexual assaults and rapes even within their own community. Even their further, father-in-laws, brother and brother-in-laws rape them. Dhanavva, a dalit woman in Limbale's autobiography is made pregnant by her own father. Writes Limbale:

Now pregnant by her own father, Dhanavva kept visiting Devki. She begged Devki to abort her. It was rather late for an abortion because Dhanava had kept it a secret all this while. Shankar, her father said, I have sown the seed from which she has grown as a plant. Now why shouldn't I eat the fruits of this plant?(67).

Dhanava has no option but to cry as there is no strong agency to be reported against the inhuman act of her own father. Limbale in his autobiography addresses the issue and the perspective of dalit women and vehemently criticizes the dalit patriarchy. He brings to light the fact that the dalit women are not given the opportunity to educate themselves and to grow as the independent beings within dalit community. They are deprived of food and are made to control their hunger as Santamai in Limbale's autobiography does. Writes Limbale: "Starvation was written in our lot from the movement of our birth. Most of the time my sisters went to sleep without eating anything. Nobody woke them up for dinner, because there was nothing to eat" (21).

It is patriarchy within dalit community that allows its young daughters to be the religious prostitutes in the name of such religious practices as *jogini*, *devadesi* and *murali*. Sometimes, dalit men force their wives, sisters and daughters to sleep with upper caste landlords just for a few money or even for leftover too. Dalit women are forced by acute poverty to adopt prostitution as occupation. Within dalit community, it is a custom to control and to have authority on dalit women but not to support or cooperate with them to grow up as equal social beings. Dalit men who themselves are the victims of humiliation and violence by upper caste men, can shed off their frustration by beating their women. Shibu Shimon and Sija Varghese observe, "Dalit men react to the victimization they suffer at the hands of the upper caste people by pouring it on their wives and their daughter" (243). The victimization of dalit women ends both neither inside nor outside of the home.

The progressive dalit male writes criticize not only the casteism, unequal opportunities and improper implementation of reservation policies in their personal narratives but they are

also equally critical of the orthodox of their own community. Raj Kumar observe that Laxman Gaikwas in his autobiography entitled as *The Branded* criticizes his community *panchayat* which suggests that a woman should be given human excreta to eat as a penalty (204). Like Limbale, Gikwad too has a liberal outlook towards women in his autobiography as he considers the role of dalit women to social justice. He openly admires his wife to support his family and to run it smoothly. He portrays her as a conscious dalit woman who despite of illiteracy mobilises dalit women for their betterment. Narendra Jadhav in his life narrative *Outcaste: A memoir* mainly writes about his father, Damu's struggle against caste, poverty and for the education of his children. Damu never beats his wife Sonu and he loves her dearly but all the major decisions are taken by Damu himself without any equal discussion with her. He does not consider her consent when they are about to convert into Buddhim. Narendra Jadhav shows Sonu as an ideal mother who compromises even her hunger to educate her children. She cannot understand the real nature of caste based discrimination and the actual meaning of conversion. In his autobiography entitled as *Joothan* Omprakash Valmiki defies the convention of overlooking the power and potential of women as he makes memorable references to the sacrifices made by his mother for his education and upbringings. His mother has to work from dawn to dusk for the rich upper caste people but what she gets is *joothan*, the leftover. She uses to feed her children in rainy season by drying this leftover food. Even for that stale food she has to face humiliation by upper caste men. But she still has a tremendous power to struggle and an unending hope for better future. It is obvious to argue that the images of dalit women as they appear in the dalit male autobiographies are constantly changing but still we lack the powerful female character coming from dalit men autobiography. The major

difference between dalit men and women autobiography is in their articulation of voice against the injustices done to them. Dalit female voices are a collective effort for the liberation of dalits in general without any gender and class consideration. Dalit women in their writing aspire for autonomy and decision making power, which emanate from education, economic stability and the articulation of political and personal voice. The female characters in these autobiographies are rebellious as they seek an agency and a trenchant voice that is denied in the heavily masculine literary traditions in India. Dalit women exhibit their fury in their writing and disapprove the representation being given by dalit men both in literary and non literary sphere. The dalit women in the male autobiographies are depicted as the continuous sufferers without any mass-struggle for change and better life. The biggest handicap of this movement by dalit men is that it wants to abolish caste and economic disparities without any consideration of dalit women's issues, it does not make efforts to change the attitude of dalit men towards their own women to root out patriarchy. The autobiography of Sharnkumar Limbale in this respect is unconventional as it supports the absolute liberation of women within dalit community. He never curses his mother for having slept with several upper-caste landlords. He revolts against the system and abuses the pseudo morality that privileges caste over human being. His autobiography ends with a voice of rebellion and disagreement. As he states: "Why this labyrinth of custom? Who has created such values of right and wrong, and what for? If they consider my birth illegitimate what values I am to follow?" (113).

The dalit women as appear in Sharnkumar Limbale are deprived, poor and the victims of violence. Limbale attracts the attention of dalit activists, leaders, politicians and the academicians to the cause of dalit women. Like Bhimrao Ramaji Ambedkar,

Limbale too views that without liberating women, the dalit movement for liberation cannot be successful. In his autobiography, Limbale leaves an appeal for a dalit women to unite, educate and agitate. In his opinion struggle is the first requirement of this group for its own emancipation. The aspiration that the justice will come automatically can be fatal.

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Saurabh Kumar Singh

**Voices in the City : A Study of Girish Karnad's  
*Boiled Beans on Toast***

Ah love, let us be true  
To one another! For the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

(Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach")

The significance of Girish Karnad as a playwright is well established and widely acclaimed as he is the one appointed as the World Theater ambassador of the International theatre Institute, Paris. In the scenario of modern Indian theatre Girish Karnad belongs to the formative generation of Indian playwrights who came to maturity in the 1960s and 1970s, and collectively endeavored to reshape Indian theatre as a major national institution. Though Girish Karnad exemplifies the transformative practices of his generation, but at the same time he has created a distinctive place for himself with respect to subject matter, dramatic style and technique, and authorial identity. It can well be justified when we look at the creative corpus of him. The majority of his plays employ the narratives of myth (*Yayati*, *The Fire and the Rain*, and *Bali: the Sacrifice*), history (*Tughlaq*, *Tale-Danda*, and *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*), folktales (*Hayavadana*, *Naga-Mandala*, and *Flowers: A Monologue*) to enkindle an ancient

and premodern world that vibrates in contemporary contexts because of his contemporary consciousness which remakes the past in the image of the present. In his mammoth attempt to forge a theatre of our own, Karnad has discovered and re-invented the diverse patterns of Indian and world theatre by drawing on myths, histories, and folktales, and thus have rejuvenated, expanded and energized the poetics of contemporary Indian drama. Apart from this, he is also a noted film maker and actor. He has been honored with the Padma Bhushan and was conferred prestigious Jnanpith Award for his literary contributions.

Apart from myth, history, and folktales Karnad has also shown his allegiance to contemporary settings in the plays like *Anju Mallige* (literally, 'Frightened Jasmine'), *Broken Images*, *Wedding Album* and his latest *Boiled Beans on Toast*. The title of the play is related to the founding myth of the city of the Bengaluru or Bangalore, which is today designated as 'Silicon Valley of India.' This 'Silicon Valley of India' has a well defined historical account after its naming as Bengaluru or Bangalore. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, king Veera Ballala went out for hunting but lost his way in the jungle. After wandering a lot in the night, quite exhausted, he approached a lonely hut where an old woman served him a handful of boiled beans (benda kaalu in Kannada native tongue) and saved his life. In sheer gratitude, the king named that place 'Bendakaaluru', the place of boiled beans, which in the passage of time got corrupted into 'Bengaluru' and later on anglicized by the colonial masters as 'Bangalore', the chief protagonist of the play *Boiled Beans on Toast*

Bangalore, or Bengaluru as it is now called, has emerged as a throbbing organism spawned by globalization. It is known for its massive cosmopolitan populace, its IT wallahs, pleasant weather, cheap beer and deadly traffic. The play puts on the stage the fractured lives of its floating and incessant pouring in of huge population. This broad social spectrum allows the playwright to enact the wild hopes

and dashed dreams, of disappointment and despair of struggler and street smart survivor, of small town aspirant to the elite, of the non-IT professionals, of laborers, of senior citizens, of the intertwined lives of high-society rich wives, the lower middle-class with its urban dreams, and temperamental maids. In this play Karnad subtly explores several modern themes such as maladies of urban migration, environmental concerns, consumerism etc, all laced with a great deal of warmth and humor. The closing dialogue of Kunal, representative of the youth, sums up the individualistic orientation of society and the responsibility of parents to guide their children.

One of the major issues of this play is rural-urban migration and consequences of this. Internal or domestic migration in India has been a common phenomenon of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It usually results from people moving from, rural areas to live in small centers, small centers to large cities, between cities to rural areas where new industries create new jobs. Some of this internal migration is temporary as farmers move to town to sell their crops and produce and then return to their farm and plantations. Some is semi-permanent as people move to town to work and return only after their retirement. Some internal migration is permanent as families move never return to their birth place.

Migrations are caused by a variety of factors including economic, social and political factors. They are briefly described as under.

1. Marriage
2. Employment
3. Education
4. Lack of Security

The sociology of migration also discusses two significant factors involved in the phenomenon of migration: Pull and Push. Urban centers provide vast scope for employment in industries, transport, trade, IT sector and other services. They also offer modern facilities of life.

Thus, they act as 'magnets' for the migrant population and attract people from outside. In other words, cities pull people from other areas. This is known as "pull factor". People also migrate due to 'push factors' such as unemployment, hunger and starvation. When they do not find means of livelihood in their home villages, they are 'pushed' out to the nearby or distant towns. Millions of people who migrated from their far-off villages to the big cities of Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai or Delhi did so because these cities offered them some promise for a better living. Their home villages had virtually rejected them as surplus population which the rural resources of land were not able to sustain any longer (Smriti Chand 4 Major causes of Migration in India, n.p.)

The play *Boiled Beans on Toast* bears ample instances to this phenomenon of migration. The play begins in the house of Anjana Padabidri where Muttu, the maid, aged about 28, is ironing the clothes in the service room. Vimala, the cook and the chief servant of the house, aged 35, enters into the house accompanied by Muttu's mother and elder brother, Shamakara, a driver. Through their talks we come to know that Muttu has a daughter, Kalpana, and her wedding ceremony is at hand. But all the ceremonies are going to take place in Bengaluru where they have migrated from their native place, Karimangala or Solagiri, to earn their daily bread and butter. But this idea is not supported by Muttu's elder brother as he proposes that, "What do we have here in this city? All our relations live in Karimangala or Solagiri. They can't come this far for the ceremony." (7) But Muttu wants to go by the logic of her husband who says that going back to native place to organize the ceremony would mean unnecessary expense because the remotest relatives will turn up, whereas in Bengaluru they will have a smaller affair. To this Shamkara retorts:

That's what happens when people move to the city. The family back home, relatives, connections- they all become

dispensable, don't they? They can be put aside. Ignored. Forgotten. (8)

The portrayal of Mr Prabhakar Telang offers us another vantage point to look at another shade of rural urban migration. Prabhakar is a thirty five years old man who is grown up in a small town Mundgod and is mesmerized to see the beauty of Bengaluru. The city bungalows have a strange effect on him. His entire body begins to shrink. His tongue refuses to turn the way he wants it to. In such situations it is safer for him to play the role of innocent fool because it is a safeguard against humiliation. He is fortunate to be in Bangalore. This is what he cares about most. The city air, however polluted, is an oxygen chamber, after the suffocation of small town (26-27). His description of Bengaluru traffic is almost poetic:

When I was young I was taken to Gokarn, to the beach. And I had never seen the sea before. I had grown up in the jungles and although the sea was less than fifty miles, had no idea what it looked like. And I was mesmerized. Waves after waves after waves and then water, right up to the horizon. Our traffic is too like that. Waves after waves of scooters, autorickshaws, buses, cars, every conceivable kind of vehicle including bullock carts, tractors, and earth movers. It's magical. (25)

He visits the house of Mr Padabidri, and reluctantly tells Mrs Padabidri the purpose of his visit. He says:

The fact is—the boss of the company in which I'm at present employed, is going to go to quit and join Mr Padabidri's office- and he's taking four of our top-notch managers along with him. His favorites. It's all rather hush hush, as you can imagine. I'm not one of them- yet – but there's a chance I may be taken up along with them. (13)

It is there he meets Mrs Dolly Iyer who, although spends most of her time in the company of Mrs Padabidiri, yet seems to be the

part of elite urban housewives as she is jealous of her. She secretly meets Prabhakar and sees in him an intelligent, well-read, energetic, young man. And he should treat the whole brave new world as a challenge instead of creeping into the Padabidri's house for a secret meeting in search of a job (27). She lies to him about her relationship with Azim Premji and Yasmeen, all in all of Wipro, obviously a fake attempt to show her importance in the world of elite Bengalurians. Not only this she also reveals to him the future planning of Azim to open a new office in Singapore for which he is looking a good regional manager. And top of it he has his own reasons not to advertise the post. She instigates Prabhakar to resign from the present post along with two months penalty because the monthly salary in Singapore will be more than what he'll probably get in six months here. He will be given residential quarters and a car to drive. She further allures him by saying that the era in which he plans spend his lifetime serving a single firm is gone. In this age of globalization he must move quickly from one job to another and upwards. But for all this he should have lots of money. And in the blind pursuit to get a better position and status he is ready to send his wife Sumitra and only daughter Vishoo back to his old place.

When he visits Wipro's office he comes to know that no appointment is fixed. He becomes hysterical not because of losing the job but losing his life. His entire future including wife and daughter rested on that single interview/job. But he is duped. He is contemplating suicide. He has no options left but to confront Dolly in person. Broken and frustrated Prabhakar rues ironically:

Before I came in now, I was standing outside, for nearly ten minutes wondering if I should enter. The concrete mixer was bellowing away, so I knew we wouldn't here each other anyway. And I was fascinated by the mixer with its huge grotesque striped belly. And those bright yellow long-necked earth diggers and extractors with sharp claws and fangs. What

are they here for? For me. So I could use these streets. Go over flyovers. Flow with the crowds. To give meaning to all this- this mess, this chaos. I keep asking myself: what keeps things working at all in this city? What drives these crowds? Hope. Ambition. Whatever. It's our version of the American Dream which would've horrified my parents, but has brought me to Bangalore. It seemed poised to lead me on to Singapore. But no matter. Despite the lesson you've taught me, Dolly, I promise you, I shall pursue the dream. I shall be relentless in a - ... *deafening roar... and noise outside continues.* (64-5)

The case of Vimla is that of an anonymity that one enjoys while living in the city. She is the head servant of Patabidri's house and Anjana thinks that she does not work anywhere except her house. But soon we find her in the police station brought by another mistress of her Mrs Saroja Kunigal . Here we come to know that she is having two names: one Vimala Thimmegowda (Hindu) and another Vimala Mary Amaldas (Christian). She has been accused of stealing a thick gold chain, a family heirloom, worth Rs three-and- half lakhs. The drama in her story presents the difficult lives of the city's domestic help. In these cases many times morality and ethics take a backseat when one has to go under many trials and tribulations to earn daily quota of ration. Apart from the projection of Vimala as anonymous agent in modern metropolis, she also has been chosen to show us slum life of not only Bangalore but any big city of India. It is undeniable fact that those who migrate from rural areas to big city like Bangalore, do not dwell in shiny marbled or tiled or glassed apartment, but they have to live and survive in rotten and dismal conditions. Slum dwellers stay in deplorable conditions, with inadequate water and bad drainage. Food costs more for migrant workers who are not able to obtain temporary ration cards. This is what we come to know when Kunal takes Vimala in his car to see her place along with police. Kunal observes:

So we go to some new residential extension in Uttarahalli. I wish you were there, Nandita. It simply wasn't the Bangalore we know. No sign of any modern civic amenities here. An absolute nightmare from which there was no way of waking up. Of course the road had no pavement. In fact, there was no solid background anywhere to step on – only potholes. Dirt, plastic bags, piles of garbage on which dogs were tearing at blood sodden bits of menstrual rags. No way could you drive a car through. Stones heaped right in the middle of the road. And in one place, water poured out torrentially, seeming to gush out from the nether-world. And a regular washing ghat had sprung up right there – women washing clothes, pots, and pans by the roadside. And the houses! Oh god! They were like the cardboard containers in my father's warehouse – piles pell-mell almost on top of one another. And in the middle of all this chaos was a pink temple and beside it a livid green mosque. I somehow managed to navigate the car through this mess. There was a peepal and around it, a platform. It must have been the meeting place for the panchayat when the area was an independent past. The tree was intact and I could park next to it. (41)

The central character Anjana Padabidri has been used to signify most important problem caused by urbanization. And the problem is deforestation and environmental concern. As the global economy grows, countries all over the world are developing and urbanizing at an alarming rate. Though it is economically beneficial, this growth and consequent urbanization leaves a pattern of deforestation in its wake. A recent study provides us the facts given below:

- About half of the world's tropical forests have been cleared
- Forests currently cover about 30 percent of the world's land mass



- Forest loss contributes between 6 percent and 12 percent of annual global
- About 36 football fields worth of trees lost every minute (Alina Bradford, n/a)

Bengaluru is not an exception as far as deforestation is concerned. In this connection India's noted dramatist Mahesh Dattani states over the transformation of Bangalore from a garden city to pub city or now a tech city. ( Deepa Punjani : Mahesh Dattani, n/a)

Anjana narrates the reason for this house being here is that the tree outside nostalgically:

Kunal and I were scouting around Bangalore for a suitable area in which to build our house- that was of course more than fifteen years ago- it was still possible to buy a plot of land you liked on which you might want to build your house- (15)

Then they saw this magnificent tree along the wide road with its foliage spreading like an umbrella. She said to Kunal that it was a rain tree.

It has bipinnate leaves – like feathers – they open up in the sun so you've shade under it during the day and they fold in at night, so moonlight filters through'. He was absolutely delighted and we immediately decided to build our house there. We planned the whole layout, standing right there, so that the terrace would be under its spreading branches, and we could have regular dinner parties on it. (ibid)

And now the situation is drastically changed:

But of course the City Corporation has other ideas now. They've joined the wide road in front to the Mysore arterial highway and turned it into a ring road. That was the end of our dinner parties. The traffic was deafening. You couldn't hear a

word of what the next person said. Now they say the ring road gets choked up, so they've to have an underpass and the trees have to go. There's talk now of widening the road to a hundred and fifty feet! There's simply no end. (ibid)

In this connection Dolly Iyer has her own perspective:

The problem is our City Corporation is run by people born and brought up by in the countryside. They've no time for greenery and environment. They simply love cement concrete, and plastic and glass-fronted buildings. That means modernity to them. (14)

Regarding this increasing over ignorant attitude instigated by growing consumerism a native American saying warns, "When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money." (Woedpress, n/a)

*Boiled beans on Toast* belongs to a world of multiple misalignments. It discards linearity narrative structure in order to show the heterogeneity of the lives and dreams. Girish Karnad in his play has portrayed these characters and thematic aspects with a sense of irony. The playwright also maintains a remarkably objective perspective devoid of any emotional/sentimental note. The play does not seem to weep over something that is lost. It also does not adopt any moralistic attitude against material development. It simply with clear distanced position presents the reality with inveterate eyes. The only time Karnad allows himself to judge at the end when Anjana's son Kunal expresses his realization:

This world, this city, Bangalore, my friends, family, you-every thing would have existed, but not me. I could be inside some black hole! I wouldn't be existing. What an utterly horrible thought! But if I didn't exist, whether the rest of the universe

existed or not, that wouldn't have mattered in the least, would it! That's going to be my new composition- yes- my paean to Bangalore that might never have existed. You know what's the first line? 'Big Bang Bangalore is a Big Black Hole!' (79-80)

Can we deny this revelation? Perhaps we must not otherwise we ourselves will be responsible for the extermination of human species. Hoping that I am mistaken.

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Vandana Bajaj

### Struggle of the Marginalised Gender : Mahesh Dattani's *Bravely Fought The Queen*

Indian women have always been relegated to a marginalized position in the patriarchal society and branded as the "other." This secondary status of women dates back to the "good old" ancient times. Our epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are a witness to the subjugation and injustice meted out to virtuous Sita, Ahalya, Kunti, Gandhari, Draupadi and many other women even in those times. Women may have come over the years as regards the accretion in their rights, privileges and empowerment, yet their equity with their male counterpart seems to be an embellished fact. Dattani's *Bravely Fought the Queen* gives an inside story of the plight of women in the so called urban elite society of India.

Indian socio-cultural paradigm demands women to be on fringes- as a wife, mother, sister, daughter, operating around men holding the centre. Education has a liberating influence on women, bringing promise of a new life outside the claustrophobic environment of purdah and other conservative measures but their identity is still defined only in context of the identity of their male counterparts. The excesses committed on woman are believed to be rooted in illiteracy, poverty and socio- economic backwardness of our society. Whenever any woman falls victim to the male chauvinism we connect it with illiteracy and tend to find the ray of hope in economic prosperity of society. It is also observed that higher literacy rate will result in the economic independence of women making them more empowered and bringing them at par with their male counterparts. Surprisingly, now when the graph of literacy has gone up in India and there is

visible social and economic growth bringing about quality - improvement in the life of an average man, the question of the independent identity of all women still remains a distant dream. Dattani belongs to this section of emerging writers who established women at the centre of their fictive world, and may be called 'avante-garde' feminist. He tries to portray the plight and struggles of this marginalized gender, torn between being and becoming, who is trying to come out of its cocoon to take a deep breath in free and fresh air. His women suffer as a traditional commodity as Tara, in the play *Tara* and, Old Baa, Dolly and Alka in *Bravely Fought the Queen*.

Dattani's play *Bravely Fought the Queen* gives us a picture of helplessness of women in the society as they are not merely individual characters but- symbols of archetype, an icon of post colonial women who are crushed in the mill of tradition and modernity. He tries to expose the position of women whose destiny is to bear uncomplainingly the traumas of marital bliss. The women in the play are victims of rich urban society which portrays itself to be highly civilized and educated. Though they are influenced by the western culture, male chauvinism dominates which is not ready to accept any deviance of women from their conventional roles. Woman has to walk three paces behind men and if she dares to walk at his pace, it is termed as aggression. This play was staged in Mumbai in 1991 and London in 1996. The title of the play is derived from the popular song lauding the queen of Jhansi:

"Khoob ladi mardani woh to Jhansi wali rani thi". The allusion to this legendary queen who bravely entered the masculine world of war to save her sovereignty suggests juxtaposition of past and present and the preconceived gender specific roles assigned by the hegemonic society. The qualities like bravery is fixed for men and queen when enters the battlefield has to shed her female identity and dress like

men. The use of the word "mardani" ironically refers to the set socio-cultural paradigm. This double standards towards the women is being carried from past to present in varied forms. Much has not changed for the women of today. Dattani seems to seek the timeless exploitation of women through the delineation of women of three generations- Dolly, Alka, Baa, Alka's mother and Daksha. The play showcases a joint family with Baa, the matriarch, her two sons Jiten and Nitin, and their wives Dolly and Alka who are also sisters. Both Dolly and Alka lead loveless married lives: Jiten is a typical male chauvinist with double standards -different values for himself and different for his wife. He is a violent and self willed husband who considers women to be on margins and above all a pretender who poses to be a gentleman while his brother Nitin is weak and marginalizes his wife Alka by keeping secret relationship with other men. The characters reflect changing India-modern materialistic India still clutching at traditional roles.

Alka and Dolly represent modern women with all the symbols of modernity but are subjugated to mere non entities in the four walls of their house. They have their own imaginary world which is completely isolated from the world of men. The titles of three acts "The Women", "The Men" and "Free for All" depicts three different zones which though appears to be isolated and preconceived are illusion. The play opens with the domestic world of women who are treated like puppets by their husbands.

Dolly, shown wearing a mask reveals her complete ignorance of her husbands' business obliquely suggesting her oblivion about her husband's deceptive ways and conduct."I'm afraid I don't know much about my husband's work."(CP235) Her unconscious use of the word "afraid" again and again hints at her neglected being in her own house. The mask of pretence suppresses the dormant queen of

Jhansi inside her and prevents her to resist against the tyrannies of her husband and Baa. She lacks the courage to fight against the oppressive system. She tolerates the violence of her husband which leads to the premature birth of their spastic daughter Daksha. Her silent seething undercurrents of rebellion are evident in her involvement with Kanhayiya- an imaginary cook. She is unable to cope with this sordid world and so wants to be in a state of self created amnesia.

Alka is marginalized in her family by her own brother and husband. She is betrayed by her own brother, Praful, who marries her off to his own gay partner Nitin. The dichotomous attitude of men is evident in Praful who could burn her sister's hair for coming with a boy from neighbourhood but seal her fate by binding her to a homosexual. She is further cornered by Baa and her brother in law. She tries to find solace in alcohol, songs of naina devi, and dancing in the rain. The lives of both the sisters are controlled by Baa, who is the assertion of paternal authority who could not allow her daughter in law to lead a life of their own choice. Going into the depths of her past, we could realize that she is a victim turned victimiser. She hated her husband who would not let her realize her dreams and left her for another woman. She passes on this hatred to her daughters in law. She instigates her sons to humiliate Alka and Dolly. She is as said by Payal Nagpal "the patriarch in the guise of a women"

The presence of Lalitha in contrast to Trivedi women has been able to project herself as a stronger woman. She with her husband's support attempts to step out of her house and seek her identity in the outer world. She gives a positive outlet to her loneliness in her obsessive attitude for growing bonsais.

Lalitha's process of creating and nurturing bonsai plants become a symbol of the lives of two sisters, Baa, unconsciously

herself and broadly the lives of women in urban, society conscious India.

How do you make bonsai?

You stunt their growth. You keep trimming the root and bind their branches with wire and... stunt them.( CP245)

The clipping of roots, the careful watering of the plants (just enough to sustain it, not let it grow), the moulding of the plant to the shape and size one wants, is reflective of the position of women in a traditionally male oriented household. The reference to the life of Rani of Jhansi and famous thumri singer Naina Devi in the play seems to make an oblique undertone that women could prove their identity only in the absence of men or with the support of men. The women in the play have been projected as the 'second sex' who cannot assert themselves in the presence of men. Dolly or Alka though living in Post colonial India cannot bloom because their roots were clipped by their husbands.

Act II 'Men' unravels the male world, the business world of men devoid of any familial love and uncontrolled execution of their own selfish pursuits which stands antithetical to the subjugated world of women. Jiten and Nitin are doing a speculative campaigning for the launch of their new product. Despite its westernized treatment, it is upholding the silliest Indian notion that the existence of women is only to please men. Jiten who is a conventional patriarch can manipulate his views for his own personal desires and profits. He would humiliate Nitin for giving his wife the freedom to drink and dance in rain but does not find anything wrong in his own involvement with whores and Nitin's faithlessness towards his wife.

The two dissociated world seems to be isolated from each other. The world of women – the world of loneliness, unfulfilled

desires and anxieties and the world of men independent and self-reliant. These unbalanced worlds seem to be grotesque like bonsai. This can only be resolved by both the worlds sharing the common space. Act III resolves the intricacies of the two worlds bringing them together on the centric sphere in front of each other. He exposes the hypocrisy of the modern world. Dolly, unable to bear the pains inflicted on her, her sister and her daughter drops off her mask, holds the sword and screws herself to fight his battle like Rani of Jhansi. She stands against Jatin, challenging him “What will you do? Kill me? Then you will have to kill Daksha as well!” She rips apart the veils of Jatin, Baa, Nitin and Praful to show them their grotesque true faces. She emerges as a brave Queen who can challenge her oppressor and stand against hegemonic society for the injustice meted out to her. Jatin rushes out of the house unable to bear the aggression of her suppressed wife and Nitin openly accepts his homosexuality. Dattani hints at the presence of Jhansi Ki Rani in every woman which is suppressed by male chauvinistic socio-cultural shackles. Dolly’s courage is a call for the marginalized gender to raise their swords and fight for their identity and stature like Jhansi ki Rani. It might be a losing battle but her resurgence is a ray of hope for women of Post colonial India.

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Samina Khan

## Women's Empowerment Through Media and Literature: A Minority Discourse

There has been a long prevailing misconception that any attempt of women to be creative in any form creates anarchy and anxiety in society. In fact women are best ally in promoting peace, and there is a close link between culture of peace and gender. In our new globalised era when there are profound cultural shifts and social relations, the necessity for women to be equal partners in the building of a new world beyond war, is becoming more obvious and urgent. Karl Marx held the opinion that "Social progress can be measured by the social position of the female sex" (qtd. in Sharma). Women are good at promoting culture of peace as well as creating it and writing about it. Women can succeed in their effort to prevent the suffering and destruction caused by wars, by virtue of their creativity and contribution to a newly required peace culture system, and also by a caring and responsible governance of the world. If women succeed in their effort to be empowered—that is, gain influential key positions, they would succeed in not only saving their children from being killed, but also in saving the whole of humanity from an impending Third World War that may be a horrifying nuclear war. Goethe, Henrik Ibsen, and Bjornson had all seen women as representing the highest and purest moral standards of society. Women have a special role as peacemakers; as a life-givers and life-nurturers, they have a special feeling about war and peace. Women manifest the vision of humanity.

Peace is a prerequisite to lasting progress and sustainable development on our planet, and a challenge for both men and women.

It can be said that peace is not the absence of war rather it is the absence of fear and presence of justice. Wars, domestic violence, crimes, injustice, gender discrimination, religious ritualism suffocates women's creativity. There are more women and children killed in wars than soldiers. In the past decade some four million women and children have been killed, and eight to ten million disabled by wars. If the women of the world unite together with all the democratic men who yearn for a world beyond war, we can succeed to have global peace.

The twin concepts of womanhood and creativity go hand in hand. The Russian writer Talyana Mamonova writes, "women give life and appreciate life . . . they are organically against war and they can really save the world if they are permitted to play an equally effective part in government" (Aharoni 4). Women writers in India and abroad are moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of their male counterparts in every arena. It is difficult to acknowledge the contribution of all creative women but a mention of representative models of women, who brought different dimension of empowerment, progress and transformation to society, is worth and relevant to the approach of this paper. All major religions grant women special eminence, veneration and support no gender discrimination, Bibi Khadija R.A. (Islam) Bibi Maryam (Christianity) Kali, Durga, Laxmi, Saraswati, Sita (Hinduism) established as symbols of strength, harmony and human progress. The special focus of this is to frame an opinion on the basis of select women writers and social and political activists who have made potential contributions in the pursuit of empowerment through literature and arts. Meerabai, Sarojini Naidu, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Kamala Das, Shobha Dey, Shashi Deashpande, Maya Angelou, Judith Wright, Alva Myrdal, Ada Aharoni, Qaisra Shahraz, Irom Sharmila Chanu Teesta Sitalwad and Fatema Mernissi among the others. These women writers have

given literary work an unmistakable edge. They are able to sensitively portray a world that has in it women rich in substance. These women writers have you nodding with wisdom and agreement. Here a question does come to our minds that what did all these women have in common? They are all women of high ideals, prepared to work and sacrifice to bring something better into being, and they have laboured in the certainty that their objectives would eventually be realised. They share a faith in humanity, whether born of religious conviction or humanism. They are not the makers of war but builders of peace, and their pursuit of peace is not through war and terror but through literature and arts. Their creativity in the field of literature and arts is a powerful eye-opener to women's power and potential to abolish war and terror. At a time when the world is still caught up in the clutches of war, terror and violence, humankind should now listen to women for a change.

Indian constitution, popular religious laws and society does not advocate brutality and inequality for women but according to NCRB data crimes against women are increasing to an alarming extent and in India the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Crimeclock, there is one crime committed against women every three minutes. While contemporary social changes have exposed women to unprotected socio-economic, cultural and political environment there are no corresponding protective social systems and institutions of social justice to safeguard their interests. Modernity has resulted in growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. In spite of the progress made, rural women and those belonging to the Dalit, tribal and nomadic communities remain unaffected. So is the case with Muslim women among the Minorities. In spite of the Charter of Human rights and provisions of the Indian Constitution, women continue to be victims of exploitation and

marginalization and hence are designated as the disadvantaged groups (Muslim population: 13% approximately of Indian population).

Modernity as resulted in a growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. In spite of the progress made, rural women and those belonging to the Dalit, tribal, and nomadic communities remain unaffected. So is the case with Muslim women among the minorities. In fact according to Qurat-ul-ain-Haider who is herself a minority writer, Muslim women are as modern and backward as their other community counterparts in India. Most of the literature and media reports highlight the clash between Muslim women's religious and constitutional identity in India, though they prefer to search a balance between both. Literature written by them and about their issues creates hope for democratic and sane fabric of Indian society.

India has witnessed the worst phase of communal violence from Partition to 2002 Gujarat genocide. A specific pattern of violence against Muslim women has been noticed during these riots. The narratives of Muslim rape victims from Gujarat, Muzaffarnagar and Kashmir is not either mere confessional literature or forbidden literature, but it also ignites the process to seek empowerment and justice. How these women express their agony through narratives, fiction and poetry and other art forms they are empowering a system and process of seeking justice in socio cultural and political contexts in India. It serves as a great social mobilise when media released official government reports, NGOs reports, case studies, testimonies of victims from refugee camps and print media's initiative into publishing special volumes and tributes from across the country.

A potential feminist voice from the other side of the LOC is that of the Pakistani-English writer, school inspector, education consultant and freelance journalist, Qaisra Shahraz, who writes mostly

on Muslims women living in western societies and explores the challenges and problems they face. Her early creation, 'A Pair of Jeans', explores the issue of clothing, female modesty, multiple identities and cultural clashes. Her debut novel 'The Holy Woman' is indeed a powerful and compelling drama telling the story of Zarri Bano, the protagonist, who in order to resurrect an ancient tradition, was compelled by her father to marry the Quarn, thus forced to quell her passion and remain a celibate becoming her clan's holy woman. The book offers an intriguing insight into the complex personal, family religion and social dynamics that are at interplay in Muslim household the world over.

Then, the name of Fatema Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist, Islamic feminist and writer, has made a place for herself in the Arab Feminism. In her first monograph, 'Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society' (1975), Mernissi explores the disorienting effects of modern life on male-female relations, looks at the male-female unit as a basic element of the structure of the Muslim system, and shows us the sexual dynamics of the Muslim world. Her book *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* (1991) includes her interviews with peasant women, women labours, clairvoyants and maidservants. Also, her memoir *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* brings up such topics as Islamic feminism, Arab nationalism, French colonialism and the clash between the traditional and the modern.

The voice of Ada Aharoni, an Israeli writer and activist, received worldwide recognition in 1998 when she was elected one of the hundred "World Heroines", in Rochester, New York, for her outstanding literary works for the promotion of women and peace. Being well aware of the creative power of literature and arts in the promotion of peace and progress Aharoni believes that art and

literature can convey what no political speech can convey. Founder-President of *IFLAC PAVE PEACE : The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace*, Aharoni believes in the power of the word—that literature and culture can help to heal the urgent ailments of our global village, such as war, terror and conflict. Her books 'You and I Can Change the World' (2000) and 'Women Creating A World Beyond War and Violence' (2002) deal with such themes as love, reconciliation, co-existence and the promotion of bridges of multi-culture, peace and understanding.

"Improve the quality of man's humanity to man", says Maya Angelou, rather than improving technology. An African-American writer, director and civil rights activist, Maya Angelou has been called America's most visible black female autobiographer by scholar Joanne M. Braxton. As a civil rights activist, Angelou worked for Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' (1969) is the first of Angelou's six autobiographies. Angelou was also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for her volume of poetry, 'Just Give Me A Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Die'. Maya Angelou's works are a completely outcry to the prejudice, humiliation, slavery, racism and demanded submission experienced by the people of Africa and universal humanism.

The most obvious deficiency in today's world is the gradual and alarming absence of love and self respect for each other. The love of power seems to overcome the power of religion, love, compassion, tolerance and peace. But the pursuit of peace and progress can never be relaxed and abandoned. Even the Nazi holocaust saw the clear light of the day. When a 14 year old Jewish girl, Ann Frank, penned down her experiences of the tyrannical Nazi regime she was hardly aware of the fact that she was forming a part



of the chorus, a collective tone emphasising the sovereignty of women's pursuit of empowerment through literature and arts.

Literature and media often face charges and controversies in the context of depiction of women's role, images and representations. The release of the documentary 'Daughter of India' raised the most sensitive discourse about media and literature as an agency that makes sufferings saleable. Though a counter opinion is also generated that such initiatives can sensitize society against crimes of all patterns regarding women and cultivates protest and resistance in the form social activism. Instead of getting offended in public domains literature and media brings counter argument and breaks myths and misconceptions. Such attempts could lead to truths and save misinterpretation of religious and other values related to women's roles and images. Indian value systems are different from that of the Western society. Hence separate approach and empowerment strategies can be effective.

Literature gives a culture to imagine sufferings of the 'Other' and create a global and just society. She further said that parliamentary bills, acts and laws alone cannot remove deep rooted prejudices, inequality and evil from society. Good and progressive literature, cinema, art forms, media, NGO, civil societies, teachers create silver lining to social change and create resistance for such slogans "Look like a woman, behave like a lady, think like a man and work like a dog."

Constitutionally, every crime should be reported, and every person whose rights have been violated should get injustice, yet marginalized groups in India, including the poor, women, Muslims, Dalits, Adivais, or residents of certain areas, face overwhelming obstacles in obtaining justice. Literature and media can play a vital role in empowering s system where they can be heard and justice is

ensured for them in all spheres of life. The disadvantage and inequality such women suffer should convert into a struggle for social justice and we can see a reversal of what Amir Khusro lolng back lamented about the fate of women from "agle janam mohe bitiya na kijo" to "agle janam mohe bitiya hi kijo".

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Sadia Hasan

### Language Sensibility in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Language is the very basis and medium of our thoughts. Herder believed that every nation speaks in the manner it thinks and thinks in the manner it speaks. (Barnard 132). Our language thus, has the exalted status of being the repository of our thoughts, feelings, memories, hopes and fears. There also exists a close relation between culture and language, making it not just a means of communication and self-expression but an embodiment and vehicle of culture.

When English witnessed its advent in the colonies, it was an alien 'colonizer's language' and for those who sought to learn it, it had an exalted ivory tower quality about it. But since then, we, the Commonwealth natives have accepted it, moulded it, twisted it, made it do local somersaults and ultimately have asserted our right over it.

The novel, too has travelled beyond the restrictive kingdom of an all-European domain and carries impressions, sounds, tastes, colours and feel of the places where most of the popular and critically acclaimed novels today are emerging from. And this in my belief is a tributary of cosmopolitanism as it is free from the ties of an overwhelming single-identity.

In a quote from *South Asian Literature in English* by Jaina C. Sanga, "Cosmopolitanism, (however), has also developed as a contemporary mode of understanding global cultures. In a multicultural world, where nationality is often fluid and subject to change, cosmopolitanism becomes a useful way of thinking about citizenship, national affiliations and cultural allegiances" (59). English language under the influence of the binaries of nationalism and globalization has been infused with words derived from local language,

making it a multinational and multicultural affair. Now it's not just about culture and language travelling into Commonwealth countries but also culture and language travelling out of Commonwealth countries.

Khaled Hosseini, as nearly the sole voice from Afghanistan writing in the genre from the region seems to be confronted with the twin facets of a responsibility as well as opportunity to present Afghanistan in an endearing way, to make the place authentic and intersperse his writings with textures and colours from the region. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, his compelling narrative of Mariam and Laila, Hosseini has chosen to explore the lives of Afghanistani women with the seamless blending of the deeply troubled history of the region.

The book spans over a period of fifty years from 1960s to 2003 and focuses on the tumultuous lives and relationship of Mariam and Laila. Mariam, an illegitimate child suffers from the stigma surrounding her birth and the abuses she faces throughout her marriage. Laila, born a generation later is comparatively privileged during her youth until their lives intersect and Laila is forced to accept a marriage proposal from Rasheed, Mariam's husband. The two women endure not only the brutality of their husband but also the appalling atrocities of the Taliban, yet remain resilient till the end.

The novel opens with a curse word, *harami* – an illegitimate child, uttered in frustration by Mariam's mother when she breaks a treasured heirloom. Hosseini uses the word numerous times in the novel bringing alive the abusive connotation of the word:

At the time, Mariam did not understand. She did not know what this word *harami* – bastard – meant. Nor was she old enough to appreciate the injustice, to see that it is the creators of the *harami* who are culpable, not the *harami*, whose only

sin is being born. Mariam did surmise, by the way Nana said the word, that it was an ugly, loathsome thing to be a *harami*, like an insect, like the scurrying cockroaches Nana was always cursing and sweeping out of the *kolba*.

Later, when she was older, Mariam did understand. It was the way Nana uttered the word – not so much saying it as spitting it at her – that made Mariam feel the full sting of it. She understood then what Nana meant, that a *harami* was an unwanted thing; that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, acceptance (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 4).

The word that shapes Mariam's life fully captures Afghanistan's social milieu which has huge repercussions for a child born out of wedlock, reducing Mariam to an animal-like existence with people in the streets jeering and throwing stones, "Besides, they'll laugh at you in school. They will. They'll call you *harami*. They'll say the most terrible things about you" (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 18)

Her whole life is held hostage by the loathsomeness of being an illegitimate child, the word has such an overwhelming presence on her mind that even when she witnesses clear cases of wrong doings, she is unable to break through the shackles of mental prison and make a judgement:

Mariam knew that she could never talk to him about this. It was unmentionable. But was it unforgivable? She only had to think of the other man in her life. Jalil, a husband of three and a father of nine at the time, having relations with Nana out of wedlock. What was worse, Rasheed's magazine or what Jalil had done? And what entitled her anyway, a villager, a *harami*, to pass judgement? (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 82)

On the verge of being stoned to death for killing her savage husband, she weighs the value of her life against her identity as a *harami*, the moments of love that she got against even the simple pleasures of life that were forbidden to her because of being born illegitimate:

Mariam wished for so much in those final moments. Yet as she closed her eyes, it was not regret any longer but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her. She thought of her entry into this world, the *harami* child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. A person of consequence at last. No. it was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings. (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 361)

The writer's framing of all details in the first few pages in the story around the word *harami* seems to have been done with the purpose of making the reality of word come hammering down to the readers in all its bitterness, exactly the way it does to the characters.

Hosseini has used other words like *jinn* (4), *arbab* (15), horse drawn *gari* (31), *nikka* (49), kerosene *ishtop* (57) *moochi* (46), *khastegar* (46), *aftawa* (68), *aroos* (126), *mozahem* (127), *shaheed* (252) etc with a proliferation. His style gives a linguistic background to the novel that convincingly appears to be set in the subcontinent. With the regular use of words like *kolba* (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 3) for a hut, solely in local language, the reader never moves out of the setting of Afghanistan.

The novel weaves words from a different language with English, which are understood using context clues. For example Mariam's

mother Nana speaking about her father says, “I wish my father had had the stomach to sharpen one of his knives and do the honorable thing. It might have been better for me . . . But he was a coward, my father. He did not have the *dil*, the heart for it” (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 7). The reader can very well infer that Nana is speaking of courage, the ability to stand up and do the right thing. Similarly, Abdul Qadeer, a friend of Rasheed says, “A revolutionary council of the armed forces has been established , and our *watan* will now be known as the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan ... the era of aristocracy, nepotism and inequality is over, fellow *hamwatan*s” (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 100). Thus, it is easy to understand these words in the context.

The writer has made these words more acceptable to English novel reading community which may not understand them, by following the words with meaning blended into the sentences, like Rasheed at one point in the novel says about the people who allow their wives to go out on the streets without being fully covered, “They don’t see that they’re spoiling their own *nang* and *namoos*, their honor and pride” (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 69) and again the meaning of a local word is explained in the sentence, “During those six months, a *loya jirga* would be held, a grand council of leaders and elders, who would form an interim government to hold power for two years, leading up to democratic elections (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 162),

The syntax of everyday speeches, local words and phrases used frequently in the daily conversations have been employed in their original to authenticate the place, character and experience, like “*Dokhtar jo*” (31) used for a daughter, *tabreek* (54) used for congratulations and *akhund* (16) as a mark of respectful salutation, frequently. The food, in singularity has been presented in its true Afghanistani denomination “*shalqam*, *sabzi* and *kichri*” (15), *aush* soup (157), *halwa* and *chai* (244)

The mind and reactions of people gain a ground of authenticity with the use of local words. When Mariam asks her mother to enrol her in a school, she is told to endure, *tahamul* (18). The readers are acquainted with the local aspects of culture by the sprinkling of words like *pakol*(135) for a turban, a *rafiq* for a friend and a *dehati* (216) for a rustic. These words give the suggestion that one has entered the realm of a different culture and provide valuable sociological descriptions.

Tariq, Laila’s *yaklenga* (248), one-legged friend is shown to be humming an old Pushto song by the local artist Ustad Awal Mir:

*Da ze ma ziba watan*  
*Da ze ma dada watan*  
 This is our beautiful land,  
 This is our beloved land.  
 (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 165)

The writer has presented an essence of the beliefs of people, the subtleties of their feelings through their truthful articulation. These words matter profoundly as they enable us to envision the realm of this cultural dynamics at play. Hosseini seems to be fully aware of these words registering an impression on the reader and goes on to suggest the nuances of language, “And everywhere Mariam heard the city’s peculiar dialect; “Dear” was *jan* instead of *jo*, sister became *hamshira* instead of *hamshireh* and so on” (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 72).

In the global market place of literature, South Asian writing in English has received unprecedented attention making them hybrid constructions. Hosseini’s deep attachment with Afghanistan and his sensitivity for its horrendous problems reflected in his lines, “I hope that I will engage you, that I will transport you and that the novel will move you and leave you with some sense of compassion and empathy

for Afghan women whose suffering has been matched by very few groups in recent world history” (Postscript *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 412) also has its bearing on the language he has employed in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It seems to be his way of bringing about a tolerance of the differences and otherness that seems to be the concern of visionaries across the globe.

Khaled, as a post-colonial migrant who was born in Kabul and moved to the US has mixed up local flavour with English language to develop a creative medium which could serve both the sub-continental as well as British audience by breaking away from the normative register and attempting to use the language in a brave new way.

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Rashmi Attri

### Narratives of Resistance and Empowerment : Dalit Women’s Autobiographies

Writing is political act and every word of literature is a social document. Writings by women at the lowest end of the spectrum usually take the form of testimonies. In India Dalit writings by women function like testimonies because they are narratives of pain, resistance, protest, and survival. Dalits in India are the most suppressed class. As says raj Gauthman “Dalits who have for so long been treated as commodities owned by others must shout out their selfhood , their ‘I’ when they rise up” (qtd in Introduction *Sangati* , vx). Their women are doubly suppressed by patriarchy and upper classes. Dalit literature a sub-genre of Indian writings in English is a literature of protest and emancipation. Here the age old question of Dalit identity has been addressed. Dalit life writing by women is about the reconstruction of self after the traumatic experiences. This parallel and peripheral literature creates an alternative aesthetics borne out of their lived experiences ,These autobiographies unlike other autobiographies portray the author as a representative of a cultural group and not as an individual.

Dalit Literature emerged out of Dalit consciousness which while projecting Dalit point of view internalises their sorrows and sufferings. While dalit literature critiques Indian caste system Dalit women’s literature critiques caste , class and gender biases. Women finding no space even in the literature written by Dalit men , dared to speak for themselves. Their favourite genre autobiography which gave them the freedom to narrate their lived experiences of being dalit women. Their writing are discourses of both pain and

empowerment. To illustrate my point I have taken Bama's *Sangati* translated into English as *Events* by Laxmi Holmstron and Urmila Pawar's *Aaydan* translated into English by Maya Pandit as *The weave of my Life; a Dalit woman's memoir*. Both reveal the structure of the traumatic experiences, while also hinting (gesturing) at the ways in which the victims have struggled, overcome, and survived the painful experiences. Both the books also highlight the activism on the part of Bama and Urmila. It is a world where a woman is a victim of multiple types of exploitations both within and outside the community. The literature that entails liberation of average common men be it, tribal literature, their gatha or Dalit women narratives are definitely emancipatory. They speak of the religion of humanism and empowerment.

Both Bama and Urmila Pawar have presented a feminist point of view. "Till recently Tamil Dalit women writers had moulded their writings on the male literary traditions." (Kanal, 30) Bama starts the Tamil Dalit feminist tradition. She redefines Dalit women. Dalit feminism is different from academic feminism. To quote Rage "the writings and manifestoes of different Dalit women's groups underlined the fact that unmarked feminism of 1970s had, in fact in theory and praxis a kind of Brahmanical feminism." (Rege, 3)

There is an inherent purpose in this exercise of writing and expectations from Dalit women as Bama in its acknowledgement says "Sangati grew out of the hope that Dalit women who read it will rise up with fervour and walk towards the victory as they begin their struggle as pioneers of a new society" (Bama, Acknowledgement, 1994). This point is further reiterated by Dalit critic Ray Ganthaman "Dalit who have for long been treated as commodities owned by others must shout out their selfhood, their I when they rise up"... (Introduction, p.xv)

*Sangati* and *The Weave of my life* both project the realistic picture of the Dalits in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra respectively. Both derive material from the day-to-day life of the author and other Dalit women. Individual 'self' is replaced by 'Us'. To quote Urmila Pawar "What the writer writes about is social reality and not his or her individual life" (Pawar, p.29). Such autobiographical writings by Indian women are significant in the sense that these writings act as a tool and weapon to fight the oppressions they have been facing since ages. This point is very well taken by Tharu and Lalita in "Women writing in India" where they discuss how autobiographies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century herald the start of the modern genre of creative writing by Indian women.

Both the books openly discard the patriarchal structures of their respective societies and boldly talk of their emotional, mental and sexual exploitation. Both the autobiographies abound in domestic abuse as both the writers locate themselves in their family situation. In an interview about Dalit feminism, Bama says "All women in the world are second class citizens. For Dalit women the problem is grave, Their Dalit Identity gives them a different set of problems. They experience total lack of social status; they are not even considered dignified human beings. My stories are based on these aspects of Dalit culture, the hard labour they have to do all their lives... Dalit women have to put up with triple oppression, based on class, caste and gender. They die in order to live." Urmila Pawar's writings also break radical new grounds, push the boundaries of caste, class and gender in her struggle towards empowerment. Calling it the story of all women Urmila informs that her mother used to weave, *ayadaans*. Marathi generic term for all the things made of bamboo. And she finds similarity between her mother's act of weaving and her act of writing are originally linked. Both weaving and writing are about their pain and agony.

Both the Books are different from other Dalit women autobiographies is the fact that instead of pitying the Dalit self, the writer is celebrating the 'self with the "glowing message of self- confidence in place of self-pity. Both being the narrative of Dalit women who dare to break all the oppressive systems of the society. To quote Bama "*Sangati* is a look at a part of the lives of those Dalit women who dared to make fun of the class in power that oppressed them" (Preface vii). This has given them courage to revolt.. The writer herself gets the inner strength "to bounce like a ball and not to curl and collapse because of the blow... as the urge grew to demolish the troubles and to live happily. These Dalit women instead of letting themselves be crushed showed the exemplary courage of swimming against the tide and lived life confidently. This is the inspirations and purpose of writing this book." (Preface, *Sangati*)

These autobiographies have unique place as the narratives contribute both to the Dalit movement and women's movement. The book chart the journey of women of various generations older women and younger women. Their collective voice becomes the expression of community women as single. The narratives also showcase their strength and unity among themselves. In case of injustice done to any Dalit women they all get united with the victim. . Laxmi Holm strong Translator of *Sangati* also says in the Introduction "Bama was already formulating a Dalit feminism which redefined women from the socio- political perspective of a Dalit , and examining caste and gender oppressions together" (*sangati*: xvii). The narratives also highlights that dalit women talk different both from Indian upper caste women and dalit men. Rajeshwari sundarajan highlights the instability of the notion of women's identity, and to the power imbalances which exit between different groups of woman, under the blanket notion of gender .

*Sangati* is a collection of anecdotes as the word Sangati means happenings. It has no plot in the strict sense. Its narrative pattern resembles the pattern of ethnographic or anthropological studies. It does not adhere to the standard norms of either novel or autobiography but blends the two . It is made of the interconnected stories, anecdotes from personal life which are narrated in the first person. It is not about the tears of Dalit women but also about their lively and rebellious culture , their eagerness not to let life crush or shatter them, but to swim vigorously against the tide... (Acknowledgement, ix). As for Urmila's autobiography "describes her long journey from Kokan to Mumbai , bringing the struggle of there generations for a Dalit modernity which readers have hitherto heard so little."

Charting the journey of three generations of women both the books abound in the instances of domestic abuse, violent beatings at the hands of husbands. Both writers locate themselves in their familial contexts. Questions related to the place of women and Dalit women in particular, related to the right to the ownership of property, harassment physical, economical sexual and mental , related to conversion are spread through the entire canvas of these texts and form an important part as they challenge the entire system , Sequence , chrolnoly and perception of time, place is reconstructed here as it evolves.

This narratives questions economic inequality. Women here are the bread earners, these women like the women of Indian Upper class are not homebound; they go out for work to earn their livelihood. They work in agricultural fields and building site labours. They are vulnerable to sexual crimes and harassment But it is Dalit men who are the masters of House. "We have to labour in the fields as hard as man do , and on top of that , struggle to bear and raise our children

. As for man their work ends when they have finished with in the fields If you are born into this world , it is best you were born as man.” (Sangati, 6-7). In order to highlight their deplorable state author compares these women to the white pigs owned by the white nun. While these women had to toil whole day to fill their belly ,as against them the pigs of white nuns were better off as they were well fed inform Bama. Urmila Pawar also points out how women of her mahar were the main bread earners. But both the writers point out how these women were paid less as against their male members. These dalit women did not have control over their money. As writes Urmila Pawar “ when i got my first salary i did not believe that all that money; that i could spend it the way i liked. Before my marriage i used to hand over my salary to my mother; now i hand it over to my husband, if this is not like deliberately offering head for the butcher’s knife . what else is it.” (Pawar, 208).

The author also traces the long history of this gender bias in Indian society which dictates different behaviour for boys and girls “from the time we are babies you treat boys in one way and girls in white another way” (29) complains the author and resisting it asks “ why cant we be the same as boys. We are not allowed to talk loudly or laugh loudly ..even when we sleep we can’t scratch out on our backs nor lie down on our bellies. We always have to walk with our heads bowed down , gazing at our toes” (29). These women don’t get proper food and that too after they have served to their children and husbands. In everything this gender bias is noticed. As in the very beginning Bama describes how she herself was discriminated against her brother. Whose needs were attended first and she was always second Urmila pawar in the Weave of my life also highlights this discriminatory attitude on the bases of gender. She describes how dalit women were made to eat inferior food. While male members in their households could eat better food these

women had to eat their rice with some watery foul smelling dish. This is pointer towards their acute poverty as well. Urmila Pawar writes “we were aware without anybody telling us that we were born in a particular caste and that we had to live accordingly,” (Pawar, 29).

Further reflecting on the oppression inflicted on Dalit women by Dalit men Bama says that since dalit men are treated like dogs by upper class society, these Dalit men let loose their frustration on dalit women who like the drum of Manu is beaten on both sides.. Hence “the position of women both pitiful and humiliating, really in the fields they have to escape from upper caste men’s molestation... even when they go to their own homes, before they have had a chance to cook some kanji or lie down they have to submit to their husband’s torment.” (35) once married she become slave to her husband who can treat as he wishes ,he can even kill her if he wishes. Even women from upper caste don’t show any compassion to these women. These women are made to believe that they are possessed by evil spirits just to pull them down to subservient position.

Both the writers have also written about untouchability prevalent in Indian society. Urmila Pawar also points out that Dalits in her society were addressed by such derogatory names as Laddu, Honda (stone), kacharia (dirt) Bhakia (Beggar).etc . They could give those names which were used by upper caste people. Further, describing how she was treated by her classmates she narrates an incident when her classmates arranged a party in which she was also invited but she writes “They did not allow me to touch anything. However we all ate together. I really enjoyed the meal . The next day was horrified to hear that my eating had become the hottest topic for juicy gossip. The girls were whispering in groups about how much i had eaten” (The weave of my life, 110). She writes that she felt so humiliated that day that she died thousand deaths .Even



teachers humiliated her for being dalit. She narrates how her poor command in English would bring insults to her by her teachers.

Reflecting on this plight of Dalit women Bama and Urmila suggest that it only educations which can help them get out of this state. “If we had a little education at least , we could live with rather more awareness” ( Sangati p.118) Bama also realises the importance of inner strength and says “We must be strong . We must show by our own resolute lives that we believe ardently in our independence.. just as we work hard so long as their strength in our bodies , so too , must we strengthen our hearts and minds in order to survive” (Sangati p.59). Urmila pawar reveals how her own transformation as a strong women was possible due to her education. She also points out how her participation in drama/theatre in school and college helped her gain confidence.

These also celebration of Dalit identity both Urmila and Bama feel proud of her Dalit identity and also of the economic independence enjoyed by these Dalit women since they are the main wage earners. Both the writer having written about the challenges of their own lives which represent Dalit women in general also reveal their excitement of an awakening consciousness .

Both Urmila and Bama talk of the conversion into Buddhism and Christianity. While the former speaks positively about this change mentioning how Mahar Dalits were gradually changed under the influence of Buddhism. Bama is critical of this conversion. She highlights the presence of castism in the Roman Catholic Church Bama says that those who have converted into Christianity are hardly integrated with higher caste Christians . Like Hindus Caste hierarchy works among Christians in India Bama writes, “caste holds down like a top root It is at the centre of religion, politics, education and everything other wretched thing”(102). Christian Dalit women

like women in caste Hindu get the most ill treated in Indian society. Bama categorically speaks of the Church rules which are strategically made to deprive women of their rights. . Bama inform us that tamil Christian dalit women don't have the right to choose their life partners or to divorce their partners. Bama depicts the hegemonic power structures working in the church and sustains this all through the character's speech. As we see when Soothipilai shouted angrily, “just look at what goes in our church as well . It is our women who sweep the church and keep it clean. Women of upper caste stand to one side until we have finished and then march in grandly and sit down before anyone else. I have stood it as long as I can and last I complained to the nuns. Do you what they said, it seems we will gain merit by sweeping the church and that God will bless us specially” (119). However Bama also highlights the resistance that started in the minds of dalit women “see how they fool us in the name of God. Why, Don't those people need Gods blessings too” (119....) This is how they become aware of their situation.

Important aspect of these text is their language which is full of colloquial expressions. This folkloric style is also part of the larger designs of protest and resistance. Its the language which is not printable , it is indecent as well . As says Gautama this is “ to expose and discredit the existing language, in grammar , in its refinement and its falsifying order as symbols of dominance” (Gauthman, Intro. ,xiii). They assert their identity by using this local dialect. By using this rude and sharp language these women protract they maintain their mental equilibrium. To relieve themselves of this victimisation and exploitation these women sing songs on various occasions .

The writer ends the on appositive note and piece of advice “if we ourselves don't change our condition, then who will come and save it for us, ...we should educate boys and girls alike ... we should

give our girls the freedom we give our boys “She is hopeful that “ a day would when men and women will live as one , with no difference between them , with equal rights. Then the injustices, violence and inequalities will come to an end” (122-3). Bama gives importance to education for the liberation of Dalits .Her present position is also due to education, and it was her brother who encouraged her to pursue higher education .

From the above narrative it can be concluded that both Christianity and Hinduism practice caste and gender bias. The writers suggest that it is only through education and activism that Dalits can fight power structures of Indian society. The autobiographies are purposive and positive where the writers try to reach out to people and say that dalit women have to rise stronger out of their own caste and not by aping the upper caste . They have to rise like the phoenix from its own ashes. The dalit women writers in the true sense narrate their lives, culture and history, they can be called theorists as theory is borne out of their movement and activities. Their autobiographies not only share Dalit women’s tireless effort to surmount hideous personal tragedy but also convey the excitement of an awakening consciousness during a time of profound political and social change.

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Shrawan K Sharma

## Women Empowerment : Indian Literature in English

After having attended a number of seminars and conferences on women empowerment and such other subjects, I feel that the speakers generally take up the issues as male or female based on contemporary theories. This approach leads to wrong conclusions. I feel that the subject needs to be talked about as a consciousness or awareness which is neither woman nor man. Let me clarify my point of view with an episode. Shukadev, the son of great Sage Vyas, and a great yogi, a great *samadarshi*, decided to take *sannyasa*. Vyasji tried to persuade Shukadev but it was all in vain. When Shukadev was going to the forest all naked, Vyasji was following him surreptitiously. On the way Vyasji saw some girls, who, while taking bath in a pond, did not bother about Shukadev, who was all naked but seeing Vyasji, who was fully dressed, hastily covered themselves with clothes. Vyasji was surprised to see the behavior of the maidens. When Vyasji asked the maiden about their unusual behaviour, they said, "Vyasji, in your mind, there is still a difference of perception in the physical form of a man and woman but in the mind of your son there is no difference of perception in the physical form. This is very much applicable to the all the upholders of women empowerment. Once we obliterate the difference of perception in the physical form of a man and woman, there shall be the beginning of real women empowerment, because then we shall show *karuna* (compassion to those who are exploited and discriminated), *maitri* (friendliness to those who are happy), *mudita* (happiness to those who do good things) and *upeksha* (indifference to those who lack these qualities)

as prescribed by Patanjali in his *Yogasutra*. At this level, *citta* (consciousness) does not draw a line of demarcation by considering the appearance of body and recognises something transcendental in both man and woman.

This idea can be appreciated in a better way if we have a cursory look at the Hindu metaphysics. One of the basic tenets of Hindu metaphysics is that the soul does not differentiate between man and woman and as such both are essentially the same. *The Rigveda* visualizes society as a Virata Purusha and out of his limb came out man and woman in whom there is no difference. The Ardhanareshwara form is the very form of this Virata Purusha (*The Rigveda*, 10.90). In the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, it is said that God wished to appear in two forms as Man and Woman, as the two forms were conjoint in him. Accordingly, he separated the two and they turned into husband and wife (*Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.3). Similarly it has been propounded in *Jabala Upanishad* that in the beginning of the creation Prajapati created from half of his own form Man, and from the other self, woman. (Section 2). Thus, man and woman are not different. They are neither equal nor unequal. They are unique. The meeting of two unique brings something miraculous into society. Half of the society has been denied its contribution, and that half of women, has an immense capacity to contribute to the society. It can make the society a beautiful paradise.

It is a matter of lamentation that the evils of society and family have created a cleavage between man and woman on the basis of difference of perception in the physical form. And this difference makes the woman slave, humiliated, and economically dependent. Ashapura Debi's *Subarnalata* a well-known Bengali feminist novel and Rajam Krishnan's *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, and Chudamani Raghavan's *Yamini*, both Tamil feminist novels have demonstrated

how the evils of society and family crippled the flight of young women. In *Subarnalata* the eager, generous and inquiring wife is crushed by the demands of her tyrannical mother-in-law and her indifferent/brutal husband that she effaces herself in supposedly true Hindu style. In Rajam Krishnan's *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, the heroine is a housewife enslaved by Brahminical orthodoxy in a Tamil household in today's Delhi. In *Yamini*, Yamini, a young woman, drowns herself in a well to have learnt that her daughter is about to marry a man of her own choice and Yamini's father, remorseful about the drowned woman, takes a suicide leap into the well. Charmayne D'Souza, an Indian English poet also interrogates Hindu marital rituals and relationship in her poem, in an ironical way:

I have marked this woman  
for me.  
We will be tied together  
by the scarlet sari  
of her blood.  
Seven times around  
the fire of my shots.  
What I have done  
is done  
for all my unborn sons.  
Her mangalasutra  
Will be a bullet  
to her breast.  
My garland  
a hempen rope  
around my neck  
and a swift sharp  
erection  
into death.

There is yet another group of contemporary writers who are engaged in showing a kind of attitudinal shift in woman. In them the women characters assert and make their impact by their attitudinal shift. They describe empowered woman as concrete, vivid, rebellious, alive and agential. They present an alternative mode of perception to the traditional systems of representation and perception of women and posit women in the position of the subject" (Case 115). Sethu's *Pandavapuram*, a Malayalam novel, is concerned with women's cruelly unequal relations with men. There a woman, abandoned by her husband, creates an imaginary town, Pandavapuram, where she will live a life in which she has the upper hand over men. Tripurari Sharma's *A Tale from the Year 1857: Azizun Nisa* is a play in which Azizun, a courtesan from Kanpur forsakes her profession to become a soldier and fight the British during the Mutiny. Azizun exhibits a strong sense of self worth and determination. She does not appreciate the condescending attitude meted out to her by Ali Khan who spares her simply because she is a woman:

Azizun: Yes, I must complete what I've set out to do. I'm not a mere woman. He should have treated me like a soldier. Fought and killed me. I'm not afraid to die. But no, in his eyes I remained a mere woman. He thought I was a coward. There's more to be done to be his match. I must become so strong and tough that one wouldn't know that one was facing a woman. Then there wouldn't be any need to show pity (166).

Here to a great extent the focus is on imitation of man or revolt against institutions. No doubt, in order to encounter the evils of life, woman's revolt against all suffering that is imposed by anybody or any institution, needs to be appreciated by the men in the society and writers in their creative world. Similarly her dropping of all enclosures

which she has chosen herself, also needs to be treated as a welcome step. In other words, their deeply buried, revengeful, cold rage against all men who ever forced to hurt woman, need to be uncovered. But it is unfortunate to know that neither the members of social system change their attitude nor the creative writers respond to the change as a critical insiders. The writers to a great extent, seem to give solution in the world of glamour, in the world of absolute freedom and thus the spirit of feminine endeavour is lost. They forget that as social beings they are situated in a community in a historical context. Hence, they should acquire a world view which enable them to see as much of the world as it is possible for them and to make their readers see. They should liberate themselves from certain inhibiting angles of vision—whether they will choose the angle of vision of the possessing classes or the angle of vision of dispossessed. They need to be sensitive to the critical change taking place in the community or nation. They will committed writer, if their narratives or stories become the narratives of the nation. So liberating from the inhibitions of life, they need to reflect various moods and movements, anxieties and aspirations, dreams and desires, disillusionments, and disappointments, failures and achievements of the people, emphasizing their commitment to their own community, their own people and their daily struggles for survival against all kinds of exploitation and oppression. U.R. Ananthamurthy, the famous Kannada writer envisions a writer as a critical insider who connects literature with the people and their world views. He aptly remarks: “... a truly Critical Insider would have boundless compassion for the poor and disinherited in India and would passionately engage himself with the present in all its confusion of values. Only with such a mind and heart would he know what is usable in the rich past of India for a creative present.”

As has already been seen, women empowerment has not been responded in Indian English literature responsibly. It does not seem to be the narrative of Indian community or nation. The common denominator is an attack on culture and tradition impregnated with a prescription for absolute freedom which cannot empower women in anyway. Indirectly such literature make them to be further trapped in the sinister design of man. Shashi Deshpande fictionalises the emergence of contemporary urban, educated upper class women who are caught between tradition and modernity. She depicts the reaction of quiet, sensitive and intelligent Indian women who challenge the system and seek a new balance of power between the sexes. They overcome the social stigmas asserting their potential in the professional arena. In *Roots and Shadows* and *The Dark Holds No Terror* and *That Long Silence*, Indu, Saru and Jaya seek a refuge in extra marital relationship forced by loneliness and marital incompatibility. Indu has an extra-marital relationship with Naren; Saru's socializing with Boozie is a calculated move to have sexual autonomy; and Jaya's relation with Kamat, not precisely defined in the novel, is also an escape to find some humane empathy and sharing. Is such revolting attitude for complete independence going to help them in achieving a complete happiness?

Woman certainly needs empowerment, but what is happening in the name of liberation and empowerment, is stupid. The central issue of women empowerment is related to woman's location in society because her location in, and experience of, most situations is different from that of man; her location in most situations is not only different but is less privileged than or unequal to that of man; and she is oppressed, restrained, subordinated, used and abused by man. There are number of questions which are raised targeting social and cultural institutions. Some of them are :Why is a child known after its father's name, while the fact is that the mother nurses it in her womb

for nine months; gives it birth and brings it up? Why is a child considered illegitimate in our society, contrary to the natural justice in animal society, whose father is not known in the society? Is the birth of a child given by its mother not adequate to legitimize it? Why is woman deprived of the benefit, in spite of law in her favour? and why does man find a way out in his favour in spite of strict law against him? Why is the loyalty of man towards his wife not emphasized in married life, the way it is expected from woman towards her husband? Why does the young widow suffer whole life the curse of widowhood while a widower is free to marry one after the other? Why is dowry in practice even today? Why is a raped woman considered perverted and outcaste? Why is man not socially ostracised? Why is it emphasized for woman to wear *burka* or *pardah*? Why is a girl given as “*kanyadan*” in her marriage and why is this “*kanyadan*” treated as pious ritual? Why is she not given right to choose her life partner or employment of her choice? Why does she depend on her parents before her marriage and after marriage on her in-laws? Why is a husband given the name *patiparmeshwar/patidev*, not a life partner? Why is a husband, seeking his wife’s advice, called, “*jorukagulam*”?

These are the questions raised by members of women liberation movement or others belonging to other social and political organizations. No doubt, certain questions need attention but discussing all these questions in a highly derogatory sense is due to the fact that they are misinformed. It is not liberation; it is not empowerment. Real liberation shall make woman authentically a woman, feminine and graceful, but contrarily she is becoming aggressive and imitating man. Woman is trying to become just like a man., trying to imitate all what rubbish a man does. This is not empowerment rather a choice for second rate citizenship. It is a choice for a kind of bondage, far deeper bondage than the earlier one

because this is her own creation. Life’s problems can be solved by love not by any violent approach. And to solve the problems of life both man and woman need liberation, liberation of the mind. That will be true liberations. But here both man and woman are blindly busy in the game of liberation or empowerment. It is rightly remarked by Osho :

The liberation movement that is going in the world is a man-created phenomenon, a male created phenomenon. You will be surprised about it, that it is again male conspiracy. Now man wants to get rid of women. He wants to have no responsibility. He wants to enjoy women, but only as fun. He does not want to take all the other responsibilities that come with it.

Now, that is a subtle conspiracy: the man is trying to persuade women all over the world that the woman has to become independent. It is a subtle trick. And the male mind is cunning and the male mind is succeeding. And now many women have become poisoned by this idea. (Osho 29)

Being poisoned by this sinister idea, woman now wants to be equal to man. The women’s organizations ceaselessly raising woman’s consciousness to drop interest in home, family, children and motherhood. They conduct sessions to destroy something deep in their womanhood to compete with men. This has also percolated into literature where the women who are extra-ambitious and reject the traditional value system of society, are called empowered or liberated women. The empowered or liberated women portrayed by Shobha De in her fiction are such figures as raise voice of protest against male dominance and reject the traditional value system of society. Karuna in *Socialite Evenings*, a middle class girl who desperately wanted to become rich, passes a series of events involving

glamour, sex, unhappy marriage, divorce resulting into disillusionment. Aasha Rani in *Starry Nights* again a town girl who in order to become number one heroine of Bollywood, undergoes the absurdities of sexual experiences and finally feels disillusioned. Similarly Nisha in her novel *Sultry Days*, Mikki in *Sisters*, and the women characters in *Snapshots* undergo the said absurdities of life to be so called empowered. Here again it worth emphasizing that this attitude shall lead women ultimately to the prehistoric society in which there was the 'cave man' who was a predator, who would capture and carry away any female unless another male with greater strength deprived him of his booty; cohabit with her and then abandon her to fate only to seek another prey, another female.

This approach to life cannot make women empowered. So long as the shades of life are not properly appreciated, the real empowerment cannot be achieved. The journey of life shows that if love without independence dissipates a woman's personality into nothing; independence without love also exhausts her sensitivity. Though social, legal, political and economic independence is must for women, it cannot give them complete independence, satisfaction and inner happiness. Women need to appreciate their feminine and graceful qualities; they need to see how much they have contributed to their own victimization instead of putting the blame on everybody except themselves. The Revolutionary changes are easier to carry than to sustain. They constitute alike strength and weakness. It is through self analysis and self- understanding and through vigilance and courage, they can begin to change their lives. No doubt, the society of the future will have to give a new vigour and colour to their life, by reconstructing its very foundation on the basis of mutual love, and not relationship of male superiority and female inferiority. Real empowerment lies in a capacity to work, and so long as a woman behaves as a responsible member of society, she is truly empowered

in the highest sense of the term. She has to act like Wordsworth's skylark whose 'heart and eye' remain with her 'nest upon the dewy ground', while her 'wings aspire'. Indian women possess a profound inner strength to find freedom through realization of their individual truth. They keep themselves submerged in the relations they are bound with. They are the real inheritors of the values. Rama Mehta's Geeta in *Inside the Haveli* is such a woman character. She assert without blowing trumpets or without offending any. She induces her family members with a feeling of warmth towards modernity; she deviates from dissatisfaction to acceptance and from tolerance to generosity. To her, family is not a battle ground for skirmishes and the desired results can be achieved through patience and perseverance as well. She seeks to synthesize traditions with modern values which are the needs of the hour. She is of the view that the traditions are not only chains of slavery but also a means to provide strength and security.

In life there are always three models that operate in one way or the other at varying intervals: the first is the ideal model of things which tells how the things ought to be; the second is the existing model of things which tells how the things are /were; and the third model is the functional model of things which tells how the things are said or thought to be. Now the question is: Where do these models come from? The first model comes from our Indian intellectual tradition and this model works as a reference point. The second comes from our life in action which is put to test of the ideal model and the third is a proposed model to be used. Among these three models, the model given by the Indian intellectual tradition is very important because it is a reference point. But it should be remembered that this ideal model is not to be followed as such. It is just to facilitate us for modifying our existing model of life. If the modified/existing model does not work properly, it is not the fault of the ideal model. The fault lies with those who fail to visualize the spirit of the ideal

model, who fail to visualize time, the circumstances in which the modified model was to be used.

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