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[www.thevedicpath.in](http://www.thevedicpath.in)

[thevedicpath@gkv.ac.in](mailto:thevedicpath@gkv.ac.in)

**+91-9412074666**

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## **A Triple Hierarchical Neuro-Literary-Consciousness Paradigm:An Experimental Approach**

**Bani Dayal Dhir<sup>1</sup> & Premlata<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of English Studies (D E I) Dayalbagh  
(Deemed University) Agra

<sup>2</sup>Department of English Studies, (D E I)  
Dayalbagh(Deemed University) Agra

### **Abstract**

If John Keats in the nineteenth century pronounced - 'a thing of beauty is a joy forever' SemirZeki expounds in the twenty first century – 'a thing of beauty is a ploy forever.' The journey from the simple experience of joy to the demystification of the beauteous ploy has been marvellous and insightful. The present paper does not aim to provide a neuronal profile of literature, instead brings together literature, neuroscience and science of consciousness to unveil hitherto unknown diversity in literary experience and its impact on human brain and consciousness.

### **Key words**

Literature, neuroscience, science of consciousness, sublimity, Indian aesthetic tradition

A literary work is, in itself, a 'thing of beauty' whose beauty is constituted by its quality as life itself. Beauty of form is just as important in literature as truth of content. It will not be out

of place to recall Aristotle's view that a literary creation is an 'imaginative recreation of reality'.

In the Indian aesthetic tradition, literature i.e. *Sahitya* denotes union of beautiful signifier and beautiful signified. In a literary creation, both the signifier and the signified are equally noble. According to Jagannath Pandit poetic delight is different from the worldly delight. It ensues from contemplation alone as poetry is a supra sensory thing. Thus, both from the Eastern as well as the Western perspectives, literature is a unique form of contemplation, no less than meditation which possesses the power to yield perfect experience of life in its fullness and vividness.

Centuries ago Longinus theorized 'sublimity' in literature as the echo of the great soul, a lofty mind, grandeur of thought, nobility in diction which corresponds well to the Indian notion of '*Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*'. A work of art elicits an experience 'which is emotionally intense and characterized by an exhilarating feeling of pleasure and at the same time it is loaded with a quality which is hard to describe (Funch, 178). The reading of literature is indeed an action. It is living through metaphors which adds a new dimension to our life in the form of greater sensitivity, refinement of feelings, lofty ideals and nobility of purpose. A non-literary text also produces an impact, but a literary experience goes beyond 'definition, prediction and analysis. It comes to the perceiver not as a verifiable statement, but as an intuitive portrayal. Philosophy and literature both probe into existential and metaphysical questions. But a philosophical text deals with life in an abstract theoretical manner whereas a literary work delineates human experience, doesn't discuss it. Philosophy theorizes life, history reconstructs the past life, literature neither theorizes

in abstraction nor does it replicate life as it is, it interprets life as Matthew Arnold asserted more than a century ago. Literature in general and poetry in particular– ‘forms us, sustains us and delights us.’

For a long time a myriad of literary questions have been dealt in psychoanalytic terms such as Id, Ego and Super - Ego, Regression, Repression, Dreams etc. Psychologists , from time to time, have tried to probe into questions such as - how can literary reading alter our minds as also lives? When we are lost in a book how are we transported to a trance like state? Why don't we disbelieve the improbabilities literature offers us? Despite advances in psychoanalytic studies several questions remained unanswered -What in the brain triggers aesthetic experiences? How does knowledge of the basic brain mechanisms inform our understanding of these experiences? Several such ‘neuro-literary’ questions made literary scholars like us turn to Neuroscience.

Norman Holland (2009) employs the metaphor of ‘Alp of mind’ and states in a lighter vein:

I think of neuroscience and the human sciences as like two very small miners energetically tunnelling in from opposite sides of an immense Alp. Although the neuroscientists on their side of the Alp do not listen much to sounds of digging from the humanists on the other side, some humanists, those concerned with the brain's role in the arts, listen very closely to what the neuroscientists on the other side are saying ( 11).

Paul B. Armstrong (2013) states:

The brain is a peculiar, at times paradoxical, but eminently functional combination of constancy and

flexibility, stability and openness to change, fixed constraints and plasticity, and these contradictory, paradoxical qualities are reflected in the workings of literature and literary interpretations in ways that can (I will argue) mutually illuminate the neurology of the brain and the experience of the art (3).

The magical three pound mass of jelly like fats and tissues made the famous American poetess Emily Dickinson write in amazement:

The Brain - is wider than the sky-  
 For -put them side by side-  
 The one the other will contain  
 With ease -and You- beside-  
 The Brain is deeper than the sea-  
 For- hold them- Blue to Blue-  
 The one the other will absorb-  
 And Sponges- Buckets-do-

### **A Brief Tour of Human Brain**

The Human brain is made up of one hundred billion nerve cells of neurons which form the basic structure and functional units of the nervous system. Each neuron makes something like one thousand to ten thousand contacts with other neurons and these points of contact are called synapses. It is here that exchange of information occurs. The brain has two mirror image halves, called the cerebral hemispheres, the cerebral cortex resembles a walnut sitting on top of a stalk, called the brain stem. Each hemisphere is divided into four lobes: frontal, the parietal lobe, the occipital lobe and the temporal lobe. The occipital lobe is concerned with vision. The temporal lobe is concerned with hearing, emotions and certain aspects of visual perception. The parietal lobes

of the brain- at the sides of the head- are concerned with creating a three dimensional representation. The frontal lobes are concerned with some very enigmatic aspects of the human mind and human behaviour such as moral sense, wisdom, ambition and other activities of the mind. This is perhaps the most mysterious of all. Julie Kane , a poet well versed in neuroscience , draws on experimental literature and shows that mostly literary devices are processed in the right hemisphere.(2004). Of course she clarifies that the right hemisphere can only express its special poetic or literary meanings when it is combined with such left hemisphere abilities as perceiving the words, decoding the grammar, and assigning to a text the plain sense.

### **Neuroaesthetics: Convergence of Neuroscience and Aesthetics**

The study of aesthetic experience and brain mechanism found a new platform with the emergence of a new discipline called Neuroaesthetics which marked the convergence of neuroscience and empirical aesthetics. Neuroaesthetics is both descriptive and experimental, with qualitative observations and quantitative tests of hypotheses, aimed at advancing our understanding of how humans process beauty and art. Neuroaesthetic questions cut across the traditional cognitive neuroscience, such as perception, emotion, semantics, attention, and decision-making. The term aesthetics is broadly used to encompass the perception, production, and response to art, as well as interactions with objects and scenes that evoke an intense feeling, often of pleasure.

Anjan Chaterjee (2010) states:

The term Neuro-aesthetics is used broadly as a domain that has something to do with properties of the brain as it engages in aesthetics ( 53).

According to Semir Zeki (2016):

Neuroaesthetics does not ask the question of what is beauty, but only the brain mechanism that engages with the experience of beauty. (*The Hindu*)

The first step in a neuroaesthetic enquiry, according to Zeki, is ‘to define the function of the brain and that of art. Many functions can be ascribed to both. One overall function, common to both, makes the function of art an extension of the function of the brain: the acquisition of knowledge, an activity in which the brain is ceaselessly engaged (*The Hindu*).’

Jason Holt explains:

The stakes, then, are far greater than what natural curiosity there might be, and should be, in the “mere” neurological profile of art. If psychological/aesthetic accounts are the most promising among competing theories of art, then the contribution of neuroaesthetics will be absolutely crucial in discovering the underlying nature of aesthetic experience and in finally uncovering the nature of art itself(2).

Although many of the claims of Neuroaesthetics are contested, philosophers and art theorists are using insights from Neuroaesthetics to develop novel theories about why art is ubiquitous in every human culture.



### **A Bird's Eye View of the Recent Research Endeavours in Neuroaesthetics**

In an attempt to discover how and where imagination occurs researchers at Dartmouth college performed experiments using functional MRI on 15 subjects. (Alexander Schlegel, Peter J. Kohler et.al. 2013) Unlike other studies that looked at different parts of the brain in isolation, the new Dartmouth study demonstrated how it's not just the "right brain" that is responsible for creative thought. Rather, the human brain is interconnected. They showed 11 different brain areas activated. Researchers at the University of Exeter have concluded after experiments using fMRI that in response to any written material "reading network" of brain regions are activated. Emotionally charged writing activated areas of the brain which are known to respond to music, predominantly on the right side. When participants read one of their favourite passages of poetry, regions of the brain associated with memory were stimulated more strongly than "reading areas." ( Adam Zeman et.al. 2014) Participants received resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging scans on 19 consecutive days. Days after the reading, significant increases in connectivity were centered on hubs in the left angular/supramarginal gyri and right posterior temporal gyri. Long-term changes in connectivity, which persisted for several days after the reading, were observed in bilateral somatosensory cortex. A group of researchers at the University of Liverpool in England led by Noreen O'Sullivan, have provided some brain-based evidence for why reading is apparently of benefit to "mental health and well-being"(2015). Other research initiatives include *Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience* (Starr, 2013), *Aesthetic Responses and Evolved Human Behaviour* (Davies, 2012),

*What love and art reveal about the brain* (Zeki, 2009) and *Where art comes from and why?* (Dutton, 2009).

### **Literature and Human Brain: An Experimental Study Using Magneto encephalography(MEG)**



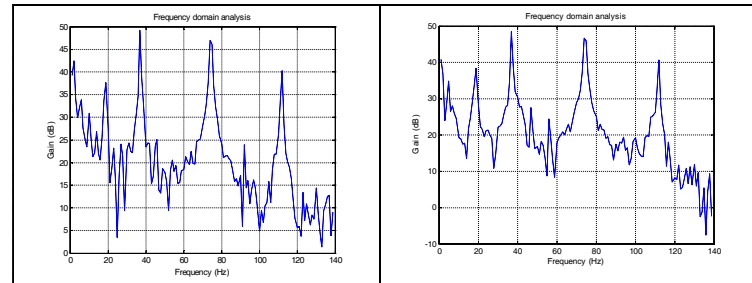
MEG experiment in process in DEI's Magnetically Shielded Room(MSR)

The present experiment in Neuroaesthetics has been conducted using Magnetoencephalography (MEG) installed at the Centre for Consciousness Studies, Dayalbagh Educational Institute (deemed University), Agra. The experimental study is propelled by the belief that literature employs a different kind of visualization from that of music, dance and painting. At the outset, a research question was formulated: “Do all literary compositions stimulate the brain in a similar fashion and perform the ideal function of ‘forming, sustaining and delighting us?’” A hypothetical hierarchical paradigm of literary experience and consciousness levels was designed for experiments , placing ‘literature of senses’ at the lowest rung resulting in material consciousness , ‘literature of intellect’ at the middle rung corresponding to cognitive consciousness, , ‘literature of the spirit’ at the highest resulting in spiritual consciousness.

The experiment was conducted on six participants. Participants were given a variety of texts /excerpts from both the Eastern and Western literatures to test the diversified nature of literary experience and its impact. During the reading activity of the selected texts, magnetic fields generated by the neuronal activity of the brains of all six participants were measured through Magnetoencephalography (MEG).

In the first phase of the experiment, what we termed “literature of senses”, the participants were made to read Nobel Laureate William Butler Yeats’s famous poem “Leda and the Swan” based on the Greek myth of how the beautiful girl Leda was robbed off her chastity by Zeus in the form of a Swan. The measured frequency recorded during the reading activity is shown below in the graph:

**Fourier Plot for ‘Literature of Senses’**

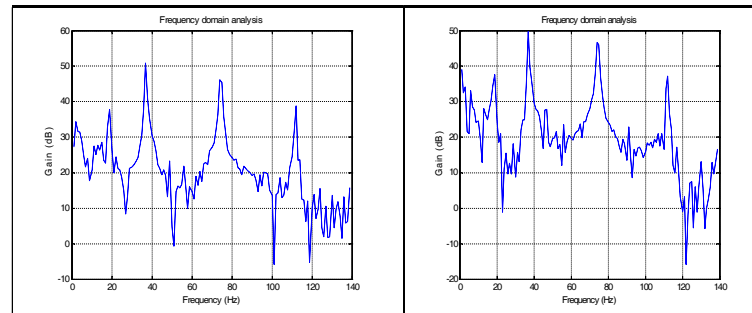


**Literature of the Senses : Pronounced frequencies during the reading of Yeats’s Poem**

	3Hz	45Hz	45Hz	76Hz	108 Hz	126 Hz	Energy
Average gain in decibels	42.2891	30.1213	25.258	46.1232	16.12	5.896	9.8431

In the second phase of the experiment, what we termed “literature of the intellect”, they were made to read the British political thinker and writer Edmund Burke’s famous prose / speeches. As the participants were reading his information packed prose passages, the frequency level was measured which is given below :

**Fourier Plot for ‘Literature of Senses’**

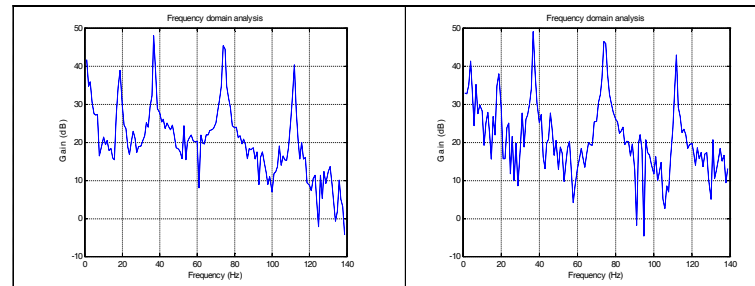


**Literature of the Senses : Pronounced frequencies during the reading of Yeats’s Poem**

	3Hz	45Hz	45Hz	76Hz	108Hz	126Hz	Energy
Average gain in decibels	33.4371	28.7583	26.8362	46.1589	22.1216	7.0122	9.8431

In the third phase of the experiment, what we here term “Literature of the Spirit” they read the mystic and devotional verses of Eastern Bhakti Poets and Radhasoami Saints. The frequency levels are shown in the graph.

**Fourier Plot for Literature of the Spirit**



**Literature of the Spirit: Pronounced frequencies during the reading of mystic verses**

	3 Hz	4.5 Hz	45 Hz	76 Hz	108 Hz	126 Hz	Energ
Average gain in decibels	41.8973	34.8822	27.6925	47.2912	42.1679	18.7288	9.8431

**Conclusion**

**Triple Hierarchical Neuro-Literary-Consciousness Paradigm: Eastern Saints' Perspective**

<b>Type of Literature Levels</b>	<b>Obtained Frequency</b>	<b>Level of Consciousness</b>
Literature of the Senses	4 Hz to 76 Hz	Material Consciousness
Literature of the Intellect	76 Hz to 90 Hz	Cognitive Consciousness
Literature of the Spirit	76 Hz to 108 Hz	Spiritual Consciousness

The frequency levels between 4 Hz to 76 Hz with associated functions of sensations, emotions, concentration

were relatively more prominent during the reading activity in the first phase i.e. 'literature of senses'. These literary works abound in vivid descriptions but relatively lack intellectual and spiritual depth. Hence give rise to the lowest level of consciousness -physical or material consciousness.

The frequency levels between 76 Hz to 90 Hz associated with functions of cognition, unifying thought processes, different perceptions during the reading activity in the second phase i.e. 'literature of the intellect' were relatively more prominent which correspond to cognitive consciousness.

During the reading activity of the mystic poems and devotional lyrics of the Eastern Saints, the frequency levels between 76 Hz to 108 Hz with the associated functions of self-awareness, higher levels of insight and information relatively became more prominent along with other lower frequencies. The resulting frequencies validated the hypothesis formulated in the beginning of the experiment that the reading of devotional or mystic literary discourses results in experiencing a heightened level of consciousness which in the Eastern idiom is termed 'spiritual consciousness.'

The research hypothesis was formulated keeping in view the impact of various literary texts on the three basic elements of the human system- body, mind and spirit. From the Eastern perspective, the expression 'body' designates the physical, 'mind' denotes intellectual and 'spirit' stands for the spiritual. Within the Eastern philosophical framework, the spirit entity occupies the supreme importance and body i.e. the physical the lowest. Though physical is not negated completely, it's the immortal spirit which is considered the most vital. Eastern Radhasoami Philosophy describes the three levels of consciousness as follows:

The triad of consciousness of the grand macro/micro cosmology ranges from the ephemeral physical / material reality of science of outer experience at the tertiary level, through the semi-abstract cognitive science of outer- inner experience at the secondary level, to the eternal abstract spiritual science of ultimate inner experience at the primary level. (Satsangi,8)

The three levels of consciousness are further elucidated:

We can gain consciousness at multiple levels, i.e. we can gain various shades of truth. All perceptions are reality, however, there are various levels of reality. Relativity Theory of Einstein refers to this relative nature of reality...we have the physical reality of perception of the outer world as an experience, then we have the cognitive reality of perception by the mind which is having communion both with the outer world as well as the inner world being the middle level mediator, and then finally we have the most abstract entity of spirit forces which only communicate with the mind directly , not with the body.( Satsangi,11)

The present experimental study didn't aim to identify the stimulated parts of brain during diverse literary readings, rather the endeavour was to examine the impact of literary reading on the brain and further in heightening the consciousness level.

The following observation of Benjamin Funch (2013) resonates what we have tried to demonstrate through the experimental study:

An aesthetic experience transcends the ordinary experience of everyday life...The presence of the spiritual self during an aesthetic experience is the optimal experience of one's own identity (180).

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup>The authors are extremely grateful to Rev. Prof. P.S. Satsangi, Chairman Advisory Committee on Education, Dayalbagh Educational Institutions for His guidance in conceptualizing and executing the experiments.

<sup>2</sup>Magnetoencephalography (MEG) is a non-invasive technique for investigating human brain activity. It allows the measurement of ongoing brain activity on a millisecond-by-millisecond basis, and it shows where in the brain activity is produced. MEG has advantages over both fMRI and EEG. The technologies complement each other, but only MEG provides timing as well as spatial information about brain activity. fMRI signals reflect brain activity indirectly, MEG signals are obtained directly from neuronal electrical activity.

<sup>3</sup>The preliminary results of the above experiments in Neuroaesthetics were presented at Annual Conference “The Science of Consciousness” organized by The Centre for Consciousness Studies, University of Arizona, USA in April 2016.

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## **Incorporating the Management Practices in Business Culture : A Study from the Perspective of Chanakya Neeti.**

### **Mitashree Tripathy**

Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities,  
Orissa Engineering College, Odisha, India,  
email: *mitashreetripathy84@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

Extensive competition around the world especially in job sectors has made achieving goals and aims too difficult. Arranging, assembling and organising resources are still way manageable but directing the same to employees from varied cultures and backgrounds is not an easy task. Effective management practices include and define clear objectives to the employees so as to create and conserve time, money and efforts for a successful and mutual benefit of both employees and the organisation. At this expository point, it is thereby essential that employees too must adhere to healthy concepts and skills at work places to get rid of any negative circumstances and acquire success. This paper emphasizes on management principles at workplaces with reference to the ‘Chanakya Neeti’, that comprises a series of philosophies or lessons which have been descended, transmitted and expressed in every age and in every field of management and which add great value to management practices even today.

**Key words**

Management, Leadership, Business Culture, People Skills, Chanakya Neeti

**The Concept of Management**

Management is a skill and an ability to handle and administer number of people. Both people and resource management involve a thorough act of responsibility. It is an undeniable fact that when a group of people work under the same roof, managing and controlling them is not a cake walk rather a very complicated task. At one hand it is required that the efforts and skill sets of each and every person is utilised towards achieving one common goal and at the other hand it is also essential that coordination among all the employees of the organisation properly and very decisively organised for a successful running of the organisation. In most of the platforms management and leadership qualities are considered similar however Martin discusses “Management represents a formal role within an organisation. In that sense it is a job which contains particular responsibilities for an area of organisational activity and probably a number of subordinate employees. Leadership tends to be regarded as a set of personal characteristics that reflect the ability to get other people characteristics that reflect the ability to get other people to follow” (Martin 375).

Rudani in his book *Management and Organisational Behaviour* classifies management into five different functions after contrasting the functions with other writers. He summarizes that “management consists of five functions or steps, such as planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling” (Rudani 18). The book *Supervision: Concepts and Practices of Management* define management as “the process of getting things accomplished with and through

people by guiding and motivating their efforts towards common objectives” (Leonard, Trusty and Hilgert 48). Guidance, motivation and other aspects of managerial skills enable the administrators and managers to deliver high class performances. Successful managers today practice people skills while still being tactful.

People skills enable them to communicate effectively, plan and prioritize capably, and coordinate and organise very decisively. Efficient managers lead and influence large number of people under them, delegate and negotiate carefully and also give constructive performance feedback. Interestingly, the set of skills which are today considered as an essential strategy of management have been written and put into practice centuries ago. Much of the complexities of work place and management practices today are solved and resolved with the incorporation of Chanakya’s management lessons in business management. Garde in his book *Chanakya on Management* states “The Chanakya Philosophies have the unique distinction of being the principles which have been demonstrated to have been used successfully in practice to achieve good results on a sustainable basis” (Garde 3). Though the volume of the ‘philosophies’ of Chanakya are large in number this paper emphasizes on three of the most crucial ‘Neeti’ which managers must integrate in their management strategies and techniques in order to be efficient enough to run the organisation.

Mishra in his book *Better Management and Effective Leadership through the Indian Scriptures* appreciates the vision of Indian writers and authors in ancient times and how their works have established the benchmark of management and leadership. He supposes “Managers spend more time in communicating than in any other activity. They have to ensure that the messages pass on without distortion or misunder-

standing. Their emphasis should be on making their communication short and precise, yet clear, focused and to-the-point” (Mishra 114).

This paper deals with some of the important management lessons as prescribed by Chanakya which when incorporated in business management renders happiness, harmony and are result driven. Some of the ‘Neeti’ are collected in the book *Chanakya on Management* originally written in Sanskrit and translated into English by Ashok R Garde.

### **Incorporating Chanakya Neeti into Management Practices**

Today the theories and concepts of management are well delivered through the use of power point slides. Interestingly, almost all the principles of management were unambiguously expressed by Chanakya in his much followed works. Chanakya also known as Kautilya was one of the rarest of the rare multitalented administrator, economist and management Guru who had achieved expertise in various genres of life like “management, leadership, risk assessment, financial planning, governance, law, accounting system and many others. The six hundred philosophies of Kautilya’s Arthashastra has been classified in 15 books, 50 chapters and 180 topics by Chanakya himself” (<http://moneyexcel.com/9030/chanakya-niti-financial-success>). Few of his teachings are as under.

#### **1.Sukhasya Moolam Dharmah (Asti)**

It says “Basis of happiness is ethics” (Garde 5). Ethics is the study of code of conduct that deals or governs our actions towards doing things. Ethics deal with our decisions to do something. They guide us and make us able to do things which

are right or wrong, good or bad. The study of ethics put exclusive focus on our endeavour to being a human pr excellence. Subramaniam in his book *Professional Ethics* believes that much of the ethical principles like honesty, gratitude, forgiveness and many more are a part of ancient Indian scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads and it is from there that our forefathers have learnt and inculcated ethics thereby transmitting the same to us.

While the current business scenario has become globally intriguing and intensifying, the rapid changes in technology, outsourcing and business as a whole have exempted it from using ethical means to achieve success. Today, in many workplaces the existence of ethics, values and morals have gone missing. It is an undeniable fact that much of an individual's life span is spent at work place. A work place becomes an individual's focal point of survival and livelihood. But even though people believe that success in life comes through efforts at times they fail to understand that success comes only to those who are virtuous in imparting their efforts not only in their workplaces but also in every aspect of their lives. Most of the times people get easily motivated to acquire the unethical or disruptive means to success. The path to vices like dishonesty, corruption, shortcuts may result in victory and the business may prosper but with every passing moment they fade away because they are temporary. After all the sole essence of existence of human being is nothing but the character. It plays an important role in being successful. An ethical attitude towards work, colleagues and organisation is defined to be the secret ingredient of a beautiful work culture. Maintaining a high set of ethics in business is benevolent not only to the leaders or subordinates but also to the organisation as a whole. "In business, this is critical, because how people see you and your

company is the basis of building trust. If you're taking unethical actions, you lose credibility, and your business will suffer" (<https://blog.udemy.com/business-ethics-examples>). Researches claim that there are many companies around the world do not practice or incorporate ethical or moral principles in their work. However, earning profit remains their ultimate aim no matter in whichever way that is procured. Examples of such companies are many as they understand that morality or values have no place in their company's profile but their actions must only earn them gross profit. "(...) many businesses act unethically not because of a desire to do evil, but simply because they want to make a profit and therefore disregard some of the consequences of their actions."(George 3). Richard George in his book *Business Ethics* manifests, "(...) business and people in business are not explicitly concerned with ethics. They are not unethical or immoral; rather, they are amoral insofar as they feel that ethical considerations are inappropriate in business" (3). In further section George writes about the decline and downfall of the organisations which never fore mostly centralized work ethics and which land up in making newspaper headlines as "accounts of executive fraud and malfeasance, bribery, misrepresentation, white-collar crime, kickbacks, unsafe products and insider manipulation of markets" (3). To suffice this point he exemplifies Enron Arthur Anderson and WorldCom who accessed every unethical means in their business and have laid low environments and towns, which did everything but considered ethics like corporate social responsibilities do exist.

With immeasurable business policies and only few companies practicing ethical principles, each day it becomes arduous for the leaders of the companies worldwide to encourage their employees to be ethical and earn profit for

their organisation. As it is the vision, mission and purpose of the company that states and establishes the definition and identity of the company, it is required that the leaders and the managers take the charge of running a sustainable business with high ethical principles. Any authentically powerful and reliable leaders must first acknowledge their employees about the commitment towards ethical guidelines and clearly communicate in a motivational approach to make the vision of the company a reality. The employees at the same time are required to champion the resolute needs of core ethical virtues and a sense of purpose which is the basic foundation of the company. As the employees get influenced and inspired by their virtuous leaders, a mutual agreement and commitment about the shared virtues flourishes throughout the organisation.

## **2.Na Ekam Chakram Bhramayati**

The Neeti describes “one wheel cannot make a cart roll” (Garde 13). The saying acknowledges that it is impossible to run an organisation autonomously. For a successful running of an organisation working in teams is very important. A team consists of members of varied skill sets who work together for a common goal and that assists in achieving prosperity and success. However it is essential to know the importance of working in a team. West in his book *Effective Teamwork: Practical Lessons from Organizational Research* delivers “the only point of having a team is to get a job done, a set of objectives met” (West 290) and where it is also crucial to meet specifications like team task failing which the organisational structure and its functions gets disorderly and manipulative. Researchers, authors and management experts define team as a group of employees with clear and classified goals governed by an authority. It is generally experienced that a proper formation of team i.e. including people of



appropriate skills sets with differing values and significances generate implausible outcomes. Again managing the perfectly formed team can also assist in achieving more complex goals. Conversely, building an effective and result driven team is not an easy task, it requires continuous attempts and commitment.

Today teamwork is considered as the sole essence of a successful organisation. However it is important to understand that the behaviour and performance of the team members determine the overall effectiveness of the team. Mullins his book *Management and Organisational Behaviour* asserts that “Harmonious working relationships and good teamwork help make for a high level of staff morale and work performance” (Mullins 521). Managers are required to inculcate the very fact in their mind that a team must be developed and encouraged through an appropriate process of decision making. Taking decision to set up a team is a complex task because putting the right individual recognising the ability and personality with the right mind set of people can sometimes be arduous. Not only this building up a team and assigning them duties and responsibilities is yet another important job. A thorough planning of important documents and development of the scheduled plan of action including a proper review and follow up is always essential to manage a team. So also in a team the members must adhere to be more accountable about individual goals and objectives and always ready to confront and communicate with apt language and communication skills, share information and support other members and believe in responding and constructive feedbacks, paying gratitude and accepting that every member of the team is as important as the team itself. When a group of people work together for a common goal, it is obvious that the question of trust issue is most likely to arise. Ego

clashes, differences in opinions, emotional outburst and other forms of conflicts are some of the most common forms of misalignment in a team. It is the responsibility of the manager to incorporate virtues of trust, cooperation and support among the members. Ghosh believes that “when there is a high level of trust within a team, people will feel that they are working in a supportive environment, which enhances mutual learning and the achievement of team goals and objectives” (Ghosh 122).

Today a large number of companies believe working in a team based structure. Team based organisational structure fulfils the agenda of team building at every level of an organisation. This structure induces more confidence in each and every member as they understand that they are an important part of the organisation and that their contribution and participation in decision making process or any other important issues is redefined and considered worthy. Achieving goals becomes more facile. Problem solving, conflict resolution and management become not so difficult to carry out. This leads to better customer satisfaction and brings effectiveness towards any creation or innovation and even changes introduced within the team or organisation is clearly sorted and accepted.

***3. Gunavadagunavadwa Kurwata Karyamadou.  
Parinatirwadharya Yatnatat Panditen  
Atirbhasakritanaam Karmanamavipatte.  
Bharwati Hridayadahi Shalyatulyo Vipaakaha.***

Thus implies “Before taking any action, whether virtuous or otherwise, the wise must make efforts to anticipate its consequences. Those who act in great haste beget a heart turning consequence like an arrow in the body after the result of action turn out to be adverse.” (Garde 19). Haste makes

waste and it goes so well matching to every aspect of life especially in business scenario. Likewise making haste in decision making can result in adverse effects. Decision making is an essential process in any business organisation and it is undoubtedly a process made by leaders and managers with wide range of knowledge, experience and skill sets to deliver high class performances. Any doubt or ambiguity in the minds of the managers can create unresolved matters and unsettling situations. Diwan in his book *Management Principles and Practices* defines it “as a process of selecting of a one best alternative for doing a work. Thus it is a particular course of action chosen by a decision-maker as the most effective alternative for achieving his goals” (Diwan 252). Hence, decision making is an activity dealing with the intellect or thinking process and which requires lot of planning. It must be kept in mind that any decision made must be effectual and result oriented and for better results must be taken at the right time. Although decision making requires performing necessary action but researchers believe for productive and influential organisational function timing is a very significant factor. Many authors and researchers believe that managers must not take lot of time and involve in slow decision making as that process can never be right and are ineffectual because the managers tend to get biased and arrive at failed outcomes. Many studies still believe that managers must incorporate faster ways and act rapidly and decisions must be taken right at the moment so as to save time and efforts of the companies. However Finkestein et al., study “it should be clear that if you don’t have appropriate relevant experience, you are highly likely to use some less relevant experience to help you think through an important uncertainty that must be resolved to make the decision. And when you do so, there is a significant probability that you will be misled by these less relevant experiences. By identifying these experiences and

particularly the ones that might influence your choice, you can identify the particular experiences that are the most worrying red flags. You can then turn your attention to strengthening the decision process in a way that will counterbalance this potentially distorting influence” (Finkelstein, Whitehead, & Campbell 86-87). When decisions are taken slowly they are often accompanied with past experiences. This process assists in doing a comparative analysis of the results driven then and at present. The careful and meticulous examination impels relevance to the experience drawn and hence encourages taking slow and better decisions in the future. Daniel Kahneman the writer of *Thinking , Fast and Slow* asserts that slow decision making are more “effortful, infrequent, logical, calculating and conscious”(Tropman 159). This excerpt has been claimed by Tropman in his book *Effective Meetings*. Hence, no studies state whether decisions must be taken slow or fast. It depends on varying contexts and interpretations. However, decisions must be taken at the right time and must always be guided by the consequences. The managers ought to think and analyze the consequences of the decisions and then take positive steps ahead.

### **Conclusion**

This paper studied the selected ‘neetis’ or philosophies as prescribed by Chanakya. In ancient times the philosophies assisted in forming and managing government. The philosophies proved very beneficial in running a successful regime. Today, however the same philosophies determine the concept of management as practiced by the managers in business scenario. Management practices which include many responsibilities like team work, ethical guidelines and effective decision making outline a broader spectrum of present business culture. At present when the effect of

globalization is unconvincing and business cultures are rapidly evolving, it is important to extract the substantial contexts from ancient preaching and address the contributions to the dynamic components of the workplaces.

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## **The Nativization of Macaulayan Language: Raja Rao's *Kanthapura***

**Saurabh Kumar Singh**

Dept. of English, Vasanta College for Women, BHU, Varanasi,  
email:visitdrsaurabh@gmail.co

### **Abstract**

The participation of the intelligentsia and elite class in various sectors like law, trade, teaching and administration of colonial state had developed into curious yet scandalous relationship towards English language and other various regional languages. English has emerged as a site of power structure which implies that the literature written in English assumes a greater identity than those written in regional languages. But, at the same time, regional languages could not be ignored or neglected altogether because of its inevitable necessity to connect one with past as well as bringing about the concept of integral India. The present papers explores how the experimental use of English language can help retain the cultural identity which has seriously been dented by the same

### **Key words**

Language, intelligentsia, colonial state, nativization, cultural identity

During the 1950s and 60s, in literary world, the difference between various indigenous languages and English language was termed as a choice between decolonization and

recoloni-zation, rootedness and rootlessness, integrity and corruption, and wholeness and fragmentation. It has also been termed as a quarrel between indigenous vs alien, authentic vs fake, westernized vs 'Indian', and even tradition vs modernity. The Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi has expressed his serious concern over the obsession with English language in his classic *Hind Swaraj*. In his *Hind Swaraj* he declares, "To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them. The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us" (103). He further added, "It is we, the English-knowing men, that have enslaved India. The curse of the nation will rest not upon the English but upon us" (104). The noted novelist Shashi Deshpande and noted poet Meena Alexander too have expressed their concern over this problem. As Shashi Deshpande observes:

One of the problems I've had to face as a writer is the isolation one works in when one writes in English in India% an isolation that is emphasized when one is a woman... For me the problems amounted to this: there was nothing, nobody I could model myself on. I could only tell myself, I don't want to write like this, not like this, not like this. (229)

Somewhat the same dilemma is experienced by Meena Alexander when she writes in English language: "English had alienated me from what I was born to; it was also the language of intimacy and bore the charged power of writing" (116).

The term nativization of a language can be defined as the rendering of an alien language in one's own linguistic and socio-cultural framework. Theoretically the term nativization has been described variously by different thinkers. It can be described as 'acculturization', or as 'indigenization' or even 'hybridization' of a language in an altogether alien or non native socio cultural context. It can

also be described as a kind of deviation or divergence of a language or varieties of language respectively from a parent source. In the specific context of English, the term may refer to the changes and modifications which English has undergone due to its contact with other languages in diverse socio-cultural and geographical setting in the peripheral circle of English. This is done by a continuous process of coining and accumulation of new words and meanings to suit the native social and cultural requirements. This process is also known as language change in Linguistics. In this connection English is the classic example of language change in both aspects: diachronic and synchronic. English has been used in different environments different from its origin. It has been adjusting itself while changing its texture according to new socio-cultural dimensions. The process of nativization has definitely expanded the horizon of English as a language. In India too English has gone through different phases of moulding and even remoulding and refashioning. This process of rendering of English language into typical Indian context entails the passing of English through the phases of imitation, adaptation and innovation. English happily solemnized the marriage i. e. polygamy with other Indian languages which resulted in a new and distinct variety of *englishes*.

If we make an attempt to understand the role of English or nativized englishes in post-colonial India, we can safely talk about two distinct purposes: first, language of imperialism whereby the white masters rather Macaulays sought to colonize India and second, language as resistance whereby the natives responded or fought or wrote back to the whites. As an instrument of resistance English language could then be seen not merely as a means to engage in struggle, but as a principal site of the struggle. This struggle should be taken as cultural and political project to rethink the meanings of English in altered situations. The practice of famous phrase



‘writing back’ in English language necessarily involves the issue of powerful resistance against colonial and imperial powers by using the language rather reusing to shape new realities as witnessed and experienced not only by the Indian English novelists but also by several non native language communities. This does not mean only waging a war against Imperialist for freedom but it means the involvement into a kind of cultural battles and counter discursive positions, and thus involving into broader question of cultural politics.

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in their celebrated text *The Empire Writes Back* talk about a difficult situation in postcolonial writing where:

... many writers were forced into the search for an alternative authenticity which seemed to be escaping them, since the concept of authenticity itself was endorsed by a centre to which they did not belong and yet was continually contradicted by everyday experience of marginality. The eventual consequence of this experience was that notions of centrality and the ‘authentic’ was themselves necessarily questioned, challenged, and finally abrogated. (1989 40)

Tiffin in one of her writings *Commonwealth Literature: Comparison and Judgment* talks about two stages in the postcolonial nativization process: “abrogation”, a denial and refusal of the colonial and metropolitan categories, its standard, and of normative or “correct” usage, its claim to fixed meanings inscribed in words; and “appropriation”, whereby the language is seized and replaced in a specific cultural location. Postcolonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of English by using language to signify the difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood (1983: 19-35). By inscribing meaning, writing releases it to a “dense proliferation” of possibilities, and the “myth of centrality” embodied in the concept of a standard

language is forever overturned. It is at this moment that “English becomes english” (ibid). In a nutshell it can be argued that like so called standard English even Indian English/ englishes are linguistically well defined and systematic and most importantly culturally autonomous.

Long back ago before the emergence of postcolonial scenario in colonial era noted novelist Raja Rao has talked about the process of nativization of English language extensively. Already we have defined the term nativization of a language as re-defining or assimilating the language in one’s own linguistic and cultural framework. It is a process of invention thus accumulation of new words and meanings to meet the social and cultural necessities. In this connection it would be interesting to see how Raja Rao anxious about the use of ‘alien language’, brings about a transformation in the use of same, while incorporating native flavour and colour, in his classic text *Kanthapura*. Raja Rao, one of the first generation of Indian novelists in English, expressed the linguistic and narrative anxiety of the postcolonial writer while emphasizing the nativization of English and its new identities in the foreword of the novel:

The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word ‘alien’, yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make up. We are all [emphasis added] instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English.  
(5)

Rao’s anxiety reflects the worries and concerns of non native writer writing in an ‘alien’ language. The risk is eluded

by assuming the target readership to be bilingual, speaking both English and any of the Indian languages. In this connection a noted thinker Rumina Sethi rightly observes:

Rao perhaps refers to Kannada, the language spoken in Karnataka, and there could be two reasons for that: the language and speech mannerisms used in the novel are close to those of Kannada, and Rao is, himself, a native speaker of the language. But in not specifying the exact location of the spoken language, the reader is at liberty to infer that the foreword is, perhaps, indicative of his or her own particular language, which is presumed to be shared by the author owing to the subtle construction of community suggested by first person plurals. The concealed information not only removes the difficulty of employing any single language in a multilingual country, it also legitimizes the use of English. This enables Rao to evoke a response from all readers so long as they speak and read English and one Indian language. By establishing English as the lingua franca, he can go on to write an Indian novel in English with convenience. (*Myths of the Nation* 41)

Further Raja Rao adds:

We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indian. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.(5)

The terms like acculturation, hybridization and indigenization which have been the part and parcel of process of nativization is clearly reflected here. Here he talks about the urgent need to construct new native idioms and techniques to suit the occasion. He emphasizes the utmost importance

of mixing of foreign into indigenous to forge a new multilingualism while giving more importance to local. Intellect and emotion must come to create a new whole. He is of the opinion that English can be indigenized if it is dressed up in native's rich mythologies.

Raja Rao does not stop here. He further talks about the stylistic elements in the process of nativization. In this connection he emphasizes the importance of stylistic transcreation, "After language the next problem is that of style. The tempo of Indian life must be infused into our English expression, even as the tempo of American or Irish life has gone in to the making of theirs" (6). This insistence on tempo of Indian life might refer to the oral tradition of Indian ethos. This orality must be incorporated even in a novel especially in the narration of long tales. This provides Raja Rao a vantage point to gradually shift from hybrid form of Indo-English speech to a more Indianized perspective. This can be done by the incorporation of certain cultural traditions in the narration, amalgamation of cultural strategies which are almost absent in the alien language's narrative technique. He talks about the unique feature of typical Indian storytelling which does not conform to punctuation strictly. He remarks:

And our paths are paths interminable. The *Mahabharata* has 214,778 verses and the *Ramayana* 48,000. *Puranas* there are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and 'ons' to bother us – we tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move to another thought. This was and still is the ordinary style of our story telling. (6)

In the manner of Raja Rao Chinua Achebe, a renowned African novelist of the modern times, in a speech entitled "The African Writer and the English Language" addresses this issue in the manner of Raja Rao. He says:

Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there's no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it... I felt that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new surroundings. (as quoted in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 2007 7- 8)

Gabriel Okara too intensively talks about injecting indigenous elements in the form of proverbs, folklores and peculiarities of indigenous speech, in his case Senghorian 'black blood' into the rusty joints of foreign language. He remarks:

As a writer who believes in the utilization of African ideas, African philosophy and African folklore and imagery to the fullest extent possible, I am of the opinion the only way to use them effectively is to translate them almost literally from the African language native to the writer into whatever European language he is using as medium of expression. I have endeavoured in my words to keep as close as possible to the vernacular expressions. For, from a word, a group of words, a sentence and even a name in any African language, one can glean the social norms, attitudes and values of a people.

In order to capture the vivid images of African speech, I had to eschew the habit of expressing my thoughts first in English. It was difficult at first, but I had to learn. I had to study each Ijaw expression I used and to discover the probable situation in which it was used in order to bring out the nearest meaning in English. I found it fascinating exercise. (ibid )

The writer further explains his viewpoints and adds:

Some may regard this way of writing English as a desecration of the language. This is of course not true. Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language. There are African, West Indian, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add life and vigour to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures. Why shouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our own way. (ibid 9)

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is a classic example of a nativization of English language. Here the novelist self consciously uses an alien language for storytelling. This may be rightly called as intuitive translation. The novel has a female narrator Achakka, the grandmother. She beautifully uses colorful figures of speech to bring in the Indian aroma and flavour to an alien language:

He has refused bride after bride, some beautiful as new opened guavas, and other tender as April mangoes (18)

Kanakapala knew the true from the false, as the rat knows the grain from the husk (20).

They looked hale and strong as exhibition bulls (21).

Oh! To have had father with a heart pure as a morning lotus (19).

According to Sethi the narrator performs the function of mnemonic acculturation for the benefit of an audience who have lost the world of primitive cultures (45). To Sethi Rao brings about a radical change in the structure of sentences to reproduce the effect of spoken Kannada language. He corrupts the sentences by reversing the word order so that verb precedes the subject and the abandoning of the verb in

two of the clauses suggest a sentence structure which is typical to Kannada land (45-6). Let us look at these examples:

High on the ghats is it, high up the steep mountains that face the cool Arabian seas, up the Malabar coast is it, up Mngalore and Puttur and many a centre of cardamom and coffee, rice and sugarcane (7)

Kenchamma is our goddess Great and bounteous she is (8).

Rao also adheres to the employment of images and vocabulary that connote culture specific norms like beliefs, greetings, salutations, speech mannerisms, abuse, name tags, blessing and so on so forth. For example: 'sparrow voice' (44) referring to strong personality, 'wooden tongue' (49) referring to stopping people from gossiping, 'the leaf is laid' (64) means food is served, 'stomach that has borne eight children' (164) means worldly wise person, 'coconut and beetle leaf good bye' (190) referring to fare well. 'Sons of concubines' (24), 'set fire to their dhoti and sari' (11), 'eat blood and mud' (119). 'limbs get paralysed' (103-4) are the classic examples of nativized forms of slangs, abuses, and curses.

Raja Rao beautifully infuses the culture specific terminologies to bring about local feeling. This local touch, evidently, is very difficult to understand by outsiders to that culture. Though to make the difficulty easier he also provides English translation yet it poses tremendous problem to Western reader to decipher the meaning. This is consciously done to bring about the sense of emotional attachment to the native readers irrespective of plurality of language. For instance:

Purnayya has a grown up daughter, who will *'come home soon'* (37).

(A girl's attainment of puberty.)

The youngest is always *the holy bull*, they say don't they (51)?

(Often after a rich man dies, a bull, bearing his name, is let loose in the village. It moves around freely and without fear, and is fed by everyone.)

I shall offer them a jolly good blessing-ceremony in the choicest of words(56).

(The meaning here is ironic and has to do with raking mischief.)

He walked out to preach the 'Don't-touch-the-Government-campaign' (99).

(The meaning here is to boycott the government with allusion to caste defilement, an expression that Gandhi himself would not have approved of.)

This is all *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; such things never happen in our times (172).

(In spite of being sacred to the Hindus, the two epics also imply endless and ideal narration since they are full of fantastic stories.)

And the classic one;

Oh, no more of this *Panchayat* – we ask you again, disperse, and do not force us to fire! (240)

( A 'panchayat' is the self-governing body of the village. In the context of the novel, it indicates a needless and purposeless argument. This is an ironic comment and can be understood only by those familiar with the term.)

The novelist also uses literal translation of Kannada into English. These kinds of sentences can be understood on their own. For example:



He goes from village to village to slay the *serpent of the foreign rule* (22).

So you are a traitor to your *salt-givers* (25).

Otherwise brahminism is *as good as kitchen ashes* (45).

I am o *butcher's* son to hurt you (45).

Our Rangamma is no *village kid* (46).

Rangamma stood by the door, helpless as a calf (59).

O Maharaja we are *the lickers of your feet*. (70).

Raja Rao also uses Kannada equivalent to English idioms or proverbs. Rao changes the English instances with Indian to serve the purpose. While deviating from the original he doesn't go too far but roams on the boundaries:

Nobody who has eyes to see and ears to hear will believe in such a crow and sparrow story (27).

Here the English one is 'cock and bull story.' But Rao replace it with 'crow and sparrow' as this is in the oral tradition in Kannada.

Every squirrel has his day (112). In English it is 'dog'.

The Swami is worried over the pariah movement, and he wants to *crush it in its seed*, before its cactus roots have spread far and wide (44). Here the English substitute is well known 'nipped in the bud.' The nativized one is more original and culturally specific expression.

'Pin drop' silence is substituted by 'moving ant' (110).

A noted critic Jasbir Jain expresses her valuable opinion about Indian writing in English in one of her articles titled *The Plural Tradition: Indian English Fiction*. Her scholarly observations on the state of Indian English Writing do help a lot in uncovering and understanding the term Indianness in details. She ruminates:

Writing in the late fifties K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar referred to Indian writing as 'Janus-faced', others described it as hybrid, and still others viewed it in terms of the East-West encounter. Apparently on the face of it, it relates to two traditions, one on the basis of language, the other on the basis of culture. Hence, it has passed through several phases and different descriptions - Anglo- Indian, Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian English, Indian Fiction written in English - descriptions which indicate the shifts in emphasis. Today it has arrived at a point where the differences between language and culture have been bridged and rendered irrelevant. Indian writing in English constitutes a pluralistic world wherein, the colonial past, the Indian heritage, the indigenous forms, the inherited and internalized cultural values, the oral tradition, the diasporic presence abroad, the parallels with and differences from language literatures, -all theses jostle with each other. Partly it is representative of a multi-cultural situation; partly Indians are no longer apologetic, on the defensive or self conscious in their use of English.' (*Singh and Sheel* 1997:55)

Conspicuously the Indianness in writings in English lies in its fresh and incessant encountering with rich pre-colonial and colonial past. The very sense of India's rich cultural past and traditional heritage will give rise to the sense of Indianness. Thus must have been the conviction of Raja Rao behind his use of nativized form of an alien language. His visit to France at early age exposed him to European arts and literary style. This must have inspired him to display his love for his motherland. Though he did not make India his home for ever, he came to India occasionally, for short periods of time, but each time he made a meaningful encounter with tradition by vitalizing his intimate contacts

with India and its rich r traditional values. To make it more meaningful he often visited to Indian thinkers like Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Narayana Maharaj, Premayatana ashram of Pandit Taranath, and the asram of Mahatma Gandhi. Partha Chaterjee observes that Raja Rao's experiment with English can be seen as the expression of 'inner domain of cultural identity' (*The Nation* 7). To sum up, in the words of Rumina Sethi, we can say that his use of traditional concept of storytelling for the depiction of real events may then call for an evaluation within a social reality substantially different from the Western conventions of realism. His adoption and adept adaptation of episodes from *epics* and *puranas* allows him to glorify the eternal and timeless pre-British past which in the pre-independence India happened to be the cultural and literary inheritance largely employed by the intelligentsia to increase the value of present generation (71).

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**Breaking The Silence: A New-Historical  
Study of Gender and Partition in  
Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning***

**Basundhara Chakraborty**

Research Scholar, School of Women's Studies

Jadavpur University

email: basundhara.chakraborty@ yahoo.com

**Abstract**

The paper focuses on Jyotirmoyee Devi's celebrated partition narrative *The River Churning* to initiate a new-historical study of partition from the perspective of gender. The questions addressed in this paper are: (a) how by placing the subjective experiences of the doubly marginalized figure of the refugee woman at the center of the narrative, Jyotirmoyee Devi subverted the dominant patriarchal narrative of female chastity and criticized the hypocritical nature of nationalist patriarchy that do not recognize sexually violated women as subjective agents; (b) how she subverted the myth of purity associated with women's body and expose the politics of silence subversively associated with it; (c) And how she presented a new-historical reading of the episode of partition and rewrite the history of 'modern' 'secular' India that maintain a queer silence over the woman episode through the mythic references of gendered violence. The critical approach of the study combines textual analysis, socio-historical reading and feminist theory.

**Key words**

Partition, gender perspective, refugee woman, nationalist patriarchy, purity, new-historical reading.

What is partition? An event in the history of modern India? A close chapter in it? Or a living memory for the people of the two nations concerned? Enough ink has been spilled over these debates, still the issue invites serious intellectual endeavors from humanist intellectuals even after the seventieth anniversary of the holocaust. But the event seems most intriguing in the context of gender and feminism as women were the worst sufferer of this calamity. Their bodies became the site of violence where the various ethnic groups sought to establish their dominance over each other. Abduction, rape, social exclusion became the common lot of women. Yet, their pangs of crisis has never been a part of the dominant discourse. But, though limited in number, few men and women have endeavored to break the silence. Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning* is one such narrative. Originally written as *Epar Bangla Opar Bangla* (1968) this novel is a rare specimen of its kind written in Bengali by a woman. The present paper focuses on this groundbreaking work to initiate a new-historical study of partition from the gender perspective. The questions addressed in this paper are: (a) how by placing the subjective experiences of the doubly marginalized figure of the refugee woman at the center of the narrative, Jyotirmoyee Devi subverted the dominant patriarchal narrative of female chastity and criticized the hypocritical nature of nationalist patriarchy that do not recognize sexually violated women as subjective agents; (b) how she subverted the myth of purity associated with women's body and expose the politics of silence subversively associated with it; (c) And how she presented a new-historical reading of the episode of partition and rewrite

the history of 'modern' 'secular' India that maintain a queer silence over the woman episode through the mythic references of gendered violence. The critical approach of the study combines textual analysis, socio-historical reading and feminist theory.

The narrative starts with adult Sutara recollecting the trauma of her adolescent-self in the backdrop of the infamous communal riot in Noakhali in East Bengal in 1946. Whether she was violated sexually is a great matter of dispute as the text never provides a testimony to the fact. But what makes Sutara's experience a special one is her violated status and subsequent marginalization at the hand of her own community that observe her as a great violation to her class-caste entente. Bagchi and Dasgupta remind us that, "Though there is a general belief that rape was less marked a presence in the Bengal Partition, the fear of rape was enough to marginalize women and to prevent them from being accepted by their own community"(4). In Sutara's case it was the possibility of rape that made her a refugee in her own extended family and larger community. This possibility of contamination was redoubled by the fact of her being rescued and nursed back to life by a neighboring Muslim family. The second section of the novel has been named "Sutara Problem" in the original Bengali text echoing the "women's problem" during the cultural awakening of Nineteenth century Bengal (Chakraborty 142). The greatest fear of the mother-in-law of her elder brother is to save her household from Sutara's "pollute"[d] touch" (Jyotirmoyee Devi 32). Finally the family finds a solution to this 'problem' by excluding her from its domain – by dispatching Sutara to a missionary school that gives shelter to girls and women who shared her similar fate. Sutara's life as an outcast continues further in the next section. In spite of attaining higher

education and climbing the social ladder high by working as a professor in a college, Sutara has never been able to achieve acceptability from her family.

Anne McClintock has referred all nationalisms as “gendered”, “invented” and “dangerous” as “they represent relations to political power and to the technologies of violence” (352). This truth can be extended to the nationalist patriarchy at the time of partition as well. Though imagined as the epitome of the nation-goddess in the collective unconscious of the inhabitants and the makers of nation, women have never been part of the “imagined community”. Women’s chastity and bodily purity became a hallmark of the community’s claim to superiority and the most articulated form of asserting power over other community was to inflict sexual violence over the women folk of the other community: “The defilement of communal honor through the violation of female sexuality is a thesis that resonates the entire process of our nation building” (Baghchi 21). Jyotirmoyee Devi’s *The River Churning* can be read as a critique of this ‘thesis’ of nation formation. The figure of the sexually violated woman has always been a part of the canon of partition-texts. But *The River Churning* deserves special mention as it narrates the whole scenario of violence from the subjected perspective of the violated woman, and thus subverts the meta-narrative of patriarchal honor that tends to reduce the violated figure into a mere sign of patriarchal concerns and robs her of her subjectivity thus. Paulomi Chakraborty has read *The River Churning* as a radical version of the dominant rape narrative and comments:

In *The River Churning*, the experience of Sutara, the refugee woman, a possible victim of rape during the Partition, brings the critical scrutiny on rape not only as an extraordinary violence of the Partition, but also



an ordinary patriarchal violence belonging to the everyday world. The novel shows that the normative patriarchal understanding and definition of rape during both times remain incommensurable with the female experience of rape (152).

The novel at the same time addresses the issue of unavailability of a competent language that can address the gendered experience of women. But the silence generated from this lack can get more vocal than words at times. *The River Churning* itself is a fine example of this kind of 'vocal silence'. The narrative is interrupted by silence almost after every few lines. Paulomi Chakraborty adds:

*The River Churning* is a text saturated with silence. Even though all the moments of silence in the plot can be psychologically accounted for, and in many cases, imaginatively filled-in, the end result is that the novel itself is constantly interrupted by silences. The narrative pauses every few lines where words fail and in many instances the somatic excess of tears intervene. *The River Churning* thus reads like a sentence where periods have been inserted excessively and at places where a reader does not expect them, so much so, that there is always a sinister looming quality where speech (of the narrator as well as of characters) is constantly on the verge of breakdown (146).

After the fateful night of riot, Sutara's life is surrounded by silence. Sometimes it is the silence of grief, sometimes it is the silence generated from the trauma that engulfed her life after so many years of the incident. Not only at the textual level, *The River Churning* is a narrative engulfed by silence at the meta-text level also. The author has not specified the nature of violence that was inflicted upon Sutara. There is a

possibility of sexual violence, but it is never explicit. The fateful night is described thus:

Sutara stared after her [mother] when suddenly she heard her sister scream and fall to the ground. From near the shed where Mother was wrenching the flap door open she heard a shrill cry. “I’m coming,” she called. But she could not make it. Dark shadowy figures surrounded her, some tried to grab her by the hand. Breaking free, she rushed to the pond at the back and jumped into the water. In the light of the spreading fire everything was now visible. One of the ruffians went after Mother but another stopped him, “leave her, it’s their mother, let her go.” But Didi did not stir. Was she dead? What happened to Didi? Sutara couldn’t tell. She wanted to reach mother and began to run, but stumbled and fell. Then everything went blank. (Jyotirmoyee Devi 8).

Next we encounter Sutara at the house of her rescuers when she was gaining her consciousness after lying unconscious for several days. The narrator briefly contends “she was so shattered physically and psychologically that she couldn’t get up from her bed” (Jyotirmoyee Devi 10). After regaining consciousness, Sutara herself get confused: “Did she fall to the ground or was she pushed down? What happened after that? (Jyotirmoyee Devi 16) The only detail comes from Moinu, the small child of Tamij Shaheb as he is too innocent to understand the stigma associated with this topic:

Sutaradi, did they thrash you badly? he asked, it was a good thing Fakir came and told father. That is how Baba and Aziz bhaisaheb took our Habibullah and some other farm hands armed with cudgels and spears and carried

you home. You were lying half-dead. Aziz bhai and others lifted you on their shoulders and brought you here. Fakir told us that they had beaten you badly (Jyotirmoyee Devi 17)

But soon he is cut short by his mother who gives Sutara an apparently innocent account of this incident: “The sight of the fire and all those ruffians was too much for you. You fainted. Then you had an attack of fever just from shock. But you are going to be all right now” (Jyotirmoyee Devi 17). Much later in the narrative, Aziz, one of her adult rescuers speaks of finding Sutara as “a bundle of clothes[...] lying in a pool of blood” (Jyotirmoyee Devi 100).

This ambiguity over the nature of violence inflicted upon Sutara, what Baghchi has referred as “unspoken”, has caused a great dispute in the academic arena (20). Debali Mookerjee-Leonard has observed that Sutara’s possible experience of the “trauma of the sexual assault” is registered in the text “mostly as a confused, nebulous memory, with scattered references to her torn and dirty clothes, her friends’ suicides, drownings, and abductions” (41). Meenakshi Mukherjee on the other hand, writes that the novel “conjures up the claustrophobic ethos of stigma without ever mentioning the word ‘rape’ which lay at the core of the plot (16). Similarly, Andrew Whitehead also argues that the text is “deliberately ambiguous about the extent of the assault on Sutara” (19). But Mookerjee – Leonard has forbidden the reader to read this deliberate ambiguity on the part of the writer as an instance of her prudishness and by a critical scrutiny of the whole corpus of writing by Jyotirmoyee Devi, she points to the recurrence of the Bengali equivalent of the word ‘rape’ there and comments “veiling of a bodily trauma through language constitutes a counter-discourse to the economy of display of woman” (41). Jashodhara Baghchi is

also of the same opinion and describes Sutara's assault at the hand of her own community, the proverbial "second rape," as "a prolonged and unbearable panoptical gaze by the community over Sutara's body and mind" (xxxii). Paulomi Chakraborty has also read the novel as a critique of this 'panoptical gaze' (150) and Jill Didur has read the novel as an attempt by Jyotirmoyee Devi to "redirect the gaze of the reader/researcher away from women's bodies and sexuality" (13). She also demanded a sensitive reading on the part of the reader that would "understand [the silences] as women's inability to subsume their experience within projects of patriarchal modernity that has produced them in the first place" (11). In line with Paulomi Chakraborty it can be said that Jyotirmoyee Devi's refusal to give the details of Sutara's assault should be read as a comment on and critique of the social Brahminical norms in treating their 'soiled' (raped or not) women (157). Didur has also argued, that "by refusing to fill the gap in Sutara's story, Jyotirmoyee Devi's novel denies the reader 'the evidence' he or she needs to assess whether or not Sutara was sexually polluted and instead redirects 'our' attention to the patriarchal rationale that informs the construction of women's sexuality as polluted or pure" (155).

Before its publication in the book form in 1968, the novel was published in the annual autumn issue of the Bengali periodical *Prabashi* with the title *Itihashe Stree-Parva* (The Women Chapter in History). The novel can be read as the writer's attempt to rewrite the history by inclusion of the women's chapter, that has traditionally been under erasure. Jill Didur observes that "partition literature has often been read as a kind of 'record', or, conversely, rather than a literary representation of the historical period" (10). Jyotirmoyee Devi seems to be a conscious practitioner of this inclusive

project as she situates her text with the *Stree-Parva* of *Mahabharata* in her prefatory note to the text: “The crux of the matter is that even the great Vedavyash could not write what is implied by the title. Only once, in some *slokas*, has he skimmed over the heartrending tale of the chapter” (xxiv). The said chapter of *Mahabharata* records the happenings in *Dwarka* after the demise of Lord Krishna and Balarama, when women were disgraced in a state of anarchy. Jyotirmoyee continues:

the chronicler has not been able to give us a complete account. But what happened afterwards? Vyasdev is silent about that. Which male poet could dare to write about that, and with what ink? No, such a pen, such ink and paper has not been produced in the world. [...]

History is not written by cowards, and there are no female epic poets. Even if there were, they could hardly write the stories of their own dishonor and shame. The language for it has yet to be fashioned, so naturally *Stree Parva* does not figure anywhere. [...]

The world resounds in praise of male bravery, acts of heroism — but has nothing to say about the eternal *Stree Parva*, the humiliation of women, the endless exploitation of helpless women, which continues through the combined efforts of savage men, and lurks behind all heroic deeds. No history has recorded that tragic chapter of shame and humiliation that is forever controlled by the husband, the son, the father and their race[“jati”]. (xxxiv-xxxv).

The choice of profession for her protagonist seems to be a conscious act on the part of the writer. The novel opens at a history class where Sutara with her students of the modern history of India are discussing over the fictive nature

of history that excludes more than it includes. There Sutara's remembrance of Tagore's lines "Stop your long narrative and endless tales/You spinner of falsehood" throws light on the process of history making (Jyotirmoyee Devi 3). This disdainful attitude towards the gendered quality of history get resonance in other literary works of Jyotirmoyee Devi as well. Her poem "Spinx" ends with these following lines:

Hence kind God has made us liars, chaste

Like the Sphinx of Egypt

Silent Spectators of the world's history (qtd. in Baghchi xxv).

These lines point out how women are relegated into a 'silent spectator'[ship] in the domain of history. The problematic relation of women with history is reflected upon further in her short story "Ahalya Draupadi Tara":

Whatever it may be called. May be its History. Because all over the world stories of such people are strewn about. If we add year, date, family history, we may be able to pass it off as History. Especially if the subjects of the stories are kings-emperors or just rich men, it would become History. And if such grandeur were lacking, if the narrative belongs to simple folks, people would think this is just a story. Any how, let it be presumed that this is a secret, unspoken, heart-rendering, eternal tale of women's happiness (where is happiness for women?) and sorrows, rise and fall. Not stylish enough to be lifestyle, but the fragmented history of life's struggles. In any case, even I don't know all the histories associated with the tale. Thus, it would be better to presume this as just a story. (quoted in Chakraborty 174).

In line with Joan Kelly's agenda of "restore[ing] women to history and to restore history to women to fulfill this agenda of her, Jyotirmoyee Devi has manipulated another tool at the hand of hegemonic patriarchy to serve her purpose – myths (Chakraborty 176). Chakraborty put it as:

[The River Churning] use myths to register the loss and go further to probe alternative narrative practices. In absence of a history of women, the novel turn to the mythic to add the collective—both spatial and temporal—dimension to what are individual women's stories. This is how it constructs its feminist resistance (176).

By dedicating her novel "to the tortured and exploited women of all ages and lands", Jyotirmoyee Devi has been able to construct the holocaust of partition as "an extension of the ordinary and everyday—the historical—violence of patriarchy" (Chakraborty 177). The novel is saturated with mythical allusions. Allusions to the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* is central to the narrative – the very initial page of the narrative alludes the partitioned geo-body of India to the "truncated *Maha-Bharata*"; Delhi is referred as "*Hastinapur*", the capital of the *Pandavas* (Jyotirmoyee Devi 1). The three sections of the English translation of *The River Churning* are named after three episodes of the *Mahabharata* – the initial section is called "*Adi Parva: the Beginning*" after the first book of the epic, "The Book of the Beginning", the next section is called "*Anusasan Parva: The Imposition*" after the thirteenth book "The Book of Instructions" and the concluding section is called "*Stree Parva: The Women*," after the eleventh book of the epic, which is usually translated as "The Book of the Women." By drawing attention to this pervasive presence of epic in the novel, Paulomi Chakraborty further adds: "The narrative is

crisscrossed with allusions to Hindu-mythic women who were violated in different ways and were never redressed within an essentially patriarchal understanding of justice”(178). The humiliating fate of the mythical women is also alluded to by the offenders of gendered violence to justify their wrong deeds - when confronted by Tamiz babu, one of them asks him to point out “a single instance when women have not been molested, pushed about? Look at the stories in their Puranas – what about the abduction of Sita? What about Draupadi?” (Jyotirmoyee Devi 14). By naming her protagonist Sutara, Jyotirmoyee Devi makes her readers remind the fate of all her mythical namesakes – the wife of Brihaspati who was abducted and raped by Moon, and the other Tara is the wife of Bali. There are several references to Sita and Ahalya also. But the dominant presence is of Draupadi. The women’s college where Sutara works is named “Yagyaseni College”, in allusion to Draupadi’s name Yagyaseni, leading Cynthia Leenert to specify the women at the college as “an army sacrificed on the altar of communal violence,” like the sacrificial figure of Draupadi and argue further : “these women, who have faced humiliation, who have had multiple sexual partners forced upon them in an obscene parody of Draupadi’s multiple marriage, literally come together as Yajnaseni” (97). The omniscient narrator put the gendered violence of partition as “numerous Draupadis were disrobed and humiliated. After all the easiest way to show off one’s manhood is at the cost of helpless women like Sita, Draupadi and the others” (Jyotirmoyee Devi 68). By adding a collective dimension to the individual stories of gendered violence, the mythic allusions “enables the text to recreate an alternate site of narrative continuity of a collective dimension in the face of what is denied by history”(Chakraborty 188).



*The River Churning* has been praised by Jasodhara Baghchi as “a rare example of a Partition novel in Bengali written by a woman”(20). This novel can be read as a fictional account of how the constellation of thrice-fold agents of domination- patriarchy, state and community intersect with each other during the partition and relegated women into a sphere of humiliation and silence. At the same time the novel can be seen as a successful attempt of feminist historiography that “allow private experiences of pain [of a victim of violence] to move out into the realm of publicly articulated experiences of pain”(Didur 193). John Barrington, the famous new-historicist has drawn attention to the potentiality of partition narratives in reshaping the partition history. *The River Churning* is one such literary text that filled the great ‘aporia’ in the history of ‘modern’ nation and unveils the ‘women chapter’ in it.

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## **Stimulating the Imaginative Heights:Of Love and Creative writing (with special reference to Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats)**

**Abhishek Tiwari**

Assistant Professor of English,Department of Manviki,  
Adhunik Jnan and Shodh, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rastriya  
Sanskrit Vidyapeetha (Deemed University), New Delhi-  
110016

### **Abstract**

The research paper under consideration attempts to establish the stirring impressions of love in the process of creative writings. The argument of the paper encompasses how love that occupies the central position amongst human emotions becomes a creative vigor and gives origin to literatures of universal prominence. Analyzing the theoretical grounds of creative progression itself the paper looks forward to discussing the impact of the feeling of love on creativity at various levels with special reference to the universal literatures of two pioneers of the Romantic movement of England, namely, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats whose personal frustrations /gratifications in love resulted in outstanding literary output that created a landmark in the history of British literature.

### **Key words**

Social animal, *Kamadeva*, Psychoanalytical dimension, Realized soul.

*“Yam chintyami satatam maisa virakta  
Saapyanyamichchati janam sajanoanyasaktah  
Asmatkrute cha partusyati kachidanya  
Dhiktaam cha tam cha madanam cha imam  
cha maam cha.”*

(She of whom I always think is indifferent to me, but, on the contrary, she likes another man, who, in his turn, is attached to a different woman. Again, there is someone else who takes much delight in me. With these facts before us, we cannot help calling shame and censure upon her (the woman who loves me), him (my love’s paramour), my love, myself, and Cupid (the real author of all these evils)” (Bhartrihari, *Neetishatakam* 60).

*“Othello. “It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me. O my soul’s joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken’d death!  
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas  
Olympus-high and duck again as low  
As Hell’s from Heaven! If it were now to die,  
Twere now to be most happy;”*

(William Shakespeare’s *Othello* II.1)

Of all the emotions that a living soul realizes, love occupies the place of pride for its being associated with human heart and mind in unswerving mode. The bearer of the Soul, be it a man or an animal, cannot escape love as it happens to be one of the basic ingredients of creation itself. Without the blessings of *Kamadeva*, no creativity is possible. The four considered *Purusharthas* according to the great Indian tradition are *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. With a view to attaining these *Purushartha chatustaya* (4 *Purusharthas*) every sincere human being initiates his actions through out life.

Love that proves to be the very medium of accomplishment of *Kama* is very imperative for creative writing without any doubt whatsoever. Before we set off into the debate on the relationship between love and creative writing, it would be pertinent to have the brief conception of the creative process. It is a well known fact that some hard-hitting personal experience is essential for the purpose. A common man living his life with his relations in a very happy to go lucky manner is not going to give too much to creative writing for it requires a person to be a little different from the common lot in life style, thoughts, ideas, behaviour, attitude , et cetera. Merely jotting down words and framing the same as a literary work will not serve the real purpose of literary composition as it needs to relate with the emotions of the public at large. There is an ardent need to render individual emotion into global emotion.

Although there had been many litterateurs who led the normal life, yet the men of letters that we admire even in our own times have had a very uncommon sort of life. The inspiration that forms the fountain head of creative writing comes from something immense and having high forms. When we take into account the literatures from various languages down the ages we come to the conclusion that the writers of those literatures had an experience of unusual sort. Sometimes there is a Firaq Gorakhpuri with his personal idiosyncrasies, sometimes a Tulsidas being emotionally snubbed by his better half Ratnavali for having been so much in fondness for the substantial gratification. A Valmiki can be viewed sometimes who stands a realized spectator to the terrible slaughter of a masculine *Krauncha* bird at the hand of a hunter. At times there is a Premchand who stands so much empathetic to the problems of peasants and the poor, and now and again an exasperated universal Lover who has

no other way to relieve his pains and pressures other than by way of composing loving lyrics in the remembrance of his sweetheart. According to David Daichess, “Various schools of modern psychology have each had something to say about the psychological conditions out of which art arises. The Freudians have their view of the relation between art and neurosis, the Jungians have found in work of literary art archetypal images and echoes of basic and recurring myths, and there have been any number of modifications and additions to both kinds of theory. The notion that artist is neurotic, sick, maladjusted, has become immensely popular during the last hundred and fifty years, and modern psychology seems to have justified it” (David Daichess 332). About its psychoanalytical dimension Peter Barry further argues, “All of Freud’s work depends upon the notion of the unconscious, which is the part of the mind beyond consciousness which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions. Freud was not the discoverer of the unconscious: his uniqueness lies in his attributing to it such a decisive role in our lives. Linked with this is the idea of *repression*, which is the ‘forgetting’ or ignoring of unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires, or traumatic past events, so that they are forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconsciousness. A similar process is that of *sublimation*, whereby the repressed material is ‘promoted’ into something grander or is disguised as something ‘noble’. For instance sexual urges may be given sublimated expression in the form of intense religious experiences or longings” (Peter Barry 92-93). The famous Shakespeare scholar G. Wilson Knight in his appendix on ‘Spiritualism and Poetry’ writes, “Literature, though itself a temporal art, may yet be felt as a blending of the arts of space and time. Painting, sculpture, and architecture exist in space; music and poetry in time. But each

kind always aspires towards the other. The spatial arts either suggest narrative, or at the least are alive with a significance on the brink of motion; and the temporal arts achieve 'form', or 'structure'. But poetry, though itself temporal, appears to be peculiarly adapted to include, and blend together, the other arts, fusing the visual with the aural, space with time, at every instant" (*The Starlit Dome* 318).

Ronald Barthes makes the following observation in his essay "From Work to Text", "It is not that the author cannot 'come back' into the text, however he can only do so as a guest so to speak. If the author is a novelist, he inscribes himself in the text as one of the characters, as another figure sewn into the rug: his significance is no longer privileged and paternal, the locus of genuine truth but rather ludic. He becomes 'a paper author' [...]" (78). Here Barthes tries to put forward the fact that the writer of a text becomes an inescapable entity whose position is very crucial. He/she can put forth his/her ideas without having spoken his/her words in the position of an author. Therein the persona/spokesperson becomes the central ideologue not the real author of the ideas. Another critic Rajnath holds the view, "The text gives us a glimpse into the life of the author and a kind of biography can be constructed from it. The author becomes a 'paper author' no doubt but he is all the same an author not different from the implied author" (Rajnath 38). T. S. Eliot, the epoch making critic and poet from the Modernist literature, further stresses for an "objective correlative". He says, "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative', in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory

experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked” (Eliot 145).

After having perused various dimensions of the procedure of creative writing, the idea becomes prominent that some inspiration of higher form is a must. Man/woman is a social animal and he/she desperately needs a vehicle for his/her ideas. He/she cannot live in isolation. His/her life needs some brainwave for personal existence and definitely love provides the same without an iota of doubt. Love as a stimulating drive can be of binary temperament. Sometimes it is negative motivation; occasionally it becomes positive and fruitful. It is a well thought-out estimation that music accelerates the disposition of love. William Shakespeare too feels the importance of music and art in the making of a socially sound and morally upright citizen. He makes his protagonist Lorenzo utter the following point of view in *The Merchant of Venice*,

“The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not mov’d with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted”

(*The Merchant of Venice* 214).

Literature at large is full of examples where a poet because of personal reasons in life became able to compose high class poems. For the paper under composition the author takes delight in discussing further point of view with special reference to P.B. Shelley and John Keats, the two pillars of the Romantic movement of England.

Shelley, born in a noble family, viewed life in the radiance of his revolutionary ideas that was full of romance.



His maiden love with Harriet Grove, unhappy marriage with Harriet Westbrook, and the affair cum marriage with Mary Godwin speak volumes to the turning points that his short life witnessed. There is no denying the fact that Shelley had a very open idea about love and marriage. He was not the sort of person who simply stood satisfied with a wife with all her goodness and shortcomings. It seems that he always sought a fresh image as his sweetheart with a view to deriving bountiful inspirations and suitable symbols for the composition of his literatures. As a point of fact it gave him a way to pour down his recurring emotions on paper. In the poem “The Indian Serenade” written in June 1819, probably addressed to Jane Mary Williams, the poet sings,

“The wandering airs they faint  
On the dark, the silent stream—  
The Champak odours fail  
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;  
The nightingale’s complaint,  
It dies upon her heart; —  
As I must on thine,  
Oh, beloved as thou art!”

(Shelley, *The Indian Serenade* 580)

The famous scholar K. G. Srivastava argues, “The use of ‘Champak’ here, I am sure, should be taken as the measure of Shelley’s knowledge of Indian culture and of the literary traditions of India....The relevant information is that the flower is so strong in smell that bees refuse to extract pollen from it with the result that it remains sadly mortified. In the absence of this very valuable information the thought of the verse of Shelley’s poem, where the word ‘Champak’ has been used, will be hard to grasp” (286). The information just quoted from K.G. Srivastava’s magnum opus makes the point clear

that Shelley through the metaphor of 'Champak' wants to suggest that even his own condition is like the 'Champak' flower whose love was not positively reciprocated owing to its being very intense and strong. As the bees decline to take pollen from Champak, similarly sweet ladies sometimes are afraid of his company thanks to his deep and sensible personality. This ought to be borne in mind that by projecting an Indian serenade the poet intends to put himself as a true lover as India was known for being a country where people had good faith in real love and that they could go to any extent to save their relation of love whatsoever be the cost.

In another poem the poet assigns her beloved the status of the paragon of beauty. The romantic temperament of his reaches its zenith while composing the following verse,

“Thou art fair, and few are fairer,  
Of the nymphs of earth or ocean,  
They are robes that fit the wearer —  
Those soft limbs of thine whose motion,  
Ever falls and shifts and glances  
As the life within them dances”.

(Shelley, *To Sophia [Miss Stacey]* 580)

The next poem that enunciates his ideas of love is quite aesthetic and sensuous. He wants to imply his lady-love that her charms would be worth nothing if she does not establish lovely relations with him. Citing the very relation between sky and mountain, sunlight and the earth, et cetera, he demands the same from his sweetheart. It seems that Shelley was well convinced by the thought that physical enjoyment ultimately leads to spiritual elevation. He does not simply believe in thoughts and imaginings of the beloved, rather he demands love in action. Shelley writes,

“See the mountains kiss high Heaven  
 And the waves clasp one another;  
 No sister-flower would be forgiven  
 If it disdained its brother;  
 And the sunlight clasps the earth  
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
 What is all this sweet work worth  
 If thou kiss not me?”  
 ( Shelley, *Love’s Philosophy* 583)

And see again the extract addressed to his wife that clearly reveals the feelings of the poet for her ,

“My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,  
 And left me in this dreary world alone?  
 Thy form is here indeed—a lovely one—  
 But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,”  
 (Shelley, *To Mary Shelley* 582)

Thus was Shelley’s high level genius which supplied the world with excellent lyrics that circulated the message of love in the society. Mrs Shelley well wrote in Preface to the first collected edition, 1839, “It is our best consolation to know that such a pure- minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him;—although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him” (*The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* xi).

John Keats, one of the most sensitive of the Romantic poets, was competent to write universal verses about ‘charm’d magic casements, opening on the foam/ of perilous seas, in faery land forlorn’ thanks to the deeper emotional crisis he felt within. The very conflict between his frenzied fascination for his beloved’s beauty and his fatal disease that would not

allow him a long life stood him into an intricate phase of self appraisal followed by self revelation through poetic medium. What actually Keats writes, he writes with the drops of his own blood as ink. Driving the hearty emotions on paper, the way Keats writes to his ladylove becomes a benchmark in the arena of love-letter writing. He very passionately writes, “Will you confess this in the Letter you must write immediately, and do all you can to console me in it—make it rich as a draught of poppies to intoxicate me—write the softest words and kiss them that I may at least touch my lips where yours have been. For myself I know not how to express my devotion to so fair a form: I want a brighter word than bright, a fairer word than fair. I almost wish we were butterflies and liv’d but three summer days—three such days with you I could fill with more delight than fifty common years could ever contain” (<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/selected-love-letters-fanny-brawne>). The emotional Keats writes at another place illustrating the very theory of Metempsychosis, therefore giving his love’s paramour Fanny Brawne a saintly altitude, “The thought of leaving Miss Brawne is beyond everything horrible— the sense of darkness coming over me— I eternally see her figure eternally vanishing. Some of the phrases she was in the habit of using during my last nursing at Wentworth Place ring in my years— Is there another Life? Shall I awake and find all this dream? There must be; we cannot be created for this sort of suffering” (John Keats’s ‘Letters’ Quoted in K. G. Srivastava 332). Keats , who had the pleasure of having the first ever rendezvous with the pretty Fanny Brawne in September 1818, was so much enamoured of her beauty that he had perceived life without her as something terrible and lacking in joy altogether. However as he happens to be a believer in *Punarjanma* or theory of Rebirth, he is all sanguine about

the good days that he would follow as life could not have been so tough. To him Miss Brawne had become a symbol of life itself that supplied him with plentiful gusto to survive with delight even during moments of utter emotional crisis. In fact the beauty of Fanny was something equivalent to supreme reality for Keats. Had it not been so, he would never have asserted as follows, “Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.” (Keats, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* 210). It would be right to quote Leavis, “To show from the Letters that ‘Beauty’ became for Keats a very subtle and embracing concept, and that in his use the term takes on meanings that it could not possibly have for the uninitiated, is gratuitous and irrelevant. However his use of the term may have developed as he matured, ‘beauty’ is the term he used; and in calling what seemed to him the supreme thing in life ‘beauty’, he expressed a given bent — the bent everywhere manifested in the quality of his verse, in its loveliness. ‘His concern for beauty meant, at any rate in the first place, a concentration upon the purely delightful in experience to the exclusion of ‘disagreeable.’ And the ‘beauty’ in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* expresses this bent is plain—that it should is the essence of the poem, and there is nothing in the poem to suggest otherwise” (F.R. Leavis, *Keats* 322) . Again, Keats believes in the ever delighting nature of beautiful things. He deems it as a perpetual source of endless pleasure; pleasure that initiates a person towards union with the Divine. See the following extract from “Endymion” that stands witness to Keats, s philosophy,

“A Thing of beauty is a joy for ever:  
Its loveliness increases; it will never  
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
A bower quite for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quite

breathing.”

(Keats, *Endymion: A Poetic Romance Book I*, 55)

Here Keats brings to the fore the bounty of beautiful things. He believes it to be a life giving source of all the blessings that we desire in our lives like happy dreams, good health and fortunes and that its joys would remain ever afresh in our hearts and minds. However he is well known to the nature of life with its dual character. He is quite conscious of the fact that even beauty is subject to decay with the passage of time and that happiness carries as its shadow the despondent feelings. He writes,

“She dwells with Beauty— Beauty that must die;  
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips  
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,  
Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:  
Ay, in the very temple of delight,  
Veil'd Melancholy has her Sovran shrine,”

(Keats, *Ode on Melancholy* 220)

In his brilliant poem “Ode to a Nightingale” Keats after comparing his life with that of the nightingale comes to the resolution that the life of the later is far better than his very own. The poetic saga is the delineation of a disheartened lover for whom the haven of death was preferable to the pangs and frets of life. The lines from the poem are given below for ready reference,

“Darkling I listen; and, for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!"

(Keats, *Ode to a Nightingale* 208)

G. Wilson Knight observes, "Moreover, the poet is 'embalmed': it is a kind of death. So next death itself is invoked as the final hope, called 'easeful', 'soft', and 'rich' at this supreme moment. Though he himself become a 'sod', that which makes him desire death is immortal. The bird is itself no death-symbol. Its voice persists, like that of the Grecian Urn, from generation to generation, expressing the undying life and darkly-sweet mystery of our universe: even if it, as a bird, dies, its instinctive music lives on" (*The Starlit Dome* 299).

"La Belle Dame sans Merci", a poem marked with high simplicity and slanting melody, is Keats's gleaming response to infidelity in love. The knight- at -arms in this ballad meets a beautiful lady, who displayed her genuine feelings for him with all the courtesies and made promises of love to the hilt,

"She found me roots of relish sweet,  
And honey wild, and manna dew,  
And sure in language strange she said—  
I love thee true'

(Keats, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* 351).

However, the knight- at –arms afterwards comes to know the real character of the pretty girl from the mouth of those who had already been seduced by her *mayavi* charms. Keats writes,

"I saw pale kings and princes too,  
Pale warriors, death –pale were they all;  
They cried—'La Belle Dame sans Merci  
Hath thee in thrall!'

(Keats, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* 351).

The poem seems to be Keats's reaction to the disloyal nature of the sweet ladies who first make positive gestures and later on show their real countenance in the form of perfidy. The fanciful world may look amiable to young hearts for the time being, yet when the reverie is shattered they find themselves in a whacked world of broken images; a planet of longings and unpleasant feelings. Keats might have witnessed such type of experience in real life that made him write down the poem of this type.

In fine, it can be safely concluded that love as a fundamental human emotion proves to be very momentous in the creative writing of excellent nature. It may not be the single reason behind literary compositions, but can be affirmed as the most considerable one. The perusal of the literatures of Shelley and Keats further justifies the thesis that the emotional transformation that a heart witnesses after falling in love prepares high ground for creative writings and a large number of readers feel a sort of surrogate experience and derive therapeutic effect after reading the same. The following couplet of Firaq Gorakhpuri seems worthy of note herein where he tells the impressions of true love in life,

*“Shokhiyaan husne-haya-parvar mein ye kab thi ‘Firaq’  
Rang layee rafta-rafta ishq ki ruswaiyaan”*

(Firaq Gorakhpuri 23).

*(When did she own prettiness and coyness like this,  
O Firaq!*

*That separation in love brought the blush steadily.)*

It is a fact that love is a divine blessing and it ought to reign supreme in the soul-selves of all and sundry. By way of spreading and utilizing its aura a *sahridaya* (Realized soul) can give birth to literatures of classic status that will leave ineradicable mark on the head and hearts of the humanity.



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## **The Subaltern Speaks : Revisiting Sophocles' *Antigone***

**Navleen Multani**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Rajiv Gandhi  
National University of Law, Punjab, Patiala. email:  
navleenmultani@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Every realm of human experience is marked by the ideological weight of hierarchy and power. The play of power and politics patterns subaltern and subordination in every system. The problematic of binary opposition and the dynamics of superiority inferiority inscribe and reinscribe in the individual as well as social psyche. Diverse institutions – family, religion, culture, society, literature – bear the imprint of hegemony. Language is the potent tool with which dominant groups in a society create binary opposites. With the use of language, one group is given priority and the other is pushed to the margin. The present paper concentrates on the process of cultural Othering which creates a subaltern at all levels – social, personal, sexual, political, cultural.

**Key words** hegemony, patriarchy, hierarchy, feminism, binaries

Patriarchy is the primary ideology that subjugates women. It reinforces the systems of exploitation of the subaltern. Simone de Beauvoir explains cultural othering in the following words: "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the

incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other” (1972;16). Feminine is constructed with reference to the male, the masculine, the norm and the centre. Beauvoir believes that masculine is the absolute human type against which the deviant feminine is measured and analyzed.

Patriarchy ensures continuous dominant masculinity and dominated femininity. It perpetuates gendered subjectivity and maintains an ideology which gives man superiority. Patriarchy renders women to marginalization and cultural Othering. Literature represents the marginalized women. The literary works by male authors, governed by the ideology of patriarchy, provide prejudiced views on womanhood. Women are misrepresented as angels, emblem of purity and of sacrifice or even as evil ready to tempt men (leading them to havoc). Male constructed literary texts represent woman as paragon of all virtues or demon of all vices. These women have no voice, language or history of their own. They function with a borrowed and unauthentic voice. They are denied access to both the mimetic and political forms of representation. The discourse of patriarchy reads women’s liberation and exercising of rights as forms of aberrations.

The patriarchal dominance gets subverted when a writer provides space for female sensibility in literature. The creation of women’s literature envisions an alternative history – “his” story to “her” story. Such writings challenge patriarchy and reassert the true subjectivity of women. The narrative strategies and literary structures are a medium through which identity of women gets redefined. The subordinated, muted, subaltern women attempt to articulate reality when they start speaking. An increasing awareness about injustices done to women gives rise to a feminist’s movement that raises voice

against marginalization and patriarchal oppressions. Feminism focuses on women and the problematics of oppression of women in patriarchy, colonialism and politics.

Feminism, which critically interrogates theory and social action, deals with political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, racial and institutionalized inequality of women. It systematically registers protest against various oppressive structures that inflict injustices upon women. Every strand of feminism-Marxist, psychoanalytic, postmodern, liberal-addresses the marginalized status of women in society. Feminism also mobilizes movements on issues of gender-based discrimination. The notion of a universal patriarchy manifests every social institution and weilds a great influence on individuals of diverse cultures, histories and religion.

In order to maintain and perpetuate the relationship of domination and subordination between the two sexes, patriarchy hands over the reigns of power to men. Kate Millet, in *Sexual Politics*, observes: "...that military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance-in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in make hands" (25).

Patriarchy intersects with the caste, class, race, religion and culture of perpetrate marginalization/inequality of women. The feminists endeavour to address the victimization/dehumanization of women at the social, political, intellectual and existential levels. Liberal feminists assert that society will develop only if individuals are provided with the right to act freely and rationally. Liberal feminism voices the need for the realization of complete self of all women.

Patriarchy, according to Radial feminism, is the primary form of oppression of women—at home and in society. The

Radical Feminists believe in eliminating patriarchy and inequality of sexes (Willis 118). They challenge the gender roles and call for a radical reformulation of society (Tong 95-96). Maria Dalla Costa locates and analyzes the role of women in both the public and private spheres. She believes that the role played by women in both spheres determines her awareness of self (21). Women are alienated in a system because of their being trapped in domesticity. Friedrich Engel believes that women are confined to homes by marriage and do not remain centres of production (26,151). According to Simone de Beauvoir, patriarchy deflects women from their existential destiny and immuses them in “otherness”(17). Man, believes de Beauvoir, assumes the role of *self* in society and relegates women to the position of *other*. Man attains self because he enjoys all rights and privileges, explains Beauvoir. Woman, she adds, becomes the *other* because she lacks power (55-90). Men assign women passive roles of matrimony and motherhood and hence confine her to domesticity or the private (285,469). Woman, argues Beauvoir, should seek her own self and be the subject of her actions (689). When woman is free to act, she attains the right to equality and freedom (734). This, believes Julia Kristeva, can be achieved by transgressive and non-phallogocentric feminist works.

Language, in Kristeva’s views, is a system of differences and discriminations (*The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt* 42). The entire patriarchal project could be revolutionized through language, according to Kristeva (*The Revolution of Poetic Language* 96). Helene Cixous also asserts that woman as the repressed *other* could be articulated by language (*Coming to Writing* 23). The patriarchal language could be ruptured to lead to the emergence of a new language (*The*

*Newly Born Woman 95-96*). Kristeva and Cixous emphasize that women should be perceived as a political category.

The disruption of the binaries through language in literary texts plays a great role in promoting equality of sexes. The articulation of women experience and voicing of their rational thoughts in literary texts attempts to promote a democratic perception. Such a perception dissolves differences and projects women as thinking and acting freely. The deconstruction of binaries and identity makes space for the equal rights of the women. Many writers, in diverse fictional works, focus on the female perspective. Though the majority of feminist theorist and writers are women, men have also written from the female perspective. Annis Pratt believes that gender roles are oppressive not only to the women in real life but also in literature. Fiction, she believes, reflects those experiences of women which thwart their growth in society. Pratt writes that women are 'outcasts'- they have neither a homeland nor an ethnic place within society (6). Sophocles play *Antigone* brings out this state of women in ancient Greece.

Sophocles, one of the three great Greek tragedians, is known for his classic writings. The plays penned by Sophocles (496-406B.C.) provide insights into the political and social aspects of ancient Greece. His plays belong to a period after Aeschylus. Greek tragedies have a religious background. While Aeschylus introduced the idea of divine will shaping the course of events, Sophocles adds the element of human will working in harmony or in opposition with circumstances. The plays written by Sophocles include *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *The Women of Trachis*, *Ajax*, *Electra* and *Antigone*. Out of 123 plays written by Sophocles, only seven are available in complete form. Sophocles, son of Sophilus and Jocasta, made his first artistic achievement in

468 BC by defeating the reigning master of Athenian drama, Aeschylus, in Dionysia theatre competition.

*Antigone*, which is from Theban plays, is one of the famous tragedies by Sophocles. Tragedy, according to Aristotle, is imitation of action. It offers a concrete means of interpretation of human condition. Sophocles tragedy, *Antigone*, occupies a privileged position in modern political thought. It articulates the issue of the place of women with respect to both the state and the household. Sophocles speaks for the women constrained by the state/politics. The theatre, in ancient Greece, expresses political articulations. It establishes elements of political, moral and religious foundation of *polis* in Athenian democracy. The performance of tragedy in the theatre of Greece, transposes political debates of the polis on the stage. Hence, theatre offers visibility to people-lets them “see” and “be seen.” The plays conceptualize both the narrative and the political. With the power of narration, the plays exhibit imitation of an event that relates to subaltern. These plays describe human deeds and the consequences of human action. Sophocles brings *Antigone* to visibility and gives her voice. While the central position in the play belongs to Creon, Sophocles has reversed the emphasis (De Witt 395-96). He gives prominence to the part of *Antigone* in the story of Creon. Necessity and chance make the writers shape history and legend. Great writers never simply uphold the doctrine of art for art’s sake. They can bring anomalies and disrupt the dominant style of writing to make the part seem greater than the whole.

In his book *Almost a Girl: Male Writers and Female Identification*, Alan Williamson focusses on the difficulties male author have while writing from female perspective (2). He explains the feelings of a male author writing for a female identity with the understanding of oedipal stage. He perceives



a commonality between son and mother at the oedipal stage. At this stage, Williamson believes, there is emotional and imaginative attuning between the two. Once the oedipal stage is over, the male identifies with his father and masculine side. This transition involves a grief over the lost bond with mother (5). If the male child turns this grief into anger, it has a negative effect. This effect is positive when the child tries to regain the bond shared (with his mother) by re-identifying with women. "Writing from the female perspective allows male authors to achieve a re-identification" (Lange 2).

Sophoclean tragedy *Antigone* is structured on principles of dramatic construction (derived by Aristotle three-quarters of a century later). The pattern of the play is marked by a shift of emphasis from "tragic hero" to a secondary figure. Sophocles tells the story of Antigone with the familiar theme of hubris (hybris). He could not tell her story without bringing in the edict. Antigone dies because she defies the edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices' body. Creon, the King is the protagonist and the story of Antigone is told through his story. With the force of her rhetoric and personality, Antigone captures the interest of the audience. Though Antigone departs Creon's story and is in subordinated position, Sophocles modifies the theme of hybris by developing her character. Sophocles' characterization of Antigone shows her dominating and outweighing the character of Creon. Sophocles presents Antigone as he *sees* her and titles the play after her name (Adams 47-48).

Sophocles highlights the issues of authority, democracy and freedom in *Antigone*. Antigone, the heroine, is associated with civil disobedience. She fights against the absolute power and represents the principle of natural law. It is through Antigone that Sophocles voices the female claim against the

rules of patriarchy. The dialectics of Sophocles' *Antigone* explains the contradictions of the modern age and of the human condition in the modern age. Human beings, in the Sophoclean World, realize that they no longer can regulate their choices. The divine laws of piety give Antigone the right to bury her brother. The polis' law gives Creon the right to condemn Antigone. As both rights are legitimate, it gives rise to conflict.

Antigone and Creon produce a parallel discourse of kinship and citizenship, of family and polis. By doing so each promotes a distinct vision of the city's future that attempts to alter the course of Theban time. Creon fails to rebuild Thebes on the foundation of distinctions that are rigid and gendered. But Antigone's failure works to a different effect. Antigone's voice suggests the possibility of a new beginning. She transcends the narrow realm of household and rises to the realm of politics. Sophocles presents both the private and the public selves of Antigone in the play. He integrates the principles of private behaviour of Antigone – the love of a sister who desires funeral honours for her brother's body – with public law.

Many literary works portray women as weak-willed, obedient, law abiding and in subordinate position and men as strong, independent and dominating subjects. Although men dominated in Greece, Sophocles' work *Antigone* represents women in an empowered position. The authority of Creon cannot dampen the courageous spirit of Antigone. She firmly believes that there are laws above those laws which are made by men. Antigone is quite assertive and has faith in Gods.

The opening scene of the play brings out the conflict between men and women. When the two sisters-Antigone

and Ismene-exchange views, they articulate the traditional notion of gender. Ismene represents traditional belief that women must not challenge men's laws. She refuses to help Antigone as she fears. Ismene says :

And now the two of us, left all alone – think how we will die, most miserably of all, if in defiance of the law we transgress the decree and power of the king. We must remember that we were born women, not to fight against men; and that since we are ruled by stronger hands and must listen in this matter, and in others still more painful. (Sophocles 7)

On the contrary Antigone's arguments represent the force for social change. She argues that unjust laws of men should be challenged.

After Oedipus' death in Colonus, Antigone and her sister Ismene return to Thebes with the thought of helping their brothers (Eteocles and Polyneices). According to a prophecy the brothers would kill each other in a battle for the throne of Thebes. Upon their arrival to Thebes, Antigone learns about the death of both her brothers. Creon (Antigone's uncle who inherits the throne) gives a proper burial to (Eteocles). He issues a royal edict and bans the burial of Polyneices. Antigone defies the law and buries her brother. She is imprisoned. Haemon, Creon's son and Antigone's fiance, and Tiresias (blind prophet) plead with Creon to release Antigone. When Haemon reaches the jail, he finds that Antigone has killed herself. Out of despair Haemon and Creon's wife also kill themselves.

Antigone opposes Creon's law and buries her slain brother. When Creon comes to know that it is a woman who has broken his laws, he is infuriated. Antigone confronts Creon's anger and sentence with determination and courage.

She shows an acceptance of the consequences of her doing. Her free spirit refuses to submit to the role of a helpless woman (like her sister Ismene does). Antigone's words ring in a possibility of a new beginning. Her voice and actions are suggestive of setting aside the past practices of the dominance in Thebes. Antigone's action in the past envisions a change and promotes a perception which permits women to make decisions that could alter the course of events in a state.

Creon, son of the House of Menoeceus and brother of Jocasta, ascends to power under the "new conditions given by the gods." The Greek text indicates a gap in Creon's lineage. On assuming power Creon regards women to be passive conduits of kinship. Creon's new order relies upon the exclusion of women from both political and familial authority. He demands the guards to remove Antigone and Ismene from the public space in which his authority is challenged. Creon's rule is absolute not only in the city but also in the House. He tells his son, Haemon, who is betrothed to Antigone, "But there is no worse evil than disobedience. It destroys cities, and leaves houses abandoned; ... we must uphold the laws, and never be worsted by a woman" (Sophocles 51).

Ismene, the dutiful niece, recognizes Creon as patriarch of both House and city. In the opening scene, she advises her sister not to fight against man. Creon holds Antigone's defiance as a double challenge to his public rule and to his manhood. He considers Antigone to be a man because she wants to move ahead with her decision. Creon replaces the rule of tradition with rule of law by transforming the terms of kinship that organize the family and the city. Kinship, in new Thebes, no longer signifies a shared ancestry. It establishes the links that relate men to one another through marriage. These are the links which formalize women's presence but enforce their invisibility in both House and city.

Though the law of marriage links men, it establishes juridical distinctions between men and women. As the founder of this new order, Creon enforces a series of distinctions conferred by the state – woman and man, odd and new, dead and living, enemy and friend. The new order is marked by distinctions that are actually oppositions politically congealed and impervious to reason, human action and even death.

Creon's inflexibility with respect to laws results in his failure. His imposition of the new order invites transgression in his own family. Creon's rule is brought down by not the living but the dead. His son's and later his wife's suicide make Creon realize his own investments in the House : "Alas, the guilt can never be attached To another mortal To relieve me... Oh! Oh! I ... killed you" (Sophocles 99). Haemon and Antigone strike the foundations of Creon's new order- the power of the state to regulate kinship through marriage. They consummate their marriage not with the imprimatur of Creon's state but in the house of Hades. Creon is condemned to loneliness and lives like "an animated corpse" from which there can be no expiation.

If Creon initiates a fundamental reorganization (of the House, of kinship, and of state), Antigone defends old ways. Her actions break the cyclical course of Theban time. Her acts cut across Creon's rigid and gendered distinctions of state and home. Antigone's difference and defiance heighten the strangeness of Theban discourse because any woman who speaks and acts publicly in Creon's order is "unwomanly." By speaking and acting as she does, Antigone transgresses the rules which are limitations imposed on women. Antigone thinks differently and interferes with the workings of the House and polis. She likens herself to the Phrygian stranger (once married to a Theban King). Antigone's "minute

deviation” makes a world of difference for mobilizing (the otherwise immobile past) and altering the terms of the past in terms of Theban present and future.

Sophocles’ *Antigone* shows a woman acting explicitly unwomanly (in ways that contest and defy the constraints imposed upon women) which compound and confound the orderliness of gender in Creon’s Thebes. Her story brings out the confrontation of a subaltern with a male dominated system. Antigone’s insistence upon securing her brother’s place in Hades does not establish her as a new leader. This ‘insurgency’ (to use Gayatri Spivak’s words) or female participation as a subject challenges the ideological construction of gender. Antigone, “the subaltern as female . . . deeply in shadow”, through her actions transforms herself from familiar to stranger (Spivak 28). Antigone’s strangeness, her rhetorical stance, her defiance of Creon and her suicide return to Thebans the possibility of acting and speaking freely. Her actions and death introduce another generation to Thebes. Her doomed family is the last to suffer. Even her name, Anti-gone, translates to mean “anti generation”. Though Antigone dies unwed, unwept and friendless, she is successful in breaking the repetitive cycle of Theban crimes. Antigone cannot survive her own acts but her death returns to Thebans an opportunity to begin anew by continuing on different terms. Sophocles representation of the dispute between Antigone and Creon, in the play, clears space for a political present. The political present, though divisive, prepares for possibilities that would engender equality of sexes and promote democratic perception.

Antigone is unable to secure Ismene’s help and sets forth alone to bury the body. This is a case of *tolma* or *thrasos*, “rash daring” or “recklessness” against *sophrosyne*, safe-

mindedness or wisdom. Sophocles brings out the essential trait of tragic figure by setting it in sharp contrast with the opposite trait in another character. Ismene symbolises wisdom common to Greek morality. *Sophrosyne* of Ismene declines Antigone's proposal. Antigone proposes to make a 'folly' even when it means death to her. Antigone's recklessness is right and transcends the parameters of wisdom, according to Sophocles. He envisages the criterion of a body of Unwritten and Eternal Laws- laws which govern things by instinct to be right. Instincts compel Antigone to defy the edict, abandon *sophrosyne* and take to *tolma* and *thrasos*. Sophocles justifies Antigone's *thrasos* as virtue (and not vice) because she has a wisdom that rises above *sophrosyne* to demand piety to man (Adams 48-49). Antigone upholds divine law above laws of man.

Antigone takes the course of action in the conflict between rights of conscience and duty of obedience with deliberate coolness. She anticipates the consequences of her action but has the courage to forego her pleasures. Antigone views her death as a triumph. She remains convinced about the righteousness of her conduct. She regards herself as a second Niobe looking forward to a happy reunion with father, mother and brothers (De Witt 393-394). Antigone does not fear death and goads Creon to take her life. Creon does not want to be guided/ruled by any woman. He believes that imprisonment and threat of death may bring Antigone to her senses but in vain. Haemon, Creon's son, recognizes Antigone's action with honour. His attitude is democratic and Athenian (Adams 54-56). The Chorus sides with Antigone's obeying of eros/instincts and the Unwritten Eternal Laws. Sophocles' *Antigone* is the tale of the woman who defies the King to honour her traitorous brother. This, for Hegel, illustrates the conflict of interests of women and family with

the functions of State power. Men leave home to become citizens but sisters remain behind to guard the divine law within the household. Their speech/act to transform the universal end of the state into work/property of family positions the women as internal enemies of the State. This threatens the dominant order but Antigone's action in the play restates new possibilities for the formulation of expanded space for the subaltern. The tragedy of Antigone provokes reflection upon the nature of modernity. It highlights the narrow political space assigned to women in the past and the present. Antigone's anti authoritarian voice generates a political discourse. *Antigone* chronicles the suppression of traditional female social word. It rejects the amoral statecraft in order to preserve the social world. It also defends the prerogatives of family against the overweening state power (Holland 1108-1111). Antigone speaks against Creon to inscribe an absence for a more participatory citizenship. She emerges as a citizen of Thebes. She challenges the patriarchal vision with her unwomanly acts. Antigone connects the contemporary readers with prepatriarchal and preauthoritarian past. Sophocles' heroine shows, even in the present times, the value and significance of a minute deviation which could usher in transformation in any culture or nation (1129-1130). She cultivates 'a difference', and encourages men and women to speak and act to bring necessary reforms in oppressive structures and orders. Sophocles' *Antigone* enables one to assimilate the past to remake inegalitarian present and develop a vision for a better future.

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**From Border to Trans-border Situations:  
Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines***

**R. Krishna Mohan,**

H.no.22/7, Vidyanagar colony, JNTU College  
Road, Anantapuramu, Andhrapradesh.

**Abstract**

Though the novel is written in the first person, we never come to know the name of the person even after the novel is read completely. There seems to be a deliberate attempt on the part of the novelist that the reader should not try to find out the name of the story teller. For Amitav Ghosh the story teller is not only an individual but also the supreme consciousness that pervades the life of every individual. The article analyzes the aspect of this supreme consciousness or the individual consciousness which becomes a battlefield in which there is no victory or defeat.

**Key words** : Borders, Nation State, Unity, Consciousness.

The very beginning of *The Shadow Lines* is significant to understand the novel: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib" (Ghosh 3). It is quite appropriate to say that the novel begins as a recollection of events that have taken place not in the life of the narrator but in someone else's. It is also important to note that there is a very rich narrative texture. The story is told in layers, mixture of private and public events working towards unity.

It is, however, very difficult to define the theme, perhaps at the same time very easy to do so, for, it is a novel of “search” – search for self knowledge and self-identity.

The narrator describes the events that he had heard from Tridib- his cousin now deceased- when he is eight and undertakes a journey. It is therefore quite appropriate to call Tridib the mentor and alter ego of the narrator. When the narrator begins to identify himself with Tridib, the narrator’s grandmother chides him, for, she does not approve of Tridib. For the grandmother

Tridib is a “loafer and wastrel”(3) who wastes his time:

In my grandmother’s usage there was nothing very much worse that could be said of any one. For her time was like a toothbrush: it went mouldy if it wasn’t used. I asked her once what happened to wasted time. She tossed her small silvery head, screwed up her long nose and said: It begins to stink. As for herself, she had been careful to rid our little flat of everything that might encourage us to let our time stink. No chess-board or any pack of cards ever came through our door; there was a battered Ludo set somewhere but I was only allowed to play with it when I was ill. She didn’t even approve of my mother listening to the afternoon radio play more than once a week. In our flat all of us worked hard at whatever we did: my grandmother at her school mistressing; I at my homework; my mother at housekeeping, my father at his job as a junior executive in a company which dealt in vulcanized rubber.

Our time wasn’t given the slightest opportunity to grow mouldy. That was why I loved to listen to Tridib : he never seemed to use his time, but his time didn’t stink.

(4)

In *The Shadow Lines* the action takes place in different continents –Europe, Asia, and Africa – and in different countries –India, Bangladesh, and England. The novel is divided into two parts: “Going Away” and “Coming Home.” There is a shift of time from the past to the present and from the present to the past. “Going Away” can be interpreted as “going away from the self” and “Coming Home” can be interpreted as “coming back into the self”; So, there is the concept called “coming and going” (not belonging) which is expressed as part of family’s secret lore:

You see, in our family we don’t know whether we are coming or going – it’s all my grandmother’s fault. But of course, the fault wasn’t hers at all: it lay in language. Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all ; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement. (153)

As P.D. Dube observes, “...one is constantly plagued by doubts in the novel as to whether the characters are going to Calcutta or coming to Calcutta or coming to London or going back to London. The two parts of the novel indicate this enigma of ‘non-belonging.’ When the dwelling place is uncertain, borders also compound the problem” (93). Joshi also says that the novel is arranged in such a way that important situations/incidents come after a “prelude as if to provide a catalyst for the narrator’s memories”(112).

*The shadow Lines* tells the story of the narrator’s family of three generations which are spread over London, Dhaka, and Calcutta, and draws characters from different nationalities, cultures, and religions in the world. The first

generation is represented by the grandmother Tha'mma, Jethamoshai, Mayadebi, and Saheb. The father, the mother, and Jatin represent the second generation. May, Nick, Ila, and the unidentified narrator represent the third generation.

Ghosh employs an educated young man who frequently travels between Calcutta and London in 1981 to narrate the story. As mentioned earlier, the story contains many layers—multiple stories to be precise: stories of his grandmother and her sister, of his uncles Tridib and Robi, of his cousin Ila, who married an Englishman, and of May Price, a family friend in London.

The novel depicts urban middle class life. For urban middle class, education and professional jobs are important. These people are addicted to work because education and profession only see to it that they earn their daily morsel. The work environment so moulds them that they cultivate the virtues of hard work, obedience, saying yes to all the dictates of the boss; and thus they zealously fall in line with the norms of society. But this class of society gets seriously disturbed when misfortunes strike them. For them, life ceases to exist when struck by the sudden eruption of violence like a volcano in public sphere. In these cases life for them loses all its meaning and comes to a standstill. The two parts – “Going Away” (Ghosh 3-112) and “Coming Home” (115-252) – are used to refer to going and coming with home as the central symbol, a place where one is born and brought up and is deeply attached to.

This attachment is more so if one is away from home for a long time for different reasons. The feeling of “citizen of the world” may be ideal, but it is not within the reach of all people. They either go away from their home or come home. We find that characters in *The Shadow Lines* go away

from homes in Calcutta or Dhaka or come home to Calcutta or Dhaka. But what transpires to them at the end is that peace is as elusive as ever, wherever they are – either at home or abroad.

Tha'mma may be said to be the central character of the novel. It may even be said that the novel, in fact, is her story. Tridib calls her a modern middle-class woman. Like all middle-class women, Tha'mma wants to lead a trouble-free life; she is a great patriot and believes in the unity of the country. But she becomes a sort of a rebel when the life that she wants to live is denied to her by the cruel fate of time. She spends most part of life in Calcutta, but she becomes a witness to a most horrible scene when she visits Dhaka to bring back her uncle. In that visit her aged uncle and also her nephew meet tragic death. She becomes a sort of dangling woman suspended by the history. The story Tha'mma is told to the narrator by herself (121-26). She was born in Dhaka, and grew up as a member of

...a big joint family then, with everyone living and eating together: her grandparents, her parents, she and Mayadebi, her Jethamoshai –herfather's elder brother– and his family, which included three cousins of roughly her own age, as well as a couple of spinster aunts. She remembered her grandfather, although she had only been six when he died: a thin, stern looking man with a frown etched permanently into his forehead. In his presence everyone, including her father and Jethamoshai, spoke in whispers, with their heads down and their eyes fixed firmly on the floor. But when he left the house for the district courts, where he practiced as an advocate, the house would erupt with the noisy games of the five cousins. Every evening the five

children would be led by their mothers into his study, where they would each have to recite their alphabets – Bengali first and then English –with their hands held out, palm downwards, and he would rap them on the knuckles with the handle of his umbrella every time they made a mistake. If they cried they were rapped on their shins. (Ghosh 121)

But as it almost always happens, the ancestral house had to be partitioned, after the death of her grandfather. She came to know about the terrorist movements in Bengal which was in fact the nationalist movement to free India from the clutches of the British imperial regime: “about secret terrorist societies like Anushilan and Jugantar and all their off-shoots, their clandestine networks, and the home-made bombs with which they tried to assassinate British officials and policemen; and a little about the arrests, deportations and executions with which the British had retaliated” (37)

She was studying B.A. in History in Dhaka. She had a great liking for revolutionaries like Kudhram Bose and Bagha Jatin, and in her young romantic imagination had even wanted to become a revolutionary. A shy young man of her class was arrested on the charges of conspiring to kill an English magistrate. He was tried and deported to the cellular jail in the Andamans :

She'd been expecting a huge man with burning eyes and a lion's mane of a beard, and there he was, all the while, at the back of her class, sitting shyly by himself. She could so easily have talked to him. He would have been handsome too, she had decided later, if only he would shave that beard of his. Lying in her bed, she would think to herself – if only she had known, if only she had been working with him, she would have warned



him somehow, she would have saved him, she would have gone to Khulna with him too, and stood at his side, with a pistol in her hands, waiting for that English magistrate.... (39)

She wanted to work for the revolutionaries, to run errands for them, cook their food, and wash their clothes because they were fighting the enemy of the country. When the narrator asks her whether she would have killed the English magistrate, she replies, “I would have been frightened.... But I would have prayed for strength, and god willing, yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom: I would have done anything to be free” (39).

But all her romantic sojourn with revolution came to an end when she was married off and went to Burma. Her married life also proved to be short-lived, as she bore a child in 1925 and became a widow in 1935 when she was just 32. She had to start a new phase of life in Calcutta as a school teacher in 1936 to fend for herself.

There is not much depiction of her life from here onwards, and the reader is expected to construct the story from the links dropped by the author now and then. She had to live in a one-room tenement in Bhowanipore. She would dream of “the old house, her parents, Jethamoshai [her uncle], her childhood” (125) in Dhaka, but she could never go there. The saga of partition and the attendant problems of refugees had no direct impact on her life as she had left Dhaka long back. She had more pressing problems in getting her son educated, declining the help offered by her sister. The next happenings of her life –her son getting employment in a private company, his marriage, the birth of a grandson in 1952, her own retirement in 1962 as the headmistress of the school she had joined – are all revealed in an indirect way.

Thus Ghosh portrays Tha'mma as a typical middle-class Indian, suffering and braving odds that confront her. She can be considered the real heroine of the novel with all her peculiarities. She is a sincere, hard working, and time-conscious lady for whom wasting one's time is an inexcusable crime. She tells the narrator, her grandson, that if one wastes time, it starts stinking. The typical middle-class Indian mindset is revealed when she refuses help from her sister. As the narrator senses:

... the fears she had accumulated in the long years after my grandfather's premature death, when she had had to take her school teaching job in order to educate my father : I could guess at a little of what it had cost her then to refuse her rich sister's help and of the wealth of pride it had earned her, and I knew intuitively that all that had kept her from agreeing at once was her fear of accepting anything from anyone that she could not return in exact measure.(33)

This mindset is in contrast with both upper and lower class of society as the former is used to receiving favours, where as the latter cannot deny on account of its helplessness. We can also sense a kind of a feminist in Tha'mma. For her, all men are like Tridib: "... at heart she believed that all men would be like him if it were not for their mothers and wives" (6).As a teacher, she was sincere and innovative. She was always working to develop new techniques and methods for the benefit of her students. As the narrator says:

When she was headmistress my grandmother had decided once that every girl who opted for Home Science ought to be taught how to cook at least one dish that was a specialty of some part of the country other than her own. It would be a good way, she

thought, of teaching them about the diversity and vastness of the country. (116)

Tha'mma's character can be said to be a tribute to many unrecognized women who are responsible for the growth and sustenance of "family" in our country. Though she loves and shows concern for the narrator, she can never reconcile herself to the breach in his character. When he visits her on hearing news of her ill health, she accuses him of his worshipping of Ila and visiting cheap women in Delhi. The narrator is shocked at what he considers her cruelty. Adding to this, just before her death, she writes a letter to the principal of the college where her grandson (the narrator) is studying to oust him from the college, citing his unethical conduct. Of course, the narrator is able to "convince" the principal of his conduct blaming the sickness that might have affected Tha'mma's reasoning faculty. The narrator thinks, "I have never understood how she learnt of the women I had visited a couple of times, with my friends; nor do I know how she saw that I was in love with Ila so long before I dared to admit it to myself" (93).

Though Tha'mma's is very strict as far as spending time is concerned till her retirement, after that with "stinking time," she gets deviated from her path. She gets overpowered by her thoughts about family, her uncle in Bangladesh, and others. This new change in her life costs her dearly, for this "change" claims a precious, young life. Tha'mma takes up a "mission" in her old age. This is to find and bring back her uncle Jethemoshai in Bangladesh. She says, "It doesn't matter we recognize each other or not. We're the same flesh, the same blood, the same bone, and now at last, after all these years, perhaps will be able to make amends for all that bitterness and hatred" (129). She is at loss to understand the

evil in humans. It is well said that old bitterness cannot be put to an end, try how well one might be. But Tha'mma only succeeds to meet Jethamoshai, now a man without any memory. At first he fails to recognize her, but when Tridib reminds him of his connection with them, he suddenly recognizes: "The old man's face lit up. They died! he said, his voice quivering in triumph. They had two daughters: one with a face like a vulture, and another one who was as poisonous as a cobra but all pretty and goody-goody to look at"(214).The irony is this old man is spitting venom against the same people who have come to rescue him from the wretched life he has been leading. In this attempt, they are also going to lose a very precious life! Tha'mma's visit to Dhaka can be said to be her hamartia and she has to pay for that. It is her new passion for relatives that brings doom on them. Tridib, Jethamoshai, and Khalil, the rickshaw-puller get killed in the communal frenzy when they try to return to India from Dhaka after convincing Jethamoshai to accompany them. This tragic incident has its own bearing on the psyche of Tha'mma, for her perception of human relations changes drastically indeed. This lady, who has been talking about peaceful co-existence among people of different countries hitherto, begins talking about a kind of pre-emptive strike to keep Indians safe. She donates her gold chain to the fund for war. When the narrator questions her about her decision of donating the chain, she emotionally says, "We have to kill them before they kill us; we have to wipe them out" (237).

Childhood is one of the major themes of *The Shadow Lines*. Tridib, the narrator's older cousin, exerts a great influence on the narrator. The narrator looks at the world with Tridib's eyes, which have a kind of detached sensibility. For the narrator, Tridib is a perfect role model as he tries to identify himself with Tridib. The narrator says, "I was nervous

now: I could see that he was waiting to hear what I'd have to say, and I didn't want to disappoint him" (28). The narrator's identity takes shape in and through his responses to the characters he engages with and the responses he elicits. He remains unnamed and the reader constructs his image and physical traits by events narrated.

Great fiction bases itself on human psychology. This is quite natural. So, it also appears some times that these novelists might have smuggled psychological precepts from texts of psychology. In psychoanalytical literature, castration fear in male children is a major theme. This is exploited by Tridib when he tells a story to the narrator and Robi: "He (Tridib) had smiled and gone on to tell us in ghastly detail about the circumcision rites of one of the desert tribes. And then, spectacles glinting, he had said: So before you leave you'd better decide whether you would care to have all that done to your little wee-wees, just in case you're captured" (19). There is also what is known as coming together of complexes in childhood and growing. The narrator's relatives come from different places and with different stories to tell. The complex has such a great impact on the narrator that he cannot think of these people as his blood relations; he says, "...I could not bring myself to believe that their worth in my eyes could be reduced to something so arbitrary and unimportant as a blood relationship" (3). This can be the reason why the narrator fails to establish any relationship with Ila. He is noticed only when Ila's relationship with Nick gets spoiled. The narrator falls a prey to inferiority complex when he compares himself with Nick. Ila says, "He is very big. Much bigger than you: much stronger too. He's twelve, three years older than us" (49). Life changes for the narrator with this encounter:

...after that day Nick Price, whom I had never seen, and would, as far as I knew, never see, became a spectral presence beside me in my looking glass; growing with me, but always bigger and better, and in some way more desirable –I did not know what, except that it was so in Ila’s eyes and therefore true. (50)

The narrator’s relationship with Ila is only one sided. He wants Ila, but Ila is not interested. Maybe the narrator’s middle-class family background is the reason. Another significant peep into child-psychology is exemplified by the narrator’s coming to know about Tradib’s death. Tridib was very close to the narrator, as his friend, philosopher, and guide. His influence on the narrator is immense. Yet when he comes to know about his death, “I felt nothing –no shock, no grief. I did not understand that I would never see him again; my mind was not large enough to accommodate so complete an absence” (239). This feeling is also experienced by many children. So, when a person dies, they innocently ask questions like “Why are you crying?” or “Why is grandpa lying like that?” The elders cannot answer such questions because they do not know what to say.

Irony of fate works in matters of love. Pain comes mainly because of love. Love eludes definition. Love is a kind of emotion that centres on a single individual. This individual could be mother, father, sister, brother, or any one. So, it is a wrong notion that love exists only for a suitable mating partner or the opposite sex. Love has a very wide scope and is very much misunderstood. Another aspect is that love demands suspension of logic. Love and logic are natural enemies and so are love and other rationalities – equality, justice, etc. So, when one is irrational, the mindset will be uncertain, excited, and confused. When an individual thinks only of himself/herself, discarding others, control over

emotional life gets disturbed. By looking at love from this angle, one can say that the narrator is in love with Tridib, Tha'mma, and more so with Ila, his eccentric cousin.

It may be appropriate to say here that the narrator fails to get back the love in the same measure he shows to others. He gets what is known as reciprocity. Tridib reciprocates his hero-worship to an extent; May drains the very meaning of his life: "I was jealous, achingly jealous, as only a child can be, because it had always been my unique privilege to understand Tridib, and that day at the Victoria Memorial I knew I had lost that privilege; somehow May had stolen it from me" (170). With Tha'mma also his relationship gets strained. This is because Tha'mma never changes her rules or code of conduct. He tries to shake off the chains of his body: "I jerked my head out of her hands. She met my gaze and smiled. I could not believe that this withered, wasted, powerless woman was the same person that I had so much loved and feared" (91). This is how the relationship breaks. With Ila, there seems to be no way for any reciprocity since she was not at all concerned about the narrator. In London, he spends much time trying to talk to her, see her, and hear her speak but in vain. The narrator explains the connection between love and human tendency to "enumerate and quantify" (95). The novel here expresses the complexity of love. Love cannot be "purchased" with gifts; it just happens. So, applying the ordinary ruler of wealth and power to normalize it is a mistake. By applying "the metaphors of normality," (96) we expect justice in love. But it does not turn out that way. The narrator tries his best to get Ila's attention and reciprocation. But, what he gets is:

She would open the door and say –Nice to see you,  
come in, but I hope you're not expecting any dinner –

and I would tell her, smiling brightly – I've walked eight miles, it took me exactly two hours and ten minutes – and she would arch her eyebrows in surprise and say: Why? Is it some kind of health kick? (96)

Ila does not reciprocate for the one who loves her so passionately. She loves Nick, who is not sincere in his love. This is the baffling aspect of love.

*The Shadow Lines* suggests multiples ideas related to trans-border situations impregnated with the civilization-growth and international borders. The title suggests that all lines are shadow lines; they are not real. The very notion of modern nation states has been questioned. According to the author, these lines only succeed in dividing people, not uniting them. The very concept of nationhood is a mirage since it is not logically based. The lines drawn by nature in the form of mountains, oceans, and rivers are real. But lines drawn by humans in the form of borders are shallow and hence unjustifiable.

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