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Rebels of Empire : The Human Idiom in Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons*

Satish C. Aikant

There is considerable debate on whether 1857 was a mutiny, a peasants' revolt, an urban revolution or a war of independence. Indian historians have, in general, found the term 'Mutiny' a misrepresentation of both the events that led to, and followed the outbreak of violence in 1857. It was reported to the British Parliament that the incidents of violence were a 'wholly unpatriotic and wholly selfish 'sepoy mutiny' with no native leadership and no popular support.' In fact the enduring representation of the events of 1857 in British historiography as a 'sepoy mutiny'¹ reflected a determination to preserve Britain's reputation as an imperial power. It is often contended that forcing Western ideas on an Eastern people fundamentally backfired, and the 'divide and conquer' tactics employed by the British in India ultimately sowed the seeds of the rebellion.² What happened was, understandably, a direct consequence of the imposition of the British rule and cultural practices that were largely incompatible with native culture, which was not yet exposed to European modernity. This instability is underlined by Robert Young who speaks of an inner dissonance that marks a resistance to Western Culture within Western Culture itself.³ Nonetheless, 1857 became a seminal event in the history of British India and the acts of unbridled violence committed on both sides left a legacy of bitterness.

Some British historians in view of the defiance of the Peshwa, the Rani of Jhansi and other rulers, attributed the

event to the machinations of Hindu princes, while the others believed that, as the rallying point of the rebels was Delhi and the powerless titular Moghul emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, he was to be held responsible for the conspiracy which V. D. Savarkar dubbed India's First War of Independence.⁴ But as a matter of fact, instead of the single coherent Mutiny or national war of independence, there was a chain of very different uprisings and acts of resistance, whose form and fate were determined by local and regional situations, passions and grievances.⁵

The Uprising has to be seen not in exclusive terms of nationalism, imperialism, orientalism or other such abstractions, but instead as a human event of extraordinarily complex and tragic outcomes. It allows us to look into the lives of the individuals caught up in one of the great upheavals of history. Public, political and national tragedies, after all, consist of a multitude of private, domestic and individual tragedies. 'It is through the human stories of the successes, struggles, griefs, anguish and despair of these individuals that we can best bridge the great chain of time and understanding separating us from the remarkably different world of mid-nineteenth century India.'⁶

The Uprising was not merely a mutiny on the part of disgruntled soldiers. It was not one unified movement but many, with widely different causes, motives and natures. It was a response to multiple grievances among the Indian people, triggered by British cultural practices. These practices grew out of the colonial encounter which critics and commentators like Edward Said have brought into sharp focus as colonial discourse.

While one would generally agree with Said's basic contention that knowledge of the Orient is linked to the exercise of colonial power, his sense of an unbroken, unchanging tradition of European representation of the East

from the earliest times to the present times, which rests on his model of unified, undifferentiated concept of orientalism pays insignificant regard to historical developments. As James Clifford maintains, Said's 'critical manner sometimes appears to mimic the essentializing discourse it attacks.'⁷ It also ignores the alternative discourse that emerges within the dominant hegemonic formation, which Dennis Porter calls 'counter-hegemonic thought.'⁸ The opposites posited by Said- East/West, Colonizer/Colonized, Self/Other should not be taken as rigid binaries. The concept of identity that is shifting, diverse and responsive to various affiliations can be applied to the European Self and its Others. Considered thus India was not always an antithesis of Britain but also its analogue.

The various representations of the Uprising of 1857 have found expression in several historical, social and literary accounts. A literary text in particular becomes a site of cultural control, a stage on which the issues of race, gender and culture are enacted. It can be used to re-imagine the racist ideology. The reports of the 'Sepoy Mutiny' that reached home to the English audience at the time had such powerful effect on the reading public that it became hard to separate fact from fiction.⁹ The message that came through in contemporary accounts, with few exceptions, as well as in the early histories of the event sought to justify the imperial mission through constant reinforcement of ideas of racial superiority, and indignation against the native. As Andrew Ward acknowledges in *Our Bones are Scattered* (1996), there is a dearth of primary material from the Indian side of the equation. 'The Indians at the time- at least those writing in English – told the British only of what they wanted to hear.'¹⁰ Ruskin Bond's novella *A Flight of Pigeons*,¹¹ which is based on actual historical incidents, is a reflective narrative that deals with the individual lives and the particular rather than with the abstract or the homogenized collectivities.

This nationalist movement began in Meerut on May 10, 1857, when the Indian soldiers in the Company's force rose against their officers and took charge. Soon the resistance spread to other cantonment towns and throughout the princely states, challenging the Company's annexation of or interference in their kingdoms. *A Flight of Pigeons* provides both the British and Indian interpretations to these events: the first-person account sensitively presents the impact of the violence on innocent Europeans, while a series of political and social uprisings indicate that it was not an isolated 'mutiny' of the *sepoys* ('soldiers') but a grassroots freedom movement that was orchestrated by leaders of all segments of the population, both Hindu and Muslim, army and civilian.

The centre of interest in this story is the fate of two Eurasian women who are caught in the holocaust: they are Ruth and her mother Mariam, who is of mixed French and Muslim blood and the wife of the Frenchman Mr. Labadoor. The Europeans are attacked while the church service is in progress at St. Mary's in Shahjahanpur. Mr. Labaddor is killed, along with many British officials and their families, but Ruth escapes and joins her mother in their hiding place.¹² After hiding in their Hindu benefactor's house for a month, Ruth, Mariam, and other members of their extended family are caught by Javed Khan, one of the Muslim leaders of the resistance in Shahjahanpur. However, he cannot bring himself to kill Ruth. He takes them to his home because he admires Mariam for protecting her daughter and also because he has been infatuated with Ruth's beauty. Javed Khan is a Rohilla Pathan, who is suspected of having set on fire at night the bungalow of the Redmans.¹³

Since the narrator is a helpless young girl in hiding, the spatial canvas as well as the point of view of the narrator are naturally limited. However, Shahjahanpur, a small cantonment 250 miles east of Delhi, where the story is set

represents India in microcosm. We find here all the major religious groups and communities; the existence of the feudal and the colonial order, as well as the presence of contesting political forces. Bond is fascinated with small towns as he thinks they reveal the true face of the country. In the Introduction to *Time Stops at Shamli and Other Stories* Bond writes, 'Small town India – that's my India' and adds, 'There is a timelessness about small-town and cantonment India.' In order to provide historical authenticity to his story Bond studied the gazetteers of that period and other available accounts, and visited the site of action in Shahjahanpur. In the Notes appended to the novella he writes,

I first heard the story of Mariam and her daughter from my father who was born in the Shahjahanpur military cantonment a few years after the Mutiny. That and my interest in the accounts of those who had survived the 1857 uprising, took me to Shahjahanpur on a brief visit in the late 1960's. It was one of those small U.P. towns that had resisted change, and there were no high-rise buildings or blocks of flats to stifle the atmosphere. I found the old Church of St. Mary's without any difficulty, and beside it a memorial to those who were killed there on that fateful day. It was surrounded by a large, open parade ground, bordered by mango groves and a few old bungalows. It couldn't have been very different in Ruth Labadoor's time. The little River Khannaut was still crossed by a bridge of boats (164).

Bond has brought vividly to life this old time world and through Ruth opened a window on a critical period of India's colonial history. Mariam and her family find shelter in the hut of Triloki, a mason. From here they are escorted by Lala Ramjimal to his house. The Lala risks violence at the hands of the frenzied mob when he gives succour to these helpless women. But Bond does not highlight the conflict between the Indians who kept their distance and those who joined

hands with the mutinous sepoy. The conflict and its aftermath, as history records it, took the form of an intense vindictive suspicion on either side.

When Javed Khan takes the women away as guests of his Muslim household, Ruth and Mariam assume Muslim identities, as they knew that their only chance of survival was by gradually shedding their European identity to win native approbation for exercise of control over them. Viewed from a different perspective it could be understood as a success of the imperial mission to the extent that the colonizers can move easily between Indian and British culture, using disguise as a temporary erasure of cultural identity. Mariam's impressive Muslim ancestry, her knowledge of Muslim culture, and ability to speak fluent Urdu enable them to communicate with and be trusted by Javed Khan's family. She is thoroughly familiar with the Muslim way of life and customs. The ritual of the bath, the *baisakhi* celebrations, the superstitions about spirits and pigeons on graves, all have a familiar ring and come as ready references while she spends time with the Muslim household. Explications like that of the term *Hafiz* or the name Zohra, along with turns of phrases that reflect the Muslim style of speech give an earthly authenticity to the story. Above all, in this closely observed Indian way of life there is none of the implicit criticism of the native way of life to underline the superiority of the British ruling class. The story dispels mutual stereotypes that Muslims and Europeans have of each other. Ruth recalls in her narration that the Muslim women 'were agreeably surprised to find that we delighted in hard work, that we loved needles and thread, and that, far from seeking the company of men, we did our best to avoid them' (133). These western women are sensitive to concerns and cultural practices of the 'natives' and provide a model of cultural acceptance. Such depiction of the East-West encounter is very different from the uncharitable,

stereotypical portrayal in several colonial accounts. On the other hand there is perfect understanding of the distinctiveness of nationalities, as for example when Ruth says, 'It was in our interest to forget that we had European blood in our veins and that there was any advantage in the return of the British to power. It was also necessary for us to *seem* to forget that the Christian God was our God, and we allowed it to be believed that we were Muslims' (123-124).

While describing the predicament of the characters caught in the flux of events, Bond brings out their essential humanity. Mutual suspicions notwithstanding, the urge for co-operation, concern for the 'other' show up as steady undercurrents. In the ultimate analysis it is the spirit of the syncretic culture which had held sway in pre-colonial India, prevails and which is not smothered even in the violent conflicts.¹⁴ When the Uprising breaks out it is not merely the Hindus and Muslims who reach out to each other, but they also show concern for the hapless Britishers, belying the definition of the 'other' in the orientalist categorisation in terms of essentialization of the Hindu-Muslim opposition and its institutionalization in political discourse.¹⁵

As the news gradually trickles into the obscure Shahjahanpur Ruth and her mother impatiently await a change in the fortunes of the British army. Mariam's prospects of survival fluctuate with the fortunes of the Company. Twenty-five days after the massacre in the Church, she hears the beating of drums and the sound of fife, the tramping of horses and the shouts of cheering crowds. It is a moment of tense uncertainty; the Lala later informs Mariam that the dissolute Nawab Quadir Ali has been ousted. His place had been taken by Ghulam Qadir Khan, pious, energetic and determined to free the land from foreign yoke. For Mariam the only uncertain consolation is that he has some regard for the Labadoors and was also against the senseless slaughter

of women and children. 'I will have nothing to do with the murder of the innocent,' he said (113).

For Mariam and Ruth time moves at a slow pace along with their hopes and fears. Their solace is the sympathy and warmth of the women of the household, and the occasional delayed news that the conflict was yet unresolved. Their hopes are revived when there is an indication of the reversal suffered by the nationalists in the prophecy of the black robed fakir that 'the restoration of the *Firangi* rule was as certain as the coming of doomsday. See here they come!' he cried, pointing to the north where a flock of white pigeons could be seen hovering over the city. 'They come flying like white pigeons which, when disturbed, fly away and circle, and come down to rest again. White pigeons from the hills!' (139).

The news of the fall of Delhi, when it finally reaches Shahjahanpur, is passed on in whispers in Kothiwali's house. For Mariam and Ruth, it augured well as far as their prospects were concerned, 'Our hearts leapt at the news, and tears came to our eyes, for a British victory meant a release from our confinement and state of dependence; but Delhi was a far cry from Shahjahanpur, and we did not give any expression to our feelings' (148). The women in the household in general were indifferent to the political upheavals and changes. Politics, as Ruth on another occasion noted, was the domain of men. 'Politics seldom ever entered the four walls of the zenana – wars and deeds of violence were considered the prerogative of men. Seldom was any reference made to the disturbances that were taking place throughout the country, or to our own troubles' (133). However, for those embattled, survival would be dependent on the political course of events and their outcome.

Mariam constantly fears for her security: 'We had no idea how we would fit in with their future plans should the British reoccupy Shahjahanpur' (152). The emperor Bahadur

shah Zafar was made a prisoner, the Nawab's men led by Nizam Ali routed and now months after they had taken Delhi, the English army was moving towards Shahjahanpur. A year after they fled from their burning house, Mariam and Ruth are 'in flight again' along with the Kothiwali's household – now perhaps, as hostages. Mariam discreetly tells Kothiwali, '.. for the present we are identified with you all, and we must go where you go' (155). For the time being they have to share a common destiny, till their ways will finally part, but not without feeling a profound sense of loss.

History is not merely a backdrop in this novel, certainly not in terms of generalized or abstract statements involving faceless men and women. It is rather a story narrated in subjective and humane terms. The story of the Uprising here takes up the form of Ruth's story. When Bond learnt the story from his father it prompted him to explore both the site of the happenings as well as the contemporary historical records. His interest was roused by the survivors of the Labadoor family and the extraordinary circumstances of their ordeal and forced confinement. Bond does not allow his narrative to be lost in the maze of the superfluities of the trappings of history, nor does it meander into the fantasies of fictional discourse. *A Flight of Pigeons* is a piece of fiction that brings facts alive and projects a credible point of view.

The Uprising was a clash of nations- the ruling colonial power and the people of the land. Like the historian, the writer of fiction has at hand conflicting versions of the nature, causes and outcome of the struggle. Besides this, in determining his perspective Bond has tried to elicit sympathies of the reader where they are due. The narrative shows how the survival of Labadoor's family depended on the loyalty of friends, acquaintances and servants, in a spirit of human give and take that does not discriminate between races. The general masses are uninvolved in the politics of the conflict. However, the

protagonists of the story do have conflicting views about the Uprising. Javed Khan reproaches Kothiwali for her sympathetic attitude to the British, because the British Collector had consoled with her in her grief. She, however, adds as a palliative; ‘don’t think I wish to run down the cause you have made your own – the rebel cause, I mean.’ At which Javed Khan retorts:

The *rebel* cause! Why do you always call it the rebel cause, *chach*? Javed Khan looked very upset. ‘Rebels against whom? Against aliens! Are they not to be expelled from the land? To fight them is not rebellion, but a meritorious act, surely ! (144).

Bond’s story is not a comment on history, and he takes no sides. Ruth with all her fears of what she might suffer at the hands of her captors holds no brief for the British cause. She and her mother no doubt look forward to the reoccupation of Shahjahanpur by the British – but only because it would mean the end of their captivity. Their concern for victory is related to their survival and freedom. As Ruth explains, ‘Our motives in hoping for the restoration of British authority were, therefore, entirely personal. We had, during the past months, come to understand much of the resentment against a foreign authority, and we saw that the continuation of that authority could only be an unhappy state of affairs for both sides; but for the time being, it was in our interest to see it restored. Our lives depended on it’ (150).

Like Kothiwali who ‘dealt in individuals, not in communities,’ Bond too is concerned with the lives of individuals. Often writing in semi-autobiographical mode he presents a galaxy of characters drawn from those whom he has known and adds to these creations of his imagination, the impetuous Javed Khan, the repressed Khan Begum, the cordial Kothiwali and the well meaning and down to earth Lala Ramjimal. The most impressive of these is Mariam,

fearless, defiant and at the same time tactful and discreet. These make the moving panorama of life where each plays his part and moves off-stage, leaving, most certainly, his human imprint. And finally, there is Mangal Khan. Why Pilloo decides to stay with the Pathan may be incomprehensible to Ruth, but they are true to their instincts. His kinship with Mangal Khan defies even the ties of blood. Throughout their ordeal, Ruth and Mariam are helped by the British, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The overall impression is that of the realization of the futility of war in which both sides burn and loot houses, riot and rape, and kill innocent women and children. In the orgy of violence at the beginning of the novel, there is the simple description of the two Muslims, burying the mortal remains of the Christians who had been killed, though well aware of the risk in doing so. In the end Mariam even promises to use her influence to protect Javed Khan's family and to prevent British retribution against him.

Despite his savagery at times and his ruthlessness, Ruth has a kind word for Javed Khan too. His love for Ruth may not have been reciprocated by Ruth in the conventional manner but his final mute encounter with Ruth is a triumph of his love, which is evident when she makes her assessment of him as she concludes her story, 'looking back on those months when we were his prisoners, I cannot help feeling a sneaking admiration for him. He was very wild and muddleheaded, and often cruel, but he was also very handsome and gallant, and there was in him a streak of nobility which he did his best to conceal' (162). The final remark is not only a warm-hearted assessment of Javed Khan, but also establishes the innocent humanity of the young storyteller.¹⁶

A Flight of Pigeons bridges barriers by giving a human face to historical forces. Atrocities are committed by both sides in an impersonal manner, yet when the enemies are

encountered as real people, they are seen as innocent victims of circumstances and are given protection. Ironically, all the Europeans who survive in the story do so with the help of their Indian servants. The Redmans hide in the house of their washerwoman, and two Muslims risk their lives to bury the dead Europeans in the church. In fact, Mariam's half-brother, Pilloo, prefers to continue living with his Hindu protector and is adopted by him. Bond's narrative, however, does not gloss over the dichotomies of the colonial relations. Nor does it play down the antagonisms, or the oppositional positions. He does not tone down the cruelty of the rebels or of those who put down the rebellion. As the characters grow beyond racial antipathies, a new light is thrown on the notions of human affiliations, as well as on all forms of piety, and possibilities of mutually-enabling acts in the social life of India, even in the shadows of horror and strife.

Notes

¹See John William Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-1858*. London: W.H. Allen, 1864). Kaye's history regarded as the authoritative account of the Mutiny in the nineteenth century is replete with Victorian prejudices regarding Indian character. For a more balanced perspective see Philip Mason. *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (London: Cape, 1974). Some recent works are Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*. Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1995); P.O.J. Taylor. *What Really Happened During the Mutiny: A Day-by-Day Account of the Major Events of 1857-1859 in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999; Saul David. *The Indian Mutiny*. London: Penguin Books, 2003; Rudrangshu Mukherjee. *Spectre of Violence: The 1857 Kanpur Massacres*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007.

²Colonel G. B. Malleson. *The Indian Mutiny of 1857*. New York: Scribner & Sons, 1891, 81.

³Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge, 1995.

⁴V.D.Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*. New Delhi: R. Granthagar, 1970, first published 1909.

⁵"The 'mutiny' was an assertion of autonomous power, a force that threatened to sweep away symbols of colonial power in northern India. The nature of the outbreak and the rapidly evolving political dynamics during the course of the mutiny represented a severe threat to established hierarchies in indigenous society." Sabyasachi Dasgupta, "The Rebel Army in 1857: At the Vanguard of the War of Independence or a Tyranny of Arms?" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLII, No. 19, May 12, 2007, 1729.

⁶William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857* New Delhi: Penguin/Viking, 2006, 13.

⁷James Clifford. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge: Mass. 1988, 262.

⁸Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems,' in Francis Barker *et al*, eds., *The Politics of Theory*. Colchester: University of Essex, 1982, 181.

⁹Mrs. Harris's *Lady's Diary* (1858) was a widely read 'survivor journal,' full of the images people back home wanted to read about. Harris wrote of 'Many ladies and children [who] have fortunately made their escape from different small stations in the district, just in time to save their lives, leaving all their worldly goods to be burnt and plundered. H gentlemen bayoneted on the spot, wives and children looking on.' Mrs. Harris, *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow. Written for the Perusal of Friends at Home*.

London: John Murray, 1858), n.p. Some of the accounts of the Mutiny were highly invidious. Jenne Sharpe, in *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Women in the Colonial Text*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 discusses at length the rumours and hysteria that pervaded the discussions of British women and their treatment during the Mutiny.

¹⁰Andrew Ward. *Our Bones are Scattered*. New York: Henry Holt, 1996, 555.

¹¹Ruskin Bond. 'A Flight of Pigeons,' in *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra: Stories*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991. All page references are to this edition and are given in parentheses. *A Flight of Pigeons* was first published in *Imprint*, November 1975. It was later made into a Hindi film called *Junoon*, directed by Shyam Benegal.

¹²Mariam's story is the subject matter of another narrative, J. F. Fanthorne. *Mariam: A Story of the Indian Mutiny of 1857*. Benaras: Chandraprabha Press, 1896. It gives an 'Indian' perspective- almost unheard of in Mutiny writings. It went to make one of the most fervent appeals for inter-racial harmony urging "the European to recognise the common fraternity of the two races and to descend from the high level of morality and social superiority which he has assumed and behave more considerately to, the 'nigger' than he does at present" (iv).

¹³The acts of violence against British men, women and children shocked and angered the Victorian public. In an age when domesticity was celebrated and was central to the idea of British nationhood, the murder of these very symbols, women in particular, on a foreign soil prompted outrage and calls for revenge.

¹⁴The colonial accounts carried the repeated misrepresentation that native India was too fragmented into

warring factions – vertically by caste and horizontally by religion, race, and region – ever to achieve political cohesion of its own making. See Lewis D. Wurgaft. *The Imperial Imagination: Magic and Myth in Kipling's India*. Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1983, 44.

¹⁵See Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, 12.

¹⁶This, again, contradicts the usual accounts in which the native was stereotyped as overly libidinous and unruly, who was a threat to the innocent white women. This image continues through the early part of the next century in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*. According to Jenne Sharpe, the alleged rape of white women by Indian men could be seen as a metaphor for the crisis of British colonial authority. See Jenne Sharpe. *Allegories of Empire* 7

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The Woman Does Not Exist In Pablo Neruda

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The mind is a mixed fruit juice of all that has gone into it since birth. Neruda's has been no exception. He had never disowned the fact that it is all a matter of chance that he was a poet. In the poem "The Enigmas", there is evidence of his belief that the work of a poet is no more mysterious than any ordinary labour and not in the least magical.

You've asked me what the crustacean spins
between its gold claws
and I reply: the sea knows. ...
I am nothing but the empty net that advances
human eyes" (306-7)

He explains his stance in another poem called "This is Where We Live". It is a poem about being natural and a product of nature. "I am one of those who live/ in the middle of the sea and close to the twilight" (480). In the assertion that his poetry is merely a product of his experiences put together in various shapes, he assumes a kind of belongingness in the role of the earth. It is the sea, he often refers to as his inspiration. It is the sea he addresses and says,"here I will begin my own rejoicing, /my particular poetry" (480). In the next few lines he interweaves the act of love making in the theme of the poem. "when sky and sea came together/ like two lips touching;/for that's no small thing, no? –" (480)

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has explicitly said that for the man the woman does not exist. He says, "If

there is some from which this business of the sexual relationship can be clarified, it's precisely from the ladies' side." But even the lady analysts do not shed any light on this. (Lacan 57). However, Lacan should not be taken literally because he always punned on the French words he used. The phrase "Woman does not exist" was used in the newspaper after he spoke on the sexual relationship that 'fails' and the universe 'succeeds'. The same experience of the universe being the schemer, the earth as mother and the scheme is to reproduce is expressed variously in Neruda's love poems.

Neruda is most known for six of his volumes of poetry of which three are specifically love poems. His political inclination was communist. He dedicated the poetry of his prime age to praise for communism. The volume which made him famous as a poet was *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1923-24) published at the age of twenty years when he had no political connections. However, the Chilean government used to send their poets on diplomatic positions abroad. Neruda was also harnessed to that kind of a job. Motherless, estranged from father and homeless, Neruda had sought resort in the arms of a woman in his youth. When that relationship broke he composed *A Song of Despair*. The passion that possessed him was wrenched away by that final bereavement and since then almost all his poems mention 'solitude', 'stone', 'death' and the steeling of the heart against further pain. ["Introduction" 2003]

In his later years, after receiving love from his country, the world and two women who never abandoned him, he composed love poems again. There is not much shift in his attitude towards women in the later poems either. Almost all the poems assume the woman as a lovable 'body'. Studied in the feminist light, none of his poems show any sign of upholding the feminist cause.

For women, throughout the academic world, have been insisting on the right to chose her own course of life. She has been denied freedom and individuality. The generic term woman has been misinterpreted by men. And women have constantly been trying to rectify it. Naomi Zack has discussed the definition of the word ‘woman’ with a long list of things: “We know that each individual woman who has ever existed, exists now, or ever will exist, is real ... These are things that can be said about “women” and “woman” as abstract general nouns” (Zack 26). Neruda’s poems amply demonstrate this misinterpretation of the ‘abstract general noun’ woman.

In the poem “Maternity”, he eulogizes the action of giving birth. The earth performs the action of multiplying as if there has never been any death. The womb that bears life does not register births and deaths like an accountant. In the phenomenon of the earth, the thought of calculation does not exist. He writes of the condition of existence as a shadow:”There is shadow for all lives./There are circles of milk and building of blood,/and towers of green air” (67).

In giving life its due, the act of bringing forth is accepted as a natural course. For the man in Pablo Neruda’s consciousness, the woman does not exist as a feeling, thinking being. She has to act like mother earth, cooperate in her dedication to propagate life.

It is for you, this world in which no one is born,
in which exist
neither the dead wreath nor the uterine flower,
it is yours, this planet filled with skin and stones.(67)

The mass of maternity is purely a function. There is no scope for question. Had there been any feeling of gratitude towards the bearer of life, the tenor of the poem would have been different – pleading, worshipping, appeasing. As it is, the claim is that all life forces belong to the mother. It leaves no

option for the mother to refuse to perform the action of building life. The poem is rather a surrender of man to the forces of procreation.

Just as “Maternity” is a poem on woman as the earth, “The Earth” is a poem dedicated to the physical earth as creator. She cannot but give birth to new lives even though man has been eroding life gradually.

The lightning bolt that seemed to fall from hell
was hoarded by the ancient mother of roots
and each day bread came out to greet us,
unperturbed by the blood and death we humans wear,
the accursed progeny who deliver light unto the world.”
(847)

‘Humans’ in his poems includes the female counterpart without their consent. In “This is Where We Live” he mentions a home saying “there we live, my woman and I” and prays to the sea which acts as his inspiration and his cause of life to “help us to be more of the earth each day!” (481) The humanitarian element in the poems is superseded by the environmental. He is one with nature and the coupling of ‘my woman and I’ does not strike him as presumptuous. He is an element of nature and guided by natural forces; and he merges the identity of ‘my woman’ with that same element of nature in him. There is no certainty of who ‘my woman’ at a given time might be engaged with him in the act of procreation.

In a magnificent poem called “House”, Neruda articulates his identification with nature and talks like a function of nature. He observes that there might be a ‘soul’ connected with his being. But that ‘soul’ can be a part of eternity. On scientific grounds, man has not lived as man on earth for long. He has been only a part of the evolutionary process of the earth. So if the ‘soul’ existed in any other form,

he, as Neruda, still belonged to the physical world in the form of either a stone or the ground. The poem at once reduces the concept of soul and immortality to dust and also conditionally accepts the theological explanation of human existence as plausible.

Maybe this is the house where I lived
 when I did not exist, when the earth did not exist ...
 That is why
 I touch this stone, and for me it has not died:
 it's what I was, what I will be" (934)

Therefore, in Pablo Neruda's attitude towards life, even man does not exist as an individual entity. But in his consciousness there are various issues that bother him as a man. One of the constant themes is his power of destruction. His violence and his passion engulf almost all the significant things that surround him. The poem "A Song of Despair" is poignant not only because of its expression of loss and sorrow but also the sense of drowning everything of value in the whirlpool of violence.

You swallowed everything, like distance.
 Like the sea, like time. In you everything sank!
 It was the happy hour of assault and the kiss.
 The hour of the spell that blazed like a lighthouse."(24)
 The "Song" reverberates with the name 'pit of debris' for the 'deserted one'. Simultaneously, it also echoes the past in which there was assault, hunger, fury, wound, sorrow, shadow and everything violent and dark about love. The passionate lines on the condition of despair not only reflect the speaker's present as a betrayed lover but also his approach to love. It can be explained further by the poems preceding the "Song".

In the first poem, among the *Twenty Love Poems*, that talks of the "Body of woman ... like the world in your posture

of surrender ... Body of skin, of moss, of avid steady milk”, there is a repetition of the attitude expressed in “Love”. The poem “Love” suggests maternity as a function of the woman. It says, “Woman, I would have been your child, to drink the milk of your breasts as from a well”. (5) She anchors the sorrowful youth. Not only maternity but the woman is also representative of the earth; the body of a woman appeals to the man in so far as she functions as a repository of all the yearnings, sorrows and thirsts he has felt for years. So the poem ends with: “Dark riverbeds where eternal thirst follows, / and fatigue follows, and infinite sorrow” (9).

Soon after, the earth is described as a body that gives ‘nourishment’ to the ‘people’ with fruits and roots and fire. The poem treats the theme of procreation as eternal function. He calls the earth, woman and creation in all “Oh magnificent and fecund and magnetic slave/ of the circle”. He calls the act of love-making clearly printed in a universal scheme of things. There can be no failure to adhere to that scheme even to the length that ‘flowers perish’ in the creation.

If we attach any philosophical value to these youthful outpourings about love, sorrow and physical passion, the ‘flowers’ would mean beauty that is surrendered for the function of creation. The following poem again assumes the same inevitability of love: (“your parallel body yields to my arms /like a fish infinitely fastened to my soul, /quick and slow, in the energy under the sky” (10-11). The anguish of the youth is poignantly worded in the lines of the love poems. He does not receive her as much as he would love to. There are phases of waiting, feeling lonely and jealous. He has to reassure himself that the woman would visit him soon. When she arrives, he becomes the ‘ravenous water’ that cruises through her. (10) At times he apologizes for being violent:

How you must have suffered getting accustomed to me,

my savage, solitary soul, ...
 I go so far as to think that you own the universe.
 I will bring you happy flowers from the mountains,
 bluebells,
 dark hazels, and rustic baskets of kisses.
 I want to do with you
 what spring does with the cherry trees.” (15)

The jealousy pours out in the form of an attempt to erase her identity. It is quite likely that the woman wished to go back to her daily duties or safeguard her social identity and in reply to it the youth promptly says:

You are like nobody since I love you.
 Let me spread you out among yellow garlands.
 Who writes your name in letters of smoke among the
 stars of the south?
 Oh let me remember you as you were before you
 existed. (14)

From the very beginning of his poetic career, the woman does not exist in Neruda. The love poem XIV is replete with reference to the parts of nature as forceful in getting things done. The wind, the birds, the rain, the storm, the flower and the fruit – all the functionaries of nature conspire to get it done, to make him love her. There is a note of urgency, where she seems to disappear and he has to take control of her physically and spiritually. She seems to slip away from his grasp. He calls her a ‘subtle visitor’ on account of her secret alliance with him. He struggles to hold her ‘even so, at one time a strange shadow ran through your eyes. He says he can “contend only against the power of men’, whereas what he feels at the moment is the power of the forces of nature asking him to copulate” (14)

Each of the Spanish poems has rhyme and rhythm. The English versions, though carefully translated with poetic

diction, do not reproduce the rhyme and rhythm of the Spanish lines. Where the English lines appear to be violent outbursts and overt expressions of love, the original poems also boast of masterly poetic technique. The most beautiful poem, that also has a refrain and a song like quality to it, is the one that goes like this:

I like for you to be still: it is as though you were absent...
As all things are filled with my soul
you emerge from the things, filled with my soul.
You are like my soul... (16)

The most youthful ambition of the poet has been for him and his woman to roll into one. As this possibility is punctured with doubts, questions and jealousy, the insistence that the relationship of love is dictated by a universal cause is amply repeated in all of the poems. There is a poem from his later days that happily talks of the same experience, now fulfilled. It says, "Today our bodies ... rolled melting themselves/ into one single drop/ of wax or meteor" (323). It was not achieved in his youth where the last poem saying, "Tonight I can write the saddest lines" is on lost love. It repeats the most crucial fear of a man when he loses his love, the fear that she would go to another man just the same. The woman's body as a possession is one of the recurrent motifs in love poems by men. He says, "She will be another's. As she was before my kisses. / Her voice, her bright body. Her infinite eyes." For him, that which he sees in a woman and touches to get excited is the only thing that matters. There is no mention of her laughter, her thoughts, her sorrow, her soul... in his consciousness none of these are parts of a woman. Woman as 'body' is all that the *Twenty Love Poems* explicitly view in a relationship.

In the poems of his later days, Neruda often refers to the woman as an instrument of pleasure. The maternal

element gives way to the function of recreation. The breasts with milk to suck do not appear in his later poems. As he grows older and his woman happens to be younger and perhaps quite inferior in his opinion, he loves her more as a piece of luxury and not as a natural force. A poem in *The Captain's Verses* (1951-52), "Your Laughter" calls it more important to him than 'bread' and 'air'. It is the palliative that helps him to keep up with the struggles in his public life. He writes:

My struggle is harsh and I come back
with eyes tired
at times from having seen
the unchanging earth,
but when your laughter enters
it rises to the sky seeking me
and it opens for me all the doors of life." (328)

Thus the woman is his object of recreation. Nothing in the poem suggests his role in assuring the constancy of her laughter. The lines do not offer her any condition that may keep her happy. In love, the woman's happiness keeps the man in a good mood. But there is no assurance of procuring that happiness for her. If it were not poetry, it would have plainly said, 'don't spoil my mood when I come home'.

In a poem that is affectionate and that calls the woman 'earth' again, he is bigger than her like King Kong. The poem is typically titled "In You The Earth". Here the man finds the woman:

Little
rose
roselet,
at times,
tiny and naked,
it seems

as though you would fit
in one of my hands” (321)

However, he is affectionately surprised that she has grown as big as the earth as he says in the same breath that “in love you have loosened yourself like seawater”. The poet, now self-assured and with sufficient sense of control says

I have named you queen ...
No one sees your crystal crown ...
Only you and I”...
Your whole body holds
a stemmed glass of gentle sweetness destined for me.”
(321-22)

To the progeny Neruda has the same reply.”Ah son, do you know, do you know/where you come from?” (330). He tells the progeny that they are products of a terrible bonfire where ‘casting all into the fire’ the love has been consummated. The effort of love to journey towards the mate is huge and the son is the one who should be made aware of the tremendous effort that has gone into creating him:

Like a great storm
we shook
the tree of life
down to the hiddenmost
fibres of the roots
and you appear now
singing in the foliage,
in the highest branch
that with you we reach.” (330-31)

Another apology for violence follows in *The Furies*. In it, “The Hurt” is an apology for hurting one’s beloved. In its concluding line again there is erasure of the woman as an individual. At first there is gentleness, pity and guilt for being harsh towards her. But the man refuses to accept her

harshness in response. He cannot tolerate it. And his argument aims at procuring fulfilment only for the man. He expects her to surrender her stance before his. It comes as a request to start with but gradually becomes a necessity for him: "destroying you a little/so that you may rise from the clay/refashioned for my struggles" (332). The same theme of the need for emotional support from the woman is wrought in the many poems in *The Furies* and *Lives*. He says plainly, 'Come with me'. (338-39) and goes on to assert that he is going on a mission to heal an ailing society in *The Mountain and The River*. In another poem he says:

Stand up with me
and let us go off together
to fight face to face
against the devil's webs,
against the system that distributes hunger,
against organized misery." (339)

As if the request in this fashion was not enough, he quickly asserts that she is "newborn from my own clay". If we ignore his biography, then too it is quite evident from these lines that he has found a woman as a recreation in times of struggle. His struggle is that of a visionary and a reformer. Therefore, he first teaches her to be like him. "Epithalamium" is a poem with hypnotic ululations. It demonstrates his method of making the woman his. Those words, the repetition of his assertions that she definitely belonged to him have functioned as the hypnotic balm. Nature and the earth have conspired towards their union. The poem can also be read as an assurance of infallible love at times of separation due to external causes. "Letter on the Road" is a farewell letter to the beloved before going to war. He says, "I have not left you when I go away" (351-52).

It is worth remembering that all the poems have been appreciated as lovely. It is more because in his time, fewer

women were individualists and even fewer people feminists. *One Hundred Love Sonnets* (1957-1959) written after his return to Chile and his continued support to communism, are tinged with sadness. As a supporter of communism, he had a mass of right-wing supporters as opposition. So he took his political career as a 'fight'. He describes his return to Chile in romantic terms: "as if the roots which I had abandoned, the land/lost with my childhood, suddenly came searching for me,/and I stopped, wounded by the wandering aroma" (511). The "Love Sonnet XVI" is devoted to the beauty of love-making and at its end he calls her 'my globe' (513). In the next poem he asserts:

I love you without knowing how, or when,
or from where
I love you directly without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don't know any other way
to love
Except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
so close that your eyes close with my dreams.(514)

It is enough that he loves her without any 'problems or pride'. Till the very end he seems to acknowledge her presence as important to him until the same question of whether her presence was as an individual or as a body resurfaces when he talks of 'your eyes close with my dreams'. Thus, in the present world, feminists can forgive him for his headless love for the body of woman only because of his limitless praise for her body.

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Rooting Feminism to India

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Every version of feminism is a personal version. To call for an Indian version of feminism is an ambitious task. Taking this topic, analyzing it and writing on it brings Indian feminism centre stage. It carries the dialogue forward and brings our focus to it. The underlying conviction behind the effort is naturally that feminism is relevant to today's India. Discussion on its Indianness brings it closer to us. Feminism is close to life. It is contentious. Therefore the dialogue must go on. The idea is to familiarize the concept to the soil of India so that it is accepted and imbibed; so that it stays. No one should claim ownership on ideas. Once an idea comes, it must undergo osmosis with native, local ideas. Modification of feminism is a must keeping our country in mind. When feminism is spoken through the local idiom and colour, it gets into the life of the people. That is the aim.

Feminism in India has come of age. It has become part of consciousness. "Feminism in Indian English writing is commonly conceived as a very sublime and over the top concept, which is most subtly handled under restricted circumstances. However, with development of time, feminism has been established in India, setting aside the patriarchal predominance to some extent. Leaving aside the crusaders and activists of the social and political scenario, perhaps enormous body of work on feminism is also accomplished through Indian English literature. Feminist writers in India today proudly uphold their cause of "womanhood", through

their write-up. In the contemporary scenario there are many men/women writers who, though their writings, have been successful in projecting the existing social (gender) inequality. With regards to the new-fangled styles, technique and trends in women's novels and poetry there is a noteworthy movement linking the domestic with the public spheres of work." (Bhavesh Kumar B. Rana I)

Everyone knows and feels the importance of feminism and equal rights for women, yet opposition to feminism is also deeply inherent in the psyche; as a politician once said, "these dented and painted women". The aversion is to "feminist" women, rather than feminism. The question is not whether women should have freedom or not; the question is, "what constitutes freedom?" What does freedom mean? In this context, it is necessary to question feminism and modify it. The questioning is also a method to keep it alive. Do Indian women want to be free from family, traditions, religion and memory? What kind of freedom Indian women want? Is there one standard version of a feminist?

The native Indian female experience is wide and varied. There is a need to view the native Indian female experience beyond the paradigm of "victimhood". There are many layers to it. Many Indian women are leading happy, contented lives. These native Indian female experiences do not find space in mainstream feminist discourse. It is essential to question and challenge popularly accepted stereotypes and images of women. We have got so much used to "rape" news in the morning newspapers that unconsciously we fail to perceive happy, successful, joyous women of India. When Indian women voice their identities in their own words, we get a better understanding of what life means to them. Women in Indian families find pivotal roles – spiritual fountain, nurturer, carrier of customs, care – giver... They are the backbone of Indian family system. Do women want to destroy the Indian

family system in order to be called “feminists”. Or is there an Indian brand of feminism already kicking and thriving? Is there a final image of an Indian woman? Or are there multiple images? How do we summarize the Indian woman? Can we, for once, “decolonize” our perception? We do not have to make the Indian woman palatable to the Western tastes. Nor do we have to judge her condition by “their” standards. Films, TV serials, tourist shops, magazines, toy stores and even grocery shelves do not depict the uncountable versions of the Indian woman. Native Indian women should be asked as to how they want to be portrayed. Negative stereotypes regarding typical Indian women have harmed the cause equality for women. Within India, there is tremendous multiplicity. Background, belief system, place, ethnicity, value system, age, and cultural background decide the view of a woman and her concept of freedom and feminism. For example, for an urban, young, rich woman, travelling alone may define freedom. Yet for a woman from a comparatively small town, accompanying while travelling may mark respect and care. Respecting and accepting the natural surroundings of a woman have to be essential parts of feminism.

In no other country, feminism has been an integral part of nationalism. “Pre colonial social structures and women’s role in them reveal that feminism was theorized differently in India than in the west. Colonial essentialization of “Indian culture” and reconstruction of Indian womanhood as the epitome of that culture through social reform movements resulted in political theorization in the form of nationalism rather than feminism alone. Despite these “on-paper” advancements, many problems still remain which inhibit these new rights and opportunities from being fully taken advantage of. For example, India’s constitution also states that women are a “weaker section” of the population and therefore need assistance to function as said equals.” (Dwijendra Nath Thakur : Vol. 3, Issue 4)

Problematizing feminism in India is essential as the imported model often proves to be inadequate. There has been marked growth in feminist discourse as well as creative writing in India in the past four decades. This body of literature and criticism is layered, appealing and rich. A unique feature of Indian feminism has been that often it is government sponsored. Much of this writing has come out of academia. Centres for Women's Studies have played a positive role. International agencies have also substantially sponsored feminist discourse. Theories of multiculturalism and post modernism celebrate India's diversity and plurality, especially regarding the female experience. For scholars today, feminism coupled with post-colonialism becomes a boon. Indian feminist writing is globally visible.

The first task is to accept that even before the arrival of Western feminism in India, awareness about the importance of women in family and society has always been part of Indian consciousness. India has always been sensitive about the rights and status of women. Within the traditional, agrarian, patriarchal model, women have always held their place. The whole historical process has to be viewed in continuity. "...we cannot interpret history in monolithic universal terms ignoring the differences in culture. Feminism is multicultural and diasporic. The needs of women who live in different countries are dissimilar and they are conditioned by several factors : familial, societal / racial, marital, economic and cultural and individual consciousness (subjectivity).

"In such a diverse context, it would be far wrong to associate Indian feminism with the western, which is marked by radical norms and invoke western feminist critics on the problems that women in India confront." (M.S. Nagarajan : *The Hindu*)

Indian feminism has been deeply entwined with Indian nationalism. Indian state has done a lot to advance the

discourse. Globalization and India's economic success have contributed to Indian feminism. Democratization of India has awakened marginalized groups and castes to feminism. Nationalism, democracy, free market and globalization have accelerated the feminist voice in India. Today, everyone is for women empowerment. Nobody, just nobody can afford to say that he/she is against women empowerment. Now within this consensus, we have to discern differences. In the world of feminism, there is no point in separating ideas and deeds. Both ideas and deeds at the individual level and at the collective level have to go hand in hand.

Postcolonial scholars of Indian origin are leading intellectual voices around the world. What earlier seemed specifically Indian a few decades back, now seems to be universal given the cultural diversity of the west itself. In the Indian context, women do not always focus on their personal desires. This is reflected in literature as well as discourse. Here, a woman's right to drink or wear less clothes or have multiple relationships is less important than her right to decline an offer to drink or sex or short clothes. In a country like India, a woman's right to wear traditional clothes, her right not to smoke or drink and her right not to have multiple relationships become more important. The trouble usually arises with a woman's "No". Indian feminism must protect a woman's "No". Megha Marik explains, "We all have gone through a phase we have wanted to be desired by someone or the other. We have been warned that this is a part of growing up. However, "desire" is contextualized differently for different genders. Women's desire does not matter while men's desire is paramount. Women are not taught to say "No" and men are not taught to take "No" for an answer.

"Women have been told that being the subject of a man's desire is a worthy goal and must increase their "value" to the opposite sex by working on their appearance to reach

society's impossible beauty standards. Men have been programmed to fulfill their emotional, psychological, and physical desire by approaching women. However, the problem arises when the woman refuses the man. In such cases, in accordance to the social conditioning, men are supposed to resort to all means which will help them “conquer” the woman. (Megha Marik)

In India, we have to give up the imported image of a feminist. A woman may be educated, working and independent and yet she may be deeply religious and family oriented. Being religious is not anti feminist. Feminism is the world-view of an aware human being. An aware Indian woman has every right to worship, to raise a family and to be traditional. A broken family is not the trademark of a feminist. Feminism is not anti happiness. Women empowerment is the goal. Religion, family and traditions are the support systems that empower and strengthen a woman. Wrong traditions and unjust religious practices must go. There is no doubt about that. But all that is Indian is not bad. All that is traditional and religious is not antifeminist. Indian feminism demands improvement of religion; not its abolishment. Property rights, family name, priesthood for women and cremation rights-religion must grant and ensure these to women. A religion which does not change decays and dies. Our shastras say that time, place, circumstance and individual - these four factors should decide our actions. Religion has flexibility.

“Ultra” feminism does not work in India. Radicalism in the name of feminism is a farce. In India, community, identity, democratic rights, educational rights, citizenship rights, religious beliefs, employment and working conditions, cultural differences and urban and rural poverty become the main concerns of feminism. In India, feminism is and has to be welfare-oriented. A woman's right to drink wine is less

important than her right to drink clean water. Her right to be in multiple relationships is less important than her right to say “No” to a relationship. Here, domestic violence, dowry, forced marriages, dropping out of schools and colleges are the issues.

Resistance to a noble concept like feminism comes from over westernization and fear of losing identity. Feminism cannot be a tool of re-colonization. Therefore, our feminism must spring from our soil. Sita exercised her right to say “No” Gargi exercised her right to study. “Gargi was one of the composers of Upanishads. Her philosophy-poetry addresses metaphysical questions about the construction and origin of the universe. She is best known for a public debate in which she silenced (and irritated) a renowned sage by posing an unanswerable question, which can be simplified into : “Where is the realm of the Gods located?”.... Gargi was also said to be an advisor in the court of King Janaka. ...” (Saumya Arya) Countless Indian women assert their place and identity. Our theory as well as role models must spring from our soil. Indianhood in pro women. It is deeply Indian to be a feminist. Our choices and selfhood need not be expressed in the language of the western individual woman. Selfhood in west is individual Our selfhood is collective. Family, religion, community, relations, region-so many factors from the self of an India. There is no need to destroy all this in the name of an imported idea. Our major issues happen to be agrarian crisis, reproductive health issues, controlling resources like land, forest and water, women rights in war zones, place of women in religion and poverty. (National Conference of the Indian Association of Women’s Studies IAWS 2011).

Feminism has to negotiate the inequalities, pluralities and diversities of India. It cannot be imported as such, nor can it be imposed. We accept that western influence, English education and the colonial rule have accelerated the pitch

of feminism in India. The social reform movements in the 19th century paved the way for women's writing. In the continuing process, the political participation of women increased substantially in the 20th century. After Independence the Indian state officially accepted the cause of women and has ever since tried to spread awareness in its own way. In the late 20th century, the patronizing, condescending approach gave way to a more assertive attitude. The scope of discussion was widened. Property rights, religious rights, political representation, domestic violence, harassment at work place, alcoholism of men, dowry and rape came into focus. A pioneer of women's studies and activism, Vina Mazumdar says, " 1970s capture issues of violence, sexual exploitation, identification of complex structures of domination and their reassertion in new forms in the ideology of revivalist, fundamentalist, communal and ethnic movements. Similarly, investigations of peasant women in the rural economy and of their undiscovered history have prompted new questions and drawn women's studies closer to issues also being raised by ecological and environmental movements. Investigations into women's marginalization and exploitation in the economy, both formal and informal, in the educational process, in communication and media and also in the political process, have turned women's studies into one of the major critics of the pattern of development and the choice of strategies " (Mazumdar : 44)

Taking forward Mazumdar's argument, we can say that indigenous Indian model is pro-women and it is also pro-ecology, pro-environment. What kind of economy have we developed which does not recognize the labour of women in homes and informal sector? Logical thinking will lead us to believe in Indian feminism; a brand of feminism rooted in our soil. This dialogue also takes us to the need of a uniform civil code in India.

A typical Indian approach towards feminism deals with deep issues of equality, human rights and dignity. Religion, family, society and traditions are part and parcel of Indian feminism. An Indian woman's commitment to family, friends and social norms does not undermine her commitment to her own dignity, equality and freedom. It is when we synthesize the concept of feminism with Indianhood that it finds acceptance. The typical Indian womanhood is strong. When a woman empowers herself with all her existing support systems, she becomes strong and confident. Roots always strengthen. Rejection of roots does not lead us anywhere. DNA of centuries has to be respected. As the popular sentence goes, revolution does not work; evolution does. The Indian woman has to awaken herself to her original status. She should embrace modernity with all the components of her identity. Her family, her extended families, friends, community, religion - all comprise her SELF. As a tree takes water through its roots and flourishes, so does the Indian woman.

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Problematizing Caste, class, Gender and Identity: Women in the Selected Folklores of Shimla District in Himachal Pradesh

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Over the ages Indian women expressed themselves through the folklores as traditionally they had no access to education and literature. The patriarchal society relegated them to the outer margins and left no space for the flourishing of their personhood and the emergence of their voice, autonomy and agency. An overt public expression was denied to women so they selected the folklores to articulate their voices and to express their opposition to the social prejudices against them. At the same time they attempted to assert their identity as women and ascertain their place in society. The women of Himachal Pradesh too had the similar experiences of pain, suffering, repression and marginalization and in their folklores they appear to be the worst victims of the evils such as caste system, gender discrimination, sati system, child marriages, dowry and honour killing. So in their folklores they are full of complaints and anger against the atrocious and repressive social system. Through their folklores the women of Himachal problematize the issues of caste, class, gender and identity and expose the degraded social mentality and attitude towards women.

Key Words: Folklores, Problematize, Personhood, Prejudices, Voice, Agency and Autonomy.

The women ever had a subordinated status in Indian society. Their will and agency have been subjected to men

who traditionally controlled the power structures and had a dominant social status. The Indian women had never been free to speak on their existential conditions as a voice expressing their grievances, addressing issues and asserting their rights has traditionally been denied to them. The institutions such as religion, God, culture and conventions have been used as instruments to perpetuate their subordination and have authority on them. The personhood and identity of women have always been repressed by men. The domestic, socio-cultural, political and economic roles of women have been decided by men in accordance to their own will and convenience without giving a thought to women's will, desires and aspirations. And while deciding women's positions and actions men simply hurled implications on women and took all liberties for themselves. Indian women have undergone the numerous tribulations and suffered humiliation and violence in the name of gender superiority and gender bias for centuries. As far as the lower caste women are concerned the social institutions and cultural traditions have been more hostile to them as apart from gender and class, the caste has been an added aggravative factor in their life. But it is worth of noting that despite the severe repression of centuries Indian women managed to survive and voice their antagonism to the gender bias and the authority of men. The Indian women traditionally had no access to education so long before their socio-political mobilization and formal literary expression these women expressed themselves through folklores, the only available literary forum for women at that time. Indian women over the ages expressed themselves through the folklores and problematized the issues of caste, class and gender through them. At the same time they attempted to assert their identity as women and ascertain their place in society. The present paper is an attempt to cull out the images of women as they appear in the selected folklores of Shimla district of Himachal

Pradesh. And it further seeks to examine the efforts of these women to problematize the issues of caste, class, gender and identity through selected folklores. The study is restricted to Shimla district only but references are taken from other districts of Himachal Pradesh to authenticate and widen the scope of study. The folksongs, tales, ballads, proverbs and riddles selected for illustration in this paper have been translated for the local dialect called *pahari* and the majority of these folklores are based on the real life incidents.

Generally, the folklore can be defined as an unwritten literature of a specific culture including popular folk songs, stories, ballads, proverbs and riddles. According to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the folklores mean the traditional beliefs, customs songs, tales, etc. preserved in oral form among a group of people (1006). Generally folklores are transmitted orally from one generation to another by the members of that cultural group. The folk literature of a social group having same cultural features has a great significance as an authentic expression of the people and the true reflection of their life. Manorama Sharma is right to say that folk literature especially the folk songs have their origin in the womb of the cultural tradition of the concerned group of people and the nature, interests, likes and dislikes and the behaviour of the local people are always mixed in them (5). It is apparent that the folk literature is the most authentic account of the life and the lived experiences of the concerned people as through folk literature they express themselves in a simple and straightforward way and ward off the influence of the world around. However, there may be certain fictional elements in folk literature but still it can be considered as authentic as life writing or a personal narrative. The folklores of Himachal Pradesh despite the diversified cultural backgrounds of the people can be called the collective voices of the people as through their folklores these people not only amuse themselves but also express their views on the society

around and exhibit their agitation and opposition against the prevalent social evils and disparities. The women of Himachal Pradesh used folklores as a front to express themselves and expose the prejudices of caste and gender prevalent in the primitive society of state. Through the folklores these women indicated their status, their social and cultural locations and problematized the caste, class and gender disparities in Himachal Pradesh. However, many cultural historians and critics are of the opinion that the women had a liberated status in Himachal Pradesh as the evils such as caste system and the gender disparity have never been the part of the traditional societies of Himachal Pradesh. They further maintain that aboriginal tribes such as *Dasas, Panies, Asuras, Vratyas, Chamuri, Dhuni, Pipru, Susha, Kinners, Nagas, Kiratas, Pichas, Yakshas, Kories* and others have been democratic and equalitarian in their approach towards their women and caste system was not a part of their society. Apart from this the women of these clans and castes have been the part of the productive process and economically they did not rely much on their men. Jag Mohan Balokhra in this context writes that the women in Himachal Pradesh have always worked side by side with men in agriculture and their role has been as important in the field as in domestic sphere. In agricultural operation, women have constantly been at work, breaking earth, transplanting, weeding, reaping, threshing, pounding or carrying loads of fodder, firewood, manure, water, grain, flour, rock and clay (755). This contribution of women to food production process definitely added to their autonomy and liberal status in society. On the basis of the opinion of the historians and a minute analysis of the existing social and cultural conventions in Himachal Pradesh it can be concluded that women of Himachal Pradesh especially from hilly areas were free from the bonds of patriarchal laws and conventions and the system of caste did not operate so rigidly in their life as the women of other parts of the country mostly because

the conventional societies of Himachal Pradesh remained unaffected by the Brahmanical Hinduism to a great extent. It appears that these women lost their esteemed equalitarian social status after the migration of Brahmins and Rajputs from the surrounding plains of Himachal Pradesh such as Delhi, Chenderi, Memar, Bikanar, Chittor, Jodhpur, Jasalmair and other places mostly inhabited by Rajputs who called themselves to be the descendents of Aryan. Hari Krishan Mittoo maintains that the first contact of the Aryans with Himachal Pradesh came about when they crossed river *Purushni* (Ravi) and reached *Arjikiya* (Beas) in about 3,000 to 2,500 B. C. (20). Goutam Sharma Vyathit on the other hand argues that the Aryans came as plunderers to Himachal and their leader Divodas finally defeated Shamber, the leader of non- Aryan tribes such as Kole, Kinnars, Nagas, Kiratas and others in a terrible war of forty years in Rig Vedic period (5). It is obvious that the new settlers brought with them a new culture that was obdurately stratified in the name of caste and gender and has certain restrictions, implications and codes for women and reserved place, professions and patterns of behaviours for untouchables. In this way the caste system and gender bias evolved gradually in Himachal Pradesh with the arrival of the Brahmans and Rajputs whose culture and religious beliefs replaced the indigenous social and cultural norms that mostly were equalitarian in approach. But another group of historians and thinkers put forward the view that the arrival of the Brahmans and Rajputs did not affect the integrity and autonomy of women. Hari Krishan Mittoo has argued that the Aryan conquerors did not change the prevailing laws and customs among the people of hills rather they themselves observed some customs and religious beliefs (21). On the basis of such arguments it can be argued that the traditional societies in Himachal Pradesh have their own laws and rules for women and they were less privileged as compared to men. And in the context of the caste system it

is possible to maintain that the aboriginal society had an intricate social stratification, however the caste system and caste codes were not coercive as in the surrounding plain areas ruled by the Rajputs. Whatever may be truth about the inception of caste system and construction of patriarchy in Himachal Pradesh but it is apparent that the Himachali women as portrayed in the selected folklores appear to be the worst victims of the evils such as caste system, *sati* system, *purdah* system, child marriages, honour killing, domestic violence and the bonded labour. The women of Shimla district which is selected for the study are no way different from the women of other districts in terms of the caste, class and gender oppression. The folk literature of this district too exhibits that the traditional society has been exploitative and discriminatory towards women. Even the traditional sayings and proverbs reflect a patriarchal social structure as the majority of them portray women as something inferior and low. According to Meena Sharma, in some of the adages the women are portrayed more than dust or ash (134). A proverb in Shimla district says, “The birth of a girl child is result of *pap*, sin and that of son is the result of *punya*, the good deed” (Translated from pahari). The women appearing in the different songs, stories, ballads, proverbs and riddles of Shimla district express their pain and anguish in their oral literature but it is worth of nothing that it is not simply a recording of their distress and suffering as in certain cases these women articulate their voices of dissent and aggressively interrogate the caste and patriarchal norms. They deliberately expose the patriarchal institutions such as *sati* and *purdah* system and problematize their subjection to these institutions. For instance, in the song of Chankhi, a young Rajput widow from Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh the brutish and crude system of *sati* has been exposed. This song further reveals the fact that this system was imposed cleverly on Rajput widows. On the basis of the analysis of the content

of the song it can be maintained that this system was glorified to persuade the women to follow this system. A widowed woman committing sati was praised and was given the status of *sati mata*, the mother sati and her immolation was designated as *maha parityag*, the great sacrifice. In the song the suicide of a young Rajput woman in the name of purity is described pathetically:

The breath has merged in the sky
 The flesh has been eaten by the fire
 Only the pile of the boon has been left
 On the black soli of funeral ground
 Thus Chankhi you have committed the great sati
 (Translated from pahari).

The song reveals the fact that the Rajput women who were mostly illiterate were trained to embrace sati to have the natural grace of being a Rajput woman. They were not conscious enough to understand the real intention of the patriarchal forces behind this inhuman system. They are not aware that sati system has a patriarchal implication and it is being used as tool to control their sexuality and to maintain the purity of caste by men. Some of the critics are of the opinion that the sati system was a matter of choice for Himachali women and it was not imposed forcefully on them. For example, they interpret the song of Chankhi in different way and maintain that Chankhi took sati not as social and cultural compulsion but as the expression of her limitless love for her husband who was fatally wounded during a hunting trip with a local king. She was unable to bear the lifelong separation from her husband and decided to burn herself as *masti* (sati) to join him in heaven. But some other songs prevalent in Shimla districts cast a spot light on the sati system as coercive fatal social evil. The song of Kuji, based on the real incident of sati in the upper area of Shimla district reveals the fact that this system of sati was a forceful social, cultural

sanction and women were cunningly forced to take this ritualistic suicide. In the song of Kuji it is her husband who wants her to burn with him and entices her to do sati. It is apparent that her husband was sure of his death before his young wife and was much worried about her sexuality. So he expresses his love for her and tries to know her opinion about sati. He says:” My darling wife Kuji I want to know/ What you will do if I die? (Translated from pahari). Kuji, a chaste wife seems to be aware of his intention and she promises him to commit sati if he dies. She replies: “Me Kuji putting my right hand in your hand/ Promise you that if you die I shall burn alive with you” (Translated from original in pahari). Here his real intention comes out when he expresses his doubts of her decision of sati. He says:

“You my wife is too innocent and straightforward to
Understand the way of world
You do not know that your parents will not allow
you to commit sati”
(Translated from original in pahari).

Innocent Kuji further assures him of her determination and says that it is my life and why should I be sacred of my parents in committing sati. There was a huge dispute on her decision of being sati and finally she was forcefully pushed to the burning pyre of her husband to be sati. The people of this area believe that it was an instance of enforced sati and because of this a curse fell on the progeny of Kuji’s deceased husband. And because of this curse now no man from the family of Kuji’s Husband can live a long life. Every man dies early because of this mysterious curse. The song of Rupi, a Rajput woman from the upper area of Shimla district also exposes the system of sati. On the basis of the analysis of the songs on sati in Shimla district it appears that the widows were forced to commit sati by the family of their husbands as in the most of the cases the parents of the widowed women

try to save their daughter from this inhuman system. In the songs of Chankhi, Kuji and Rupi their parents try to stop them from immolation but their voices do not appear to be affective. Apart from the song even some of the traditional sayings in Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh expose the sati system. As a husband says to wife, “Why should I act according to your will? Are you going to be sati with me?” (Translated from pahari). From this saying it is apparent that a woman who cannot burn alive with her husband had no right of claiming to be his wife in primitive societies in Himachal Pradesh.

The women of Himachal Pradesh problematize the every evil through songs. In some of their songs these women expose the evil practice of child marriage. These songs reveal the fact that women of Himachal Pradesh were not free to choose husbands for them and marriages were imposed forcefully on little girls. In the following song of Shimla district a little girl pathetically requests her father for not marrying her off in childhood:

Father I am a little girl
 So you shall not marry me yet
 Dear father if I marry
 It will separate me from my mother,
 Toys and friends

(Translated from original in pahari).

The girl in the song appears to be too little to understand the meaning of marriage. In the another song in dialogic form between father and daughter the practice of dowry is exposed as the daughter refuses to marry because her father is too poor to give the desired or demanded dowry in order to set her married life. The girl says:

Father you cannot give jewellery in dowry
 And you cannot make rich arrangements

for my marriage

Dear father I do not have even cloth to cover my body
So how can I get married? Isn't it shameful in society?

(Translated from pahari).

In certain songs the women of Himachal Pradesh appear to problematize the issue of honour killing and strip the patriarchal orders and social mentality in blatant manner. In the song of Ganga Ram patwari prevalent in Shimla district Ganga Ram patwari kills his daughter at the instigation of jealous villagers and has no sense of guilt as he is sure that his daughter is his property. Even the society approves this killing:

O Ganga Ram patwari you have no need to worry
You simply have killed your own daughter.

So it is not a murder

(Translated from original in pahari).

The song not only exposes the honour killing but also the diseased social mentality towards women in general. It is apparent that the cases of honour killing were mostly the result of the alleged sexual infidelity by women. Sex has been a taboo among the people of Himachal Pradesh and it has different codes and conventions for women. The transgression of such codes by women was punishable. For instance in the song of Vidya, Vidya, a girl was shot dead by her own brother Raju for having a premarital love affair and getting pregnant by her lover. Same kind of punishment was given to a woman named Indru who was pregnant when she was murdered by Balaiia who was probably her husband. The songs such as *Rulla Di Kulh* in Kangra district expose the patriarchal societies of Himachal Pradesh. In some of the songs the women of Himachal Pradesh expose their exploitation in the domestic sphere. Most of the women have to work hard from dawn to dusk and they do not get the support of the other family members in the field work and in

domestic chores. Hari Krishan Mittoo in this context rightly says that for a hill woman, agriculture does not end in the field; it is carried to home as the works such as threshing and pounding are done at home by women mostly (16). In their songs these women address their exploitation in husband's house and want to escape to parents to see them and have some rest there. In a song of Shimla district a young woman pathetically requests the fog of *Savan* (the month of mid July and mid August) to disappear so that she can at least have a look of her parental village till she manages to go there. She reports her exploitation in domestic sphere in song:

Early in the morning I go with scythe and rope
 To fetch grass and pasture
 And when I come back in evening
 I do not get even the fire burned in hearth

(Translated from pahari).

In certain other songs the women of Himachal Pradesh appear to be the victims of sexual exploitation and problematize the incest committed against them by their own relatives such as uncles, cousin brothers and even by real brothers. The evil of caste system has been problematized by the women belonging to the lower castes in Himachal Pradesh. In the some of their songs these women show how they are humiliated by the people of high castes. In a song of Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh the humiliation of untouchable women in the name of caste is exposed openly:

In your Karana village
 You *kolin* (a woman from *koli* caste in Himachal) slut
 Washes your hairs with herbs and soaps and
 Washes face with milk
 You kolin sexy slut do not elope on the
 inauspicious days of
 Tuesday and Wednesday

(Translated from pahari).

The untouchable women as portrayed in the selected folklores of Shimla districts of Himachal Pradesh are the worst victims of caste system. In some of the songs and folk tales it is evident that the inter-caste marriages were not allowed in Himachal. Society had a degraded attitude towards low caste women as in many folk tales they appear as filthy, faithless and the experts in black magic. The vision of low caste woman even in dream is considered inauspicious by high caste people. The popular belief is that the witches appear in the persons of low caste women. Thus a dignified and autonomous life was not allowed to them. Lavali, a dalit woman of about ninety years old living in a small village called Basa Mahog forty kilometres away from Shimla city in personal interview told that the women of the lower castes were not allowed to go to school for education. They were sent to the high caste households to work as bounded labourer and were exploited and humiliated in numerous ways. They were not given the good names and in the majority of the cases they were called by their caste name such as *kolin*, (A woman from koli caste, mostly agricultural labourers) *Chamari*, (a woman belonging to leather working caste) *Churi* (a woman from scavenging caste) (Personal Interview). The exploitive system of bounded labour imposed on dalits by the local high caste feudal known as Thakurs is exposed in the popular song of Jhawali in Shimla district:

Annoyed Jhawali left the house of her husband
 And a gentleman named Khui went to persuade her
 Come back saying
 You Jhawali slut come back who will do the
 bounded labour In your place?

(Translate from pahari).

Here in the song Jhawali, a dalit woman is stopped from going to her parents because she used to perform the bounded labour obligatory for low castes. As a person she

has no significance in family. Nargu Ram, an old man of about ninety years belonging to koli caste of Shimla said that the low caste women, especially the beautiful one were sexually exploited by the local Thakurs. Such women were given some relaxations in work but were strictly warned to be silent on the matter (Personal interview). Exposing the brutal feudal system and its impacts on untouchable women in Himachal Pradesh Goutam Sharma Vyathit writes that another dark side of local feudalism was the sexual exploitation of the low caste women. The ballad of *Naukhoo Gaddan* prevalent in Kangra district exposes it well as Naukhoo Gaddan was abducted by local feudal to enjoy her youthful charm and beauty(127). It is obvious that the women of Himachal Pradesh through the folklores problematize the numerous social evils. In most of the cases these women present themselves as the victims of patriarchal repression and the evils such as caste system, sati, purdah, child marriages, dowry system, honour killing and bounded labour. But in certain other songs they appear to be the beautiful women and the queens of men's dreams. Their physical beauty and simplicity have been appreciated openly in the songs. In some other songs the women of Himachal appear to be chaste, loving and dedicated to their lovers and husband. The ballad of two lovers Kunju Chanchalo of Chamba district shows the devotion and true love of Chanchalo to her lover Kunju. In the song of Bhagarathi, the heroine Bhagarathi is portrayed as a chaste and loving woman who lost her mind after the death of her young husband. She treated him as alive and often saw him in a snake to meet whom she often went out in nights. She was so convinced of snake's being her husband that she stopped her parents from killing the snake saying that the snake in fact is their son-in-law as her husband's soul entered that snake's body. In many cases the women have been portrayed as sacrificing, brave and hardworking as when the occasion

demanded these women not only fought bravely but also offered their lives for the welfare of society. In some other songs these women appear to be resistant to the social, cultural and patriarchal bonds and they deliberately transgress these norms. They appear to be infidel and assume an agency to take their decisions. In a song of Jhanghi, the heroine Jhanghi transgresses the gender bonds by breaking her betrothal by falling in love with another man. And finally she deserted both her erstwhile lovers for their possessive attitude towards Jhanghi and their patriarchal jealousies. Jhanghi can be called an unconventional woman character as she exhibits an awakened consciousness as a woman. She asserts her autonomy by rejecting her former lovers by marrying the third party. In some other folk songs of Shimla districts women appear to be rebellious against the patriarchal forces and they overtly retaliate the injustices done to them. For instance, in the song of Usha Batkhi (Brahmin girl) Usha revolts against her molestation by a Rajput boy named Lyaku. While expressing her anger on her molestation Usha appears furious and determined to fight against her humiliation. She says, "I shall teach a lesson to that Rajput boy. And for that if I have to quit even my job I shall not mind it"(Translated from pahari). This song of Usha is based on a real incident of molestation of a Brahmin girl Usha at Theog near Shimla and it is evident that the song was composed in the post independence Himachal Pradesh. The song reveals the fact that with the spread of education in post independence era the women of Himachal Pradesh have improved their position in society. With the passage of time these women have started to articulate their voices, express their grievances and to assert their rights, personhood and identity. These women have now started to interrogate the predominance of men and act as agents themselves. The images of these women as portrayed in the songs composed in the post- independence era are different from the women

appearing in the songs of pre-independence period. In the folklores of post- independence Himachal women appear to be more awakened, empowered, extrovert, progressive, identity conscious and rebellious against the atrocious social and cultural system. It is apparent that with the spread of education and the accessibility of jobs these women have started to articulate their voices to transform the existing social, cultural, political and patriarchal structures. But it does not mean that the women of Himachal are absolutely free. On the basis of the analysis of their folk literature and existing existential condition it can be concluded that they still need collective efforts to secure liberty and transform the discriminatory institutions of caste, class, gender, culture and religion as these institutions impose a subordinated status on these women.

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Indian Medical Humanities: Challenges and Prospects

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Medical Humanities can be conceptualized as an in-depth association of medicine with various disciplines of humanities like literature, philosophy, ethics, history and religion and different subjects of social sciences such as anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, sociology, health geography and arts (literature, theatre, film and visual arts) and their practical application to medical education and practice.

The 2009 online manifesto describes Medical Humanities as: the name given to a so-far rather diverse field of enquiry. Its object is medicine as a human practice and by implication, human health and illness, and the enquirers are basically people working from the perspectives of humanities disciplines. Thus Medical Humanities denote humanities looking at medicine, looking at patients. At present, History, Literature, Theology, Anthropology and Philosophy are prominent among the disciplines that engage in Medical Humanities. If they act separately and in isolation from one another, then 'Medical Humanities' is just a list. But it becomes far more interesting when these disciplines are combined in a genuinely interdisciplinary way (Durham University 2009).

In Western countries like the United States and other European countries there is more or less common framework for Medical Humanities. Tracing the trend of European nations, many developing countries like Turkey, the Middle

East, and South East Asia have introduced Medical Humanities. In Indian context, Dr. Satendra Singh and colleagues at the University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, have started certain healthy and innovative practices in the field of MH. Seth G S Medical College in Mumbai, Maharashtra; PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (PSGIMSR) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu; and Jorhat Medical College, Assam etc. are keen to be pioneering proponents in MH. With their scientific, rational and humanistic approach to the study of MH the Centre for Community Dialogue and Change (CCDC) and MH team of UCMs conduct workshops on Theatre of the Oppressed in different Institutions and fully committed to the democratization of the profession of medicine.

Expansion of MH in India

So far as India and MH as an academic discipline is concerned, there is no expertise in it. It is only the interest, creative energy and an inner urge of the medical professionals and academicians alike which motivated them for the proper foregrounding of MH as an allied subject of study of medicine. In West, MH is well grounded as a part of academic curriculum which offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in it and faculties from humanities are being systematically trained to be appointed in Medical colleges and institutions to render their services in the holistic development of field of medicine which is lacking in humanitarian aspects of humanity. It is in the context of India, there is an urgent need to address the typical and traditional fabric of Indian mind which have drawn a knee-deep barrier between medicine and humanities. It's the need of the hour that academicians and practitioners from both disciplines must be properly skilled to correspond each other.

Keeping in view the changing scenario and urgent need for reforms in medical education, Medical Council of India

(MCI) has proposed to introduce Medical Humanities in medical curriculum. It has also given directives to medical colleges to appoint faculties who have expertise in non-medical disciplines.

MH is an extensive field of study and on account of this various Institutions across the globe have embraced different methodologies for its successful implementation. The socio, economic, political, ideological and cultural diversity of India have invigorated MCI to gear up MH as a discipline with the introduction of ATCOM(AT= Attitude & Com = Communication skills) Module into undergraduate medical curriculum to bridge the gap between the field of medicine and non-medicine so that medical students may get familiar themselves with the positive and negative aspects of both medicine and humanities which may help them in their grooming as better future doctors. The core intention behind the implementation of ATCOM module is to create a medical professional who is first and foremost a human, clinician, leader, communicator, member of healthcare team and system, life –long learner and a professional and in this way it fulfills the very criteria of IMG (Indian Medical Graduate).

With the unprecedented advancement of science and technology, it is not only imperative to reform the curriculum to accommodate new findings in order to enrich cognitive domain and skill acquisition, it is necessary to concentrate the heart of IMG. The affective domain addresses one's emotional behaviour such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivation and attitudes. MH de-emphasizes time-based training and promises greater accountability, flexibility and learner- centeredness. The ATCOM module addresses four domains i.e; knowledge, skill, attitude and communication. The early clinical exposure is planned to be started in the 1st year medical course, attitude and communicational skill development, adoption of

contemporary education technologies such as skill laboratory, e-learning and simulation. It promotes competency pattern in the undergraduate curriculum and aims to draw a balance between explicit teaching and experimental learning incorporating values of professionalism. The module has been formulated in such a way that communication and ethics are being taught in each year of the medical course. The courses have been framed in the following manner: the foundation of communication in the 1st year, bioethics in the 2nd year, medico legal issues, ethics and doctor-patient relationship in the 3rd year & medical negligence and dealing with death in the final year are some of the important topics. Thus, the emphasis has been given to address the heart of the medical graduates.

Medical Humanities makes provision for three distinct approaches. Firstly, the study of medicine and medical by humanities scholars who are appointed in university humanities department; secondly, arts and humanities interventions in medical education; and thirdly, arts practitioners addressing the public with issue of the body and illness through literature, dramatic performance of various kinds, theatre and visual arts in particular.

The basic concern of Medical Humanities is to shape better doctor or doctor who is more human in nature. The driving force behind introducing humanities into the field of medical science is the noble thought of nurturing sensible human doctors and the development of a better medical education system. The purpose of the inclusion of it in medical education is to humanize and encourage democratic practices for the doctors who consider patients as cases and their diagnosis as the target of achievement at the expense of the negligence of their feelings and emotions.

The descriptor 'Medical Humanities' has been applied to the following five fields of activity:

- 1) The humanities studying medicine (such as history of medicine or the critical evaluation of medicine in literature).
- 2) Arts and humanities intersecting with medicine in medical education—often called ‘medicine as art’
- 3) The arts engaging with medical themes in public engagement.
- 4) Arts for health (for example, art in hospitals and arts activities with patients-often called ‘arts as medicine’.
- 5) Arts therapies (sometimes linked with arts for health, but usually associated with mental health interventions using arts media within a psychotherapeutic framework).

Medical humanities has flourished in three places—university humanities departments through the formal study of medicine; university medical schools, hospital and community clinics through medical education; and public galleries, museum spaces and theatres through arts engagement with medical themes.

Medical Humanities offers:

- a) a field of academic inquiry;
- b) the intersection of medicine and the creative arts;
- c) creating more compassionate, more capable communicative doctors that may lead to better health outcomes for patients.

The Medical Humanities are no longer supplementary or complementary but actively reformulate what clinical thinking and clinical practice or the critical imagination might be. The arts and humanities are given a central role politically in democratizing medicine, where they also educate for tolerance of ambiguity

Medical humanities is not limited itself only to the overall development of doctor rather it is deeply concerned with the institution of medicine and the culture of medical education. It regards medical education should not act as handmaiden to normative medicine rather it should resist and critique the institutional norms of medicine where humanizing regarded as unproductive to patient care, collaborative inter professional teamwork and doctor's self-care.

MH aims to render sensitivity to doctors so they can communicate sensitively with patients and colleagues, inculcate habit of close listening in receiving the patient's history, close noticing in the physical examination, have an emphatic understanding of patient's narratives of their illness, medical problems and act accordingly to achieve effective diagnosis. It also seeks to develop doctors' understanding so that they can critically and reflexively understand the very fabric of medical culture itself and have a better understanding of the body, health, disease and illness.

MH perceives that the political and aesthetic dimensions of medical education are missing from present medical courses offered to medical professional. And there is an urgent need to reframe these dimensions and this can be achieved through integrating the Medical Humanities into medical education as core and integrated provision. The political aspect of Medical Humanities looks forward to treat medical education for social justice that regards each and every patient as a valuable human being and citizen. It aims to redress health inequalities and provide equal access to health services.

There are diverse opinions from intellectuals of different streams. Hal Cook, a historian by profession, sees Medical Humanities as a way of exploring the complexities and ambiguities of the human condition which is inextricably related to medical practice. He promotes us to see 'the

medical' as one historical and cultural determined dimension of human experience. Another intellectual like Deborah Kirclin, a doctor and medical ethicist, sees the application of the arts and humanities as a kind of fine tuning of sensibility which is helpful in developing a far more subtle and nuanced appreciation of the context within which illness is experienced and healthcare delivered.

Michel Foucault, French philosopher, social theorist, literary critic and historian of ideas raises questions which are historically and culturally grounded. Taken into account French historical archives, Foucault asks how the focus of medical practice shifted from the home visit to a patient attending a clinic? What conditions emerged that legitimated intimate examinations ordinarily taboo in everyday social exchanges? What is different about the way that a doctor and a lay person gaze on, or at, a body?

Different practitioners of medical humanities opine that it can be employed only non-critically, serving medical dominance rather than used in an interventionist manner. That's why Felix Guattari describes the incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries of medical science/ practice. He asks the questions:

1. What does the future held for the medical humanities?
2. Where medicine aims for homeostasis or relief from symptoms?

Medicine must collaborate with the arts and humanities if only to reap the rewards of learning about tolerance of uncertainty and ambiguity such as awareness of the cultural habit to repress or deny uncertainty that is also a symptom of the high rate of medical error.

In the beginning the first wave of MH was introduced into medical education in the form of modules in ethics and

the history of medicine which gradually assimilated narrative-based medicine and topics which discuss at length how looking at art may help medical students to look more closely at patients. Initially with its introduction in curriculum, it was an optional learning, a supplement within the curriculum, a light relief from biomedical science and visualized as a means of entertainment. With the progress of time, MH was redesigned as a critical educational intervention which aims to act as a counter point to reductive biomedical science from within the curriculum.

The structures of medicine do not encourage a relationship with emphatic care. The principles of medical practice as a scientific pursuit aiming to eradicate illness are also the values that undermine a moral medicine producing doctors who objectify the patients, where 'controllability and safety' overshadow empathy. Attempts at empathy merely serve to feed the medical students' fears of losing their own equilibrium. In short, students may insulate themselves against contamination by patients through emotional distancing.

Scholars are of the opinion that empathy is being short-lived. Even if doctors empathize with patients, ten minutes later they can be joking with colleagues about a different matter entirely and the patient contact has already dissolved. It is believed that the true empathy is not possible in a doctor-patient relationship because the bonds are professional, generally short-term and not deeply intimate. The best that can be achieved is sympathy for the patients.

The process of medical education itself is not all to blame for empathy decline and moral (or ethical) erosion. The medical students are initially recruited to medical school because they show what in other people's eyes known as a 'premedical syndrome'. Medical education does not redress such symptoms but exacerbates them. If pre-medical

education is overachieving, excessively competitive, cynical, dehumanized, over-specialized and narrow, how can a medical practitioner or doctor be humane? In other words, the majority of those students who plan to enter medicine are already educated for insensibility and this process is reinforced by pre-clinical undergraduate medical education. Now the question is: how could any rational person, not to mention an entire profession, ever expect to be humane, compassionate, caring physician in an educational environment characterized by harshness, rigidity and cynicism?

Insensitivity in doctors may be studied and evaluated as an unpremeditated consequence of medical education on account of those in power failing to distribute capital of sensibility aptly and fairly among the poor and disenfranchised-students, patients and healthcare colleagues such as doctors, nurses. The following lines from “Insensibility” one of the poems of Wilfred Owen, the First World War poet reflect the causes of insensibility:

By choice they made themselves immune
To pity and whatever moans in man
Before the last sea and the hapless stars

In this poem the poet describes how the soldiers have to cultivate insensibility to tolerate the horrors of battle, drawn from the poet’s own experience as a soldier in the First World War. The poet too recognizes that long term insensibility or shell shock is a product of war. He equates insensibility with insensitivity-soldiers are making themselves immune to pity. Doctors too, in a sense combat and also suffers a kind of shell shock in burn-out, how will they relate authentically to the suffering of patients if they harden to an insensibility and a lack of pity.

The use of the narrative and reflective writing is one of the best practices of MH. India has a rich story telling tradition and narrative writing and reflective writing can be widely used in the medical curriculum. Students can get the opportunity to write about and reflect on their different experiences both inside and outside medical school which can help them in understanding of their own sensibility as well as those of patients.

Art Appreciation session is also used in MH modules. It can be helpful in Indian medical scenario as well. These session have proved helpful in improving visual diagnostic skills among students. Religious themes have been portrayed in traditional paintings and art works while secular themes, occupied the modern paintings.

The present paper can be concluded with the remark that the incorporation of Medical Humanities is a boon for medical students, practitioners, technicians alike which can be helpful in the overall development. It tries to provide the medical professionals with that perspective of life which is missing till now. Literature with its insight into shared human experience exposes them to real-life situations. Medical Humanities with its interdisciplinary approaches may broaden view of all belonging to medicine and medical. It directly addresses the emotive aspects of life and helping the doctors in communicating with patients. The coming time with better prospects of Medical Humanities may prove nourishing doctors with humanity.

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Stylistics and Classroom Pedagogy

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The article looks into the role of linguistic stylistics in enriching the classroom pedagogy. Both the linguistic and literary problems which a teacher faces in teaching a literature written in a foreign language can be better handled by taking recourse to the findings of modern linguistics. Stylistics also strengthens literary criticism by providing a linguistic basis for literary interpretation. The precise nature and extent of the utility and usefulness of stylistics to the teacher in the classroom handling works of literature in a foreign language/ second language is the subject of our investigation here.

Key Words : Stylistics, Pedagogy, Deviation, Foregrounding, Foreign Language, Semantics, Syntactic, Phonological, Communication

Since literature is a specialized use of language, literature written in a foreign/second language cannot be appreciated without knowledge of the devices by which this specialized use of language is realized. Every literary product makes use of a set of linguistic devices, and these devices may differ from language to language at least in practice. The personality of the writer constitutes a factor to be reckoned with, but only to the extent, it influences him in the choice of these linguistic devices. Therefore, one of the things the teacher of a foreign/second literature has to do is to identify for his learners the devices which a particular writer has chosen to use in any given work of literature, and then to

ponder over as to how these choices lead the author in making/strengthening his/her communication effective. Since a literary work is primarily a linguistic entity, the learner has to become familiar with the resources of the particular language in which it is written; he has to know first the resources available to the writer in that language and against the whole body of available recourses he has to evaluate the choices exercised by the individual writer. The significance of each item is to be related to the total resources of the language. The infinitive, for instance, is less common in Hindi than in English. Consequently, the factors that will account for a high frequency occurrence of the infinitive will not be the same in English and in Hindi. Moreover, the passive voice in English need not indicate impersonality and formality, for sometimes the passive voice does not have a substitute in active voice, such as “I was born on 4th October, 1966”.

A total interpretation of a literary piece is not possible without taking into account its linguistic peculiarities in the context of the total resources of the language in which it is written. In the interpretation of the stylistic devices, the degree of their deviance from the norm plays a vital role. Style as deviation is an extension of the view of style as choice, since the deviance, the writer employs through his choice when he uses devices, which are outside the norm, but certainly within the range of contextual acceptability. All deviations, to be effective, have to operate within the ‘acceptable’ limit of the native speaker. If a literary writer as stylist seems to violate the norm, it is because these violations are tolerated – in a certain context, as in the case of nonce words. Some writers are more conscious and deliberate in their violation of the rules of grammar of the language of daily use than others. A poet like Hopkins or E.E. Cummings is stylistically more effective; he produces subtle effects by inventing, as it were, a personal grammar of his own in place of the normal

one. He is able to celebrate this freedom because the grammar of poetry, of creative literature, for that matter, is a counter grammar which entitles the user to deviate upto a point from the norm of general grammar, provided these deviations are dependent for their signification upon the commonly accepted norms. In other words, the deviations will be interpreted by relating them to the norm. The so called 'deviant' writer is in a sense using grammar/phonology/syntax/semantics to get beyond grammar/phonology /syntax/semantics. Even otherwise, the languages in prevalence such as the language of the mystic consists of a lot of paradoxical expressions such as 'knowledge is ignorance' 'dark is light' etc because the apparent contradictions vis-a-vis deviations are contextually reconciled, and hence are only partial contradictions. Ambiguity of any kind – phonological or syntactic or semantic – arises when the normal resources of the language are stretched, and this makes deviations acceptable. Since deviations can be explained or understood contextually with reference to the grammar, they are accepted for the purpose of discourse, although they are technically ungrammatical. Metaphor is the best example of deviance as it consists of a kind of meaningful violation which involves a transfer of grammatical features from one category to another. It could be either violation or disregard-the violation of a category rule or a subcategory rule or even the disregard of a selection restriction rule. This unfamiliarization through metaphor / metaphorical devices is certainly one of the universals of languages, but the precise way in which metaphor operates within the system of each language may be different. The teacher of a foreign literature as a pedagogue should take into account differences in syntactic structure. For instance, the Subject, Verb, Object order in a statement constitutes no deviation in English, but it does so in Hindi. The conditional sentences in English constitute clauses – the subordinate clause in 'present' and the main clause in 'future' but this will

be a rarity in Hindi. Likewise, it is conceivable that the replacement of a temporal noun for a spatial one, or a spatial adverb for a temporal one may not have the same importance in all languages. The use of the phrase 'bananas and bananas' is a grammatical construction and does not constitute any deviation; however, in Hindi, it does not have an equivalent (if translated literally, it constitutes a deviation).

The foregoing analysis, however, does not mean that every literary product or piece of literature is the outcome of the deviant use of language. There are literary styles which may not have marked contrasts with the style of normal uses of language. Such literary styles are characterized, by what Mukarovsky calls, foregrounding. Foregrounding may be described as a means of identifying the language of literature. Deviance, as such, is not an essential condition of the literary use of language. Most of the writers conform by and large to the norms of standard language, and variation from the norm is not a regular feature of their style.

All literary forms (which also differ from language to language) do not manifest the same kind of concern with rule-violation. Moreover, the teacher of literature is not always concerned with the explication of deviance. In fact, in a text to be employed for classroom teaching, there will not be too many passages/sentences/phrases which show an excessive obsession with deviance. The special quality, to be observed in the literary use of language need not derive exclusively from the exploitation of rarer forms. Some authors may prefer deviant forms, archaisms, inversions, etc, but there are many who normally patronize standard forms. In the same way, some literary genres tolerate deviance better than others. The poets of certain schools may be seen to cultivate deviance whereas there are poets in other schools who may use forms like that of prose or of everyday conversation. Among prose writers or prose stylists also, we

see masters of the norms and masters of deviance. All these constitute varieties of style for the teacher of literature.

The notion of style as choice may be most helpful in evolving a classroom pedagogy. Once the learner is made aware of the choices a particular language offers, he can identify the features employed by a given writer. A writer's style may, thus be defined in terms of the choices he has made. Questions focussing on these choices may constitute the part of classroom pedagogy. The use of first person pronouns in the lyrical romantic poetry, the combination of a sentimental vocabulary with scientific and technical terms for humorous effects in poets like Auden, the omission of punctuation in stream of consciousness prose, coinages in Hopkins and similar several other features may be brought to light by close analysis.

The teacher of a second/foreign language should equip his students with insights into the stylistic potential so as to enable them better identify the choices made by a particular author. It is significant for him to remember not only the basic differences in grammatical features but also the ways in which these differential features are expounded in the respective languages. For instance, what makes for the musical quality of verse in English is different from what makes for it in other Indian languages. The supra segmental features of Hindi and English are not the same-certain English consonant and vowel sounds are not the part of Hindi language. Similarly, even word stress is not found in Hindi. Deviation from this expected pattern is likely to have some importance. This, however, is unheard of in English. It means that the same stylistic function may be expounded by different elements in different languages. Such factors should be paid attention to by the teacher of a foreign literature.

The task of the teacher in the classroom is to draw the attention of the learners to the special and desirable effects

produced by the writer by the manipulation of the various devices of the language concerned. Although there can be no one to one correspondence between a particular device and an intended effect even within the same language, the learner is often enabled to predict the effects from the disposition of the linguistic devices in the text when seen in context. Moreover, there cannot be context free applications of general principles. It is the context that decides the effect/s of the use of a certain device. One and the same device may lead to opposite effects in different contexts. A parody is often distinguished from its original by the variance in tonal quality generated by the changed context. For a similar reason, what creates linked sweetness of Shelley's verse degenerates into cloying mellifluousness in Swinburne in the absence of a sustaining undercurrent of vigorous thought. Thus it is obvious that linguistic features should not be subjected to literary interpretation without taking all contextual factors into account. It is equally difficult to develop a full proof apparatus to spell out the aesthetic consequences of stylistic features. Indian aestheticians such as Vaman, Kuntaka, Anandavardhana and Abhinav Gupta have dealt with some of these aspects of stylistics. It, therefore, goes without saying that modern linguistic stylistics might benefit greatly by giving them a space in its framework.

Now the question is what should the teacher of a foreign literature as a practitioner of linguistic stylistics do? The teacher should identify linguistic features of the given text and then make inferences about the likely aesthetic effects on the reader relating them to the context of the text and the reader. Besides the context, the other major constraints having a bearing on the literary interpretation of linguistic devices are the personality of the writer, biographical facts, socio-political background etc. The linguistic stylistics acknowledges the fact that language no doubt is the medium of

literature, but a literary work is not merely a linguistic entity. The teacher of a foreign language must be aware that a literary work belongs to a particular period, a certain society, a given genre, and a changing readership of varied skills, views and tastes; it gets its total meaning in relation to all these. The stylistically oriented teacher of literature might well do justice to his task of cultivating the linguistic insights as well as the literary sensibilities of his learners only if he recognizes the fact that no work exists in isolation, and that the whole meaning and significance of a work cannot be derived from its linguistic structure alone.

Secondly, the teacher must also remember that while the language of literature may vary from the language of everyday life, the ways in which these differences manifest differ from language to language. As a consequence, the literature of two different languages, say L_1 and L_2 cannot be made intelligible by invoking the same linguistic features/items. This is an area where the knowledge of contrastive linguistics might be of immense use. Here this is to be clarified that there are not only differences; neither are the differences more important.

Stylistics across languages vis-a-vis literatures becomes a focal point of interest to the teacher when for example the writer to be taught uses a dialect and deviates from the standard language which the foreign student of literature has always been taught. The cultivation of a linguistic sensibility equips the learner adequately to deal with a variety of styles used in a number of texts. Pit Corder also says: "The standard dialect has the resources for coping with the widest range of language functions: government administration, the law, education, science and technology, trade, journalism. Indeed, certain of these functions are exclusively carried out by the standard dialect." C.A. Ferguson also shows that in certain literary forms, letters, plays, folk literature and communi-

cation involving waiters, servants, intimate friends and relatives, there is high priority for the non-standard i.e. deviant forms of the language. Thus, the teacher of foreign literature should keep in mind that there is a correlation between linguistic dialect and literary genre.

Thirdly, the task of a teacher is to alert the linguistic sensibility of the learner by pointing out the specific choices (deviant forms) made by the writer. Once it is done, it will start working on its own to make discoveries in the classroom. Language is the meeting place between form and content, and is thus vital to the structure of organized thought. The learner will automatically learn the ingenious application of stylistic variability through the examples he comes across in the everyday communication of ordinary people. The students, for example will learn to distinguish between the information seeking plain question and emotionally charged rhetoric question, requests in the form of question and question in the form of statements. These linguistically equipped students will then move to explore more fruitful areas of stylistic variations. They will learn to distinguish a literary movement on the basis of their stylistic peculiarities. Martin Turnell contrasts the Romantics and the Symbolists in their use of adjectives. He writes: "The Romantics used massed adjectives to describe extremes of feeling and extreme situation; the symbolists rare and recondite epithets in order to reveal the impact of a changing civilization of the sensitive individual or the new combination of feelings which were the result of the rapid growth of self-consciousness in the latter part of the century" (Turnell : 1959).

Stylistic is the bridge where language and literature meet. Stylistics explores how creatively the resources of language have been exploited to enhance the communicative effectiveness of a discourse. Since language use is ever a creative activity, the students be exposed to this creative

aspect of language in the authors prescribed for them, they then will eventually move on to a more creative use of language. This will enable the students identify the varieties of style of the authors they study, and later show a sense of style in their own writing. Recognition follows production as the students identify the styles first and then they put them to use. Literature, however, is not simply study of styles, a literary work of art contains more than styles. G.W. Turner rightly says “literary criticism is more than the study of style ... that literature is not only application of stylistic ...” (Stylistics, 1973). On the other hand, the fact remains that the study of literature is incomplete without the cultivation of an awareness of the linguistic features of a literary work and that the teaching of literature remains imperfect if it does not develop a stylistic sensibility in the learner. In brief, both the traditional teacher of literature who is averse to take to linguistics, and the new-fangled teacher of L₂ must understand that stylistics helps in building bridges between literature and language.

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The *Mahabharata* and the Politics of Persuasion

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This paper attempts to read Mahabharata from the lens of classical rhetorical tradition. In examining the two major incidents of the epic which were to culminate in the Great War, the paper traces the implication of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and attempts to draw the parallels. In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle elaborates the three genres of persuasion i.e. forensic, deliberative and epideictic. Forensic persuasion aims to seek justice, deliberative persuasion aims to decide the future action and epideictic persuasion praises or blames during the ceremonies. This paper strives to read Draupadi's speech in the assembly of king Dhritrashtra and Krishna's speech on the battlefield of Kurukshetra as characteristic examples of forensic and deliberative persuasion respectively.

Key words: Rhetoric, Aristotle, *Mahabharata*, Forensic Persuasion, Deliberative Persuasion

One of the central themes of Mahabharata is the dichotomy between right and wrong, good and evil, war and peace, and *dharma* and *adharma*. As has been iterated several times in the epic that the nature of dharma is subtle and cannot be resolved very easily, the personas of *Mahabharata* leave no stone unturned to define dharma in the light of their own understanding and perceptual experience. They also endeavor to change the ways of how others think and act in a given scenario. The means by which they aim to alter others'

attitude and course of action is persuasive language which is deployed in the form of either speech or conversation or both. Speech is a prerequisite mode of communication and instrumental force in changing the human behavior as ArindamChakrabarti in 'Just Words: An Ethics of Conversation in the Mahabharata' (2014) opines:

Speaking is not just one among many kinds of human activity that are subject to moral appraisal and justification; it is the paradigmatic source of what we may call dialogic normativity. It is through the sieve of kind, accurate, reasoned, sincere, and candid conversation- discussing together (*sam + vada*) - that reflective human beings sift our good from bad, substance from chaff, correct from incorrect, virtuous from vicious conduct. (244-245)

The relevance of speech becomes more intensive when it is referred to as a means of persuasion. In order to undertake a micro analysis of persuasive elements in the epic, it becomes imperative to approach Aristotle's magnum opus *The Art of Rhetoric*. Aristotle asserts that rhetorical arguments have three objectives: "the establishment of the justice of its given subject-matter, the establishment of its admirability or the establishment of its advisability." (Lawson 17) These objectives determine the three genres of persuasive speech viz. forensic, epideictic and deliberative rhetoric. Aristotle then develops the various subtypes of aforementioned forms of speech to suggest the broader scope of these genres.

In Mahabharata, there are many instances that adopt persuasive techniques as explicated by Aristotle. This paper will focus on two major events of the epic that are very significant as far as the main plot of the epic is concerned. These two events not only sow the seeds of the destruction of Kuru clan but also substantially articulate the issues of Dharma and its appropriateness in one's life. The first event occurs in the SabhaParva where Draupadi is subjected to

public ignominy in the court of Dhritrashtra. The second event takes place in the BhishmaParva where Arjuna is in a state of dilemma whether to fight the battle of Kurukshetra or not. These two instances categorically refer to forensic and deliberative modes of persuasion through which Draupadi and Krishna try to influence the court and Arjuna respectively.

I

According to Aristotle, the kinds of forensic oratory are *prosecution* and *defence* and the objective of forensic speech is *justice* and *injustice*. He classifies two types of laws: general and particular laws. Particular laws are written down in constitution and general laws are unwritten laws which are held to be agreed by all men. (Aristotle 111) Based on such categories, forensic speeches are made for the objective of justice or injustice. In the SabhaParva of Mahabharata, Yudhishthira- the eldest of Pandava brothers is invited to play the game of dice by Duryodhana and his maternal uncle- Sakuni. Yudhishthira loses one by one all his wealth, property, servants, brothers and himself. When nothing is left to be stalked in the game of dice, Sakuni hints that Draupadi is still there who can help him restore all he has lost so far. However, Draupadi is also lost in the game. Duryodhana sends his steward - Pratikamin to bring Draupadi in the assembly. On being informed by the steward, Draupadi resists and sends him back to the assembly with a poignant moral question:

गच्छत्वं कितवं गत्वासभायां पृच्छसूतज
किंनुपूर्वं पराजैषीरात्मानमथवानुमाम् । (II.LXVI.7)

...Go, and ask that gambler present in the assembly, whom he hath lost first, himself, or me. Ascertaining this, come hither, and then take me with you. (II.LXVI.126)

The forensic persuasion of Draupadi begins here. By asking this question Draupadi is juxtaposing the rules of the

game of dice with the Kshatriya dharma. Very cleverly, she draws out the problematic nature of gambling one's wife. Her question becomes a double edged sword because first of all, no husband has a right to stake his wife before himself and if he has already lost himself in the game of dice, he is no longer free to stake his wife to restore all the previous wealth which is lost. When she is unanswered by the assembly, she ingeminates her question and explicitly associates it to the generic nature of dharma:

एवंनूनव्यदधात्संविधाता
 स्पर्शावुभौस्पृशतोवृद्धबालौ
 धर्मत्वेकंपरमं प्राहलोके
 स न शमंधास्यतिगोप्यमानः ॥

सोऽयंधर्मोमात्यमात्कौरवान्चै
 सभ्यान्गत्वापृच्छधर्म्यवचोमे ।
 तेमांब्रूवुर्निश्चतंतत्करिष्ये
 धर्मात्मानानीतिमन्तोवरिष्ठाः ॥ (II.LXVI.15-16)

The great ordainer of the world hath, indeed, ordained so. Happiness and misery pay their court to both the wise and unwise. Morality, however, it hath been said, is the one highest object in the world. If cherished, that will certainly dispense blessings to us. Let not that morality now abandon the kauravas. Going back to those that are present in that assembly, repeat these my words consonant with morality, I am ready to do what elderly and virtuous persons conversant with morality will definitely tell me. (II.LXVI.127)

However, the Kauravas do not pay heed to what Draupadi questions and Dushasana is sent to bring her to the assembly. The condition of Draupadi is pitiable as she is in her menstruation cycle and clad in one piece of cloth. Even though she informs Dushasana about her condition, he ignores

her plea and seizes her by her locks and calls her dasi or servant. Here, it is important to note that this humiliation of Draupadi turns out to be one of the decisive factors behind the war of Kurukshetra. The reason is that Dharma is given in to the enticement of revenge, jealousy and power as is seen in the observation of Kevin McGrath:

This is a scene not simply of humiliation but of debasement; dharma has been completely abandoned in the interests of domination and rivalry, and the formalities of the court only temper the level of abuse with a further charge and tension. As the burgeoning conflict between rival sides of a family focuses on the subjection of Draupadi's body, she supplies this primary terrain or field for the clash of cousins as they struggle for power and sovereignty. (McGrath 124)

Draupadi restates her question after being dragged in the assembly. Everyone present in the assembly is silent and unable to answer the question. Then she turns to Bhishma who epitomizes the moral righteousness and makes an ethical and emotional appeal to him and other elders in the assembly:

द्रोणस्यभीष्मस्य च नास्ति सत्त्वं
क्षत्तुस्तथैवास्य महात्मनोऽपि ।
राज्ञस्तथाहीममधर्ममुग्रं
न लक्ष्यन्ते कुरुवृद्धमुख्याः ॥ (II.LXVI.41)

“Oh! Both Drona and Bhishma have lost their energy, and so also hath the high souled Kshatta, and so also this king. Else, why do these foremost of the Kuru elders look silently on this great crime?” (II.LXVI 128)

Bhishma's answer to Draupadi's question is ambiguous as he is unable to explain the precise nature of dharma:

न धर्मसौक्ष्म्यात् सुभगेविवेक्तु
शक्नोमिते प्रश्नमिमं यथावत् ।

अस्वाम्यशक्तः पणितुंपरस्वं
स्त्रियाश्चभर्तुर्वशतांसमीक्ष्य ॥ (II.LXVI.47)

O blessed one, morality is subtle. I therefore am unable to duly decide this point that thou hast put, beholding that on the one hand one that hath no wealth cannot stake the wealth belonging to others, while on the other hand wives are always under the orders and at the disposals of their lords. (II LXVI 129)

Bhishma's response delineates his inability to take a stand against the humiliation of Draupadi. However, this is noteworthy that no one contends the validity of the question raised by her. This suggests that she succeeds in creating at least some impact by appealing to the ethos of the assembly. However, this persuasive technique of Draupadi does not prevent her from being subjected to disrobing in front of the entire assembly. It is only through the divine intervention that she is saved from utter humiliation.

Till now Draupadi adopts logos and ethos to persuade the assembly. That is to say, she seeks the help of higher moral principles to ask what dharma is on the one hand and on the other she portrays herself as a chaste and virtuous daughter in law of the Kuru clan. Accordingly, she keeps censuring the assembly for not taking the appropriate action against the humiliation of their daughter in law. Given that a divine intervention saves her from being disrobed, she instantaneously shifts her attitude and enforces another persuasive technique i.e. by appealing to the pathos of the king and other elders of the assembly. As soon as Dushasana proceeds to take her to the inner apartments, she announces:

पुरस्तात्करणीयं न कृतकार्यमुत्तरम्
विह्वलास्मि कृतानेन कर्षता बलिना बलात् ।
अभिवादं करोम्येषां कुरुणां कुरिसंसदि
न मे स्यादपराधोऽयं यदिदं न कृतमया ॥ (II.LXVIII.1-2)

‘Wait a little, thou worst of men, thou wicked-minded Dussasana. I have an act to perform. - a high duty that hath not been performed by me yet. Dragged forcibly by this wretch’s strong arms, I was deprived of my senses. I salute these reverend seniors in this assembly of the Kurus. That I could not do this before cannot be my fault. (II.LXVIII.135)

Draupadi makes the assembly realize that she has not forgot her dharma as a daughter in law of the Kuru clan to bow and pay respect to the elders even in the midst of this excruciating episode of disgrace. Draupadi’s action at this juncture explicitly suggests her motive to manipulate the minds of seniors who have been silent so far. What she wants to suggest is that this act of Dushasana and Duryodhana is so perverted that she was made to ignore the raj dharma of saluting the venerable kinsmen in the court. This tactic of persuasion proves to be effective as Bhishma appreciates her act of reverence and announces:

उपपन्नं च पांचालितवेदं ब्रह्मिद्रशम्
यत्कृच्छमपिसम्प्राप्ताधर्ममेवान्वेक्षसे ।।(II.LXVIII.19)

“O princess of Panchala, this conduct of thine also, viz., that though sunk in distress, thou still castest thy eyes on virtue and morality, is assuredly worthy of thee.” (II.LXVIII 136)

Thus Draupadi with her brilliant application of logos, ethos, and pathos succeeds in convincing the king Dhritrashtra and other elders in the court that she has been subjected to a gross injustice by Duryodhan and his brother Dushasana. Meanwhile, some dreadful voices in the form of bad omen intervene the discussions and warn the King about the impending catastrophe. Dhritrashtra implicitly and metaphorically relates these voices to Draupadi’s plight and conceives it of as an external manifestation of her constant prophecies of the downfall of Kuru clan. He announces out of fear:

वरवृणीष्वपांचालिमत्तोयदभिवाञ्छसि ।
वधूनांहिविशिष्टामेत्वंधर्मपरमासती ।।(II.LXX.27)

“Ask of me any boon, O princess of Panchala, that thou desirest, Chaste and devoted to virtue, thou are the first of all my daughters-in law.” (II.LXX.139).

It is to be noted here that King’s decision to grant Draupadi a boon is a combined result of her various persuasive tactics and the fear of the aforementioned voices which he infers as bad omen. As a result of the boon, she regains the liberty of her husbands and compels Karna to appreciate her crucial role at the time of crisis:

अप्लवेऽम्भसि मग्नानाम्पतिष्ठेनिमज्जताम् ।
पांचालिपाण्डुपुत्राणांनौरैषापारगाभवत् ।।(II.LXXI.3)

“indeed the princess of Panchala, becoming as a boat unto the sons of Pandu who were sinking in a boatless ocean of distress, hath brought them in safety to the shore.” (II.LXXI.140)

Thus Draupadi’s persuasive strategies earn not only the freedom of her husbands and all the lost wealth but also help her emerge as a virtuous and morally righteous woman.

— II —

The first section offers a fine example of forensic persuasion as adopted by Draupadi in seeking the justice. This section focuses on yet another important form of rhetoric i.e. deliberative persuasion. Aristotle points out that deliberation has two types- exhortation and deterrence. The objective of deliberation is to either advantage or harm. This genre of persuasion looks forward to future as advice of rhetorician brings consequences in future. One of the most refined examples of deliberative persuasion in Mahabharata is the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna just before the

battle of Kurukshetra begins. Krishna takes the responsibility to persuade a reluctant Arjuna in fighting the war and assumes the role of a deliberative speaker. According to Quintilian in his *InstitutioOratoria*, a deliberative orator is someone:

... who would have all men trust his judgment as to what is expedient and honorable, should possess and be regarded as possessing genuine wisdom and excellence of character. (13)

Krishna is an ideal deliberative orator for three reasons: Firstly, he is associated with both the armies and equally revered by them; secondly, he has a better understanding of past, present, and future; and thirdly, all others can follow his judgment on what is right and just. Aristotle asserts that there are five important subjects of deliberative speakers: revenue, war and peace, the defence of the realm, imports and exports, and legislation. Doubtless to say, Krishna fulfills the characteristics of a deliberative rhetorician with reference to war and peace subject also as Aristotle elaborates:

In connection with war and peace, the speaker must know both the present and the potential strength of the city, the nature of existing forces and of such as might be added, and also what wars she has had and in what way she has been at war. The wars, moreover, not only of his home city but also of neighbouring ones, and of those with whom war is to be envisaged, must be familiar to him, so that there may be peace with those that are stronger and that the home city may enjoy the option of war with the weaker. It must also be known whether or not the forces are comparable, since here too there can be gain and loss. (Aristotle 85)

Despite several peace attempts between Kaurvas and Pandavas, no reconciliation takes place. Kauravas are adamant not to give any portion of land as was the deal before Pandavas left for the exile of thirteen years. So the

war is inevitable. Arjuna who holds the responsibility of leader gets stunned when he finds his elders, noble kinsmen, and teachers against whom he is to fight the battle. He connects this fratricidal act of war against the law of dharma and announces:

एतान्नहन्तुमिच्छामिघ्नतोऽपिमधुसूदन ।
अपित्रैलोक्यराज्यस्यहेतोःकिंनुमहीकृते ॥ (III.XXV.35)

I do not want to kill them
Even if I am killed, Krishna;
Not for kingship of all three worlds,
Much less for the earth! (BG I.35)

He perceives war as a destruction of family and entire clan and therefore withdraws from the battlefield. He is terribly grief stricken and in a fit of despair lays down his bow and arrows. When Krishna scolds him for putting on such a form of cowardice in the time of crisis, he laments and says:

न चैतद्विद्मःकमरन्नोगरीयो
यद्वाजयेमयदिवानोजयेयुः ।
यानेवहत्वा न जिजीविषाम्
स्तेऽवस्थिताःप्रमुखेधार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ (III.XXVI..6)

We don't know which weight
is worse to bear——
our conquering them
or their conquering us.
we will not want to live
if we kill
the sons of Dhritrastra
assembled before us. (BG II.6)

Arjuna's grief and despair is rooted so deeply that Krishna has to adopt the deliberative technique to convince

Arjuna so that he can fight the battle without any sense of doubt. He projects this war as a dharma yudhha (war for the upliftment of moral righteousness) which will promote the wellbeing of the people of Bharata clan. In order to establish such a state of happiness, Krishna asks Arjuna to detach himself from the affairs of samsara and focus only on the duty which he is supposed to perform. There is no need to look at the end results which the actions will yield in future. An action without the expectation of fruit is the key to happiness or wisdom according to Krishna.

Likewise, Aristotle also asserts that one of the many objectives that motivate the deliberative persuasion is happiness as all exhortations or dissuasions are very much related to happiness and its related aspects. All goals of life are aimed at maximizing one's happiness be it inner or outer as Aristotle puts forth:

Let happiness, then, be virtuous welfare, or self-sufficiency in life or the pleasantest secure life or material and physical well-being accompanied by the capacity to safeguard or procure the same. (Aristotle 87)

Aristotle also mentions the various elements of happiness that are generally sought for viz. "gentle birth, a virtuous circle of friends, wealth, creditable offspring, extensive offspring and a comfortable old age, reputation, status, good luck and virtues like prudence, courage, justice and moderation." (87) Thus deliberative oratory extensively co-opts the idea of happiness to make the persuasion successful.

Accordingly, the first strategy employed by Krishna is to remind Arjuna of the various elements of happiness that are caused by the righteousness of one's duties. As Krishna preaches:

स्वधर्ममपिचावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि
 धर्म्याद्धियुद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ।
 यदृच्छयाचोपपन्नंस्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्
 सुखिनःक्षत्रियाःपार्थलभन्तेयुद्धमीदृशम् ॥ (III.XXVI.31-32)

Look to your own duty;
 do not tremble before it;
 nothing is better for a warrior
 than a battle of sacred duty.
 The doors of heaven open
 For warriors who rejoice
 To have a battle like this
 Thrust on them by chance. (BG II.31-32)

Krishna refers to the battle of Kurukshetra as a war for righteousness and it is the duty of a Kshatriya warrior to perform such a sacred duty. The warriors who fight the battle for dharma deserve the heaven which is the ultimate means of all sorts of happiness. Further, Krishna talks of honour and reputation which is at stake in case the war is not fought by Arjuna. He warns that it will bring a great downfall of reputation of Arjuna if he backs out. It will also be a good opportunity for opponents and enemies to speak ill of his skills and character. Thus, he directly catches hold of Arjuna's conscience by speaking of Kshatriya's reputation and warrior's duty for the sake of dharma. He makes the happiness a final goal which is going to be achieved in either case as he recites:

हतोवाप्राप्स्यसिस्वर्गजित्वावाभोक्ष्यसेमहीम्
 तस्मादुत्तिष्ठकौन्तेययुद्धायकृतनिश्चयः ।
 सुखदुःखेसमेकृत्वालाभालाभौजयाजयौ
 ततोयुद्धाययुज्यस्वनैवंपापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ (III.XXVI.37-38)

If you are killed, you win heaven;
 If you triumph, you enjoy the earth;
 Therefore, Arjuna, stand up

And resolve to fight the battle!
 Impartial to joy and suffering,
 Gain and loss, victory and defeat,
 Arm yourself for the battle,
 Lest you fall into evil. (BG II.37-38)

Aristotle emphasizes that deliberation is primarily about means rather than ends. One does not deliberate whether, but about how, to be happy. Thus the deliberative orator must possess topics on the means to achieve happiness even more than on happiness as an end. Krishna also adopts the same policy and he explains of the means of happiness in further chapters. He also reveals his true self to Arjuna and provides him a source of infinite joy and happiness. He encourages Arjuna by saying:

मयिसर्वाणिकर्माणिसंन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
 निराशिर्निर्ममोभूत्वायुध्यस्वविगतज्वरः ॥ (III.XXVII.30)

Surrender all actions to me,
 and fix your reason on your inner self;
 without hope or possessiveness,
 your fever subdued, fight the battle!

Krishna gives his own example and teaches him the ways of Sankhya Yoga, Gyan yoga and Karma yoga by which supreme level of happiness and peace can be acquired. When Arjuna still finds doubt whether to fight or not, he discloses more secrets of universe. He declares:

यदायदाहिधर्मस्यग्लानिर्भवतिभारत
 अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्यतदात्मानंसृजाम्यहम् ।
 परित्राणायसाधूनांविनाशाय च दुष्टताम्
 धर्मसंस्थापनार्थायसम्भवामियुगेयुगे ॥(III.XXVIII.7-8)

Whenever sacred duty decays
 And chaos prevails,

Then, I create
 Myself, Arjuna.
 To protect man of virtue
 and destroy men who do evil,
 to set the standard of sacred duty,
 I appear in age after age.

Krishna reveals to Arjuna step by step, that he, Krishna, is himself the eternal, absolute reality, lord of the whole universe. He argues that there is no contradiction between action and the essence of yoga, which is the renunciation of individual, personal, desire-based interest in one's action and its fruits. He represents himself to Arjuna as the terminus of Arjuna's yogic perfection and the proper source of all his motivation, and he grants Arjuna a vision of one of his divine forms i.e. divyadrishti as all-destroying, all-consuming Kala, who is swallowing all the Kashatriyas and warriors of the universe. Thus he declares to Arjuna:

कालोऽस्मिलोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो
 लोकान्समाहर्तुमिहप्रवृत्तः ।
 ऋतेऽपित्वां न भविष्यन्तिसर्वे,
 येऽवस्थिताःप्रत्यनीकेषुयोधाः ।
 तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठयशोलभस्व,
 जित्वाशत्रून्भुङ्क्ष्वराज्यंसमृद्धम् ।
 मयैवैतेनिहताःपूर्वमेव,
 निमित्तमात्रंभवसव्यसाचिन् ॥(III.XXXV.32-33)

I am time grown old,
 creating world destruction,
 set in motion,
 to annihilate the worlds;
 even without you,
 all these warriors
 arrayed in hostile ranks

will cease to exist.
 Therefore, arise
 And win glory!
 Conquer your foes
 And fulfill your kingship!
 They are already
 Killed by me.
 Be just my instrument,
 The archer at my side!

Thus, by means of deliberative rhetoric, Krishna is able to persuade Arjuna and his attitude towards war undergoes a sea change. All doubts of Arjuna related to righteousness are resolved at the end as he acknowledges:

नष्टोमोहःस्मृतिर्लब्धात्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।
 स्थितोऽस्मिगतसन्देहःकरिष्येवचनंतव ।। (III.XLII.73)

My delusion hath been destroyed, and the recollection (of what I am) hath been gained by me, O Undeteriorating one, through thy favour I am now firm. My doubts have been dispelled. I will do thy bidding.’ (V.XLII.98)

— III —

In the Mahabharata, there are several layers of persuasion techniques two of which have been discussed at length in this paper. Draupadi’s strategy of forensic persuasion in seeking justice against her humiliation compels the whole assembly to think of dharma in its appropriate context even though the nature of dharma is subtle. Her appeal to higher moral principles in general and Kshatriya dharma in particular portrays her as a morally righteous and virtuous woman. Her speech and capability to debate brings a welcome change in the fortune of Pandava brothers and they are liberated from the fatal deal at the game of dice. Her skillful use of logos, ethos and pathos not only impresses the king, Bhishma, and other elders in the assembly but also

instigates Bhima to take oaths against Duryodhana and Dushasana which he fulfills in the battle of Kurukshetra.

Krishna's deliberative speech gives an insight of what should be the characteristics of an advisor or counselor. His knowledge of past, present and future helps him in successfully altering the attitude and perspective of Arjuna on war and dharma. His deliberation on happiness, selfless duty, action without the concern for fruit etc. permeates Arjuna's consciousness thereby enabling him to fight the dharma yuddha without any iota of doubt. Both these modes of persuasion revalorize the ethical strand of duty, war and righteousness.

The present paper is a hermeneutical attempt in reading Mahabharata through the lens of classical rhetorical tradition. While there is abundant scholarly literature on the comparative study of the eastern and western poetics, rhetoric tradition in a comparative framework is yet in its nascent stages. This paper is one such step to explore the various tenets of rhetoric across the traditions.

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Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* as a Postcolonial Novel: A Study in Hybridity

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Kiran Desai is a novelist who discovers her subject matter from within the cross currents of the contemporary conditions of life. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* picks up the diversities of the contemporary life and processed them for a literary presentation through the intellectual focus that suits the craft of fiction the type of which quickens the interest of its readers into the predominant question of global significance without offending the literary tastes and expectation. In her *The Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai provides an effective literary presentation to the question of hybrid identities as an outcome of the post-colonial and transnational conditions of life. The transnational connectivity and interaction has reduced the nationalist boundaries as mere shadow lines and the importance fails to check the imbibing of the alien influences that knock at our doors many ways. Kiran Desai sets the story of the novel in the context of the insurgency, militancy, cultural hybridity, native expectation, diasporic frustrations, and the exploits of globalization in such a way that at every step the reader is compelled to think of hybridity –a situation of life that involves one in a never –ending quest for identity and belongingness. The present articles is proposed as a study of Kiran Desai's literary presentation of the question of hybridity in her *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Hybridity in relation to the colonial process and post colonial consciousness has a specific sense import. It is a term

that cannot be loosely used because every growth or every change that co-exists with the diverse processes cannot be called hybridity. Even mutations are either of genetic or cultural nature do not signify hybridity. Truly speaking, hybridity stands for the creation of new cross-cultural forms that are formed in the course of the struggle between the possibilities of one's own irrepressible love for one's own cultural initiative and one's own imitative urges to the new forms of cultural constructs. Hybridity is a wide ranging phenomenon that includes the cultural, political linguistic and the socio-religious conditions of life. The literary presentation of the phenomenon of hybridity is like working with a fine brush upon a wide canvass in such a way that it takes a lot of time and a lot of work before the effects are continuously visible. The above observation gets an additional validity and force in the light of the fact that the phenomenon called hybridity has its own dynamism and running crosscurrents that make the whole mechanism passed through the processes of adoption and availability. Further, the process of adjustment and amalgamation initiated by the colonial conditions of life do not end with the end of political colonization. They continue sometimes perceptibly and most often imperceptibly in the post colonial conditions of life. No doubt the process of post colonialism give air to intensity of national pride and national identity that are antagonistic to the possibilities of imbibing and imitating the colonial conditions of life. But, life does not go by full proof theories and canons. It has its own scope of violating them in the larger interest of community as a whole. It is this scope of imbibing and imitating the colonial condition of life in the post colonial and post independent days of self pride and self identity that makes enough room for hybrid forms of multicultural and cross-cultural constructs of life.

Post colonialism does not define a condition of life so much as it signifies the process of life furthered by various

global developments of transnational and multinational connectivity between various sections of mankind inhabiting the various parts of the globe. Post colonialism in its interactive association with transnationalism produces the chequered shades of hybrid constructs in various walks of post-colonial life and its literary presentation. It is indeed obvious socio-cultural and socio-literary phenomenon that the hybridity constructs created by the symbiosis of the colonisers and the colonized are different from those created by multinationalism and then qualitative nature and spirit the former finds a literary presentation in the writing of those who experience post colonality in their own native land. The latter finds a literary expression in the writing of those whose experience of post colonality is punctuated with their stay in Diaspora. Kiran Desai provides literary presentation in her novels as she inherited not only the true spirit of post colonial experience from her parents but also that she has her own share of the transnational experience enriching her attitude to life and its direct and first hand experience in multiple shades of international and transnationalism.

The Post Colonial spirit of the novel peeps through the genetic hybridity inherited by the girl Sai, the daughter of Mr. Mistry, the Zoroastrian and his wife Mrs. Mistry - the Hindu. Sai is developed in the face of the inheritance that her grand father Mrs. Jemubhai Patel, a judge stands to symbolize. Mr. Jemubhai Patel was educated in at Cambridge in England and thus brings with him a transnational legacy as shared between the colonised and the colonizers. His daughter with Zoroastrian husband had died in Moscow in an accident and his grand daughter Sai stands between the pastness of her past and its valid presence steering her in the eyes as challenging her to escape the loss of her inheritance if she can. The foreign mode of life by way of her schooling and her living in the company of her grand father is nothing

but a sufficient cause to make her a typical hybrid character in the novel – a character that has her feet on the native soil but her brain looms large in the foreign influences.

In the course of the narrative of the novel Kiran Desai beautifully presents the questions relating to the cultural hybridity caused by the post colonial conditions of life and futhered by the transnational multi -culturalism. One of the beautiful examples of socio - religious and religio -moral hybridity peeps through the words of Biju - the waiter who is an Indian by birth and a transnational by profession. To quote his words:

Biju thought of Saeed. Saeed who still refused to eat a pig, “they I am Zanzibari, then I will Be American.” Once he’d shown beju his new purchase of a model of a mosque with a quartz clock set into the bottom that was programmed, at the five correct hours, to start agitating : Allah hu Akbar, la ilhaha Illullah, wal lah hu Akbar.” Through the crackle of the tape from the top of the minaret came ancient sand- weathered words, that keening cry from the desert offering sustenance to create a man’s strength, his faith in an empty bellied morning and all through the day, that he might not fall through the filthy differences between nations. (Desai 136)

The embarrassment that passes between Sai and Gyan is caused by the hybrid phenomenon of eating Indian dishes in British ways. To quote from the text:

Eating together they had already felt embarrassed, he, unsettled by her finickiness and her curbed enjoyment and she, revolted by his energy and his fingers working the dal his slurps and smacks. The judge ate even his chapatis, his puris and parathas with knife and fork. Insisted that Sai in his presence do the same. (176)

The experience of hybridity results into the binary of the east and the west that makes the mind reel under the diversity of the contraries craving to be yoked together communities to a playground in which there is a tussle between the communities expectations to stick to their national identity of socio-religion and socio cultural significance, and the individuals thwartings towards imbibing and imitating is taken highly and somewhat ironically. The following example provides a peep into the hybridity that is the result of amalgamating association between the native and the alien rather than a harmonious and organic alchemy working between the two :

“But what is missing?”

“My Puff”.

“What is that ?”

He tried to explain

“But what on earth is it for, baba?”

They looked at him bemused.

Pink and whtle what? That you put on your skin?Why?

“ Pink?”

His mother began to worry, “Is anything wrong with your skin?” She asked, concerned.

But, “Ha ha,” laughed a sister who was listening carefully.

“We sent you abroad to become a gentleman, and instead you have become a lady”. (167)

For a purposeful harmonious practicability Mr. Jemu Bhai Patel feels, “An Indian girl could never be as beautiful as English one” and also that the mind set of a judge in India works under different social cultural mechanism from those that exist in the developed countries of the west. As a judge Mr. Jemubhai Patel underlines the difference of human conditions between the east and the west that necessitate the different legal maneuvers to meet the end of justice? He says

:

India was too messy for justice; it ended only in humiliation for the persons in authority. He had done his duty as far as it was any citizen's duty to report problems to the police, and it was no longer his responsibility. Give these people a bit and one could find oneself supporting the whole family forever after, a constantly multiplying family no doubt, because they might have no food, the husband might be blind and with broken legs, and the woman might be anemic and bent, but they'd still pop out an infant every nine months. If you let such people get an inch, they would take every thing you had – the families yoked together because of guilt on one side, and an unending greed and capacity for dependence on the other – and if they knew you were susceptible, everyone handed their guilt along so as to augment yours, old guilt, new guilt any passed on guilt of whatever. (264)

The inheritance of loss as caused and furthered by the socio-cultural hybridity is not just as a personal experience to be felt within. It becomes an family affair first and then, floats outside the domestic limits to become a social reality of a post colonial phenomenon of hybridity in both the post colonial and transnational conditions of life. It remains a two way process between the natives of two different cultures. When Payali Baneerzi announces the BBC news in pucca British accent, it makes the Indian laugh and laugh very hard:

“Good eveningHH.this is Piyali Bannerzi” with the BBC news”. All over India, people hearing the Indian name announced in Pucca British accent laughed and laughed so hard their stomach hurt. (47)

Further, Marilyn a Gujarati Indian also passes through the same experience of being laughed at in the course of his perfecting his adoption of foreign accents. The following conversation between Marilyn and Rajnibhai not only

provides an example of linguistic hybridity bent also an example of the amalgamating nature of hybridity between the two contraries taking highly and humorously by the natives that makes one to conceal one's national identity as Marlin refuses to acknowledge his being Gujarati. The following conversation of marching deserves attentions:

Marilyn, Blown up photographs of Marilyn Monroe on the wall, Indian owner at the desk !
 The owner was on the speakerphone
 "Rajinibhai Kem Chho?"
 "What?"
 Rajni Bhai?"
 Who aezthees? Very Indian trying to be American accent.
 Kem Chho? Sarru Chho? Teme Samjo Chho?
 WHAAT?"
 Don't speak Gujarati Sir?
 "No"
 "You are Gnerati, not ?"
 "No" (137)

How deeply can these post colonial and transnational hybridity may affect a person? The answer is to be found in transformation of Harish Harry, the person running a hotel in New York Biju, the waiter unfolds not only my the ironical aspects of such hybridity but also the serious aspects of religion moral concerns of life, death and the after death.

Harish-Harry- the two names, bijiu was learning, indicated a deep rift that he hadn't suspected when the first walked in and found him a manifestation of that clarity of principle which Biju was seeking. The support for a cow shelter was in case the Hindu version of the after life turned out to be true and that, when he died, he was put through the Hindu machinations of throne? He tried to keep on the right side of power tied to be

loyal to so many things that he himself couldn't tell which one of his selves was authentic, if any. (147-48)

Further, it is interesting to feel the hybridity of the India students addressing their American friends with their changed accents in their own way :

It wasn't just Harish –Harry confusion was rampant among the half 'n' 'haf' crowd, the Indian students coming in with American friends, one accent one side of mouth, another the other side; muddling it up, wobbling then, downgrading sometimes all the way to Hindi to show one another who? No, no, it was not they pretending to be other than who and what they were. They weren't the ones turning their back on the greatest culture the world has ever seen. (147-48).

The circumstances of diasporic experience upturn the native side of the coin, Ohio man seems to understand the true spirit of the tragic vision that come out of his immigration to foreign lands. The Ohio's man unmask the darker face of the experience of immigration thus.

He know what his father thought that immigration so often presented as a heroic act, could just as easily be the opposite; that it was cowardice that led many to America; fear marked the journey, not bravery; a cockroach desire to scuttle to where you never saw poverty, not really, never had to suffer a tug to your conscience, where you never heard the demands of servant, beggars bankrupt relatives, and where your generosity would never be openly claimed. (299)

The following conversation between Gyan and Sai serves as an eye opener towards the futility of a superficial adoption or ridiculous imitation of the alien ways of life that falls some length short of a positive, purposeful, practical hybridity. This is nothing but a clash between nativity and foreign element of life manners.

“*Christmas!*” Said Gyan “You little fool” Christmas had never bothered him before She was defining his hatred, he though her he caught, sight of it –oh- and then he could. n’t resist sharpening if, if only for clarity sake.

Do not your have any pride? Trying be so westernized. They don’t want you!!!! Go there and see if they will welcome you with open arms. You will be trying to clean their toilets and even then they wan’t you. (174)

The phenomenon of hybridity inevitably results into the loss of inheritance leading to a feeling of hatred rather than love and admiration. The hybrid product comes into existence only if and when both of its constituents are ready to suffer the loss of their identity and inheritance in one way of the other. Otherwise an immature amalgamation cannot result in to the perfect hybridization of two cultures. On the other hand it only results into the broadening of the gap between the native identity and the foreign encroachments.

A Calcutta sister accompanying a Chicago sister “getting value for her daaller, getting value for daaller, discovering the first germ of leprous, all consuming hatred that would in time rot the families irreversibly from within. (298)

And Further :

This habit of hate had accompanied Biju and he found that he possessed an awe of white people, who arguably had done India great harm and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India. (77)

In fact cultural hybridity is not just the fate improved upon a post colonial community. Even the colonizers who are no more the colonizers cannot escape the cultural impact they sustain from the community they colonise and thus

hybridity though of a different kind is also faced by them; To quote from the text of the novel.

Well, I don't like to agree with you, but may be you have a point Noniconceded, "After all, why isn't the writing or where he lives now? Why wasn't he taking up, say, race, riots, in Manchester?" "Also the new England Noni A completely cosmopolitan society. (77)

The Imperial view of hybridity has a negative shade of meaning - the superior silencing the inferior and subduing it for a timid imitation and adoption. But this is not the whole truth. Apart from the colonial and the post colonial hybridization of cultures from across the borders we have the historical phenomenon of the union of races with its lasting cultural positivisim. Moreover one colonizer may also have the past of being colonized by some other colonizers. And again the hybridity of attitude and culture that surges up because of transnational, cross cultularism also displays the positive shades of a happy and healthy cultural hybridity, in fact, we should remember :

"Magpie things gleaned from a romantic version of the West and a fanciful version of the East that contained power enough to maintain dignity across the rotten offences between nations" (14).

Works Cited

Kiran Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss*. India: Penguin Books, 2006. Print.