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Dear Readers & Contributors,

This autumn issue of IJELLS as revisited the old and brought in the new. It is an issue which compiles many poems, interesting articles on various aspects and on the areas that are fast expanding the scope of English Literature, bringing in multidisciplinary elements, demonstrating how it should truly be. One interesting article is on Janakpur art along with another very interesting art on a Telugu novella *Atadu Adavini Jayinchaadu*. Taking it further on this path of uniqueness is an article on a Telugu novel *Antarani Vasantham*.

We also have a couple of articles on Literature & film discussing Cultural Diversity in Literature and Film and Post-97 Hong Kong films .

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju
Founding & Chief Editor



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Slow Bond...

Dechhen Dolma

Enveloped in a red 'mother bear' blanket
 Nestling on her lap
 Dampens her new woven kira
 With his hot hot piss

Silently Dolma picks him up
 Hands him to his dad
 Who chuckles with pride
 Eyes fully on his three-day old son

Kelsang protrudes though in rage
 Calls him names in ways
 Displaying her innocence
 Of an angry three-day old sister

Tshela handles her though
 With love and care
 Asking her to love him more
 To help him grow

Sisterly love comes to her slow
 With each passing day
 She learns a new way
 To care her brother so

'Life has never been the same in my family
 After my brother came home'
 Kelsang had said once grimly
 Now she says again *but* with full of pride.

Now she takes his little fingers in her palm
 And leads him everywhere
 Teaching him to rise with every fall
 Now, now that's what I call a '*slow bond*'





The most beautiful lines ever written

Himanshu Shukla

Today I can write the most beautiful line
I have ever written
Look how smooth the nib of this gorgeous pen
rubs on the folds of the paper on my lap
Today I can write the most beautiful line indeed
Today I hear from that inner well of consciousness
or soul or whatever you want to call it, and today
I notice each breath.
I hear each of these little storms
rushing by the entrances of my nose
Today I feel the pumping of my heart
and shaking of my palm as I have set out to
write the most beautiful line
Today when I cuddled a dog
a German looking scary street dog
I realized all it needed
was love
a little warmth of my hands on its fur
a little pat on its back
Today I felt so one with it that it became me
and I became it
and the most beautiful line I can ever write
is this
This is it.

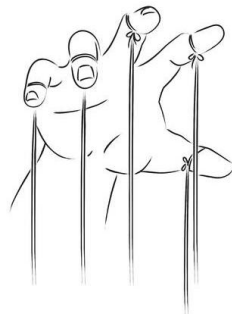




To Be a Puppet

Muthu Meena Losini

Wedded to be innocent, ignorant though you are not to be
 To be mom and mum though you are not to be so
 To be submissive and subsided though you are expressive
 To be an introvert though you are an extrovert
 To be bounded though you are unbind
 To be in control though you are uncontrollable
 To be unwise, foolish and untactful though you are tactic
 To be unacceptable in even mean ideas though
 you are accepted in a gathering
 To be a dolly though you are alive
 To be dependant though you are independent
 To be an observer though you speak sensibly
 To be in other shoes though no one is at your shoes
 To be unaware of everything though you aware of few things
 To be a sophisticated slave, given all comforts and requirements
 To be a loveable girl though nobody cares you
 To be all desire is your desire though your desire is unnoticed
 To be forced to accept your spouse as a goat to be slaughtered
 To be an arrow that never reaches its aim
 To be a follower as a dog to its master
 To be a tree this always gives forth its fruits
 To be unstable as a monkey
 To be an actor who disguises accord to the scene
 To be deaf and dumb, nothing expects in return except food and shelter
 To be a puppet in the hands of the Puppeteer
 To be an unpaid keeper and caretaker
 To be expected to hold smiley face always.
 Better
 God might have given the clay in His hand
 To create each ones' fiancé
 Whenever He wants
 He can collapse and recreate again
 Creator of creation is HE!
 ---Plea of a Perfect Wife.





Old Men Walk Funny

Michael Lee Johnson

Old men walk funny with shadows and time eating at their heels.
Pediatric walkers, prostate exams, bend over, then most die.
They grow poor, leave their grocery list at home,
and forget their social security checks bank account numbers,
dwell on whether they wear dentures, uppers or lowers;
did they put their underwear on?
They can't remember where they put down their glasses,
did they drop them on memory lane U.S. Route 66?
Was it watermelon wine or drive in movies they forgot their virginity in?
Hammered late evenings alone bottle up Mogen David wine madness
mixed with diet 7-Up, all moving parts squeak and crack in unison.
At night, they scream in silent dreams no one else hears,
they are flapping jaws sexual exchange with monarch butterfly wings.
Old men walk funny to the barbershop with gray hair, no hair;
sagging pants to physical therapy.
They pray for sunflowers above their graves,
a plot that bears their name with a poem.
They purchase their burial plots, pennies in a jar for years,
beggar's price for a deceased wife.
Proverb: in this end, everything that was long at one time is now passive,
or cut short. Ignore us old moonshiners, or poets that walk funny,
"they aren't hurting anyone anymore."





Dreams like Butterfly

Tshoki Dorji

Is she wind-driven or is she flying on her own?
 Often, I think, upon seeing her.
 She takes flight awkwardly
 And it seems to me that she doesn't even know
 Where she is going or coming from.
 She is little more than
 A tiny, coloured piece of paper
 Blown in the air.
 I have dreams, but small and simple
 Like the butterfly that keeps flying
 Or as if blown in the air.
 Why do my dreams often fly away?
 Every time I get closer, my dreams caution me
 Like the butterfly does.
 I have dreams, but small and simple.
 Sometimes, when it perches on the ground I see her
 As if, wanting her skin to be tanned
 She sits there with half-opened wings
 And says, "Don't come any closer
 Or I will fly away and away and away."
 Keeping the distance, I from my pocket
 Draw out my phone for camera
 I then stretch my arms to take a close look,
 I never am as quick to click as she is to fly
 I squint my eyes to see where she is going.
 Amazed by her fluttering from one place to another I follow her;
 I see her colours and the patterns,
 Those small dots that add to her beauty,
 When she rests on those flowers.
 Perhaps, she doesn't notice my presence
 For she rests there for a long while,
 And I see the painting of paintings,
 She is a born-artist.
 -An artist who can play with colours-
 Each colour is evenly distributed.
 As she closes her wings, one mirrors the other
 And in awe, I stand and watch her.
 Sitting at my table with my pen and my paper
 I can only recall how lovely she looks,
 How wondrously she wanders,
 But cannot praise her beauty with mere words.
 Such are my dreams, they all look alike
 I wonder if I can catch them sooner
 For my time here is not very long.





Cross-Cultural Encounter in Anita Desai's *The Zigzag Way*

Anita Konwar

Introduction

Anita Desai herself coming from a cross-cultural background can better understand the problems and prospects related to the life of an immigrant. Her novels and short-stories on cross-cultural background deal with people's search for identity and their hopes and frustrations in the process. However hard they try to assimilate themselves in the foreign setting, the unwillingness and suspicion on the part of the natives stand as an obstacle in their pursuit of cross-cultural identities. On the other hand, the emergence of a new cultural identity is possible if both the natives and aliens are tolerant and compassionate towards each other and willing to accept the good aspects of their respective cultures.

Desai's novel, *The Zigzag Way* is about the Mexican world and Mexican culture. Though the setting is in Mexico, characters from different cultures are interconnected here. Desai is interested in the Day of the Dead celebrated by the Huichol Indians. It is through this festival that the mystery of the novel is explored. The novel offers a powerful insight into a man's attempt to recover the scattered pieces of his identity, yet providing an ironic counterpart to the systematic appropriation of native cultures by anthropologists and ethnographers, whose nativism, patronizing attitude has often worked as a measure of their own distancing from dubious pasts, but also as a paradigm for the practices of containment and colonization of the other which ultimately always imply a reduction to an exotic and indigenous view of the difference. The protagonist of the novel is an outsider, trying to make sense of his past by inscribing it into another, larger experience of migration and exploitation, that of his ancestors and of the Indian natives employed in the Mexican mines of the early 20th century.

Discussion

There are three generations in this novel. Each one from these generations is related to different cultures. Davey Rowse represents the first generation. He is from Cornwall and migrates to Mexico in order to join the mining company. The workers there are Scotch, Cornish and Mexicans and they together play football. As the Revolution starts in Mexico, all these miners return to their homeland. Davey's wife Betty died in Mexico while giving birth to a son and she was buried in the cemetery near the mines. Paul is Davey's son and he represents the second generation. He was born in Mexico and was taken to England as an infant. He was brought up there by Betty's spinster sisters, Agnes and Sarah. He does not



remember a thing about Mexico. Mexico is just a fairy tale to him. Later on, he goes to stay with his father and stepmother. After he leaves school, he is in search of a job. For a few days, he works as a clerk in a shipping firm and then he decides to go to America but accidentally stays back at Maine on his way and finds a job in a local fishing business. He even marries the daughter, Madelaine from this family. This family was originally from an Irish Catholic tribe. The cultural assimilation takes place in Paul's marriage with Madelaine. Paul becomes one with this family and he forgets his English self. He has hardly any connection with Cornwall as he tries to forget his past. The act of his putting away the box containing his mother's letters and documents of his family indicates his wish to forget the memories of his family. He put the box in the attic and did not open it as if "memories and nostalgia had to be abandoned, like excess baggage, if one was to complete the experience his father had had of emigration and a new beginning in a New World" (*The Zigzag Way*, P.34). Paul cuts himself off from the memories and nostalgia of his past life in order to enter this new world. He wholeheartedly submits himself to the business of the Madelaine's family and appears to be 'the most contented of men in his little cubbyhole of an office, keeping the accounts for 'O' Brien's'(P.53) thus permanently settling down in Maine.

Eric represents the third generation. Contrary to his father and grandfather, he is highly educated. He completes his research in Boston on American immigration. As his father does not speak much about his family, he is also not interested in it. When his girlfriend, Em wants to go to Mexico for her fieldwork, he also decides to go there. He remembers one thing that his father was born in Mexico. Eric came to know the Mexican mines when he was barely four or five years old. From his grandfather he learnt the names-La Luz, Valenciana, Los Lorenzos, Real del Monte, Real de Catorce, Sierra Madre Oriental. The child Eric playing with a toy train filled with "sparkling flakes of ore in the pebble dashed cottage by the sea"(P.154) makes him acquainted with the Mexican life of his grandfather. At that time Davey Rowse, spoke to his grandchild of the mines in Mexico where he had once worked. Later on, Eric knew the fact that his grandmother had died in Mexico. His father told him about some letters his mother wrote home to Cornwall from Mexico. From this his voyage starts. At the beginning of the novel, Desai cites, "The ancient Chinese believed time is not a ladder one ascends into the future but a ladder one descends into the past" (P.1). This citation serves as a prologue that strikes the keynote of the novel. After coming to Mexico, Eric through a criss-crossing way unfolds the past of his family. Davey, Paul and Eric-these three characters shuffle in three different cultures-English, American and Mexican. Davey even after coming back to England cannot forget his life in Mexico. This is seen when he speaks about different mining places in Mexico to the child, Eric. Paul does not try to know the past life of his parents in Mexico. He cuts himself off from the Mexican life. The Mexican culture is brought



back to the foreground through Eric when he meets the ghost of his grandmother on the day of the festival “Dia de los Muertos”, celebrated by the Huichol Indians.

The hybridity of culture is noticed in Dona Vera. Her identity is quite doubtful. She is Austrian and hastily marries a man Don Roderigo whom she meets during the war period. Roderigo was a Creole who was a wealthy person. They owned mines, houses, streets in Mexico. Her husband’s family had good relationship with President Diaz. They lived in Mexico City, and Guanajuato, and Guadalajara. But Roderigo did not know about Vera’s family. Later on he grumbled at himself for not having made enquiries about the woman he was to marry and her mysterious lack of family or means. So, Vera’s identity remains a mystery. People have only guesses regarding her identity. The painter Andre Bernstein tells Eric,

One more mystery. Many more rumours. Some have said she was a Nazi, a collaborator who got out before it was too late. Some say the opposite-that she was in the Resistance, about to be betrayed. That is the story she herself encourages, I am told. For that reason, I think it was the opposite.(P.101)

Vera had to undergo hardships in her past days. Poor economic condition compelled her to dance in the bars and theatres. But at that time the political situation was getting worse and on one night Vera’s father was beaten up by a group of anti-Nazis. Vera wanted to escape. Suddenly she met Roderigo who showed her the prospect of a new life with a new identity. She wanted to be protected from the violence of the war. So, the unknown Mexico city was the safe refuge for her: “An outsider, a foreigner, presenting an opening to a foreign world”(P.67). The art and culture of the Huichol Indians in Mexico attracts her. She works towards preserving and preaching that culture. Though she had only elementary education and no degree of a university, she unexpectedly gets wide acclamation. She is such a clever trickster that she is able to conceal her identity through her acquaintance with the Huichol culture. Though Vera has little formal education, she has achieved name and fame in the field of cultural research. But she does not dare to write down her work because she does not know the language of the Huichol Indians. English and Spanish are her spoken languages. She cannot use these two languages for writing purpose. She is expert in her mother tongue only-that is German. But she does not use it. She has crushed it out of her life. There are no tracks to find out her original identity. André further informs Eric -in Europe, in Austria and in Germany-there are archives which contain letters, documents that can provide clues regarding Vera’s identity. In Europe, no one knows her Mexican life. “Her story has many chapters-European, Mexican, Huichol...’(P.101)



Three different cultures intermingle to make her identity-the queen of Hacienda de la Soledad-the queen of Sierra. She has dedicated herself to the preservation and propagation of Huichol traditions like the pilgrimage to the mountain and the hunt for peyote cactus. Vera maintains Huichol tradition in her dress also. While going to deliver a lecture on the tradition of the Huichol Indians, she wears “Indian garments, striped and flowered, trimmed and embroidered, red and green and blue and yellow like the feathers of a macaw, and silver jewellery from her neck to her knees”(P.30). At Hacienda de la Soledad, Eric meets Vera and enquires after her family connection to the mines. She denies her connection to the mines. She would like to introduce herself as an ethnographer. While searching her identity, Vera had to undergo lots of difficulties because Hacienda de la Soledad was a deserted place. It was in a broken condition having been the abode of bats and scorpions. She turned this place into a living abode through her efforts. The new location becomes a place of integration. It is a survival strategy of Vera that she does not exclude the other but tries to assimilate herself into the other. For her, the culture of the Huichol Indians is a living culture. She wants to protect Huichol culture and holds the mining industry responsible for the destruction of the Huichol traditions. Through her efforts in Hacienda de la Soledad, the lost Huichol culture has been revived. This Huichol culture was on the verge of extinction as the Spanish priests converted these poor people. Vera sees both the problems and prospects in adjusting herself to this alien land. But she is able to remove the problems and a new cultural self emerges in her. She is satisfied as she receives accolades for her work.

Vera’s anonymity, her signifying absence of individual identity, becomes a precondition for her gaining the acceptance and trust of the Huichol community and it prevents any serious conflict between her and the community. Instead of a biased attitude based on race, class and ethnicity, she shows a keen desire to extend her helping hand towards the locals. She develops a sympathetic understanding with the people living there. A critic, Jasbir Jain says that “the narrative of the Diaspora is above all a narrative of the ‘self,’ for the very act of migration implies a ‘bodily’ lifting out of the familiar and relocation in the new and the unfamiliar” (*The New Parochialism: Homeland in the Writing of Indian Diaspora*, p.79). In Vera’s case, it is not only a problem of relocation in the unfamiliar, but also a readjustment of herself in the new setting. With the expansion of globalization, the various local cultures around the world have gained opportunities to de-limit their limited borders and globalize their uniqueness through the spread of market forces and modern technology.

Culture knows no bounds. People may migrate from one country to another in search of jobs. Whatever the cause of migration, during their stay, the traditions, culture of the native, influence the immigrants. Due to the influx of immigrant workers, the cultural and racial homogeneity of a region gives way to



heterogeneity. Eric's grandfather, Davey Rowse had the two cultural backgrounds- the English and the Mexican. Betty Jennings too is originally a Cornish woman, but she comes to Mexico as a maid for the children of the Hammer family and later on gets married to Davey. Though the Cornish miners came to Mexico in search of jobs, they are not totally assimilated with the locals. They have a separate life. The Cornish miners are different from the other miners as they do not follow the popish rites like the others. There is a long ritual which the other miners follow.

On a landing below they had erected an image of the saint they worshipped, the saint of trabajadores, workmen, decorated with fresh flowers or branches, and they would light candles to him before going in different directions to start work.(P.124)

The Cornish miners did not take part in them and after coming out of the mine at the end of the day, they sang their own Methodist hymns. Though they are on a foreign land they are not severed from their roots. Their identity as Cornish people is not lost and their love for their own culture is seen when they celebrate Duke Cornwall's birthday on the mountain. Betty feels happy and she writes to her family giving the account of the occasion: "Did you ever think," she wrote, "that here on a mountain in Mexico we would be celebrating the Duke of Cornwall's birthday?" (P.130). The Cornish miners gather for the picnic with their families. They sing Cornish songs and a toast is drunk to the Duke-beer for the men, lemonade for the women and children. Thus, the Cornish miners adjust to the new setting while celebrating their own traditions. Eric, the representative of the third generation is attracted towards the Mexican culture after his arrival in Mexico and is determined to unravel the mystery of his ancestors. In order to know about the mining industry, he reads *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* by Alexander Von Humboldt and wonders: "Was this the world his grandfather had found when he crossed the ocean and sought out new territory where he might stake his claim?" (P.79) Once the Indians used to toil laboriously in the mines. Eric gets the information from Carl Sartorius's book *Mexico and Mexicans*. He remembers his grandfather showing a toy train to him and wonders whether his grandfather was motivated by necessity or by adventure: "How much of what had driven him, to come here was sheer necessity and how much adventure? His motives and his role were to Eric an anomaly, a disturbing one" (P.85). He is not sure of his grandfather's motives behind his coming to Mexico.

Journey helps people in acquiring experience, wisdom and knowledge. In order to acquire that knowledge, one has to travel oneself, in a way the physical journey becomes symbolic of one's self-discovery as in Eric's case. By tunneling his way back into his ancestry, he searches his own identity. Initially he faces problems on his way, but later on notices the prospect of discovering his ancestral past. In Satya P. Mohanty's words, "One's cultural identity, involves fundamental discoveries about what our ancestry is, what continuity consists in,



how cultural meanings do not just sustain themselves through history but one in fact materially embodied and fought for" (*Literary Theory and the Claims of History: Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Poetics*, P.227). On the day of el Dia de los Muertos, Eric starts his voyage to the mountains. He feels like an "explorer on the brink of discovery" (P.97). Dona Vera's speech on the Huichol Indians makes him interested in the festival of the Dead. Though Vera delivered the speech in Spanish, the very mention of the mining places like Sierra Madre Oriental, Sierra de los Catorce, Real del Monte, La Purisima, La Asuncion, Los Lorenzos, La Luz...acts as a bridge with the past when his grandfather used to tell him about these places. Eric was oblivious of these places for years because he did not have any connection with his father's English home except his one early visit. Now the mention of these mining places refreshes his memory and he is doubly encouraged to discover the past. He makes up his mind to discover the tomb of his grandmother and to offer flower at her tomb. As the title of the novel suggests, after crossing a zigzag way, Eric confronts the ghost of his grandmother on the night of the Dia de los Muertos. She appears as a young girl who addresses Eric as 'Paul' and says that he is dark-complexioned like Davey. She makes it clear that "the Cornish aren't English at all, that they come from somewhere else" (P.176). Eric replies that they might have come from Spain. She further adds that the Mexicans are especially migrants. Their origin may be traced to Asia. She even remembers her own days when she came to Mexico from Cornwall. She refers to the graves, known as Jew's Hill. It is rather tragic on her part that she has to die on a foreign land where she still hopes to have a look at her kith and kin even after her death. The cultural disparity is seen when the dead bodies of the foreigners are buried separately in the Jew's Hill. In Betty's words: *It was the place where they buried everyone not of their faith* (P.177). The cultural assimilation takes place when Eric follows the tradition of bringing flowers to his grandmother for the afterlife. On this very day, the Mexican families bring different things-*tequila for the drunkards, cards for the gamblers, guitars for the musical, sugar lams and chicks for los angelitos* (P.178). There is another tradition still continued by the Indians. They climb the mountains to pick the peyote cactus. For them, the peyote cactus is very sacred as it grows only here on the mountain. They eat peyote as it makes them dream. Eric is also interested in the peyote cactus and wants to try it. He is ready for the adventure, but as it is nearing the dawn, the ghost of his grandmother disappears and his quest of the peyote remains incomplete. Yet the positive aspect of his quest is that he is able to discover the root of his family and being the representative of the third generation, he has found out the connecting link amongst the three cultures-Cornish, American and Mexican.

Conclusion:

In Stuart Hall's view, "Diaspora experience is defined not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a



conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity" (*Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, P.120). Diaspora identities are constantly produced and reproduced anew, through transformation and difference. Multiculturalism as racial identity enforces racism, ethnocentric bias, class hatred and it establishes the unalterable boundaries between individuals. Reflecting on his own experience as an exile, Salman Rushdie says that a writer like him is always "haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back", even at the risk of being "mutated into a pillar of salt" (*Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism*, P.10). Michael Berliner and Gary Hull have pointed out the positive aspects of multiculturalism. They believe that every human being should be treated and judged as an individual, not by his/her colour of skin, nor by religion, gender, class or nationality. They argue, "the spread of racism requires the destruction of an individual's confidence in his own mind. Such an individual then anxiously seeks a sense of identity by clinging to some group, abandoning his autonomy and his rights, allowing his ethnic group to tell him what to believe" (*Diversity and Multiculturalism: The New Racism*, P.1). The purpose of multiculturalism should be to recognize each self as subject and to recognize the other not as object but as another different and equal subject. Multiculturalism should aim at cultural assimilation by increasing the willingness of people of different cultures to understand and respect the differences of the other. Cultural identities are constructed in the system of differences. One has to accept the potency of the other's gaze, to sustain that moment when self and other look at and construct each other. It is through the relation to the other, the relation to what is not, that cultural identity is constructed.

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Metaphorising Tribal Life: A Sisyphean Struggle in *Atadu Adavini Jayinchaadu*

J. Bheemaiah

Keshava Reddy's *Athadu Adavini Jayinchadu* (He Conquered the Jungle) is a classic novelette which is slim and slender to look at but powerful in its tribal theme involving a struggle for existence. The novelette was serialized in 1994 and was published in book form in 1985. It is incredible to say but true that the little classic has been widely translated into 14 languages. Finely fabricated in Rayalaseema climate of Andhra Pradesh, the novelette provides an interesting story of an illiterate old man who is a swine herd belonging to the *Yerukala* community (Name of a tribe that lives by poaching and hunting). But the name of the old man does not figure anywhere in the novelette giving a scope for symbolic representation of the tribal community.

The stark reality of the life of the old man is deftly narrated by the writer spiced in Rayalaseema dialect. His traditional occupation is to rear pigs which form his moveable property which is a common inheritance of every tribal man. It is everything for him. He is the proud owner of twenty pigs of which two are *sukka* sows. The first one has already given birth to ten piglets. When such deliveries take place, the old man celebrates the birth of the pigs by drowning himself in toddy. He also keeps singing to mark the birth occasion. Such celebrations reflect and even signify the tribal culture and tradition.

The old man's single minded search drives the reader into the jungle world. He is deterred neither by his old age nor by his time of search. There is no other company for him except wild animals around. We learn so many interesting things of the animal world when the *sukka* sow moves into the shelter beneath a *tindra* shrub so as to give birth. The babbler bird, which generally announces the arrival of every new entrant into the jungle, attracts the old man's attention leading him to the *tindra* bush. The bird's cry is helpful to him for easy location of the sow, sensing the smell of afterbirth; the old man confirms that the sow has laid the piglets in the shrub. When he sees the piglets he starts counting. His joy knows no bounds. He hails them as ten moons.

He exclaims in his natural jargon and lets out his expletive: "*Padimandi sukka na kodukulu puttinaaru: Ore neeyamma sandamasala madiri yelagatayunnaaru gadara!-Nanotlo chakkara posinatlaundi. Kadupulo palu posinatlaundi.*"(Reddy 27). (Ten fellows, *Sukki's* sons are born! "Ori--your mother!-As radiant as new moons you are! I felt as if someone had sweetened my mouth with sugar and filled my belly with milk).

Armed with no more than a spear and a knife and above all his unconquerable will and indomitable courage, the old man is determined to protect his sow and her litter. He is well aware of the attitude of his sow that she becomes ferocious when she delivers new



born. Generally animals such as dogs and hens are in a very sensitive mood and tend to attack friends or foes sensing possible danger to them and to their new born.

The old man has good knowledge about jungle laws since his life is associated with the animals. One may wonder as to how the old man could be led to the exact location of his sow; there are two strong reasons for easy location of the sow's hideout. One: he has in mind the entire physical map of the jungle, which is supported by the tracks left behind by the *sukka* sow. Second: the cry of a babbler bird which place a crucial role. The old man calls the bird a seeker as it would announce the presence of any new entrant into the jungle. The bird's cry proves a boon for the old man on one hand and also it becomes a bane on the other for its foolish ceaseless cry.

The old man knows that he would certainly become a victim of the sow if she notices him. To avoid this possible danger and also to keep an eye on the pig, he stations himself on top of a *sunkarenu* tree. He feels that "the innocent babbler and the recalcitrant sow are both obstacles in the achievement of my goal. It is really a strange predicament. This very sow, I am struggling to protect, is the sow that is ready to pulp me at the slightest chance". (27) Ironically, the same bird which helped the old man to locate the sow becomes instrumental in bringing a jackal into the vicinity of the *tindra* bush where the *sukka* sow stays.

A few minutes earlier, the old man had kept thinking as to how to repay the bird for its help. Now he is forced to kill it in order to protect the sow and its piglets. When he makes a bold attempt to keep the jackals at bay, he is fiercely attacked by the sow. Badly bleeding in the attack, he climbs back on to the tree. The old man knows well that he in danger but he doesn't use his spear and knife because he is committed to protect the sow her piglets even at the cost of his life. After some time he has to face a challenging problem from a pack of the jackals determined to invade the *tindra* bush. The old man whose priority is shifted to save only the piglets, unwillingly kills the sow and wards off the jackals only to lose two piglets out of ten. While carrying eight piglets home he loses them to the vultures when he falls asleep out of torpor near a pond.

The old man returns home empty-handed. Physically he appears to be the loser. His cherished goal is not fulfilled. He himself admits, "The battle is finished. I am utterly defeated." He also muses, "I have suffered the greatest misfortunes today and endured countless blows of ill luck. Even then, it is not the last day of my life." Though he confesses to his defeat, he reassures the reader that he is optimistic about his future. He appears to be the vanquished in physical terms but he is victorious in real sense of the term. Readers are reassured that the old man survives desperation and the very survival itself is his triumph. His last statement emphasizes reassertion and optimistic view of his life. His moral strength still gets strengthened. He learns a lesson through the vicissitudes of his life. He fights overnight till the end with his absolute resolution amidst the wild animals and survives, which should speak of his victory not defeat. The question of his survival



assumes significance in the face of his physical desperation. He is invaded by the thoughts of suicide in the moment when he ultimately loses his eight piglets to the vultures; he unwittingly recollects how, in the past, a shepherd in the jungle had hanged himself on discovering the death of his whole herd. However, the old man like the shepherd doesn't resort to killing himself. "If the old man did not end up like the shepherd it would only be because of a stoicism born of mature years. He survives although he is driven to desperation and his survival is his triumph." (Vinoda, ix). Courage, determination, endurance and stoicism strongly subverted his thoughts of ending his life. In other words he survives his terrible thoughts, the act of which is termed a great triumph.

Keshava Reddy makes a liberal use of local metaphors and linguistic collocations to evoke the cultural specifics of the Rayalaseema region. Throughout the novelette the monologues of the old man are finely wrought in local dialects. Terms like *Kos* (a distance of ten miles), *Jamulu*, *baras* (the length of two arms extended), *Avadi* (Telugu equivalent of August) etc., are reflections of the local dialectical climate. The novelette is replete full of references to the different types of trees and shrubs such as *balasa*, *kasara*, *bonthajemudu*, *tindra*, *sunkrenu*, *ganuga* and *vempali*. The author fervently depicts flora and fauna of the Rayalaseema region which is often referred to as *Ratnala Seema*, the land of diamonds. *Vempali* is not a tree like *sunkrenu* in literal sense. It is called *vempalichettu* in Telugu. Since it is a shrub grown in villages and even on hills, it should be rendered as *vempali* shrub. Jayaprada renders it as vempal tree as literal translation to the Telugu phrase. The literal translation, sometimes, may twist the original meaning of the word or a phrase. The non-Telugu reader may be led to understand *vempali* as a huge tree grown in India.

Keshava Reddy, as many readers feel, writes about outcastes, about the least noticed and about the most neglected members of society. He writes with compassion. He writes about their heroic battles for survival. *He Conquered the Jungle* is one such a literary adventure portraying the lone struggle of a tribal man. "The novel seems to underline the essential aloneness of man, his Sisyphean struggle and his capacity to endure and overcome, given the kind of stoicism and courage that the protagonist of this book displays." (Vinoda, ix) She appreciates the stoicism and the enduring spirit of the old man whose tenacity and proven jungle skills lead to his ultimate triumph.

The *Yerukala* tribe has a separate identity. Some tribes are nomadic. In Andhra Pradesh, people of this tribe depend upon forest products. Their traditional occupation of weaving baskets and rearing pigs define their way of life. However, the tribe is treated as the lower order of society. Keshava Reddy, who depicts the way the old man pursues in his life struggle, has the background like that of the downtrodden classes. In her introduction to the translated text, Vinoda says, "Keshava Reddy's personal background does not offer any clue to an understanding of his novels because they show a life so unlike his." As a doctor he may have served the common people, he may have shared their concern as a humanist but he might not have experienced the social travails and economic misery like a tribal man or an outcaste. A reader cannot resist from appreciating



the novelist for his extraordinary imaginative faculties. Vinoda appropriately terms the novelist's "impersonal situation an extraordinary feat of imagination" (ix). Despite his socially privileged background Keshava Reddy seems to have been endowed with acute powers of keen observation and social insight about the problems of the tribal community. He is a doctor by profession and captures the essence of life of the lower community through his social interaction. The novelist deserves appreciation for fielding the protagonist from the lower community.

The people of Rayalaseema like that of the Telangana experience the harsh realities of life. But the dominant sections of these regions continue to remain in political power. The majority people are directly familiar with the terrain and difficult living conditions which might have induced the novelist to shape his novelette with the themes involving the social and economic margins. The dominant politicians are responsible for poverty of the people of the region and the same may be with the other regions of Andhra Pradesh. "To be able to write with such understanding about people and things those do not form part of his personal experience." (Vinoda, ix) We can only say that he might have closely observed the cultural and social life of the vast majority of the lower sections of society.

Some critics are of the view that *Athadu Adavini Jayinchadu* has faint echoes of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Shivarama Karanth's *Chomana Dudi* (The drum of Chomana). The novelist might have been influenced by the progressive writings. The novel is shaped in the entire Rayalaseema environs, which has, in no way, relation to the cultural nuances of the other regions. Some readers may feel that the novelist might be influenced by the radical idealism of the Marxist thought given the marked bias of his novels for the underprivileged classes. It may be true but in the novel, no economic issues related to the old man representing the tribal community are discussed. One can understand that Keshava Reddy speaks on behalf of the marginalized sections of society.

The novelist seems to have indulged in rhetoric while narrating the story which is full of similes and metaphorical expressions such as a rooster chasing slithering baby, ambrosia-like moonlight, and a jackal with a fish bone lodged in its throat, as broad as winnowing trays etc. The use of similes adds beauty to the narration of the story. It also indicates the novelist's talent in language and narrative skill. He exemplifies the Hindu mythical characters like Bhimasena, Draupadi and Keechaka with whom the writer likens the old man to describe his strength and tenacity. The novelist has rich knowledge in Indian mythology, puranas and legends. He talks about the flies flying over the wounds of the sow and the bapana ants moving in rows in the midnight. In fact, the movement of such insects is rarely active and their visibility to the old man who stations on the *sunkarenu* tree during midnight seems to be the imagination of the author, which ascribes to a bit of exaggeration.

The reviewers of this translated text are of the view that the English translation of the Telugu classic *Athadu Adavini Jayinchadu*, retains the flavour, strength and nuances of



the original. It may be true but CLL. Jayaprada, translator of the novelette, in her 'Translator's Note' admits that bringing out the whole ethnic ambience in a foreign tongue was a daunting task for her. She means that it is difficult to retain emotions, cultural and social environment of the author and that of his characters. A native speaker of the Telugu language can enjoy reading of the original text than a non-native speaker. Brevity of expression is the characteristic of Jayaprada's translation. Reddy deserves encomiums by the marginalized sections of society for portraying their life in literature.

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Hollowness of Cultural Hegemony in U. R. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara*

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Introduction

The prime focus of Literary and Cultural studies is to examine the relations between literature and key socio-political issues such as cultural formation, ethos and eidos of culture, abstract and materialist aspects, the identity crisis and values. Culture as a way of life comprises the set of beliefs, law, morals, customs, and social organization of a particular place acquired by human beings as members of a community that renders ultimate meaning and purpose to human society at large. In other words, Culture is produced out of the material, historical and social conditions of the time. Similarly, for Marxist scholars the analysis of literature or culture involved “an analysis of not only the ideology inscribed within a particular text, but several other conditions such as the economic background, the social tensions within a particular period, and the conditions of production and reception of such cultural text” (Introduction, p. 2). As a result, national identity is not an inborn feature rather it is essentially a social construct. People incorporate identities by adopting beliefs, values, assumptions and social expectations in alignment with one's national identity which later become their culture and tradition. Therefore, one's identity lies in their culture and ‘Caste is the basis of a lot of our culture,’ is an undeniable fact (Ananthamurthy, 2008, p. 387), for Culture has its own set of rules and its opposing effects. Hence, culture must be dynamic, monitoring its own sustainability along with the capacity to transact between modernity and tradition.

Discussion

Ananthamurthy's first novel, *Samskara* (1965) was one of the acknowledged masterpieces of modern world literature. The novel first written in Kannada is a fictional negotiation between the distinct intellectual spheres of tradition and modernity. Though the novel provoked controversy in Brahmin and Hindu communities due to its negative narratives on Brahmin orthodoxy, it became an award-winning masterpiece. As claimed by biographical critics, the author's life, education and socio-cultural environment have influenced the novel *Samskara*. Ananthamurthy wrote this novel because he was influenced by the great Kannada novelist Shivaram Karanth's short story, *Chomana Dudi* (1933) a tragic tale about an ‘untouchable’ who wanted to own land. After reading the story, Ananthamurthy became a keen observer of himself and the society around him. Ever since, he wanted to write a story on the socio-cultural reality of the place he lived in. Nearly after twenty years, during his second year research studies in Birmingham, Ananthamurthy and his doctoral guide Malcolm Bradbury watched Bergman's movie titled, *Seventh Seal* that dealt with the theme of spiritual crisis in medieval Europe. At the end of the show, Professor Bradbury asked Ananthamurthy to write a novel similar to the movie. In fact, the film presented God's silence, human suffering and death due to plague



which became the inspirational idea for Ananthamurthy's seminal work. This challenge provided him an opportunity not just to pen a novel but to write in his mother tongue Kannada, with which he was losing touch for the past two years. Also, it proved to be a good chance to express his long nurtured ideas in writing. Therefore, he wrote *Samskara* excitedly in Kannada keeping alive his childhood and boyhood memories.

Ananthamurthy inherited the world of tradition and modernity since his boyhood days but not without conflicting dualities. The twin sides of Ananthamurthy's persona were influenced on the one hand by his orthodox grandfather and the Sanskrit priest-teacher, from whom he availed traditional Sanskrit education. On the other hand, he was influenced by his autodidact modernized father who exposed him to modern education by means of schooling and also introduced him to western theoretical models such as Modernism, Existentialism, Liberalism and Marxism. These diverse influences made Ananthamurthy shuffle between the identities of one who is culturally very close to his own society but at the same time emotionally detached from the community to which he belongs, to render a critical objective outlook on the problems present within. These dichotomies in him were expressed in his writings, particularly in his first novel *Samskara*. In fact, Ananthamurthy entered the world of letters after India's independence when the country was shaping its national identity. Therefore, his works are strongly rooted in their local context only to expose its biases, superstitions and hypocrisies.

According to anthropologist Geert Hofstede, culture is "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of the one group from another" (as cited in Schaller, Conway & Crandall, 2004, pp. 7-8). True to this statement, the Hindu law of Manava dharma provided its social order in the name of 'Varna' which was manipulated by the colonial administrators into caste hierarchy to achieve their agenda. According to Manusmriti, firstly, Brahmins govern the intellectual sphere of society as teachers; secondly, the Kshatriyas, trained in artillery & warfare will safeguard the society from external invasions; thirdly, the Vaisyas will look after the commerce and affairs related to economy; and lastly, the Sudras will perform the menial work, the day-to-day needs of the society. Each of these sections has its own culture and tradition. Brahmins occupy the prime position in the varna hierarchy because they are believed to be the intellectuals, born from the head of Lord Brahma, the creator. Brahmins are also considered as 'dvija', the twice born. Unlike others, they are expected to go through two births; one is their physical birth, which is common for all and the other is attaining 'gyana janma', during upanayanam or initiation into adulthood and scholarly learning. According to Manu's law, only Brahmins are privileged to study and teach the Sanskrit Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads, sacrificing their own benefit for others, and living by the code of giving and accepting of alms. On the contrary, the lord prescribed Sudras to serve other higher castes. However, with the flow of time, the occupations are manipulated and Brahmanical hegemony was maintained in the society. In this fixed and accepted social system, Ananthamurthy could perceive a gap between what was believed to be true and what was practiced in the society. Brahmins, who occupied the centre, asserted their superiority in



the social ladder and the notion of 'purity and pollution' formed the caste system, thus differentiating and discriminating people on the basis of class and caste. Other low castes were pushed to periphery and were treated as 'untouchables'. "...there was so much of social injustice in Indian society, of which the caste system was a glaring example that living in a village was hell for an untouchable" (Ananthamurthy, 2008, p. 378). Untouchables along with their identity and culture are subjugated. Ananthamurthy, himself a Brahmin and born into an educated family, nevertheless developed an acute and sensitive critical awareness of his community's socio-cultural norms to criticize its much negativity along with few positive aspects.

Ananthamurthy's first novel *Samskara*, set during the 1930s and 40s in a hamlet Durvasapura located in South India, depicts the typical Brahmanical world of agrahara, where the author himself grew up and faced an intractable challenge. The novel opens with the daily routine of Praneshacharya of which bathing, a cleansing ritual is one of the central purification rites of Brahmanism. Praneshacharya, the protagonist partially mirrors one half of Ananthamurthy himself, who has learned in a 'Veda Patsala' and rooted in Brahmanism. Like Praneshacharya, Ananthamurthy's upanayanam was performed during his entry into Vedic learning and he was supposed to be a devout Brahmin. However, later Ananthamurthy moved towards modern education and modernity rather than pursuing Vedic learning. Whereas, his fictional creation, Praneshacharya titled 'Crest Jewel of Vedic Learning' faithfully carries out the rituals in regularity with other Brahmins in the agrahara, without comprehending their real essence. Here in the first paradox between the ritual and spiritual is unmasked by Ananthamurthy as 'religious hypocrisy'. Praneshacharya, the central pillar and spiritual leader of the agrahara of Durvasapura is not without flaws. He shows hollowness in his spiritual life by thinking that he could attain moksha by skipping some of the stages for liberation and uses his invalid wife Bhagirathi, as a stepping stone for the salvation: "By marrying an invalid, I get ripe and ready" (p. 10), was his ardent belief. According to the 'Hindu' dharma, the fulfilment of four 'ashramas' in life, is very important for a Brahmin in his lifetime. They are 'brahmacharya' (celibate student stage), 'grahasta' (householder), 'vanaprastha' (renunciation) and 'sanyasa' (detachment). It is important to experience the stages sensually along with material and spiritual quest which will lead to maturity and as a result one will be able to attain gradual withdrawal from worldly life. Praneshacharya thinks that he has completed the second stage of 'ashrama' by means of marriage but truly he did not experience sensual pleasure and family life having married an invalid woman and was childless. Since he skipped the fundamental aspects of 'dharma', his desire for salvation was not fulfilled.

The antagonist Naranappa who mirrors the other half of Ananthamurthy is influenced by modern education and becomes the satirical voice of the author to question and criticize the hollowness of Brahmin orthodoxy with a strong desire to break its stereotypes. Ananthamurthy exposes the evil side of the caste-conscious Brahmins by making the hedonist Naranappa pose a direct attack: "Try and excommunicate me now.



I'll become a Muslim, I'll get you all tied to pillars and cram cow's flesh into your mouths and see to it personally that your sacred Brahmanism is ground into the mud" (p. 18). Despite Naranappa's unorthodox behavior such as eating meat, drinking and living with the low caste mistress Chandri in the agrahara, he is not exterminated officially from the Brahmin community because they feared to oppose Naranappa's meaningful challenges. Not only during his life, but even in death, Naranappa challenged the orthodoxy of Brahmanical practices and its cultural norms. The question of cremation occupies central stage because no one can perform their daily rituals nor eat except for the children until the corpse was cremated. The question became complex because when Naranappa was alive he rejected all Brahmin hood and even Madhva Brahmins believed that if they cremate Naranappa, they will get polluted; so nobody wanted to cremate him. Nonetheless, the death of Naranappa uncovers the hypocrisy and hollowness of the whole Brahmin agrahara and their orthodoxy.

Brahmin's materialistic desire is exposed through the 'heap of gold', when Chandri, Naranappa's concubine comes forward and places all her gold ornaments in front of the Brahmins to perform the last rites of Naranappa and to bear the expenses of his cremation. At that juncture, all the Brahmins changed their mind, became adaptive and more than willing to perform the death rites. Chandri's generosity complicated the situation and the situation got its reversal. "Besides the dominant wish to maintain their ritual purity and orthodox superiority the behaviour of the Brahmins expresses envy, jealousy, greed and even deceit" (Aikant, 2011, p. 30). At first, nobody wants to get polluted by cremating the polluted Naranappa, but after seeing the gold Brahmins and their wives wanted to cremate the body and they forgot about purity and their sanctity. "The women kept staring at the heap of gold and they were disappointed by their husbands' words" (p. 18). The eyes of the Brahmins turn moist and their mouths water for the gold and they want to carry out the last rite. Some even overcome their hesitation and secretly sneak to their priest Praneshacharya's house to have permission on cremating the body. According to Moorty (2004), Brahmins are greedy, gluttonous, mean-spirited; they love gold, betray orphans and widows; they are jealous of Naranappa's every forbidden pleasure. In a way, the scenario of gold indicates their hypocrisy and greed.

Other minor Brahmin characters in the novel are drawn from Ananthamurthy's own community because Ananthamurthy saw hollowness in those Brahmins. They are driven by greed, jealousy and superstition in contrast to their prescribed roles of sacrificing for their own benefit and for others, giving and accepting of alms. Child marriage as part of Brahmin culture and tradition is also exposed in the novel through the widow Lakshimidevamma. Women marry as early as eight years old and when their husband die, they are excluded from all the privileges starting from the way they dress. "Because she was a child-widow, they called her, Lakshimidevamma, the Ill-Omen"(p. 45). Lakshimidevamma represents all widows of the Brahmin community. She married at eight, widowed at ten and later her mother-in-law and father-in-law were died. Thus, her relative Garuda's father and Garuda usurped all her property and jewellery and in her old



age, pushed her into her husband's old ruined house without any belongings. Therefore, women and 'untouchables' are under constant surveillance of the power of patriarchy and male Brahmanical hegemony. Even the monastery guru exhibits hollowness and selfishness in Brahmanism. "Which means, the right and proper duty is to perform the death-rites. But the impurity must also be cleared-therefore all his property, silver and gold must be offered to the monastery to lord Krishna". (p. 84). The guru seizes all the property of deceased Naranappa in the name of god and for the sake of purification.

Brahmins are also not supposed to eat until proper funeral rites are performed. "Only we adults shouldn't, till the funeral rites are done". (p. 11). This ritual is inhuman because some Brahmins nearly die of hunger. Some Brahmin go to other lower castes to survive themselves from starving. For instance, Madhva Brahmin Dasacharya goes to Parijatapura, the agrahara of Smarta Brahmin who are lower in caste than Madhva Brahmins. Dasacharya then begs food from Manjayya, a rich man of Parijatapura. Baral, Rao & Rath (2009), argues that Brahmin culture is like prison-house where they are bounded by numberless rules which become the internal constraints. In contrast to the 'prison-house', there is also a free space which is occupied by untouchables. For instance, Sudra woman Chandri occupies this free space because untouchables are not restricted by any laws and they can take their own decision. Unlike Brahmin women she can travel wherever she likes and has the liberty to decide on the cremation of her husband when all the Brahmins including their priest Praneshacharya couldn't take any decision in performing the final rites of Naranappa. Therefore, Brahmin culture is more ritualistic than humanistic.

The Brahmanical culture is surrounded with many sacred artifacts. Brahmins worship them regularly without understanding their value. The antagonist Naranappa sees this meaningless culture of Brahmin and he wanted to resist such elite culture. "He comes to the river in full view of all the Brahmins and takes the holy stone that we've worshipped for generations and throws it in the water and spits after it!" (p. 14). By such depictions, Ananthamurthy wants to prove that "the stone was a stone" (Ananthamurthy, 2000, p. 62). Naranappa uses names of great sages like Durvasa, Parashara, Bhrigu, Brihaspati and Kashyapa who did set the tradition for Brahmanism. Naranappa did this to remind Praneshacharya that even such sages failed to overcome their lust, emotions and anger. Such anti-Brahmanical arguments of Naranappa show its resistance against rituals and artifacts. Though Naranappa is not from socially disadvantaged group, he represents lower castes and uses the artifacts and rituals of the dominant culture industry to create subversive message.

The incidence of plague in the novel is a reflection of the incidence the author experienced during his boyhood. Ananthamurthy intentionally included this incident to emphasise the hollowness of Brahmin culture and their rigid tradition. The plague in the other Brahmin agrahara, Parijatapura is controlled by inoculation given by city doctors whereas plague in orthodox Brahmin agrahara, Durvasapura spreads like wild fire



causing more deaths along with rats. Though both the places are the agrahara of Brahmins, Brahmins of Parijatapura are considered as inferior because they are heterodox and they welcomed modernity. Brahmins of Durvasapura are considered as superior due to their orthodox devotion towards their dogma. The irony is that the so-called superior orthodox Brahmins' culture become stagnant due to their rigid practices and the inferior but modern Brahmins of Parjatapura and their culture becomes dynamic. As a result, death after death in Madhva Brahmin agrahara, disfiguring and the stench of Naranappa's dead body shows decadence in the agrahara. The plague reaches the section of 'untouchables' and causes many deaths there. But following the death of family members, the 'untouchables' set fire to the thatched mud hits which prevented the spreading of epidemic. For them there is no other option because the doctors of the upper caste will not come to inoculate them as that will result in touching them. However, when Brahmin men make secret physical relation with low caste untouchables, they do not feel polluted. The rigid norms of the social world are thrown to the wind in private to gratify their carnal desires. This particular act enunciates the hypocrisy of orthodox Brahmanism who treats the untouchables as less than humans and the women are doubly oppressed in terms of caste and gender.

Brahmanical hegemony was maintained strictly in the name of culture and rituals of Brahmanism. "Ananthamurthy presents this [duality] not only through the characters with their different attitudes but also in the way in which the socio-psychological struggle is expressed in different discourses and actions" (Raval, 2009, p. 116). Casteism and untouchability were the major issues along with the patriarchal power during Ananthamurthy's time in the Brahmin society. The traditional homes of Brahmin elites act as a metaphor for their hegemony and power. The front yard of the house belongs to men folk. "This space in the front yard, framed impressively by massive well-carved pillars was a place of authority, cheerful and full of the new tidings of the temporal world outside, as well as of the spiritual world beyond" (Murthy, 2009, p. 33). The back yard of the house belongs to women where they talk on matters like everyday sorrow and diseases, which they are unable to share with their men. Women are restricted to participate in men's talk and in the front yard. The world of front yard and the back yard are different and things discussed in the back yard are different from what is discussed in the front yard. Thus, male talk dominating the front yard of the house shows male authority that excludes women and make them invisible in their back yard.

As portrayed in the novel, in reality it was the upper class Brahmins who ruled and governed other castes living in the community. Upper caste Brahmins excluded other castes people from the rights that are easily available. For example, entry into the premises of temple and into the houses of Brahmins are prohibited for low caste people who are termed as 'untouchables' believing that they are polluted and dirty. Ananthamurthy has illustrated how 'untouchables' are looked at in his society: "This system simply exploits the low caste people and women in numerous ways in the name of so called socio-cultural and religious establishments" (Pandey, 2014, p. 613). As Pandey claimed, Ananthamurthy



raised sensitive issues of women's subjugation and oppression of 'untouchables' within the caste and gender hierarchy of Brahmin community of his childhood time. Upper caste male dominated the community and their own women are viewed as mere 'performer' of the tasks assigned by the male heads of the family: "You shut up now. Why are you parting in the assembly of menfolk?" (p. 20). Though Lakshmana agrees with wife Sitadevi regarding Chandri's jewellery he did not let her to raise her voice because he thinks that his status as a husband would be lowered in the public. Brahmin women in *Samskara* are deprived of opportunities to voice their views in any decision. They are supposed to worship male supremacy and mostly were confined to housekeeping and child nurturing within the male power.

Conclusion

As argued by Karma Phuntsho (2015), the cultural nationalist of Bhutan, culture must be dynamic but not hostile towards adaptation and modification to suit the prevalent aesthetic or utilitarian values and needs of today. Along this line of thought, Ananthamurthy, the socialist, tries to dismantle the Brahmanical dogma and the caste hierarchy to ensure equality and dignity to all sections in the society. Ananthamurthy uses the ideology of Karl Marx and Gandhi whose influences are inevitable to understand the dynamics of Indian cultural polity: "...for Gandhiji had begun to find fault with our orthodox society and I used him to rationalize my feelings". (Ananthamurthy, 2000, p. 59). Both Marx and Gandhi are for egalitarian society focusing on classless society. According to Marxism, society in the world has different social class that uses its power to exercise control over others. Contrary to the established power-relation and politics, Marxist and Gandhi came up with the theory that will make people understand their rights in the society. Similarly, Ananthamurthy adopts the strategy of using rational mode of modernism to curb conflicts in the culture specific-social-reality of the tradition-bound rural society of Karnataka. There must be a fine balance, progressive change and innovative rethinking about the culture so that the society can pride its cultural preservation and the essential fabric of the cultural identity is not lost. As cited by Phuntsho (2015), it is not feasible to insist on traditional plough and yoke when more effective technologies are available. Therefore, the society must find ways to restrain rigidity and steer cultural change towards the right direction.

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Maupassant's Storytelling Technique in "Moonlight"

Ganesh Dhakal & Beerendra Pandey

Introduction

Guy de Maupassant was born on 5 August 1850 and died on 6 July 1893. In his relatively short life, he penned more than three hundred short stories within the span of just ten years. The quality of a significant number of his stories is of such high quality, along with being innovative in concept and technique, that Maupassant is today generally accorded the distinction of having made the greatest contribution to the development of the short story in Europe. He is possessed of an uncanny ability to penetrate into the deepest and darkest secrets of the human soul. By deft and sensitive narrative techniques, he brings the secrets to the surface, where others can see and understand what otherwise goes unnoticed in the human comedy. This article makes the point that the most conspicuous hallmark of Maupassant's storytelling technique in "Moonlight" is his flair for coming up with a narrative that accumulates dramatic force by its speed and concentration and gives the reader the pleasure of sudden enlightenment at the *dénouement*. "Moonlight," like most of his stories, is socio-culturally situated in the French society of the 1870's and 1880's, it explores the universal themes of religious self-denial and secular indulgence. Maupassant's outlook, as Z. Rukalski (1971) asserts, "is that of a mutinous anti-cleric" (379) in the sense of his "contention that priesthood by no means shelters man from carnal impulses" (380). He uses irony to lead his protagonist-priest, and thereby the conservatives among his readers, to a compelling discovery of the insuperability of human sensuality.

Methodology

The methodological framework for this article comes principally from Trevor A. Le V. Harris' *Maupassant in the Hall of Mirrors: Ironies of Repetition in the Work of Guy de Maupassant* (1990: x) which recognizes the co-existence, in Maupassant's fiction, of the duality of the bleak and the blithe, a full-blooded commitment to existence which is always shadowed by a bitter irony. Maupassant delights us for much of the time, only to unsettle us when we might be lured into sentimentality." Maupassant's utilization of dual symmetries and ironic under-cuttings remains related to the story's underlying message, that of the power of the natural environment over the individual. A dexterous use of irony gives the author the much-needed artistic originality, which resides in an ironical reversal of the protagonist's conservative attitude.

Analysis

Maupassant's story "Moonlight" takes place in a garden near a monastery between ten and eleven in the evening. The story gets underway with a peek into the character of a



priest. The whole story is about the massive transformation that this character undergoes in his attitude to life.

The priest, Abbé Marignan, has unwavering faith in the Divine Providence which he claims to have understood to a large extent and to which he acquiesces unquestionably. But he is a misogynist who condemns women as temptresses out to tantalize men with their extended arms and parted lips. The nuns are, however, exempted from his misogynist loop, for he takes them differently due to their religious ecstasy. He has a niece whom he is determined to make a Sister of Charity.

A sudden complication, however, occurs when his wife, Melanie, confides to him that his niece has a lover and that the couple meets by ten in the evening when the girl's mother is fast asleep. The Abbé takes his niece's act as a betrayal. He feels paternal impulses running on his head as if he were a father betrayed by his niece not telling him anything about the said act. One night, still bothered by the fact that she will be out there in the garden soon, he goes out to catch her with her boyfriend.

As soon as the Abbé opens the door, he is suddenly greeted by the beauty of the moonlight which, as Richard B. Grant comments, "Has always been a symbol for the adolescent's longing for love" in the Maupassantian canon (1963: 674). The Abbé gazes at his surrounding and sees a magnificent splendour more charming than the day. As he walks ahead still amazed by the sight, he suddenly sees two figures walking side by side under the vault of the trees. As he sees the lover kiss the beloved on the forehead, he feels "as if he were looking at a biblical scene, like the love of Ruth and Boaz, like the accomplishment of the will of God as presented in one of the great scenes of holy scripture." Now he figures out God's design behind His making the moon-lit night more splendid than sun-drenched day: God has done so to allow for the nurturance of man-woman love and intimacy as between these two lovers. This is a clear-cut comeuppance for the puritan priest accustomed to shak[ing] out his soutane on leaving the gates of a convent and str[iding] quickly away as though fleeing from danger" (Maupassant, 178).

The second time when the Abbé flees is right at the *dénouement*: "And he fled, distraught, almost ashamed, as if he had entered a temple where he had no right to be" (180). This time around he flees from the temple of love, almost committing an act of profanity. This is, however, no act of a profanity for a man who has been too ignorant, narrow and even immoral in refusing to admit love between man and woman. His hasty flight is the reflex action of an enlightened and contrite man who lets the lovers-worshippers have the temple of love in which he is unfit to worship. This reflex action, culminating into a comic resolution, turns out to be an ironical reversal for a puritan whose "beliefs were fixed; they never wavered. He sincerely believed that he understood his God, entered into His plans, His wishes, His intentions." In "Moonlight" the *anagnorisis* on the part of the main character does not remain limited



to him only; the plot produces insight on the of the reader too: there is a preponderance of more complex narrative forms: the descending helical, the preferred form for the *contes fantastiques*, the contrast, a pyramidal form that emphasizes the consequence of change; and sinusoidal, a helical contrast that, according to Richard Fusco (1994), "reconfirms Maupassant's notion of the ephemeral nature of happiness" (85).

It is not that Maupassant exploits irony only at the end in order to lead his readers to a sudden, final enlightenment. In fact, irony informs even the beginning of the story: "His warlike name well suited the Abbé Marignan" (Maupassant, 176). The protagonist's name is ironic as it alludes to the battle of Marignan (1515) in which France achieved a great and violent victory under the leadership of Francis I who was, however, vanquished in the very next battle. Like Francis I, the Abbé is poised to be defeated in his inflexible view of women and love. The central figure is a round character as it is through his new experience of certain realizations that he is transformed. The Abbé's rigid assumptions, notions, and values are shattered and he is overwhelmed by his guilt consciousness caused by his ignorance of those realities which he, as a man of Church, should have long ago respected and accepted. Thus it is through irony as a rhetorical device that Maupassant dramatizes the reversal of the protagonist's aversion to man-woman love to sudden illumination into the blessing of love that has been bestowed upon the lovers in the garden.

The picturesque description of the garden is result of a conglomeration of various images – visual, tactile and olfactory – that tickle the Abbé and makes him feel like getting intoxicated. Nature has drenched the night with wine and everything looks enchanting, and the whole description has an undercurrent of sexuality. The Abbé is bewildered and his long-held ideas and opinions are unhinged. With great effort he has dammed his emotion and impulse but magical moonlight bursts open the floodgates. He is swept away by an irresistible wave of yearning as the moonlight illumines what has been dark in him so far. He now realizes that he has been in the dark all his life and that the splendour of the night is God's blessing upon the lovers.

The priest's ultimate realization, which forms the crux of the story, is conducted not by the protagonist's point of view, but by that of the narrator:

Why had God done this? Since the night is intended for sleep, for unconsciousness, for repose, for oblivion, why make it more charming than the day, sweeter than dawn or evening? And why this slow and seductive moon, which is more poetic than the sun and seems intended by its very delicacy to illumine things too fragile and mysterious for daylight, why should it come to make the shadows so transparent? (179)

The narrator's ponderings, which lead to the priest's comeuppance, are at odds with the latter's point of view, particularly in the first half of the story. Whereas the Abbé claims to



have comprehended the Divine Providence – a claim falsified at the end –, the narrator finds it inscrutable, yet sees Nature's amenableness to time, climate, and matter:

The four seasons were perfectly fitted to all the needs of agriculture; and it would never have occurred to the priest to suspect that nature has no intentions at all, and that, on the contrary, every living thing has bowed to the hard necessities of times, climates, and matter itself. (177)

This is the passage which unmistakably yields clues to the two contrary points of view: as Robert Scholes (1991) remarks, "up to the semicolon" and the paragraphs "preceding" it constitute the point of view of the priest whereas the rest of the things stated thereafter here echo the perspective of the narrator (181). It is the narrator's viewpoints – his humble interrogations in an attempt to understand God's design in creating magic through the moonlight: "Why this half-veil thrown over the world? Why this thrill in the heart, this stirring of the soul, this languor of the flesh?" (Maupassant, 180) – which prick the bubble of the priest's boast about having penetrated into the Divine Providence.

The title word "Moonlight" is richly symbolic of love: "And he said to himself: "Perhaps God has made such nights to veil the loves of men with ideal beauty" (180). Love-inspiring beauty is hidden in the dark; the priest does not see it when he does not look deeper in the heart. Once the moonlight unveils the darkness of his heart, he realizes that God loves love, since He has surrounded the two lovers' haunt with such irresistible splendour which makes the heart pulsate, the emotion surge, and the loins throb into compliance. Man-woman love is, as Maupassant puts it, "abundance of poetry cast from heaven to earth" (180). The ending of this story is particularly noteworthy, because it not only brings sudden illumination to the reader but to the story's protagonist as well: a puritan priest, who first thinks that his niece is committing a sin when he sees her with a boy, is finally seen as concluding that God must allow love. Malcolm Scott (1989) rightly remarks that "the abbé stops on the brink of denying God and tries instead to reconcile his discovery with his faith in Providence, but the experience has changed forever his notion of life's priorities. The story is typical of Realist and Naturalist concern with the man beneath the priest's vestments and with the sexual urges which these writers see, much more than religious aspirations, as constituting the prime nature of human beings (19).

Conclusion

Summing up, Maupassant's "Moonlight" exemplifies a descending helical, contrast, and sinusoidal pattern. The exploitation of irony, so central to the pattern, helps him weave the narrative strands into a focal point in an attempt to achieve both unity and economy, culminating into strategically placed discovery at the end on part of both the protagonist and the reader. This analysis of Maupassant's use of discovery in the finale underscores the connection between plot structure and reader response and illuminates the Maupassantian variety of the short story form.



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The Unheard Pain and Yemeni Conflict in *For a Single War*: Collection of Short Stories by Intsar Asseri

Hatem Mohammed Hatem AL-Shamea

Intsar Asseri is a Yemeni short story writer. She is well-known for her three short stories collections, *The Dance on Symphony of Pain* 2010, *Holocaust*, and *For a Single War* 2016, and recently she published her fourth short story collection *A Prayer at the Water Lap* 2017.

As long as we live in a world full of hatred and wars, there are writers who try to understand those wars and reasons beyond them. They turn the disasters and sufferings of peoples into narrative as an attempt to create a hope from the debris of nations. Through narrative, they try to establish a memory of human agony that transfers from generation to another.

Intsar Asseri is a Yemeni voice that attempts to raise-up the sufferings of Yemeni people who has been living under the America-backed Saudi-led coalition airstrikes for more than three years. Her short stories collection, *For a Single War* is the voice of the voiceless country. It shows out the deliberate absence and blackout of media as well as the absence of humanity. It is a wake-up call to those fake calls of some world organizations that label themselves with humanity, but do nothing to humans.

The Storyline

The Story is about a displaced lady who is enforced to leave her country, Yemen due to the civil war and the Saudi-led coalition that heavily strikes Yemen every day and night with different weapons. The unknown girl reached Alexandria in Egypt. As she setting on a bench and waiting for her uncle to meet her at the train station, her pains take her back to her family she lost them when a Saudi missile fell down on her house and turned it to ashes. Her parents and brothers who were running with her to get out from the house could not pass through the door. The flying parts of the missile tore their bodies into small pieces scattered here and there. She tried to find her parents, but the only thing she found was marital ring of her mother and her father's leg which was still strongly standing as a challenge to the invaders. She collected all pieces of their bodies and promised that she will recreate them and rebuild their home. The house-keeper carried her out of the house. Then she ran aimlessly to an unknown street chased by the echo of the dead bodies on the road. Suddenly she got a scary shock when she hears the train's horn that announces her departure to unknown stop. Asseri maps a nonstop journey for those who aimlessly flee from wars to unknown place. Here, we can observe that such journey may indicate a hope for survival or it shows out the disastrous conclusions of wars.



The Unseen Bloody Image of War

In her short story, *The Bag*, Asseri shows that Yemenis keep travelling through time and space searching for quietness and peace. She compares between two contradictory spaces; a space where there is a hope and life, and a space where there is no hope, but a voice of war. The title, *The Bag* symbolizes a nonstop move from place to another. The bag and train are symbols of motion, travel and transience. The traveler records the pains she has gone through. The train station is a transit place for contemplating the war that draws a random map of her journey that brought her to this point. The bag is also a reminder of the lost home. The horns of trains make her alarm. Such high squeaky voice scares her and reminds her of the unrest situation in Yemen. The train station is a turning point or a crossroad that represents a contemplating moment that a character has to get to think deeply in order to take a decision about the future.

The sorrow of narrative that Asseri has used implicitly views the functions of the bag and train. The bag and train are showed as temporary transportation. However, the war embodies the unknown end of the journey. In Asseri's story, *The Bag*, the story starts from a train station people attempt to run away from the battlefield to avoid the inevitable end of their life. Such scene reminds us with Konstantin Simonov's novel, *The Living and the Dead* (1959) in which the story starts with a scene at a railway station when Sintov and Masha reached the city. As they arrived to the railway station they were told that the war broke out. The difference here is that in Asseri's *The Bag*, the journey is to escape from the war. However, the journey in Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*, brings them to the battlefield and to face war.

Asseri uses the flashback technique to work on the imagination of the young to create a sense of national purpose and inspire a bellicose spirit. As the narrative goes on the reader finds himself engaged in the situation of the character feeling the pain that the unnamed "she" goes on. The "she" here simply indicates an unknown girl. The use of "she" is meant to prove the existence of the feminist voice that equally cares about home as well as man who tries to tribute patriotism to him. However, it covertly means "he/she" or any person who is enforced to leave his/her country. Moreover, the picture that is painted shows out that man is the one who sets out and fuels wars and woman attempts to run away if not be killed.

As it is assumed that humanity is a voice of coexistence, it has become a pretext to wage war on others. Asseri sheds light on the proxy war in Yemen in the name of humanity, democracy, and fighting terrorism. In her story, *The Bag*, she draws the unseen bloody picture of the debris of Yemen that caused by the war. Waging war against Yemenis from within and from outside in the name of humanity is actually a war on humanity. It creates terrorism and crimes against humanity. In this sense Carl Schmitt states: "(W)ar waged in the name of humanity . . . has an especially intense political meaning. When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity, it is not a war



for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. At the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress and civilization in order to claim these as one's own and to deny the same to the enemy" (54).

Killing innocents and fueling wars in the name of humanity have become a vacuum excuse for destroying countries. Such actions make no difference between it and killing people in the name of religion or in the name of democracy.

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Emerging Heroic Innerself Beyond Oppression: A New Dimensional View on Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day In Shadow*

Jayanthi Rajendran

Introduction:

According to the words of Mulk Raj Anand, "come to stay as part of world literature" it is very true that Indian women writers have made the most remarkable contribution to the sphere of fiction. As far as the Indian literature is concerned, it has perhaps been easier for these women novelists to reflect on the new challenges and changes because of the simple fact that its vehicle itself is a globalized language through which they can express themselves and bring it light what is in the dark.

The 1980s occupy a unique position in the growth and development of Indian English novel. Indian women writers in English have made the furthest substantial contribution in the field of the English novel. During this period, some very promising women novelists started publishing their finest contribution towards literature. Some longstanding writers also came out with works, which showcased their creative powers that had been intact all along. It is during the eighties that Indian women novelists earned unheard of honors and distinctions not only in India but also in became prominent worldwide. The works by these Indian women novelists, like third generation women novelists, speak eloquently about their originality and unprecedented inventiveness. Indian novel has grown considerably in bulk variety, and maturity. Through these writings the women writers have earned name, fame and honors and distinctions for their contribution towards their works following certain definite patterns, and it is not difficult to trace its gradual progression from the imitative stage to the realistic to the Psychological to the experimental stage. The voice of new Indian women writers through their writings, published in between 1980s and 1990s, has ushered in a literary renaissance is the third generation of women Indian English writers like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Mehta, Bharathi Mukherjee, and Jhumpa Lahiri. These are the fore- most third generation women novelists and who hold centrality in the contemporary literary Scenario. They have made a distinct mark on the World literary scene.

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the great Indian novelists in English. As a professional writer she began writing when she was very young and became famous during the post-Independence era. Her novels mainly deal with men and women, especially women struggling against oppression and injustice heaped upon them in the name of tradition and culture which is very well depicted in the novel *The Day in Shadow*. Nayantara portrays the inalienable right of freedom for women in many of the characters in her novels, such as Simrit in *The Day in shadow*, Saroj in *Storm in Chandigarh* and Rashmi in *This Time of Morning*. *A time to be Happy* (1958) and *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) are



classed as her political novels; *This Time of morning* (1965) *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) and *The Day in Shadow* (1971) are autobiographical as far as they build on the authors own emotional experiences and conflicts. As a writer with feminist concerns, Nayantara Sahgal is a progeny of the tradition wherein power itself is deified as goddess 'shakti', a female symbol in the Hindu mythology. Her fictional world is occupied by political leaders, business tycoons, foreign advisors, upper class people, journalists and highly qualified persons like ambassadors and ministers. A political theme is often combined to the theme of man-woman relationship, their marital problems, their temperamental incompatibility, the problems arising out of their submissiveness and finally the place of a woman in society.

The writer depicts Indian life and culture and also reflects faithfully the life and spirit of the Indian ethos. She grapples with the problems and tensions generated by the rather unique way in which an individual's life and character are determined by home, family and society in the Indian social milieu. It can be peculiarly Indian in respect of its form and narrative techniques employed and the manner in which the author adapts the English language to the native sensibility. It can be characteristically Indian in its moral and spiritual content to a very large extent. Women are an integral part of human civilization. No society or country can ever progress without an active participation of women in its overall development.

Som imposed such cruel penalties on her to the taxation. He could have done it by some other humane ways. When Som explained the treachery, Simrit could not understand why Som should be so cruel and revengeful upon her. Som said it was more than a life sentence. Life sentence ends after a period of time. Hers was a real life sentence and it would be upon her until she died. Simrit had been having nightmares with a frightening clarity since her divorce. What wrong had she committed? Was it because she fought his injustice so stoically with self-composure? Did it exhibit his moral inferiority? Sahgal describes her feelings thus:

Som could have forgiven her if she had been a weaker being. Unsure, dependent, even deceiving. But beneath her docility she was none of these things was unpardonable. And she could have loved him in spite of everything, if only sometimes she had fought him. (TDS 53).

Simrit found that she had to pay taxes for six lakhs worth of shares in her name. Som controlled her shares. Som argued reasonably, of course, that she had to pay taxes as the shares were in her name. It was a crippling burden she could not bear since most of her earnings by her work would be wiped away in paying the taxes. Som's revenge was to make her pay the taxes which he knew she could not; and any way enjoys the benefits of the shares. Simrit found that she had nothing to give her children expect herself.

The novel deals with the struggle of a young, beautiful and daring Indian woman trapped under the burden of a brutal divorce settlement and the agony and unhappiness



she experiences in the hands of cruel and unjust male dominated society. *The Day in Shadow* gives a sensitive account of the suffering of a woman in Indian society when she opts to dissolve a seventeen-year-old marriage. A divorced woman is stigmatized forever and she is curiously watched by others as if divorce were “a disease that left pock marks”. (TDS 4). The mere convention of living with someone for years makes it tough for Simrit to admit the idea of living alone, all by herself. Simrit, the heroine of the novel gets suffocating environment with her husband Som. Therefore, she seeks divorce from Som to be free but after getting divorce she realizes that it's too appalling and cruel situation to move as a divorcee in the society. This truly picturises the Indian society and its impact on women and how male transfigure themselves to adapt to modernization. Her husband symbolizes cruel face of male domination in our society. He tries to be modern in each and every manner and blindly imitates the western style of life. He speaks their language, learns their mannerisms and adopts their fashions. Simrit recalls: "He had German phrases on the tip of his tongue and Vetter's mannerisms. Som set a price for any work, just as a businessman. “Be tough. Be winner”. (TDS 69) That was his dictum, no question of emotions, and sentiments, a tough guy with his own philosophies. He pounds his way through antagonism. This is how Som dealt with his wife Simrit. He could not understand the finer emotions of love, sympathy, empathy and friendship. Apart from his business acumen, these were things outside his realm. When Simrit anticipated such feelings from him, Som could not reciprocate. Her quiet resistance to his bullying, mentally and physically exasperated him. It was a blow to his male dominating ego. So, all the more he redoubled his malicious oppression with a vengeance. This is how Simrit also felt. She found him aloof. She had to take the little journey to be made each time to acceptance, to the moment of complete security. This feeling of security comes only when there is sympathy, empathy and particularly friendship. Som would not speak business with Simrit, or in her presence.

In *The Day in Shadow*, Nayantara Sahgal seems to be deeply concerned with the need of freedom for women. Simrit in this novel wants to land on her own feet and enjoy self-reliance, individuality, self-expression and self-confidence. It is Simrit's longing for freedom and individuality that urges her to take divorce from her husband and be away from all kinds of discrimination. Simrit does not want to be known as her husband's wife but as her own self, trying to give woman an identity which she yearns from the past a true identity which would be her reality. The development of Indian novel has given women freedom not only to express their inner self which occupies a unique position in the minds of the readers but takes it beyond expression. It also shows their creative powers which were intact for too long bringing them out of captivity and to set them free as a bird out its cage.

The Day in Shadow gives a sensitive account of the sufferings of a woman in Indian society when she opts to dissolve a seventeen-year-old marriage. In this novel, Nayantara's main concern is with self-expression within marriage. She describes marriage as a "life-long damage" if the other partner is not sensitive enough to communicate.



Marriage is the unwritten law of most societies and very few do not subscribe to it. Sahgal presents couples from three generations and details their antithetical relationships. Thus, Nayantara Sahgal depicts the predicament of her women characters in both the novels. The nature of the novel is equipped to deal with social reality which is voiced out to bring the attention of readers to understand the real situation faced by the protagonist of the novel. It deals with Simrit's Predicament. A divorced woman is slurred forever and she is curiously watched by others. The agony of a middle-aged woman is experienced by the protagonist of the novel. There is lot of women's suffering encountered by Simrit throughout this novel.. Indeed, the situation of the society is well focused and understood. Thus, the author depicts the predicament of her women characters in the novels.

Conclusion:

In the Day in Shadow Simrit leads to the conclusion that she would rather have marriage as a bond wherein both the parties have duties and responsibilities rather than as sacred foundation in which pre-determined roles have to be lived out. The theme of the novel thus proves it is the perpetual exploitation physically and emotionally of the woman by her husband. This has finally made her revert against all odds that she had been facing in the relationship with her husband and finally how she had managed to reconstitute it on her terms. Women who are caught up in this labyrinth of married lives should try to strengthen themselves rather than be mere victims, living oppressed and depressed lives. After all, one day life would come to an end. They should learn to pick up from the broken pieces and emerge more strongly and show the world; after all it is not the end of life. Life is too short and wonderful to be spent worrying with the burdens of the heart. As long as women could emerge victorious with a heroic inner self beyond oppression they could really bring about a conspicuous change in this pandemonium world. Though Simrit's was a love marriage, Som's ego is never quenched and day by day it scaled to different heights where he tries to snub Simrit. She ensures that womanhood enjoys freedom in all respect with dignity and equality with men. Though the writer openly speaks about the oppression of the woman character, she also equally and daringly speaks about her individuality and freedom from ancient beliefs.

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Possession and Dispossession: Negotiating Culture, Identity, and Anxiety in Speculative Fiction

K. Kamala Veni

To Cuddle Amy is a small horror story by Nancy Kress. There were a number of stories published about the anxieties of parents and children in the coming era of genetic engineering that is creeping up on humans, but none is better than this one. In “To Cuddle Amy” Nancy Kress is giving us a world much like our own; by showing us a normal couple engaged in a dispute over their child, she anchors us in that reality and then she deftly slips us information on the few critical differences between Amy’s universe and the real world. In Kress’s case, the setting is the key to the story. At this point one may not know what’s going on, but the clue, the indication that something is not-of-this-world, is unmistakable. More importantly, when she does reveal that the beleaguered parents can in fact get their sweet young baby Amy back, Kress doesn’t force to play a guessing game. She tells explicitly that one is in a world where medical science can produce exact clones of a child.

The Campbells had this only daughter, Amy, now 14. Her behavior is wild and beyond control. The police had come to warn too. The parents are angry, upset and decide to drive Amy out of the house; she has reached the legal age of 14. Alison, the mother, convinces herself:

It isn't as if she'd be without resources. The Hitchenses might take her in. Or somebody. And anyway, there are lots more like her out there. (306)

So, this is the culture of the times and many children are discarded like used garbage. Alison carries on about how good her Amy was when she was a baby. “I just want my little girl back again! I want to cuddle my lost little girl!” (306). The Campbells are more concerned for their own desires, not of Amy’s. Paul says finally:

“There are three more embryos left.” Three of six. Three frozen vials in the fertility clinic, all from the same in-vitro fertilization, stored as standard procedure against a failure to carry to term. (306)

“I’ll throw her out tonight,” he told Allison, “and call the clinic in the morning.”(307)

The parent – child relationship is, in this story, governed by the availability of spare embryos for the asking. The attitude of the parents to the child already with them is colored by this possibility – if this child is bad, let us discard it and go for a new one, after all the babies are more attractive and pose no threat to their peace of mind. Nancy Kress has projected a current medical possibility to one of its potential outcomes in the future, with a touch of the negative.



Freud stated that humans instinctually are aggressive and seek egoistic self-satisfaction. Our culture, however, has been designed to put prohibitions and curbs upon our human tendencies toward unchecked aggression and egoistic self-satisfaction. From these prohibitions and curbs come a sense of guilt--conscious and the unconscious--that has become the hallmark of civilized humanity. Understanding the role guilt plays in helping us check our tendencies towards aggression and violence is paramount. Amy's father is guilty of cloning Amy because he feels that she is useless. This guilt in him turns into apathy which is the psychological projection of Kress through the father of Amy.

Allison didn't give her daughter a chance to attack first. "So there you are! You just missed the cops, Amy, telling us what you've done this time, and it's the last straw, do you hear me, young lady? We forgave you the awful school grades! We forgave you the rudeness and ingratitude and sullen self-centeredness! We even forgave you the shop-lifting, God help us! But this is over the line! Throwing rocks at cars! Someone could have been killed – how much more do you expect us to take from you? Answer me! (304)

The relationship between a parent and a child is curtailed psychologically as it grows. As Freud feels, in their early life, children identify with an external authority (the parents or caretaker) and take the authority as their own. As a result of the relationship and interaction between parent/caretaker and child, the child gradually internalizes the parent's or caretaker's authority. This helps the child limit and control his or her actions. Freud stated that "a great change occurs only when the authority is internalized." In other words, there is a replacement of "external authority" with "internal authority." Of vital importance to the development of a child is the child's relationship with parents and caretakers. Children also experience mixed feelings toward people they love (especially their parents), which results in an ongoing conflict between love and aggression. Every time a child renounces an aggressive wish toward the parent, it intensifies his or her sense of guilt. What also occurs during childhood is that as the child's relationships widen in the community and he or she develops ties to other people, the internal conflict between love and aggression becomes active. This has made Amy disobey her parents. Amy is deserted because ovary banks have increased and she is no more a child but a choice for her parents.

In Freud's view, the human is driven towards tension reduction, in order to reduce feelings of anxiety. Humans seek to reduce anxiety through defense mechanisms. Defense Mechanisms can be psychologically healthy or maladaptive, but tension reduction is the overall goal in both cases. A nightmare is a dream occurring during rapid eye movement (REM) sleep that results in feelings of strong terror, fear, distress or extreme anxiety. Amy's world and her fate are nightmares that help in finding solutions to existential anxieties through the awakening projections. Awareness is prevention; Amy is awareness awakened through technology and emotion.



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Disappearance and Suspension in Post-97 Hong Kong films

-An observation and contemplation

Li Siu Kit

Introduction

The Hong Kong film industry is best known for martial arts and crime thrillers. But some celebrated Hong Kong films of the past 20 years are not of the same kind. It is a low-budget, even political film presenting a dark vision of Hong Kong's future. These Hong Kong films on the post-97 are mostly pessimistic, and even desperate. Through the analysis of post-97 films, covering Hong Kong film awards for best films including *Ten Years* (2015), *Election series* (2005 and 2006), Wong Kar Wei's *2046* (2005), Fruit Chan's *Made in Hong Kong* (1997) and *The Midnight After* (2015), *The Days of being Wild* (1990), the phenomenon of no posterity in post-97 Hong Kong films is found.

According to Lacan, "The unconscious is the sum of the effects of speech on an object, at the level at which the subject constitutes himself out of the effect of signifier, we depend on the field of other, and whose circulating structures determine us as a subject" (1). We know that the appearance of the self depends on others, self is positioned by others. Therefore, the disappearance of posterity is not only the projection of the past and present, but also to entangle in the future of Hong Kong by suspension. This paper examines the constructed self by the imagination of post-97 Hong Kong films and points out that this construction will culturally suspend Hong Kong.

Disappearance: Broken Family Lineage and Dystopian Enlightenment

In the past 20 years' Hong Kong post-97 films, a phenomenon is noted – families usually get broken at the end, the father-son relationship is poor, young people die one by one in films. We call this "no posterity", and it means no offspring and it is also a denotation, which means the disappearance of old values of Hong Kong. HongKongers' anxiety about the future of "50 years remains unchanged". And this includes the fear and anxiety of Hong Kong people about the unknown future. Since there is a tradition that Chinese culture is usually used to comparing a family to a state, the collapsed family points to the "constructed reality" of Hong Kong's near future.

Fruit Chan Gor's 1997 film *Made in Hong Kong* offered a bleak assessment of the city's prospects under Chinese rule.(2) The character Autumn Moon is a secondary school drop-out, whose father has abandoned his family for his mainland mistress. Moon now works as a debt collector for a triad gangster with retarded Sylvester. Ping is girl suffering from a fatal kidney disease, so the Moon decides to accept an assassination contract to pay for her medical fees. Finally, Ping and Sylvester die, Moon decides to take revenge on the adult world and kills himself in front of Ping's tomb at the end.



The atmosphere of youth's death and suicide right before the handover produced the discussion of the fear of disappearance of old Hong Kong values, represented by the Moon, Sylvester and Moon fathers and even mothers' runaway, and because of the absence of fathers and the despair lead to youth's death. The film signified a dark portrait of a city on the verge of a nervous breakdown, an imagination on its collective fears and pessimism during the handover in 1997.

Johnnie To's films have always depicted Hong Kong's social and political changes. His *Election Series* compares the process of electing the head of the Wo Shing Society to Hong Kong's Chief Executive's election, in the same genealogical sense. Especially, the father-son transition of *Election Series* parallels election process in Hong Kong.

Unlike *Made in Hong Kong*, *Selection Series's* theme is family lineage, "Selection" is the gang's long tradition, processing more than 100 years in Wo Shing Society but because of desire, external force's penetration, they start killing each other for benefits in lieu of binding with royalty and kinship. Lok killed the most respectful ex-chairman for his seeking for his second term, breaking the rule of law of gang tradition in the past 150 years. The old Hong Kong values are disappearing when facing the new era after the handover.

Comparing to the 80-90's Hong Kong films like *Once a Thief*, the characters, Chow Yun Fat, Leslie Cheung are full of confidence. Films after 2000 are very different, in *Election Series*, the newly-elected chairman Jimmy was ordered to turn the election into a patriarchal system by the National Security Bureau. Jimmy's fate, like other Hong Kong people, is holding at the hands of the rulers in Mainland. Jimmy's sons and daughters have to become the permanent puppets of this "family enterprise". This has shown that the totalitarian control is posed by the government, which is against the old Hong Kong values of freedom.

Especially, at the last scene of *Election 2*, when Jimmy and the section chief from China meet on the mountaintop in ShenZhen (One border next to Hong Kong), it is not just the meeting of a police officer and a gangster but also a scene facing land under the dark sky compared to the bright and blue sky at the beginning of the film. The dark ending portraits that the 1997 handover slogan—"A brighter tomorrow" which is turned into a darker tomorrow.

The theme of all these films has one thing in common: descendants die or have a gloomy future at the end. In the films, all the younger generations were forced to face the world all by themselves with anxiety, confusion and despair.

In Wong Kar Wei's *2046*, the line "the only thing that passengers go to the 2046 is to find the lost memory. Because everything will never change in the 2046. No one knows if



this is true since no one has ever returned” repeats as a theme.

What we can see from the monologue above in the film, until 2005, the memory of the past and uncertainty about future still co-exists in Hong Kong people’s mind. According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, 2046 is a deadline of Hong Kong’s autonomy, paralleled to Deng Xiao Ping’s word “50 years no change”.

Ten years later, the film *Ten Years* was shown. One of the directors, Au, told NBC News that “The consequence of the government’s policies is that our cultural roots are being removed.”(3) In recent years, desire for Hong Kong to secede and become independent has met with official crackdowns. (4)

The film *Ten Years* was quite straight about the changes asserted by China’s influence. Audiences were captured by the film’s five ominous short stories hypothesizing what Hong Kong will be like 10 years from now as mainland Chinese rule entrenches itself further. *Local Egg*, Sam's store is frequently checked by Youth Guards, members of a Red Guards-like uniform group, since the use of “local eggs” is on the censor list. He doubts why “local eggs” must be relabeled “Hong Kong eggs” when referring to the same thing. *Dialect*, as the government enacts laws limiting operating areas of non-Mandarin-speaking taxi drivers, the middle-aged Cantonese-speaking driver finds himself, just like some other Hong Kong people marginalized as failing to pass the national Mandarin proficiency test.

Wittgenstein said “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” and “to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.”(5) The change of official language is a microcosm which means the change of the way they think and live. Consequently, local culture elimination is another kind of values’ disappearance.

Concerning the definition of “local”, Ackbar Abbas asked readers to note that “The local is not easily localized” in Hong Kong since local is more than just Cantonese. “What I am suggesting is that the local is already a translation.”(6) because “The difficulty with the local, therefore, is in locating it, and this is particularly tricky in a place like Hong Kong with its significant proportion of refugees, migrants, and transitions, all of whom could claim local status.” Hong Kong is a multi-cultural place. The so-called localization is not only for locals, but for everyone in Hong Kong who has different needs. Therefore, we doubt the ground of enlightenment of post-97 films, since the Cantonese ethnicity narrated in the above films cannot represent the whole.

Just like what Neil Postman said, “They are rather like metaphor, working by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce the special definition of reality.....our media-metaphors classify the world for us, sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color it, argue a case for what the world is like.”(7) We can see from what depicted from above, the films are more radical (enlarging) and more imaginative (framing) than the reality in



the forms of metaphor. In another short story, *Season of the End*, from *Ten Years*, Wong Ching and Lau Ho-chi attempt to preserve objects from homes destroyed by bulldozers for relocation. The last specimen Lau wants to create is his own body. Bulldozers means authority of government, when they come, local homes, even some people, will be destroyed, coming to the end of seasons.

What the radical and imagination presented in films like *Ten Years* brings about a sensation in society, even the future dystopian enlightenment; this kind of enlightenment is also a kind of limitation and pointing, leading to binarism, pushing Hong Kong into a politicized situation, even a bloody conflict between Hong Kong and China. In fact, in 2016, Chinese Lunar New Year, the first blood of anti-government shed in Mongkok, protesters throwing bricks to the police, several injuries.

Contemplation: Over-imagination creates Suspension

New Historicism tends to see literature as part of a superstructure in which the economic base manifests itself.(8) Therefore, literature is not just the reflection of society, but also can influence the history the other way around. Searle said there are two kinds of realities, physical realities and social realities (9), the latter is constituted by language. The social reality constructed by these famous films produces the self-fulfilling prophecy, projecting a dark future of Hong Kong, which will suspend and drag down Hong Kong in future.

Failing to be awarded the promised democracy in the past ten years, Hong Kong people are fighting to get universal suffrage through the imagination in the post-97 films, but this leads to the suspension of Hong Kong. Over the past 20 years, post-97 Hong Kong films themes mostly are pessimistic, and even with a fearsome sense. In recent years, from time to time, many people in Hong Kong often say "Hong Kong is dying" or even "Hong Kong is dead".(10)

From blog to Facebook, from YouTube to films, together with media, reveal the city of the hopeless. In the process of narrating through films and media, the consciousness of fear and despair of uncertain future transmutes into the "unconsciousness" of the region, and represents the special situation of "Hong Kong" with "imaginative creation". To illustrate, let's take a look at some classic post-97 films' narrations shown in the following:

In Fruit Chan's *Little Cheung*, a little girl from the mainland, illegal immigrant Snake Fan, became a friend of the local boy Little Cheung when she was hiding in Hong Kong, but was sent back to the mainland the day right before handover. The last shot of the film, Snake Fan and Little Cheung sitting in two different white cars, separate at the end of the street, one is going to the left and one is going to the right, manifesting that the huge differences of the capitalism of Hong Kong and the communism of mainland and even (cultural) identity in two places.



In the *Election Series*, the mainland police officers always appear to threaten, to arrest people at night, force others to accept their ideas, in line with the Hong Kong people's imagination about central government's power apparatus, the negative and dark image express people's fear about their future.

In Wong Kar Wei's *Happy Together*, lovers Ho Po-wing (Leslie Cheung) and Lai Yiu-fai (Tony Leung Chiu-wai) are both male; neither are same sex couple "completely" male nor female. The in-betweenness of homosexuality is always entangled in the famous line: "We could start over." It is a motif of representation of 1997 memory. Just like Hong Kong people, film characters Ho and Lai are always haunted by memory of missing the good old days.

In the story of *Ten Years*, a woman self-immolates in front of the British consulate, seeking an answer of being abandoned, highlighting the intolerable oppression in Hong Kong from China. Whether it is the accusation of the betrayal or the death against domination, the complaints of incompatibility between China and Hong Kong has reached its peak through the film's exaggerative imagination.

This series of post-97 films, in terms of content, can raise people's awareness about political and social changes on the important historical stages. It can also arouse some Hong Kong people's resonance, especially the issues of freedom and democracy, which reflect local people's strong demands for universal suffrage.

However, we still argue that the binarism exhibited in the post-97 films. The contents of anxiety and uncertainty about future are respected and appreciated but the audience, critics, even the media did not mention the negative meaning of the films and dissemination of the meaning of the films. Such films look at the future of Hong Kong from a desperate perspective. We found out that is conceived to meet the needs of some people for the repositioning of the growing demand for Hong Kong cultural identity. However, we argue that pessimistic imagination and narrations in the films are too exaggerated and keep self-reinforcing.

So, the problem is that such films will bring about binary oppositional thinking at the territories: local versus mainland, dialect versus national language, rule of law versus arrogance, advance versus impoverishment, all these could self-restrict the future of Hong Kong, and indulge Hong Kong in an endless debates and quarrels.

Fredric R Jameson believes that the cultural logic of late capitalism is a visual society. The development of high technology can produce replica, because visual senses can no longer tell the truth from falseness. With the development of the media, the action of reading and the travelling has been replaced by focuses on the computer or mobile phone screens. It is difficult for people to distinguish between the real from virtual since virtual



images are so similar to real things. This kind of reality makes people forget the boundaries between the real and virtual, and even makes people think that virtual reality is reality.

So, these famous post-97 films have a dominant effect on Hong Kong society, especially, when Hong Kong encounter economic turmoil and has been going through political reform. Foucault believes that power relations are the main axis of knowledge construction. However, knowledge that has been intervened by power produced by media has often led to a weakening of judgment on the real situation. Therefore, people should doubt the disseminated “knowledge” of just like what have been stated in Hong Kong post-97 movies.

Robert Mckee said, “Writers deal with ideas, but not in the open, rational manner of philosophers. Instead, they conceal their ideas inside the seductive emotions of art.....Every effective story sends a charged idea out to us, in effect compelling the idea into us, so that we must believe.”(11) Therefore, death and desperate narrations of the post-97 films definitely bring the territories the atmosphere of despair.

There is another important dimension of producing films - no matter how dark the content of film is, there is still shining point of humanity. If the story only brings darkness and despair, humanistic dignity is overridden. Let's take a look at the great tragedy like *Titanic*: The dead are already gone and the survivals remain strong. In the era of holocaust, among these, the humanity's kindness and courage are highlighted, just like the line in *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, “there are still faint glimmers of civilization left in this barbaric slaughterhouse that was once known as humanity.” Jasper Tsang Yok-sing, the former President of the Legislative Council said right before handover anniversary, “Replace the enemy or foe mind with tolerance, replace the zero-sum game with mutual understanding and common prosperity.”(12)

Conclusion

“We have only one responsibility: to tell the truth.”(13) We think the post-97 films makers believe what they told in the movies is true or will be true and we uphold their right to express though we disagree with the films’ exaggeration. However, we also have the right to provide different thoughts about the dissemination of such desperate imagination and consequences of over-imagination for people to contemplate, and that will be our responsibility as the real situation in Hong Kong has been affected by post-97 films.

End Notes

1. <https://lacan-psychoanalysispraxis.tumblr.com/post/145652817201/the-unconscious-is-the-sum-of-the-effects-of>



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3. "Ten Years": Film Raises Questions About Future of Hong Kong. Retrieved 2016 September 1 from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/ten-years-film-raises-questions-about-future-hong-kong-n603471>.
4. Police used tear gas and this was against pro-democracy demonstrators in Umbrella Movement in late 2014. And in 2015, several Hong Kong booksellers, who all offered works critical of mainland political figures, mysteriously vanished.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford: The Macmillan Company,1986)p.8.
6. Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, (HK: Hong Kong University Press,1997) p.12
7. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, (NY: 2005, Penguin) p.10
8. Catherine Gallagher, Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*, (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2000) p.36.
9. John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, (NY: Free Press, Year: 1997) p.160.
10. "Hong Kong is not dying THIS CITY IS DEAD!"THIS CITY IS DYING, Y' KNOW?!Written by Kael'thas Kamiya on 2013 November 4. Retrieved 2018 Aug 2 from Hong Kong-UK Reunion Campaign at <https://hkukreunification.wordpress.com/>.
11. Robert Mckee, *Story: substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting*, (NY: Harper-Collins Publishers,1997) p.129.
12. "One Country, Two system means mutual understanding" from Chinese newspaper named AM730, published on 2018 July 30.
13. Robert Mckee, *Story: substance, structure, style, and the principles of screenwriting*, (NY: Harper-Collins Publishers,1997) p.130.



The Importance of Folk Lore in Modern Days

Padma S.V

Janapada (Folklore) is considered as the soul of literature. The world of folklore has been very ancient and is present since ages. It can be told that it is the literature that has been spread from one generation to the other. Basically the folk Songs are sung by common people, men and women at the time of their work.

The people who worked in fields used to sing songs that are related to their daily activities, just to get rid of their tiredness. The songs contained the morals of life in various angles. They created their own words in their dialects and gave their own rhythm and sang them. The songs have all emotions like love, lust, sorrow, sadness, separation, patriotism etc. They also contain many morals of life, different ways of celebrating festivals, rituals to be followed, and traditions to be taught and so on.

Marriage ceremonies travelling time 'subject' of the songs are mainly the feelings of human being, like love, affection, nature, goodness, god, children etc., But most of the folk songs tells is how to live the life in good way, that is the 'values' of life.

One can specify them as social, economical, political etc, for example during those days every culture taught one common thing to a girl, who is a daughter, a wife and a mother. And that was to be good, loving and caring; these preachings are in the form of songs. Some songs spoke of the mother-daughter relationships, Love life of husband and wife, brother-sister relation etc,. Whenever they were sung people remembered them very well and also followed in their life.

Folklore literature has evolved in many languages of India, but the folklore of Karnataka is considered to be very rich. It can be found in the Art, literature, dance, stories, proverb, beliefs, traditions and riddles.

The different forms of folk narration include Songs, ballads, epics, drams etc. But 'Songs' are most effective 'folk' form. The oral tradition flowed from 'mouth' to 'mouth' Songs is known to be much richer and meaningful, in Kannada folk world. The famous epics like 'Mahabharata' and 'Ramayana' were originally passed on orally, in the form of Songs.

Folklore songs being a part of our Kannada folklore literature bring the beauty of various places of Karnataka with their customs, traditions and culture that can be a great gift to the tomorrow's generation. Though the western music plays an important role in the life of youth now, the beauty and essence of folklore songs has been attracting people (youth) to a maximum extent.



In the present world, human values and social norms are deteriorating faster than ever. In earlier days, folktales and folklore was a part of education at home, where old grandmothers and grandfathers use to pass leisure times with their grand children. Fairly tales still exist as bedtime stories, but folk tales are beginning to be regarded even as some forms of taboo by a class of people, because they think, it is only for uneducated and archaic village folks. The coming generation of children does not lack interest in them; it is just, they have nobody to tell them in an interesting way in any form.

The importance of folklore as other subjects such as science and mathematics in early school days is becoming quite evident in present times. Some of the reasons are cited hereafter.

- Folklore is a representation of culture and tradition. It reflects the moral value of a particular culture and society. Folklore as a subject in early school education could be an effective moral education that is devoid of any religious or spiritual sentiment. Folk tales have strong messages of ethics and values because they are with lucid and simple explanations.
- Folklore can produce a feeling and a strong sentiment towards culture and unity. What is more interesting and unique is, this sentiment is devoid of disadvantages and criticality of patriotism and competitive nationalism. The reason is: Folklore is about common human values and they signify universal characteristics of mankind. They generally signify geographic locations and identities such as land, river and so on rather than using names of exiting countries and areas.
- A good advantage of folklore is, they inspire simple and logical thinking. Since folk tales are about relations of man to nature; this education will make students environment conscious, which is very important in present times.
- Folktales and folklores provide a greater and deeper insight to life and living. An early education of folklore would be a better preparation of life for any young child. There is always enough times for studying tough subjects such as Mathematics and Science. But the best time for folk tales is childhood. On the other hand, the problem with subjects such as Mathematics and Science is they are not much necessary for every student, apart from persons who requires them professionally.
- Since Folklore and folk stories are lucid and explanatory, they engage creativity in children. These increase the creative side of the brain and will make students more productive when they grow older. They will help students to have vision in their thought process and make them more responsible persons, ready for the world.

Well, it is not suggested to undermine the importance of other subjects such as Mathematics and Science in primary schools. But subject such as folklore can be great for character formation, which is will be required the most in the coming generation.



Folktales can also be used to help children develop strong reading skills, study other cultures, model positive character traits, and discover a love of stories.

Folktales can be used in a variety of ways to help children:

- Develop stronger reading skills
- Study other cultures
- Model character traits
- Appreciate other traditions
- Learn about decision making
- Explore new ways of seeing the world
- Discover a love of stories

As you explore the diverse stories included in our folktale collection, please remember that all of these timeless stories share a common thread: they were preserved so they could be shared over and over again with each new generation.

As Margaret Read MacDonald writes, “A folktale is a story that has been passed from person to person.” Margaret also cites there are many forms and genres of folktales including:

- Animal Stories
- Epics
- Fables
- Fairytales
- Legends
- Myths
- Tall Tales
- Urban Legends

Since folktales have been passed down through the oral tradition, they were honed for listening so they were easy to remember and share. As a result, folktales make it easier for children to differentiate characters, follow a plot line or recall a sequence of events. Not surprisingly, working with folktales can also help children develop the critical reading skills of phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension needed to meet the requirements defined in the Common Core Standards for Reading.

While folklores are not only highly entertaining, they also play an important role in passing along core values or character traits. Folktales were often employed to share a common history, to reinforce cultural values or highlight important traditions.

When people belonged to a tribe or lived in a small village, by necessity they needed to be able to get along well under a variety of circumstances and minimize conflict. Typically, only the chief, a high priest could confront someone over committing an



offense. As a result, stories were often shared to intentionally clarify how a transgression had occurred. Hopefully, the person at fault would then recognize the parallel between their actions and a character's mistakes in the story. As folktales were passed down over generations they modelled behaviours and helped reinforce expectations about how to live a meaningful life. Over time, folktales subtly incorporated character traits like caring, resourcefulness, trust or courage into the fabric of the stories.

Folktales also model the elements of effective decision-making. Characters in folktales invariably encounter conflicts that require them to make difficult decisions and take action to resolve a conflict. These decisions then lead to clear consequences that carry a message: making a "good" or more responsible decision results in positive outcomes while making a "poor" or irresponsible decision inevitably leads to negative outcomes. As a result, folktales can demonstrate the importance of making difficult decisions under challenging circumstances. Engaging children in discussions about the consequences of making poorly thought-out or rash decisions, helps them see the importance of making effective decisions in their lives.

Folklores by their nature celebrate diversity. By experiencing stories from different cultures, children can discover valuable insights about another culture's values, beliefs, history, practices and customs. When children learn about diverse cultural traditions, they not only broaden their view of the world, they may also develop a greater appreciation of their own family's heritage.

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Time and its many facets in Sandra Cisneros' *'The House on Mango Street'*

Proiti Seal Acharya

Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros' *'The House on Mango Street'*, published in 1984, is a coming of age novel narrated by Esperanza Cordero, a prepubescent girl growing up in an impoverished Latino neighbourhood in Chicago. Her story is told through a series of vignettes, which are not necessarily arranged in chronological order. "The time-element in fiction is of major importance", argues A. A. Mendilow, proposing that "in a large measure it determines the author's choice and treatment of his subject, the way he articulates and arranges the elements of his narrative, and the way he uses language to express his sense of the process and meaning of living." Cisneros' use of time within the novel is characterised by unspecified shifts in temporal schemes, fluctuating tenses, echoes of past traditions, mirroring, and an overall circular mode of storytelling. Each of these devices and techniques serve specific purposes within the narrative.

Henri Bergson's theory regarding "the fluidity of time" (LG 70), may be alluded to in this attempt to understand how Cisneros uses time in her narrative. According to Bergson, in case of the intellect, time is "spatialized" into separate "before" and "afters" (CM 149). However, In case of intuition and imagination, time is "indivisible", constituted by "moments inside one another" (CM 27, FW 232). Bergson admits that "time implies succession", referring to the common perception of time as a linear movement, but in those higher levels of consciousness, "succeeding each other means melting into one another and forming an organic whole" (CM149, FW 128). He conceptualises the idea of "true duration" as "the uninterrupted prolongation of the past into a present which is already blending into the future" (CM 32).

As will be demonstrated by the discussions below, Cisneros' narrative plays with conventional notions of time and the way it moves. Her narrative provides considerable insight into the psyche of Esperanza, and is coloured by her thoughts and observations about her community. Her intuition and imagination play major roles in the creation of the narrative. Within that context, in accordance with Bergson's theory, time is fluid and undividable. Many spots of time overlap and spill into each other. Adopting these techniques allows Cisneros to facilitate her readers' understanding of Esperanza's rich inner life. They also enable her to showcase the communal bonds that shape her and are so crucial to her survival. By taking these liberties, Cisneros is able to produce an authentic picture of Esperanza's coming-of-age. As a novel chronicling the transient stage between childhood and maturity, i.e. a time when one must negotiate with the past in preparation for the future, *'The House on Mango Street'* benefits from the author's decision to diffuse the boundaries between the past, present and future.



One of the techniques Cisneros uses to manipulate time within the narrative is to shift back and forth between different voices, each from a different time period in Esperanza's life. "Although there are times when Esperanza's voice is clearly that of a twelve year old and occasionally one that shows the beginnings of maturity, there are other times when the voice is much more mature, the voice of an adult looking back on past experiences", writes Breth L. Brunk. To illustrate this point, she refers to several instances from the book. Citing the chapter titled 'Darius and the Clouds', where Esperanza speaks of being "drunk on sky" (33), Brunk argues that a twelve-year old would not be aware of the feeling of being drunk, especially Esperanza, whose ignorance about alcohol and its effects are depicted in the chapter titled 'Chanchlas' (46). The techniques used in the book to achieve a poetic effect, such as "creative similes, metaphors, repetition" etc do not read like the writing of a twelve year old. According to Brunk, they "reveal a more mature voice, the polished style of an experienced author" (141). These changes make it difficult for the reader to gauge at what age Esperanza is writing which portion of the narrative. By using this technique, Cisneros creates a non-linear narrative that provokes the reader to question his/her notions of time as a streamlined, forward moving entity. Cisneros' narrative is not bound by the constraints of clock time- by shifting the voice back and forth between innocence and maturity, she seems to assert that Mango Street exists in Esperanza's mind even when she has physically removed herself from the locality. The adult Esperanza seems to exist parallel to the twelve year old Esperanza in Mango Street.

This fluctuation between time periods is also exhibited on a smaller scale through the changes in the tenses used by Esperanza in the various vignettes. While most of them are written in present tense, some vignettes are written in the past tense. In some cases, the tense changes in the middle of the vignette. In "The Family of Little Feet" (Cisneros 39), these two paragraphs mark the shift in tense:

"Do you want this? And gave us a paper bag with one pair of lemon shoes and one red and one pair of dancing shoes that used to be white but were now pale blue. Here, and we said thank you and waited until she went upstairs.

Hurray! Today we are Cinderella because our feet fit exactly, and we laugh at Rachel's one foot with a girl's gray sock and a lady's high heel. Do you like these shoes? But the truth is it is scary to look down at your foot that is no longer yours and see attached a long long leg." (Cisneros 40)

This vignette begins as a memory, but by changing the tense, the author transports the reader to the location where the memory was created. At first, the reader is being treated to a recollection of the memory, but the change of tense simulates the actual experience, which he/she can now perceive firsthand as it plays out in real time. Through this technique, Cisneros uses language as a tool to manipulate the reader's perception of time within the narrative. This too, challenges the notion of time as a straight line.



In the chapter titled “A Rice Sandwich”, the tense fluctuates between present and past at first. Then it changes to the past tense and remains so until the end of the chapter. The following paragraphs mark this change:

“You don't live far, she says. You live across the boulevard. That's only four blocks. Not even. Three maybe. Three long blocks away from here. I bet I can see your house from my window. Which one? Come here.

Which one is your house?

And then she made me stand up on a box of books and point. That one? she said, pointing to a row of ugly three-flats, the ones even the raggedy men are ashamed to go into. Yes, I nodded even though I knew that wasn't my house and started to cry. I always cry when nuns yell at me, even if they're not yelling.”(Cisneros 45)

In this chapter, Esperanza describes the time she convinced her mother to pack her lunch so that she could eat at the school canteen rather than come back home during break. Her mother sends a note along with the food, requesting the nuns to allow Esperanza to do so. As she is about to enter the canteen, one of the nuns spots her and sends her to Sister Superior, who does not grant permission. Assuming that her house is close by, the nun makes Esperanza stand on a pile of boxes, points to a row of ugly flats, and asks her if it is her house. Esperanza starts to cry, seeing which the nun gives her permission to have lunch in school on that particular day, but never again. It may be noted that in the paragraphs leading up to the crying incident with the nun, the tense fluctuates, but most of it is written in the present tense. At the very moment the situation becomes irreversibly tragic, the tense changes permanently to past. Cisneros’ masterful manipulation of the tenses underlines the nature of the incidents they depict.

In the previous example, Esperanza was in a happy mood because she received fashionable shoes. This is reflected in the change in tense from past to present- the reader is drawn in to partake in the vibrancy and delight felt by Esperanza. In case of this example, Esperanza distances herself from this painful memory by using the past tense. She seeks to separate both herself and the reader from the humiliation she experienced in that situation. In the paragraphs leading up to the permanent change, there are some instances of sentences written in the past tense, such as “I had to wait for two kids in front of me to get hollered at, one because he did something in class, the other because he didn't. My turn came and I stood in front of the big desk with holy pictures under the glass while the Sister Superior read my letter.” (Cisneros 45) These sentences anticipate the upcoming change in tense. The fluctuation reflects the nervousness felt by Esperanza during the time leading up to her moment of truth. By switching from one tense to another depending on the tone and nature of the events they describe, Cisneros adds texture to the narrative. She also stretches the possibilities of grammar and linear time.

Another way in which Cisneros experiments with time is by repeating incidents and motifs with slight modifications. Although Cisneros’ wrote in her essay “Do you



know me?" that she attempted to write the book in a way that a reader would be able to pick it up and read any chapter without having to know what came before or after that chapter, *'The House on Mango Street'* contains many motifs and tropes that mirror each other throughout the narrative. "One recurring motif is that of a woman confined to the home but leaning out a window or standing in a doorway in a half-attempt to escape", writes Brunk (142). Esperanza's great-grandmother, Rafaela, Marin, Mamacita and Sally are all female characters who find themselves in a similar position at some point in time, even though they differ from each other in age and background. Sally, the youngest, is Mexican-American like Esperanza. Her father abuses her physically, ultimately leading her to elope with a marshmallow-salesman. Sally is afraid of her husband and does not dare to venture out of their house without his permission. Rafaela's husband locks her up on his domino nights because he fears she will run away. Marin, from Puerto-Rico, is unable to get out of the house because she babysits her cousins, but she stands in the doorway. Mamacita comes from a different country and always stays indoors because she does not speak English. She sits by the window all day and plays Spanish songs on the radio.

The circumstances endured by these women mirror those faced by Esperanza's great-grandmother, who obviously lived a long time ago, and was forcefully married and ended up spending her whole life sitting by the window. Thus we find that even though a significant amount of time has passed between the time Esperanza's great-grandmother lived and the present time, women continue to be oppressed in remarkably similar ways. This mirroring across time periods also emphasises the connection between these women, and it is another way in which the author challenges the reader's notion of time as an entity defined by progress. This idea may be visualised in the form of a clock- although we perceive each day as being different from the previous one, the arms of the clock move over the same numbers every single day- even though one generation makes way for the next, the women continue to face the same challenges as their older counterparts.

A different aspect of the narrative structure is brought to light in Maria Karafilis' critique of the text, where she views Cisneros' as having made significant revisions to the traditional concept of the bildungsroman. Referring to the first and last chapters of the book, which echo each other, Karafilis writes, "We also see Cisneros's nonlinear writing style in the circular pattern of the text. Whereas the traditional Bildungsroman begins with the birth of the protagonist and proceeds chronologically until the point of maturation and assimilation into a larger society, Cisneros's novel ends virtually (but significantly not quite) where it began" (68). This circular motion recalls the words said to Esperanza by the three sisters who came to the wake of Lucy and Rachel's baby sister. They asked her to make a wish, and when she does, they are able to sense that her wish had been to escape Mango Street. They say to her, "When you leave you must remember to come back for the others. A circle, understand? You will always be Esperanza. You will always be Mango Street. You can't erase what you know. You can't forget who you are..." (105). By constructing the first and last chapters in a way that they echo each other, Cisneros has



Esperanza pay homage to the sisters' words. It may be read as Esperanza's commitment to Mango Street, which, despite being a place that disappointed and confined her, was also the place that shaped her experiences and knowledge of the world. Karen W. Martin makes a similar point, stating "Having won access to the world beyond Mango Street, Esperanza's mobility will create a circular pattern of movement as she will "have gone away to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot out" (66). By circling back to where she began, Esperanza makes another comment on the nature of time within the narrative. It may be argued that Cisneros presents time as being cyclical in nature. The notion of time being cyclical ties up with her use of mirroring throughout the narrative.

Critics Jayne E. Marek and Maria Karafilis view the episodic, fragmented narrative of 'The House on Mango Street' as being reflective of "the blending of cultural backgrounds that often characterize Chicana/o literary identity" (Marek 187) and the "repressed oral, pre-Colombian traditions of Mexico" (Karafilis 67). By evoking erstwhile traditions through her narrative technique, Cisneros roots her text within an existing genealogy. However, as Marek makes sure to add, "Esperanza's persistent vacillation between belief and disbelief, her irony and sarcasm, and the mixture of voices she uses at the same time undercut and problematize the "authority" of oral tradition" (183). By doing so, she establishes the fact that she is an author who is aware of the past but stands firmly in the present. This aspect of the author's usage of time helps the reader come to terms with her place in the larger spectrum of Chicano writing. It also echoes Esperanza's condition- she is deeply familiar with the facets of life on Mango Street, wishes to leave it behind, but she never wants to forget it.

Much of the success of 'The House on Mango Street' as a coming-of-age Mexican-American novel can be ascribed to Cisneros' creative usage of time. Her subtle, nuanced technique is more effective than deliberate, theatrical devices would have been. The reader is not immediately conscious of the tools used by Cisneros- yet the effects they have on the mind of the reader are instantaneous. Young adult readers, who are intended as the primary audience of this book, are drawn in as a result. They are able to relate to Esperanza's movements between temporal schemes and voices. By structuring her novel as a series of vignettes as opposed to a linear narrative, Cisneros also ensures their continued engagement and attention. Adult readers, who may be more perceptive to Cisneros' use of these techniques, are more likely to be able to understand the intentions behind their implementation, which would further enrich their reading experience.

Note

1. Abbreviations of titles of works by Henri Bergson cited in this paper are as follows: *An Introduction to Metaphysics: The Creative Mind* (CM); *The Introduction to a New Philosophy* (NP); *Time and Free Will* (FW).



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Cultural Diversity in Literature and Film

Roby K Sebastian & Ashitha K Varghese

Introduction

Culture is the lens with which we evaluate everything around us; we evaluate what is proper or improper, normal or abnormal, through our culture. If we are immersed in a culture that is unlike our own we may experience culture shock and become disoriented when we come into contact with a fundamentally different culture. Literature is a safe space to talk about diversity, students can enjoy a story, talk about the pictures and motifs, the characters and plot, whilst being immersed in another world or sometimes in their very own world which until that very moment had felt unappreciated at school. When it comes to building a more tolerant and supportive society we need to begin at school level by reflecting our multicultural communities in our classroom, we can start today, with the literature choices we share. Diversity in literature goes beyond ethnicity. Diversity may include the various facets of sexuality and gender, cultural, and societal groups. Whether characters in the books we read reflect others or ourselves, what is most important is connecting with them in ways that help us understand who we are today. Sometimes learning about our history through the eyes of diverse characters can be unsettling or even painful, but it also can be an awakening to the unknown. Culturally diverse literature illuminates similarities and differences in people around the world and thus educates readers about our unique situations and our common humanity.

Film industry is a mass media, there is bound to be heavy impact on its audience. The influence of films in our culture is bidirectional. Culture is reflected in films and in turn films influence culture by changes in representations, challenging audience's morals and transforming viewers' opinions. Movies mirror culture. Movies certainly influence the mass culture that consumes them; they are also an integral part of that culture, a product of it, and therefore a reflection of prevailing concerns, attitudes, and beliefs. In this paper the investigator would like to describe the concept of cultural diversity and what is the importance of cultural diversity in literature and film.

Cultural Diversity

Culture is that which shapes us; it shapes our identity and influences our behavior. Culture is our "way of being," more specifically, it refers to the shared language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviours, and material objects that are passed down from one generation to the next. Diversity is the state of being diverse. It is a range of different things. It refers to people from groups that have been marginalized in society, or "parallel cultures". This is the existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society. "Cultural diversity has increased, exposing kids to new tastes and experiences". Cultural diversity is the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to monoculture, the global



monoculture, or a homogenization of cultures, akin to cultural decay. The phrase cultural diversity can also refer to having different cultures respect each other's differences. The definition of cultural diversity to a sociologist refers to the variety of human societies or cultures in the world. The term “culturally diverse” is often used interchangeably with the concept of “multiculturalism.” Multiculturalism is defined as: “...a system of beliefs and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society.

People naturally use their own culture as the standard to judge other cultures; however, passing judgment could reach a level where people begin to discriminate against others whose “ways of being” are different than their own—essentially, we tend to fear that which we do not understand. Cultural diversity is important because our country, workplaces, and schools increasingly consist of various cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. We can learn from one another, but first we must have a level of understanding about each other in order to facilitate collaboration and cooperation. Learning about other cultures helps us understand different perspectives within the world in which we live, and helps dispel negative stereotypes and personal biases about different groups. In addition, cultural diversity helps us recognize and respect “ways of being” that are not necessarily our own, so that as we interact with others we can build bridges to trust, respect, and understanding across cultures. Furthermore, this diversity makes our country a more interesting place to live, as people from diverse cultures contribute language skills, new ways of thinking, new knowledge, and different experiences.

Multicultural literature serves as a powerful tool in enabling students to gain a better understanding of both their own culture and the cultures of others. ... As students of the 21st century are global participants, it is important that they possess cultural sensitivity. Cultural diversity refers to the variety of the makeup or the multiculturalism of a group or organization or region. It is also called multiculturalism. It includes the various different social structures, belief systems, and strategies the cultures use for adapting to life situations in various parts of the world. The differences in race, language, ethnicity, values systems, religion, and local cultures that make up various groups in a community also account for the diversity. Cultural diversity or multiculturalism is the acceptance of the various ethnic cultures in schools, organizations, businesses, neighbourhoods or cities. At the best, it involves treating impartially and fairly each ethnic group without promoting the particular beliefs or values of any group. It is estimated that the multicultural groups comprise almost half of the buying power of the market. Understanding the definition of cultural diversity could mean reaching half of your audience. Cultural diversity supports the idea that every person can make a unique and positive contribution to the larger society because of, rather than in spite of, their differences. Imagine a place where diversity is recognized and respected; various cultural ideas are acknowledged and valued; contributions from all groups are encouraged; people



are empowered to achieve their full potential; and differences are celebrated. This is the existence of a multiplicity of sub-cultures and different value systems in a plural or multicultural society or other setting. The differences can be based on gender, age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social status.

Cultural Diversity in literature

Cultural diversity illuminates similarities and differences in people around the world and thus educates readers about our unique situations and our common humanity. “The best books offer an experience that is more like looking through a window as light slowly darkens. At first one sees clearly through the window into another’s world – but gradually, as the light fades, one’s own image becomes reflected, too.” (Lee Galda) If children never see themselves reflected in literature, they receive the message that they are not important to society. It contributes to cultural understanding in a positive way. It explores cultural differences in an accurate and sensitive manner. It shows diversity within culture as well as across culture. Sometimes learning about our history through the eyes of diverse characters can be unsettling or even painful, but it also can be an awakening to the unknown.

One of the most prevalent benefits is that it will change the overall culture in the classroom. “Multicultural literature also creates a community within the classroom because students learn not only the differences tolerated, they are also embraced. This will help to cut down on the bullying and teaching that takes place in the classroom. Students will be better able to work harmoniously in groups” (Boles, 2006). In reading multicultural literature students can and will become more unified. This unification process happens through students reading books about different races and sub cultures. This will allow students to learn empathy and relate to their peers. Being empathetic allows students to open up and begin to trust each other. This in turn will allow students to learn about themselves and their own background and culture.

A second benefit of multicultural literature is that it creates self-worth within students and allows them to connect with themselves and their culture on a deeper level. DeLeon makes a great point in stating, “Multicultural literature impacts students more than just allowing them to see the equalization of the races; it also helps students of diverse backgrounds shape cultural identity” (DeLeon, 2002). They then no longer feel underrepresented, have someone to relate to, and can connect with their own culture. This will give students confidence within themselves, about their culture, and in their overall identity. Building confidence will automatically increase grades and student’s willingness to learn and cooperate within groups that include varied cultural groups represented.

A third benefit in multicultural literature is that it helps students to shape values and the way they think about situation. In reading the literature, students can be exposed to multicultural issues through texts they are not often exposed to such as racism and



prejudice. Throughout reading this type of information, students become aware of these things and will be more apt to figure out a way to eliminate and solve these problems. Students can also be exposed to cultures that they are not exposed to on an everyday basis and this will allow them to appreciate life experiences and expand their thinking of the world around us.

Cultural diversity in film

Within these environments, community film making is a potentially rich example of a cultural space in which 'lived' cultural diversity is being enacted and strengthened through film and self-representation, emanating from within community cultural production. Film industry is a mass media, there is bound to be heavy impact on its audience. The influence of films in our society is bidirectional. Society reflects in movies and in turn movies influence society. Let us leave the negatives of film industry like 'masala' movies and item songs for a moment.

Film obviously influences culture, just as music and television and books and radio and speeches and posters and billboards and any media ad infinitum all influence culture. We consume those media and it can shape the way we think and interact. Conversely, culture must influence film. Actors, directors, screenwriters: these people don't live inside the camera. They take the world around them and filter it through their unique lens to create something that is reflective of their culture (including other films, if you want to get recursive about it). This results in the massive influence that film has on today's society. Society is reflected in movies and in turn movies influence society by changes in representations, challenging audience's morals and transforming viewers' opinions. This amplifies the power of film whether it influences a personal or mass response.

Film is one of the great tools for teaching us about people different to ourselves and learning respect. The Wizard of Oz remains one of the defining examples of this, as Dorothy comes into contact with all sorts of strange and eccentric people whilst following the yellow brick road, learning lessons about home - and the world outside - along the way. One of the great gifts of film is its capacity to connect audiences to other people's point of view, whether they from the same surroundings or from another part of the world altogether. Film's ability to create these dialogues is incredibly powerful and can be a crucial tool to introduce young audiences to other cultures and perspectives, creating a space in which they can gain understanding of the world as a whole. The films on this list elicit empathy with the characters and communities, illuminating what unites us, yet urge the need for acknowledging and celebrating difference. The titles feature characters who are encountering new ways of life, beginning to embrace their cultures, while others who live amongst multiples ones or are struggling with feeling isolated new countries or within their own cultures' traditions. Ranging from gentle childhood fables to more stringently political works, all are strong examples of the power of storytelling in initiating understanding and discussion.



Conclusion

The literature and film have a tremendous responsibility to accurately reflect the world around us (whoever we are). We hope these will encourage young audiences and readers to seek out and demand a stronger range of representation to watch and the rich array of characters that populate them.

The soul of a culture (also of a community) is revealed most of all in its values, which can elevate the person or a society to new heights of existence, awareness and achievements. Experiencing the cultural differences through literature and film enables an individual to accept, respect and celebrate the diversity which is the innate expression of the Nature itself.

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A Study on Cultural Marginality leads to Cross Cultural Adaptation

Jagadeesh Prakash & Saly Joseph

Introduction

The term marginalization describes the human tendency to exclude some people from the mainstream of the society in the name of caste, creed, religion and culture. The marginalized people are not eligible for the existing system of protection and integration of the society in which they are part of. They are treated and measured with a different scale which reduces their opportunity for survival.

Cultural marginality is a concept analysis with implications for immigrant adolescents. Cultural marginality is defined by the author as "situations and feelings of passivity between two different cultures that do not yet perceive themselves as centrally belonging to either one." The word "cultural marginality" was often used to indicate immigrants who work outside of their own country, but are not eligible for the benefits of that country.

In this situation the identity of the individual is being forced to transform them from one culture to the other culture. It is a transformation from inferior culture to superior culture. Along with the culture transformation they also transform their values, beliefs, and behaviors to fit themselves in to their new circumstances. Living at the edges of two cultures leading to confusion and eventually lead of profound identity issues. When this situation arises they feel rejected and alienated which leads to isolation and marginality.

Cultural marginality refers to the dilemmas that derive from cross culture contacts in a society where caste, religion, creed and culture dominate. Cultural marginality originates from two different cultures in which an individual either remains as part of one culture or out of both the cultures. If the individual falls in line with one culture the result is acceptance or if they decided to remain out of both the cultures the result will be rejection and isolation.

India and cultural marginality

The merger of different cultures adds color to the ethnicity of India. Nevertheless we need to acknowledge that cultural marginality still exists in many parts of India. The cultures are decided based on states, Religion, caste and ethnicity. In spite of various Cultural, the marginality culture occurs because not all cultures are given equal states in our society. Some cultures are considered high and others low. Individual belongs to the lower culture do not enjoy the same status as the individuals of high cultures.



Cultural marginality in India is very evident in caste. There are around 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub castes in our country. Each of this caste does not enjoy the same reorganization by the society and the government. People in remote villages still suffer untouchability, humiliation and rejection by the upper caste people. Many at times they are deprived of their basic needs and rights in the name of caste in which they are born which determines their culture.

Cultural marginality in India is very evident in Religion. India is home to at least nine recognized religions. The major religions practiced in India are Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and the Baha'i. Each of these religions has created a niche of culture for its believers. Cultures of religion are based on food habits, style of worship, religious festivals and faith. Religious cultures have created cultural marginality in the name of God they worship. Religious cultures have created "superior God, inferior God, best God and better God. Religious cultures have divided people in the name of faith & God. They have taught them to look down up on each other's faith, creating cultural marginality.

Cultural marginality in India is very evident in Ethnicity & Language. India has more than two thousand ethnic groups, and every major religion is represented, as are four major families of languages (Indo-European, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic and Sino-Tibetan languages) as well as two language isolates (the Nihali language spoken in parts of Maharashtra and the Burushaski language spoken in parts of Jammu and Kashmir). Ethnicity & Language has created cultural marginality. People belongs to upper caste do not learn the language of the lower caste and people of the lower caste are not allowed to learn and speak the language of the upper caste. If they learn it is considered as sacrilege.

Cultural marginality in India is very evident in state. Indian has 29 states with 28 state languages. People of one state do not want mingle with the people other state. People from some states are looked down by the people of other states. People create mockery of some states that are socially, economically and intellectually poor. People from poor states are treated badly by the people of other states. Socially, politically, economically strong states create cultural marginality.

Reasons for cultural marginality

Inter caste marriages, flow of immigrants and refugees across international boards, frequent internal migrations for employment are some of the major reasons for cultural marginality. Inter caste marriages: India being a traditional Religious country has rooted its self in the depth of caste system. They believe system discriminate caste as "high and low" and along with it individuals who are part of it. The caste system in India prohibits marriage outside the caste. However, inter-caste marriages have gradually gained acceptance due to increasing education, employment, middle-class economic background, and urbanization. Children who are born out of Inter caste marriages suffer cultural



marginality. They are deprived of the rights of both the caste. They are not accepted in the society and are driven to find their own niche for themselves. They remain casteless because they do not belong anywhere and lose their identity as it is mandatory to be part of a caste in our society.

Flow of immigrants and refugees across international boards in India has a long tradition of receiving refugees that goes back centuries. India has welcomed refugees from Iran, Pakistan, Srilanka, Tibetan and Bangladesh and proved it's as a tolerant country. But it has created a partition of cultural marginality. People of other country still retain the identity of their motherland and people of India do not accept them as Indians. Though Articles 5 to 11 in Part-II of the Constitution of Indian accepts them as Indians if they reside in India more than five years, and are eligible for constitutional rights does not prevent them from suffering cultural marginality. They are still treated as foreigners and live like strangers in our country. People of India do not like to collaborate in their lives and keep them aloof.

Frequent internal migrations for employment in India have created cultural marginality among people. People migrate in large number from rural to urban areas in search of employment. Urban areas provide vast scope for employment in industries, trade, transport and services. This type of frequent migration has widened the difference of people. There are two types of migrations 'long term migrations' and 'short term migrations'. People who are on long term migration may not suffer the impact of cultural marginality as they identify themselves with the people of the place while short term migrators are the victims of cultural marginality as they do not wish to identify themselves with the new place and culture. They like to retain their mother culture which leads them to face challenges and exclusion from the society.

Few case studies

Marginalization is a process that leads to sidelining of a certain community / individual to the periphery of the social space that eventually constrain their life choices at political space, social negotiation, and economic bargaining.

Two years ago, brutal attack on Shankar and Kausalya shook the conscience of India. This honor killing has revealed the cultural marginality of the lower caste people of our society. The deep-rooted caste system in India does not allow equality and respect of every caste. Shankar, 22, Dalit man was hacked to death by a gang on bikes in March 2016, eight months after he married Kausalya, 21, a member of the Thevar caste, a dominant one in Tamil Nadu Reducing the existence of Dalit society to cultural marginalization.

A Dalit woman in Odisha was allegedly beaten up by members of upper caste for drawing potable water from a government-dug deep tube well in their area. The woman faced the wrath of upper caste groups as lower caste groups are not allowed to draw water



from these wells. This incident shows the depth of caste system that marginalizes the entire identity of the people of a particular caste. It is a sad realization that higher castes people do not want have any kind of association with lower caste people and treat them as outsiders.

We have an unfortunate example form the story of the ill-fated lovers Kevin and Neenu from Kerala which showed that the hundred percentages of literacy and education has made no change in our outlook towards our own brethren. It was the case of marriage between a poor Dalit boy and a rich Christian girl. Lack of acceptance by the girl's family led to the murder of the boy. It clearly showed cultural marginalization of the poor who have no right to enjoy the basic freedom to choose once life partner and live free in our country.

In Andhra Pradesh the atrocities against Dalit women were on the rise and the sexual exploitation of girls and women of the Dalit community are rampant. We have shocking examples of Dalit women and girls in Krishna district being attacked sexually just because they belong to Dalit society and it is a big question mark to Indian society's cultural marginalization. It shows that the constitutional right does not reduce the cultural marginality.

In Uttar Pradesh manual scavengers are done by people of the lower caste for their livelihood. It is based on their caste-designated occupation reinforces the social stigma that they are unclean or "untouchable" and perpetuates widespread discrimination. Women usually clean dry toilets, men and women clean excrement from open defecation sites, gutters, and drains, and men are called upon to do the more physically demanding work of cleaning sewers and septic tanks.

Cross culture

Cross-cultural consist of two different cultures. In cross cultural scenario differences are understood and acknowledged. One culture is not higher than the other culture. Every culture is treated equally and respected. Individuals feel loved and cared.

Increase in cross culture tendency

In the recent past people wished to work and communicate with people of the same culture. In the recent years there are rapid changes taking place. Especially youth of today do not care much for their culture, religion, caste and creed. They are more universal in their outlook on life. There is no much attention given to the traditions and ready to mingle with every caste.

The reasons for cross cultural mentality are due to various reasons such as Inter caste marriages, Education and migration. The youth of today are not much interested in



traditional marriages, of the same caste; rather they are more open to the other realities. They love to experiment different cultures, traditions, celebrations and practices. They patiently accept their differences and try to make a news culture of their own to fit in. They learn to tolerate each other's limitations.

The education national and international education has widened our knowledge on others culture and learn to celebrate life with others. Education took their minds beyond their traditions and cultures and gave them hand on experiments on others cultures. They are led to the depth of understanding that human relationships are more important than caste and creed. They extended their hand in collaboration with each other.

Employment opportunity across India and abroad is another veiled reason for the increase in cross culture. Moving from place to place and living in the present reality made them appreciate different cultures of our country. They explored new horizons and learned new traditions.

Conclusions

Today people love to live and independent life, free of all traditional bounding. They believe in the philosophy of "we are born free and have the right to live free". Cultural marginality is a social evil that divides people and create distances. Marginality assigns individual states, and places them in a frame work. They create cultures and give meaning to their identity in the society. It gives more power to the powerful and less power to the weak and downtrodden. This situation has helped the rise of inter cultural era where people of different caste, creed, religion and faith lived together without differences. People found this situation as more comforting and slowly began to move in to it. This new situation has created tension in the traditional culture. More and more young and educated began to support the inter culture by marrying outside their traditional customs and moving out of their caste circle. It is indeed an answer to the Religious fundamentalist who considers customs, culture and religion is the only way to salvation.

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Dynamics of the Spiritual and the Secular in Janakpur Art

Santosh Kumar Singh

In Mithila culture, spiritual life remains integrated with day-to-day activities targeted at earning livelihood—a duality, this chapter contends, Janakpur art dramatizes. The attainment of self-realization, while still eking out bread and butter, comes from the philosophy of Sage King Janak who had adopted Brahmanism while still being at the throne. The philosophy of a balance between worldly pleasures and the mystical ecstasy, which King Janak exemplifies, also informs Janakpur art. In Janakapur art, the philosophy manifests in the way the everyday matters find primacy of space in artistic creations which also embody the artists' ardour to be one with the divine. In this regard, historian Shashi Bhushan Chaudhuri asserts that Maithils seek spiritualism by not cutting themselves from “*atman*(affection, intimacy)” (163). Original inspiration of Mithila art, which is dominated by Maithili women, embodies this duality: Maithili women's painting shows both their female craving for matrimonial bliss and their longing to be one with God.

Janakpur art is fundamentally different from Jain art. King Janak as a sage is at odds with a Jain sage who, as depicted in Jain iconography, is shown as either sitting or standing in meditative posture without any clothes. Unlike Jain arts which are devotional in nature and provide the larger portion of the canvas to the outer space than the arts itself signifying the value of emptiness like plain paper, Janakpur art, like in *Fig.1*, captures the worldly affairs projecting the surrounding geography full of life and movement even as it depicts religious scenes and deities from ancient religious texts. A decisive demonstration of the celebration of life and nature amidst spirituality and eternity remains the distinguishing feature of Janakpur art (*Fig. 1*).



Fig. 1: Everyday Affairs amidst Local Flora and Fauna

The above painting (*Fig. 1*) is portrayed with the vivacity of life—both plant and animal. It emphasizes the Hindu religious philosophy of oneness among things. The essence of the philosophy is the principle unity of all created things, according to which,



behind diversity, there is unity, and behind individual souls, there is the divine self – the belief that all things emerge from one common source has ethical implications: it leads to a kinder and a gentler world. Compassion for all beings, on all planes, constitutes the fulcrum of Maithili life. This axis of Maithili life is borrowed from the Hindu emphasis on infinity – a human attempt to make the divine all-inclusive. As Vasudevan Mukunth says, the Hindu philosophy of infinity “existed together with a number system, one conceived to keep track of the sun and the moon, of the changing seasons, of the rise and fall of tides and the coming and going of droughts and floods. There is a calming universality to the idea – a calming inclusivity, rather – akin to what a particle physicists might call naturalness” (“Idea of Infiniteness”). In Mithila painting, the concept of zero remains disguised in the cultural relics painted in the murals, canvas, clothes, useable objects and paper. The art beginning with the dots and the opinion so discharged flourish from the concept from emptiness that is from the root to flowers that contains soul to physical body. Thus, Mithila artworks have both visible and invisible landscapes, which reinforce the duality of physicality and spirituality.

Nature acts as a surrogate mother to the artists. In fact, Janakpur art foregrounds surrounding flora and fauna. Plants and animals inspire the artists for yogic mood while drawing. The concentration paves the way for transcendental fulfillment amidst the hectic schedule of family life. The foregrounding of natural phenomena also bears out their positive attitude to the environment. The positive attitude manifests in the way plants and animals are depicted as co-existing in interdependent ways. Such a type of juxtaposition in the agrarian society vindicates the enrichment of life in Mithila even as drastic changes in climate are reported to have played havoc with the global environment. Janakpur art, in this sense, carries a message for those who have disregard for Nature and who destroy their surrounding for petty benefits.

Among the vegetation found in the region, certain plants only appear in their drawings because either they are associated with divinity or with the direct livelihood of the folks. The trees related with holiness are sacred to the common inhabitants, and they worship and pray there for wish-fulfillment like the *kalpbriksha* (wish-fructifying tree) in heaven. The portrayal of these plants links the devotees with their inner psyche: the people get integrated with the life generating trees which bless them not only with *prana* (oxygen) but also with liberation of their internal essence. While so doing, the available flora turn out to be a boon to the entire beings in the region and people look balanced in their day-to-day life.

A huge number of paintings portray natural vegetation of the area that denotes how much Maithili life owes its sustainability to Nature and the surrounding flora. The most vivid plants are mango – *mahua* (*bassialatifolia*), *peepal* (*ficuserligiosa*), *kadam* (burflower-tree), *bel* (*aeglemarmelos*), bamboo, *tulasi* (holy basil), banana, lotus, etc. Marriage with mango tree takes place before the actual wedding of the bride with the groom. It may be because the tree bears plentiful fruits that provide sufficient food during



the long summer in the region. God Shiva dwells in *peepal* tree; *kadam* is the favourite tree of Lord Krishna, the leaves of *bel* tree is liked by God Shiva whereas bamboo signifies progeny and holy basil and banana are the sacred plants wherein God Vishnu resides. Similarly Goddess Laxmi lives in the lotus. The above plants carry religious importance with them and are always worshiped by the folks so that they can achieve their divine blessing and worldly boon. A popular festival among the Maithili maidens takes place in the form of the worship of the banyan tree (*Bat Savitri*) for the longevity of their husbands' life (Ram Dayal Rakesh, "Janakpur" 71). The holy *Trimurti* (Trinity) exists in this tree and even today village folks neither cut down the trees nor do they sell them because any human injury to the tree is believed to invite suffering and trouble. This religious belief contains strong ecological sense and this is why the depiction of *ficus religiosa* is one of the favourite paintings of the Maithils in and around Janakpur.

Likewise, secular plants like guava, *katahar* (jackfruit), *barhar* (monkey fruit), coconut, lime, maize, wheat, paddy, *harfauri* (a tree with sour fruit), *semal* (cotton tree), *jamun* (black plum), creepers (sponge guard, bitter guard), sugarcane, rose, chili, grass, betel, papaya, etc. are drawn not only in the sense of *kalpabriksha*. Maithili life revolves around the flora because they carry life-force for them. The food which helps them survive comes from these trees, creepers, herbs, and shrubs. Since these are the geographically confined florae that sustain agrarian life, and their depiction marks the social reverence to them.

The secularism of Janakpur art is locatable in not only the depiction of the florae but also in the gender and caste of the artist. Artworks by women are related to the routinized, everyday life that rural Maithili women pass in highly traditional villages around Janakpur. They are mostly busy with their household duties, and once married, they are expected to remain partially veiled and silent before all males but their husbands. Their paintings express the tedious works they perform each day, passing of life – from planting seeds to harvesting, vending products, thrashing paddy, grinding grains, tilling land, food preparation, collecting water, fishing and eating.

Artistically, the vibrancy of their artworks comes from their strong use of design, natural colour and straightforwardness rather than delicacy. The fact that the figures have no mouths and the same large expressionless eyes gives the impression of a consistent diligence, duty-bound culture rather than a group of selfish beings. The paintings are fair representations of hard-working people carrying burdensome loads and often waiting for the harvest. Another important physical aspect of their artworks is the outlet that these media provide to their repressed desires and aspirations.

The agrarian lives of the people in and around Janakpur and the consequent social structure have a direct bearing on the Mithila art of the region. People of different castes exploit their available resources to create the arts, for example, farming population finds soil nearby to frame art on their mud walls with their fingers or with whole palms to



command human presence in the habitats while Kayasthain habitants use pen simply because their male counterparts practice with it for their livelihood and the black colour collected from the earthen cooking stove (*chulhi*) seem pleasant sight in their paintings despite the colour black is considered inauspicious according to the religious scriptures. In the same manner, Brahmin artists fill colours in their paintings because of the vehement colours they use in their homes to put *tika* (mark) on the forehead to foreground the third eye for right decision in their life as well as in the life of their *jajman* (the counselled). The colourful marks on the male members of their family make the women fill their paintings with colours naturally extracted from the available plants in the area. These caste-wise variations in the arts are the byproducts of the occupational castes in the agrarian society of Mithila. However, due to the inroads of modernity, the traditional social structure is on the wane.

The waning of the traditional social structure is visible clearly in the breaking of the joint family system. Due to the economic challenge, joint family is on the verge of extinction and both wife and husband need to work harder to make a decent living. This trend has given rise to nuclear families in which Maithili women have become more empowered than before. Traditionally, women from the Maithili community have almost never worked in official positions or in the formal economy, but over the past several decades, Maithili women have been making strides to gain independence, helped by NGO projects aimed at providing them with income-earning opportunities outside the home. This change is also reflected in Mithila painting of the Janakpur region in contemporary time. For example, the contemporary artwork (*Fig. 2*) shows ladies with cycles for outside work. Basically ladies were confined within the four walls of their houses but now they go out for various reasons. They also carry their children to school on the way and show courage to meet the challenges of nuclear family life. Contemporary Maithili women take flights like birds and shoulder responsibility like the self-sustaining tree. These dual roles are duly reflected in contemporary Janakpur art. In addition, the colourful borders exhibit their sweet labour for fruitful result in their family life. The changing social pattern has made women more accountable than before—the active agency of women gets represented in contemporary Janakpur art (*Fig.2*).



Fig. 2: Women Cycling to Work



Fig. 3: Elephants in Their Habitat

In contemporary Mithila, art becomes the medium to capture the nostalgia for the waning agrarian life. The cultivation of land equals bearing children in the family and



both are complementary to each other in Mithila culture. Agricultural fertility and human fecundity go side by side in Mithila culture—a structure threatened by burgeoning modernity and the rise of nuclear families.

Just like the interconnection between floras and people, fauna and people are so intermingled that the one becomes incomplete without the other. After vegetation, animals get the second place in Janakpur art. These animals either are associated with divinity or farming or both and people owe to them. The depicted animals are elephants, cows, bulls, oxen, fish, tortoises and snakes. The elephant represents royalty, prosperity and calmness but the pregnant elephant further indicates good luck, fertility and richness in the family. Due to the availability of colours, artists represent them in any colours they like with distinct eye, trunk, legs, back-seat, and a tail. The colours square with the changing mood of people in their daily life. However, the stout body signifies strength one needs in one's regular work. And their herd projects the family life that complies with Maithili social life. And their manners, being so gentle, are portrayed with trumpeting sound. Mithila used to be flush with elephants during the medieval period and they were used for travelling and showcasing on ceremonial occasions (Fig.3).

The elephants are now no more in the village but their memory, innocent look and homely behaviour are still there on the mud walls, canvas and paper of the artists. Elephants exhibit human traits most of the time—a display the Maithils like the most. The calmness and sheer strength of the elephant are virtues that Maithils would love to see become a part of their own selves. Elephants also entertain people at feasts and fairs. Moreover, they carry mythical admiration. Maithili culture appreciates the high intelligence and good memory of elephants which, for them, symbolize wisdom and royal power.

Cow, a sacred animal in Hindu religion, is associated with Lord Krishna. The animal spreads the message of eternal love, care and pleasure and supports human life by providing milk, ghee, butter and whey to enrich the agrarian life style of the common folk. Maithili children find cows as their alternate mother because of their regular consumption of milk from them. So, the artists pay a kind of gratitude to the animal and allocate it a large room in Janakpur painting. Artists draw it by making its eye enlarged pointing towards the vision one should learn after observing the works of art. Lord Krishna always stands there playing the flute and amusing the animal with its sonorous music. He was also fond of cow's butter and used to be content only after stealing it. Although the artists share the same content, works of art differ from each other due to their individual talent, skill they hone and styles they adopt.

The cow further helps farmers by begetting oxen for tilling the field and pushing the cart. And the bull in Mithila culture symbolizes God Shiva and the common folks take it as *Mahadeva* (Shiva). The following figures (4 to 5) illustrate Maithili farming life that signifies how much important oxen are in their life.

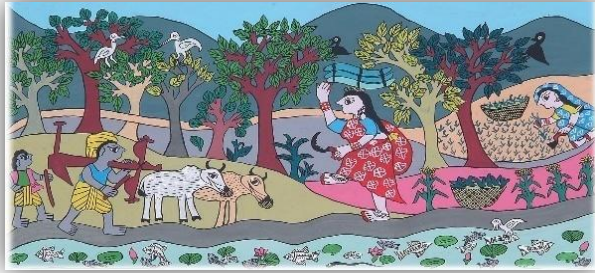


Fig. 4: Agrarian Life



Fig. 5: Farming Family

Among all the three forms of life that Janakpur art catches – water creatures (fish, etc.), sky flyers (crane, etc.), and soil cultivators (farmer, etc.), the last one is related to the oxen moving forward to the field for land-tilling and the farmer carrying the plough along with his child and wife who perform other works for maintaining their usual life. The artist's imagination, as a whole, suggests that the painting is a masterpiece which catches the very panorama of Maithili life in the Janakpur region. The pond below the path shows the aquatic flora and fauna and the birds on the green trees the flying creatures and the human activities in the middle dramatizes agrarian life where all the family members participate for the entire chores that take place in their regular life. The depiction shows people having a participatory mode of living, despite compartmentalization in their works. In this way, bovine life paves the way for human life and they have inseparable relationship.

The bull bridges the gap between the celestial and the mortal worlds. This animal transports and resides with Shiv-Parvati family members at Kailash (abode of God Shiva). It waits outside the Shiva temple everywhere in the world. In Mithila, it has freedom to graze in the field because it is not anyone's property; instead it belongs to the village and impregnates the entire cows. Therefore, it is loved, cared and owed in the universe for its selfless service and dedication to its owner. Artists expose it along with the family members of God Shiva where Maithili maidens since their childhood worship Goddess Parvati for a suitable husband and a blissful family life. While doing so, they also pray Nandi (the divine bull) for its special favour because life in the region depends heavily on animals. Therefore, the bull's stout body supporting the entire family of Lord Shiva is the spell-binding imitation in Janakpur art. Janakpur art humanizes spirituality in its presentation. The depicted deities, as the following figures show, not only look like human beings from Mithila but also their colour of the skin, ornamentation, clothes, gesture, posture, and physical organs have earmarks of Maithili life and the environment in and around Janakpur (Fig6).



Fig. 6: Lord Shiva in Sitting Posture & in Control of the Serpent

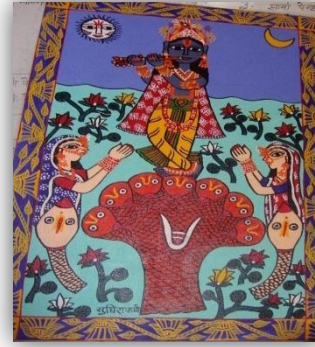


Fig. 8: Kaliya Mardan

The way people nurture long woven hair as the sign of devotion to God Jatta Shankar (long-haired Lord Shiva) and put marks on their fore heads constitute the gestures of spirituality. The cross-legged sitting, standing and playing *damru* (drum) as well as the flute create an aura that touches both the heart and the mind, thereby inspiring them towards cosmic vision. Janakpur art humanizes even God and his consort by depicting them as wearing clothes and ornaments like the newly married bride and groom. The figure “Sitting Shiva” seems simple yet inventive since it shows all the aspects of God. His ascetic pose with only one distinct eye and with an elongated nose is a clear-cut example of the humanizing of the divine—a distinguishing feature of Janakpur artworks. Distinct eyes and a long nose are taken as perfect organs for the human face in Mithila culture. However, Lord Shiva’s spirituality is still maintained through a depiction of his instrument (drum) and weapon (trident) and his poison-coloured blue neck. Moreover, the very seat of tiger’s skin keeps the flow of energy in the body, while meditating, in balance because it, as Swami Sivananda states “generates electricity in the body quickly and does not allow leakage of electric current from the body. It is full of magnetism”. On the top of all, Lord Shiva’s large interlaced hair stops the huge flooding current of the river Ganga and slowly makes it flow on the earth. Although the river Ganges flows about one hundred thirty kilometers to the south of Mithila, it continues to hold both spiritual and secular significance for the region because there can be no solemnizing of a religious ritual without *gangajal* (water from the Ganges) and as the seven major rivers of Mithila—Mahananda, Gandak, Kosi, Bagmati, Kamala, and Budhi Gandak—ultimately flow into the sacred river. These tributaries of the Ganges sustain the entire life—human, plant, and animal in Mithila. Thus, the celebration of Lord Shiva in Janakpur artworks is a vindication of both the spiritual and secular needs of the Maithils. People worship the river Ganga as their mother because water supports life and for the agrarian society streams become food for the crops. Shiva’s *damru* (drum) creates space and time that satisfies the universal cause and all disappears in its vibration. Whereas his *trishul* (trident) destroys the evils to maintain peace, law and order as well as eternal will to know oneself. Besides, Shiva’s clothing of animal skin refers to all the creatures as their own cosmic children and blesses them for their betterment, plus the colour yellow of that skin stands for ascetic conduct, regardless of family life.



So, the Maithils venerate Shiva as the God of gods, basically, he is not drawn but meditated upon for his boon the devotees owe to Him since time immemorial. Furthermore, His cross-legged posture symbolizes self-control which helps attain upliftment. Finally, His surrounding full of flowers indicates the fragrance one achieves after the great determination and the pond below his base marks coolness despite the adverse condition.

The pond turns out to be a boon to the Maithils for several reasons. Religiously people take holy dip and offer water to the rising sun every morning to pray for a balance between the solar power and water resource so that they would be blessed with healthy crops. Major regional festivals such as Chhath, Sama-Chakeva and Madhushrawani are solemnized in the vicinity of pond, and all the other festivals come to an end in the pond in the form of final submersion as all the water resources in the region represent the sacred river Ganga. The pond also provides income: fish for food and commerce. In addition, the pond also acts as water reservoir to fulfill the demand of water supply for both the flora and fauna, especially during the drought period. To put it succinctly, the pond in Mithila functions as the life-line for the agriculturalists that form the bulk of the population.

The regular invoking of *Kaliya Mardan* in Mithila painting dramatizes the resolution of the conflict between the serpent-worshipping agriculturalists and the herd-owning people. The myth suggests that agriculturists (represented by Kaliya) harassed by forest tribes (represented by Garuda) migrated to pastures where herdsmen (represented by Krishna) grazed their cows. After a period of hostility, the herdsmen overpowered the agriculturists, befriended them, and finally gave them protection. The representation of *Kaliya Mardan* in Fig. 8 celebrates this very protecting attitude of Lord Krishna:

In the above art, God Krishna is depicted as playing the flute on the head of multi-hooded black serpent that signifies the total subduing of the creature's—encroacher's—evil power. The artist, Sudhira Karna's portrayal of the fresco amid natural beauty of flowers and the pond, beautifully captures this subjugation and the accosting peaceful co-existence following Krishna's forgiveness. The placing of the sun on the left and the sickle-shaped moon on the right show the heavenly bodies as sources of light, warmth, and coolness. The greater prominence given to the sun, and its personification as a priest blessing the blooming flowers, is indicative of the blessings it bestows upon the agricultural communities. Overall, the life-giving ambiance that these two heavenly bodies exude through a balance of heat with coolness gels with the harmony of co-existence. The life-giving quality of the sun and its prime importance in Mithila culture is also borne by the fact that a typical Maithil folk begins his day with *Surya-Namaskar* (greeting the Sun) and its worship in the festival of *Chhath Puja* varieties of fruits, offerings (*thekuwa-kasar*; food items), as the following figure shows (Fig. 9):



Fig. 9: Chhath Puja (Sun Worship)

Even though the festival is the joint effort of male and female members, it is the female that remains in the centre stage. Folks worship Sun not only for harvests but also for His presence during the shivering winter that follows just after the festival in *Kartik* (late October or early November). The old people pray to God so that they may survive this winter, which means that they will be able to live for the entire year if they successfully negotiate with the trembling cold of December and January. Maithils worship the goddess Chhathi Maiyya, which is known as Usha in the Vedas (Usha means dawn in English). Along with Usha, Pratyusha (meaning dusk) is also worshipped, but it is done only in the evening. Both Usha and Pratyusha are believed to be the wives of Sun, and are with the Sun for forever. In the night, the observer sleeps on the floor with a single blanket. The worship of the Sun is believed to have been performed since the Vedic times. It is believed that ancient sages used to abstain from food and absorb energy solely and directly from the Sun.

The woman in the above painting (*Fig. 9*) offers coconut fruit for many wishes and promises she had made before and for the days to come. They pray for health, wealth and descendants as well as for good harvest and cattle. In addition, the sacredness of the festival is maintained at its sanctity: offerings must not be touched without cleaning hands or bathing. Moreover, presents for the sun-god are made up of local products and all the castes with their skills create things like bamboo basket, earthen pots, plates, coverings, and elephants. The entire village celebrates the festival with great solemnity and confirmation. People who work at distant land arrive at their home for the festival or they go outside before some months to earn money so that they could manage everything for the festival. The importance of the festival lies in the worldview of the Maithili society in paying obeisance to the sun-god for the energy for doing work, for light and heat energy, along with sustenance of life. Other Maithili drawings such as figures 11, 12, 13, and 14 given below further point towards the under pinnings of the Mithila society:



Fig. 11: Fatherly Duty



Fig. 12: Life at Teenage

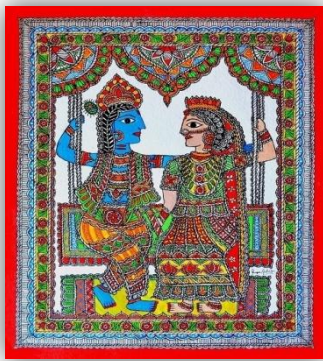


Fig. 13: Krishna's Love Affair



Fig.14: Marriage

The first portrait above (*Fig. 11*) shows Lord Krishna's father Vasudevas crossing the raging Yamuna River for his son's safety. Although the art is just an imitation of a mythic scene, it catches the oceanic love of the parents for their progenies. This Janakpur painting underscores a Maithili father's discharging of fatherly duty at the cost of his life – there is immense love and care for the children from their fathers in the Janakpur region. Mithila society, as a whole, relaxes fatherly guardianship over the children during their teenage years—a time when particularly the male teenagers are often seen teasing or showing love to their female counterparts, in spite of Maithili society being strict about love affairs. Such a relaxation works as a necessary maturity for the ensuing marriage for which the model for the Maithili society is not the affair of Radha-Krishna but that of Sita-Ram which gives to the Maithili youths a strong sense of ideal family life where obedience to parents, fidelity, and dutifulness have a high value. Sita-Ram is such a sacred name that people seek deep prayer through its chanting and the overall effect of this on the married life is that it ultimately helps cement the matrimonial bond between even an erring and warring couple.

Janakpur artists also sketch Laxmi-Narayan (*Fig. 15* below) wherein the goddess attends Lord Narayan. The social message conveyed by the painting is that Maithili women should likewise serve their husbands in the evening when they come back home after work. The second sketch (*Fig. 16* below) illustrates women worshipping the banyan



tree for the longevity of their husbands. However, the third piece (Fig. 17 below) shows women cleaning the surrounding for environmental neatness.

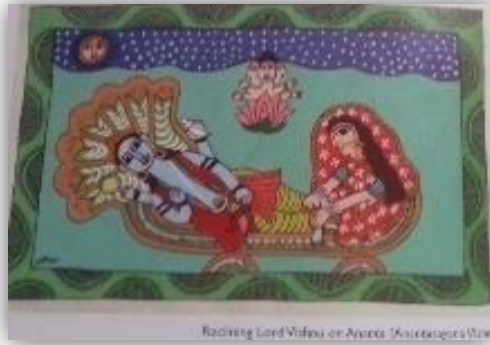


Fig. 15: Laxmi-Narayan



Fig. 16: Bat-Sabitri



Fig. 17: Nature-worship



Fig. 18: Ram, Laxman and Sita Crossing a River

All the three paintings above dramatize Maithili women's ideal roles at home. Complete fidelity to the husband even in times of an ordeal remains Maithili wife's paramount duty as the following painting (Fig. 18 below) illustrates:

The figure above delineates Ram along with his wife, Sita and brother, Laxman crossing the river on a boat with the help of boatman Kewat in order to lead a life of exile in the forest for fourteen years as a promise to his father. Sita, as an entirely faithful wife, follows him through the thick and thin. Here the younger brother displays exemplary devotion to the elder brother, which is nothing but inimitable familial solidarity at the time of crisis. The depiction of this episode from the *Ramayana* is meant for conveying message for domestic solidarity, security, and bliss in the Maithili society. The Maithili worldview is, however, not confined to the betterment of domestic life only. It also extends to the furtherance of the cause of the other as the painting of Ram liberating innocent Ahilya from the unjust curse of her sage-husband (Fig. 19 below) shows:



Fig. 19: Ram Redeeming Ahilya from Curse

Apart from responsiveness to the other, Ahilya's spiritual redemption as portrayed here carries a secular message: when she was with husband Gautam, the sage may treated her as anything but a rock and had he treated the beautiful woman as a human being, he wouldn't have punished her at all. So the telling message is here for a Maithili husband not to lose a lovely wife to his vain ego. With a painting like this in contemporary society, what Janakpur art demonstrates is how liberal Maithili culture is getting in tune with the changing time. Helping the needy, the poor, the weak, and the victimized is considered a great virtue and the saviour gets social prestige in return. That contemporary Nepali Maithili society is undergoing remarkable, modernizing changes become crystal clear from the recent renditions of the episodes from the *Ramayana*, for example, the following figure (Fig. 20):



Fig. 20: Shabari Episode



Fig. 21: Krishna Playing Flute

On the way to the long exile, both the brothers eat the sweet jujubes tasted by a low caste old woman by the name of Shabari—the artistic rendition of this story in Janakpur art (Fig. 51) dramatizes what is an epical paean to the irrelevance of caste and pollution in matters of *bhakti* (devotion). Before her sincere devotion to God, the traditional *dharma* responsible for caste segregation becomes totally immaterial. This is the secular message emanating from the painting in addition to the spiritual affirmation of *bhakti* as facilitating inner journey on the cosmic path for supreme union with the real one. Thus, the painting has both spiritual and secular overtones.

Similar implications are sought to be conveyed through Janakpur paintings of Krishna's frolicking pastimes with *gopinis* (cow-herding maidens) who openly flaunt



unconditional, spontaneous, and unwavering love for the adolescent Lord. If Krishna's flirting looks secular, it is pure ecstasy at the same time (the following Figs. 21-23):



Fig. 22: Krishna Holding the Hill



Fig. 23: Tulasi-Worship

The above painting (Fig. 23) depicts Maithili people's veneration of Tulasi plant (basil):

Maithili women take the basil as a mortal manifestation of the goddess Tulasi, a great devotee of Lord Vishnu who is supposed to nourish and protect life in the universe. The artist Saraswati Jhamake's the following observation:

Tulasi is a sacred and popular plant worshipped in the Mithila region for its medicinal properties, an emitter of oxygen and it has the property to ward off insects. It is planted in the compound of every household. The Tulasi plant is worshipped by men and women both in the morning and evening. Water is offered to the plant in the morning while looking at and assimilating the morning rays of the sun. In the evening oil lamps or aarati are offered to the Tulasi. (77)

Although male participates in the worship of basil plant, the domain belongs to women who perform the above mentioned activities with full devotion and the male members go to river, pond or pipes outside their home for the same.

The next painting (Fig. 24) underscores the value of plant in rituals:



Fig. 24: Use of Plants in Rituals

Four banana plants are set up for the worship of the *Satyannarayan Puja* (Vishnu-worship) which is at the heart of Maithili culture. The above portrait depicts group



reverence of God with *mantra* (hymn) chanting priest who helps the devotees to perform the rituals in detail. In this regard, Preeti Thakur, *et al.*, who worked together to create a single work of art “Daily activities and ritual performance,” describe their collaborative effort as follows:

The Mithila culture is centered on many rituals, festival and religious life. The day begins with reverence to the Tulasi plant and the various household activities take place, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning, taking care of children and elders, tending to animals and field activity. Amongst the rituals the Satyanarayan puja is a very popular ritual. The painting shows the preparation for this puja by cleaning the area to purify before any auspicious occasion, then erecting four banana posts to form a sacred vedi where yajnas are conducted.

Gods, goddesses, fishes, animals, daily human activity, festivals, plants and foliage form the main subject matter of their paintings. (70)

The Maithil folk life represented by regular worship and everyday chore confirms the Maithil community’s response to classical and vernacular rites. The altar (*vedi*) where rituals are performed is sanctified with *aripan* drawings (floor paintings), sketched by the male priest as his mystic domain to invoke the particular deity (here God *Vishnu*) for their blessing. Hence, the auspicious blend of *yantra* (drawing), *tantra* (ritual) and *mantra* (hymn) can only sanctify the occasion for complete achievement. By so doing, farmers link themselves to the divine, despite being engrossed with worldly affairs. Such a reverence calls forth the soul, the inner being that ultimately unites with supreme soul for the welfare of all the participants.

The next painting (Fig. 25) portrays the “Tree of Life,” which exhibits the life of an individual taking several twists and turns like the branches of the tree:



Fig. 25: Tree of Life

The artist, Subodh Chandra Das, imagine *skalpabirksha* (wish-fulfilling tree in the heaven). The presence of tree declares the availability of the resources for the human life and its sustenance. Trees also represent life force because they generate oxygen which is indispensable for life. They further add vigour, happiness and other co-living creatures



around to complete the circuit for healthy living. The jewels-decorated branches and twigs of the tree along with its colourful flowers and nutritious fruits that have made the human kind immortal as the fruit acts as *amrit* (divine syrup) on the earth. Hence, the trees on the soil parallels with the heavenly tree which also grants immortal nectar to the gods and goddesses for energy to fight with the demons who overpower their strength by meditation and blessings from the Trinity. Hence, the earthly creatures also need food to survive and create other beings for the continuity of their race and creed to make the earth a beautiful garden of nature. In this connection, artist Subodh Chandra Das observes:

This painting depicts nature in harmony with its environment. Birds perch on the branches of the tree which has big yellow blossoming flowers. A balance of all the five elements of nature, earth, water, air, fire and the sky all need to be balanced to make the perfect environment where there is clear blue sky, beautiful greenery all around and pleasant weather suitable for the blossoming of plants and the healthy growth of animals of the jungle. Rightly described as the tree of life, the concept of this painting is to conserve our environment as it gives us all the basic necessities required for the development of the body and mind. (76)

The violent cutting down of trees appears to have touched the heart of the artist. Therefore, he gives voice to the voiceless through his folk-styled painting that certainly drives home the message it aims at conveying. The canvas advances the awareness of surrogate mother – the wildlife – delivers to all the creatures for a blissful living that leads serene life devoid of any skirmishes. Besides, the artist writes about clear blue sky but its depiction is a rare phenomenon in Janakpur art. Overall, Janakpur wall painting, which generates a positive outlook towards the different creatures of nature, is also environmentally conscious.

Aripan – drawing on the floor by smearing the ground with cow dung – may not be environmentally conscious as wall painting but it is made as an offering to appease the divine spirits to make the cultivable land richly fecund and yielding. It originated in Janakpur when King Janak ordered the marriage hall to be decorated for his daughter Sita's marriage to Lord Ram. The designs for *aripan* are not with help of brushes but nimble fingers. Figures 27 and 28 are instances of *aripan*:



Fig: 27



Fig. 28: Aripan



Aripans are the mystic geometric shapes which begin from the point to complex forms where offerings are executed in conjunction with definite ceremonies and chants. At first, women sanctify the floor mixing cow dung with water. After that, with a paste of ground crude rice (*pithar*), they draw drawings according to the occasion with their naked fingers. While doing so, they feel strange sensation to evoke the desired deity for the intended result. Sunita Sharma, an *aripan* expert, makes the following observation:

Aripans are floor paintings, and design and concept, similar to the mandala. They are admixture of mystical geometric shapes and patterns usually in the shape of a circle which are drawn on the floor to purify and sanctify for the purpose of worshipping. It is painted for various religious occasions and each occasion has a different aripan. There are almost 35 varieties of aripans used for different rituals. They are painted by the female members of the family and is an art passed down to generations by simply watching the works of the elder female members. (83)

Traditionally, the male priest draws the religious *aripans* which are drawn at the sacrificial altar where women are not allowed, however, in all the other festivals and household religious worships women carve the floor drawings for further offerings. Illiterate rural women sketch these patterns as if they are expert of Geometry, essentially, they learn from the elder members of their family as a sign of family education that used to be sought from the would be husband's family members as a suitable candidate for the marriage. This art form represents cultural and spiritual energy of the society.

Without *aripan* drawings, no religious ceremonies can take place in Mithila, therefore, its knowledge is necessary for the women folks who are the sole preserver of the entire Maithili culture. In this connection, Lalit Kumud states:

These are done not only to grace the occasion through beautification of the floors, but to seek blessings of supreme power through offering prayers. In fact this art form of Mithila is a product of collective spiritual experience. We should approach it therefore not simply as an aesthetic phenomenon but a manifestation of collective body of traditional knowledge. (3)

The making of Janakpur art is a conscious effort to relate to the hallowed traditions of the Mithila society. In doing so, Mithila art is less an expression of an artist's individualistic style and more a blending of the creative spirit of the individual with that of the collective. Not just *aripans* have religious underpinnings, even some cultural folk dances, too, which are subjects of Janakpur painting; have affiliations with the sacred rituals of the Mithila society, for example, the following two figures (Figs. 29&30):



Fig. 29: Jhijhiya



Fig. 30: Jhijhiya Dance Form

The drawing of a dance performance in Janakpur art works is a recent phenomenon. The transformation from the mud walls to the canvas, paper and clothes has made the artistic activities go beyond the ritual setting. The art these days covers everything that has potentiality to be cashed in the visible form. The above pictures demonstrate cultural dance of Mithila the women perform in group to expel the witches and their evil activities from each house during *Dashain* (a great festival of Hindu). This dance is inspired by the motif of *Naina-Jogin* in *kohbar* painting.

Naina-Jogin—a portrait at the corner of *kohbar* painting—takes account of this collective sentiment of folk ladies who at least psychologically suffer from the fear of black magic practiced to their family members especially their lovely children who die in the young age and they follow from the very night of the newlyweds in *kohbar*. The eye acts as main organ in the entire body to focus as its name suggests, although this is the usual scene among the women folks because majority of them walk covering the face looking forward with an eye but the eye sometimes throws black magic on the innocent people that takes their life which causes a great suffering on the part of the victim (Fig. 31).



Fig. 31 Naina-Jogin

Basically the dance captures protective sentiment through the singing of songs at the deep tranquil autumn night when the sorceresses are supposed to practice at the village deity's shrine. This is also a cult who remains unmarried follows no common rule of the society and pass time begging and hovering. However, some people believe that they foster *tantric* cult; instead it conveys the presence of witchcraft and Maithils' worship of the Goddess of power (*Shakti*)—an influence percolating to Mithila from Bengal and seen mostly at the time of *Dashain*.



During Dashain, ladies dance, carrying a large number of holed pots on their heads in a group. And the certain ladies among the mass carry them and those who keep on dancing ensure that the holes in the pots are not counted by the necromancer. If by chance they happen to count the holes, then the pot carriers are supposed to meet with momentary death. This is a folk belief. This movement reflects agrarian social life because the activity takes place during the leisure period after the paddy plantation is over. This is quite native to the land and a medium of entertainment and expression as the occasion takes place amid the folk song, dance and music. Chiefly pubescent girls play the crucial roles because they have fresh blood to perform vigorously for a long period. The painting catches both the female power and dexterity.

At the time of dancing, abusive songs are also sung. These songs directed towards the evil practitioner act as catharsis and have mental calmness for deep sleep at night. This musical dance adds physical stamina to the performers. And the music so played creates festive mood in the village where everyone enjoys being the spectator that has helped perpetuate this cultural parade. Apart from Goddess of Power, another god that has found a room in the performativities of the Maithils is the elephant-god, Ganesh (please look at Fig.32):



Fig. 32: Elephant

The elephant embodies the presence of god Ganesh who help initiate and fructify the work till its end. The clay elephant at the *marwa* (sacred, wedding structure) demonstrates successful conjugal life whereas its establishment at the bank of river, pond and lakes during *Chhath* festival fulfills all the wishes of the devotees. At the same time, its immense size in the indigenous art reminds one of the lost memory in the region where the land was once recognized by the presence of this animal. In addition, its fervent delineation suggests a symbol of good luck. On top of it, the animal signifies the power of deities since Lord Ganesh is the army commander of all the gods to fight demons to maintain law and order in all the three worlds (nether, earth and heaven). Poonam Jha, who draws elephant as special expertise, mentions:

In Hindu mythology, the elephant is one of the animals that emerged from the samundramanthan (the churning of the cosmic ocean) by the gods and the demons. Airavata, the celestial elephant was presented to Indra, the king of heavens and rain, thus became his vehicle. In the Mithila region, the elephant is regarded as a symbol of royalty and richness. The pregnant



elephant brings prosperity and good luck to the household thus they are painted for religious occasions for the well-being of the family. (69)

Thus, the folks believe that the animal brings rain (necessary for the crops) as it is related with the god of rain and prosperity because a pair of elephants is depicted pouring liquid, jewels and valuable items on the goddess Laxmi in the main stream Hindu art. Most of all, natives love to be in their company because of its honest sentiments like trumpet-producing sound. In short, the importance of elephants in Mithila relates to the fact that they are thought of as bringing good luck, strength and peace to the people besides being seen as majestic animals.

In addition to the images of gods and goddesses, themes of nature are central to Janakpur art. Each plant and animal image has specific meaning, and artists paint particular flowers, leaves, fruits, and birds, and so on.



Fig.33: PhuloSah'sA Woman's Daily Life

In this respect, Phulo Sah makes the following observation on her own painting (Fig. 33) in a write-up entitled "In Harmony with Nature":

This painting depicts a typical day of the people of the Mithila region. A part of their daily activity involves taking their animals for grazing in the jungles and themselves going for agricultural activity. They usually carry their food with them on their heads on the way to the fields which they consume while taking rest during the labourious activity of tilling, sowing, planting, harvesting their fields. Humans, animals, birds, plants are all painted beautifully to make a complete composition of wellness and tranquility. (68)

For people in the Mithila region of Nepal, there is no separation between man and nature. They live in immediate contact with nature on their farms and in their backyards. Nature provides strength to the physical worker who cultivates the land whereas farmers



preserve landscape to support environmental health in the marshy geography of Mithila. Revati Mandal, artist of “Flora and Fauna” piece of painting, comments on how this home-grown art nourishes from the geography:

Mithila culture is inextricably linked with nature and the environment being an agrarian society they closely relate to the animals and environment around them. Most artistic representations the flora and fauna have symbolic meaning associated with the auspiciousness of nature. The elephant is a symbol of royalty and richness, and the birds represent welfare and calmness. The depiction of the animals and birds amongst blossoming trees and plants conveys harmony and balance. (74)

Maithili artists create their surrounding objects in their paintings so that they can solidify their geography as the symbols to convey their socio-cultural meanings communicable among the local folks. The collective definition of such paintings is to ensure ecological significance in the region.

The instinct of the birds to prepare nest just before laying their eggs and their care of the chicks and their regular flights attract the attention of Janakpur artists who are mostly women who paint all the birds around their home: tiny screech owls, a crested hoopoe, a colourful open bill stork and a dazzling blue peacock. Peacocks find shelter in the branches of a venerable shade tree where they spend the night in safety and in harmony in the lap of nature. They symbolize grace, joy, beauty, knowledge, benevolence, patience, kindness, compassion and love. In Mithila, people take this bird also mythologically, as one created from the feathers of *Garuda*, a semi-divine mythical bird, which is believed to be a conveyance of Lord Vishnu. Birds are not only free in their flight but also expressive by their instinct. The avian so drawn are spontaneous and reflect the inner condition of the works of art. Some of the Mithila paintings, particularly related to *Bidh-Bidhata* and *Sama-Chakeva* have both religious and secular significances (Figs.34&35):



Fig. 34: Bidha-Bidhata



Fig. 35: Sama-Chakeva Artwork

This motif of *bidh-bidhata* comprising two birds symmetrically facing each other in a beak to beak union in the nuptial chamber painting is usually painted above the central lotus plant, almost like a pinnacle. This placement is most appropriate for this divine pair because it presides over the well being and the future destiny of the newly married couple. In popular Mithila belief, *bidh* and *bidhata* are female and male birds respectively. They govern the course of events of every individual life. This pictorial image of *bidh* and



bidhata, in the above painting (Fig. 64), is brilliantly captured on paper in dazzling shades of magenta, pink, deep green and orange. The colours, through vastly contrasting are used in a manner that is extremely pleasant to the eye. The space in between the two birds is used by the lotus flowers, important symbols in the bridal chambers. These two birds, facing each other with conjoined beaks do not represent identifiable birds but are imaginary mythological ones. As Ram Dayal Rakesh rightly remarks,

This motif symbolizes the future destiny of the married couple. Bidhhata is a manifestation of Brahma, creator of the universe, and the maker of the fortune of each individual. He is believed to record an account of a person's entire future, writing every event – the prosperities and adversities and even accidents and death, in detail.

It is a popular belief that the Bidhhata writes this record on the occasion of the birth of a child, and determines the child's fate. For this reason, a good, unused pen is kept beside a new born baby. ("Mithila Traditions")

Another similar mythological depiction is that of *Sama-Chakeva* (Fig. 35), one of the important festivals of the young brothers and sisters mainly celebrated in November and commences when birds begin their migration from the Himalayas to the Terai.

The festival, which includes folk theater and song, is based on a legend recounted in the *Puranas* – the tale of Sama, a daughter of Krishna who had been wrongly accused of fornication. Krishna punished her by turning her into a bird, but the love and sacrifice of her brother Chakeva eventually enabled her to recover her human form. The tradition is as strong as *Rakhi* among the *Madheshees* (Terai-dwellers) and *Bhaitika* among the *Pahades* (hill-dwellers), which too celebrate the brother-sister relationship. Birds are, thus, important to the Maithils for their spiritual and secular activities. In pairs, they echo love beyond the sensual in nature. But it signifies absolute affection for the Supreme Being. Parrots in Janakpur art convey this duality: they symbolize love before mating as well as mimickers of *Sitaram* and *Hare Krishna* – the chanting of the Supreme Being's names for ultimate salvation. There are, however, certain animals which are painted for secular reasons alone, for example, buffaloes (please look at Fig.36):



Fig. 36: Buffalo



The buffalo gives the impression of helping people in their livelihood. The presence of this animal in multiple numbers conveys its necessity in the region. The milk buffalo yields daily in the morning as well as in the evening not only proves boon but also acts as divine nectar for the Maithili folks. The animal is synonymous with natives' physical strength. People gain power after having numerous dairy products out of its milk. Every family member finds worth living when this domestic animal begets its offspring. The pleasant sensation in the mind and heart of the community after consuming the product reminds the presence of elephant in the village who used to transport the entire luggage, heavy materials and a large number of people at a time. The way it was connected with prestige, prosperity and power of the owner, buffalo owner has the same charm these days. Therefore, the depiction of this animal seems innovative and original to the folk consciousness because it is not considered auspicious creature according to Hindu scriptures. The animal still does not look neat and clean but its milk looks boon to the rural life.

Women appear worshipping their clan deities in the first picture for the cattle and their healthy life since the family life finds great impact of domestic animal. Basically the health of children and adult equally depends on the cattle's milk. Their health further guides their happy mind that invites congenial environment in the community and people have understood the psychology behind and has adopted contemporary life in their art forms. Animal symbolizes health, happiness and harmony in the public. Hence, an artist like Dev Kala, who has had a struggling life, makes the following observation, while commenting on her piece entitled "Agricultural activities":

Agriculture and animal husbandry go hand in hand. Agriculture forms the main occupation to the Mithila region making use of the fertile land and the rivers water. Agricultural activities are performed both by the men and women. The women folk prepare food for their husbands and take them to the fields, which are consumed there. Children also take part, grazing the animals, lying on top of the buffalos and enjoying the sun. The multiple activities of agriculture involve the whole family and are performed with utmost love and dedication. (60)

Thus, the occupation looks like easy flow of blood in the human body to the farmers as they have regular duty to discharge and thinks nothing as alternative during the pick hour of plantation and all the domestic fellows find something to contribute at the large scale of agrarian phenomena. Women too have multiple roles in the farming community where they prove themselves the form of eternal energy by maintaining both inner and outer sphere. Women, too, prepare for possible natural calamities like flood, drought, downpour, and storm that damage their shelter, property and sometimes even their life as the following picture (Fig. 37) shows:



Fig. 37: Flood in Mithila



Fig. 38: Mango Tree

The artist exposes the pitiable condition of people during rainy season when their houses collapse, forcing them to carry out their household work under the open sky where cattle look like the family members staying adjacent to natives. The state of flood is contrast to the summer when people have leisure time to enjoy bathing in the rivers and the ponds.

The above painting (Fig. 38) depicts a typical day in summer when people enjoy bathing in the pond for long hours and wait for the mangoes to fall from the tree so that they can have sweet taste of their favourite fruit. Baishakh-Jeth-Asarh (mid-April to mid-July) constitute the summer season in Mithila. While the Baishakh is the month of ripe *bel* (aeglemarmelos) fruit, Jeth is the month of lychee and Asarh is exclusively the month of mango, king among the fruits.

The summer, a season of serenity and plenty, is preceded by a fifteen-days- long *parikarma* (circumambulation) of the foot trail of Lord Ram while coming to marry Sita (princess of Mithila)—a large circle that cuts across the international land boundaries between Nepal and India (Please look at the following painting — Fig. 39):



Fig. 39: Mithila Parikarma

This tradition is ancient and millions of people march on the path just fifteen days before the *Holi* (festival of colours) and it begins from Janakpur and ends there, with a final circumambulating of the *dham* (sacred township).



In conclusion, Janakpur art socio-semiotically symbolizes the Maithils' imbibing of King Janak's philosophy of duality, according to which, everything is on a continuum and has a complementary opposite within the whole – the dynamic relationship between the spiritual and the secular. There is, however, no hierarchy in this duality, for the spiritual aspect of the Maithili worldview complements the secular spectrum – the two existing in a balance. This is the message dramatized by the performance of Maithili painting in Janakpur area.

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Human Nature and Philosophy in 'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding

Rashmi. P & Saritha samuel

Introduction

William Golding's first novel 'Lord of the Flies' which appeared in 1954 was reviewed as a forcefully stated allegory about the evil inherent in human beings. The novel tells the story of a group of young boys who survive a plane crash and are compelled to learn how to survive on an island. The novel truly shows that it is not the government that determines survival but it is the sheer human nature in all of us that proves whether a society can function. A human being's personality will always have an impact on their fellow humans. Throughout the novel, there is a conflict between Ralph and Jack, who represent civilization and savagery.

When we first discover the boys on the island and get a mere glimpse of their personalities, it is quite apparent that Jack is going to be one who is power-hungry. He already has a group of followers, the choirboys, of whom he has the utmost power over and has a very controlling personality that cannot be subsided by the obstacles that are shown in the novel. Jack is obsessed to command and rule when he is not chosen as the chief and supreme ruler in the very beginning, it is proven that he will find a way to claw up to the top and take the spot that in his opinion is his right. Jack has quite a reckless personality, and will risk all to be standing alone at the top as king or leader. He is also guilty of envy, which goes hand in hand with power and is envious of everything that Ralph has.

As the boys set up their community, Ralph explains the need to start a signal fire, to form a band of hunters, and establish protocols for behaviour. The conch shell indicates a call for meetings. A six-year old boy with a mulberry-coloured birthmark on his face cries, asking what will be done about the snake-like "beastie" he saw in the woods. Intent on settling the resulting excitement, Ralph insists there is no beast. Jack leads the choirboys in building a fire and volunteers them to be keepers of the fire as well as hunters. When the fire burns out of control, Piggy admonishes the group for their behaviour, claiming they should have made shelter, and they should be keeping an eye on the youngest children. The group realizes that the little boy scared of the "beastie" has gone missing.

The little ones are suffering from nightmares. Ralph and Jack struggle to communicate as Jack's obsession with hunt and Ralph's emphasis on rescue draw them apart. One afternoon, Jack experiments with charcoal and mud to create a mask for hunting. Feeling liberated, he dances and snarls like a savage. Scared, yet compelled by the mask, some of the other boys follow him, letting the fire go out. When they return, thrilled with their capture, Ralph admonishes Jack for losing their chance of rescue.



Earlier a ship had appeared on the horizon and they had no way to signal it. Piggy joins in the blaming, and Jack punches him in the stomach then hits him in the head, knocking Piggy's spectacles to the ground where they lay half broken. Although Jack apologizes, he has lost Ralph's respect and camaraderie. Ralph realizes this is no longer an exciting adventure. He is tired and having trouble keeping unity among the boys and stay focused. He wants to be logical but is lapsing into strange speculation. He has begun to appreciate Piggy, if not as a leader, as a thinker. He addresses the assembly solemnly. What started as group efforts, like the huts and the fire, have been abandoned. The boys are soon turning into savages. Ralph insists they address their fears while Jack berates the "littluns" for their childish behaviour, their fears, their crying, and their play. Piggy expounds the virtues of science, claiming there is no fear except the fear of people.

The next morning, the twins discover the body of a dead pilot stuck in his parachute harness but mistakenly think they have seen the beast. Ralph calls an assembly, and after much talk, Ralph, Jack, Simon, and other boys set out to investigate. Simon knows better to share his insights but cannot envision the beast without also seeing a human, "at once heroic and sick." Ralph is conflicted between the urge to give in to hopelessness and fear and the desire to hold onto his humanity. He reminisces about his childhood while Simon encourages him to stay strong. Meanwhile, Jack tracks a wild boar. Contrary to character, Ralph spears the pig, in an instance of joining with the hunters. Back at the camp, Jack orders the boys to re-enact the hunt with Robert as the pig. Yelling, "Kill the pig! Cut his throat," .Separating himself from the group, Simon volunteers to tell Piggy they will be delayed. Ralph feels they all should go back to the shelter but because of Jack's taunts continues the quest for the beast. When they get to the top of the mountain, the dead pilot's ghostly face rises in the wind, and all three boys run.

The boys return to tell Piggy and the others what they've seen. Jack is determined to gather his hunters and fight the beast, but Ralph insists the rescue fire is more important. Jack snatches the conch, calling an assembly without Ralph's permission. He demands that the boys take sides, either with him or with Ralph, whom Jack accuses of being like Piggy. Jack calls for a vote to eliminate Ralph as leader, but none of the boys raise their hands. Electing not "to play any longer," Jack abandons the group. Simon believes the group should climb the mountain and face the beast. Piggy suggests building the fire down on the beach, and the boys set out to do so. Eventually, they realize that Maurice, Bill, and Roger are missing, obviously gone to follow Jack. The hunters find a mother boar nursing her piglets and they attack her in a heated frenzy. Afterwards, they leave her head as a gift for the beast and run off to steal fire from Ralph and the others. Meanwhile, Simon has climbed the mountain and imagines he hears the voice of the beast chide him for his innocence, threatening him not to spoil the hunters' fun. Refusing to run away but sick with the comprehension that the beast is not "something you could hunt and kill," Simon loses consciousness. When he is back in his senses, Simon realizes the ghostly figure is actually the dead pilot and staggers down the mountain to reveal that the beast is "harmless and horrible."



Meanwhile, the hunters are holding a feast. Jack sits painted and garlanded, Piggy and Ralph join the group, and Jack orders his hunters to bring them some meat. When Ralph asserts he is still the elected leader, Jack insists that his provision of food makes him the ruler and that the conch is meaningless on this end of the island. Realizing his recruits are torn between the promise of food and shelter, Jack orders them to “Do our dance.”

The hunters circle and chant, and when Simon appears to reveal the mirage of the dead pilot, the boys in a frenzy kill him, believing the beast has broken their circle. Later, wind and rain free the parachute which falls from the mountain, carrying the body out to sea. Likewise, the tide lifts Simon and he also floats out to sea. Ralph, Piggy, Sam, and Eric are guilt-ridden but tell themselves they had no part in Simon’s murder. Jack tells his hunters that Simon was the beast in disguise. Ralph struggles to maintain his sanity and longs for his childhood, depending on Piggy to remind him of what is important—the rescue fire. But when Jack, Maurice, and Roger attack at night, stealing Piggy’s glasses, that hope seems lost. Ralph and Piggy go to Jack’s fort to recover Piggy’s glasses. When Piggy stands up to the hunters, Roger releases a large, levered rock, instantly killing Piggy. Jack stabs and wounds Ralph, who runs away, alone. He sneaks up on Sam and Eric, who give him some food and warn him away, telling him Jack intends to hunt him and kill him the next day. He hides in a thicket and falls asleep, only to awaken to the savage sound of a hunt. The boys send boulders to smash Ralph and then set fire to the forest to smoke him out. Ralph runs in fear, straight into a naval officer on the beach. Ralph and the rest of the boys break down in tears as they are finally rescued.

Conclusion

William Golding uses the book *The Lord of the Flies*, to transfer a message that humans have a dark side to them. Golding was trying to do many things like explain to the readers that human nature has a dark side to it, he also had hands on experience with savagery and Golding used his position as a writer to explain his thoughts and philosophy of human nature.

Golding portrays a very vivid picture of the modern society through his novel where most readers can recognize the slow but steady progression of savagery throughout the book. William Golding also had an experience of his own that involved him recognizing the dark side of human nature. This experience inspired him to write the book *The Lord of the Flies*, it also inspired the message translated through the book. The experience William Golding had was when he was part of a war, during that time he witnessed mass amounts of killing and deaths which scared him mentally. Experiences are very vital in making a person who they are, this war experience was very vital for Golding because it helped him make the amazing book *Lord of the Flies*. Through his novel Golding also sends a message that if nations of the earth ever were to engage in an atomic war, the population of the world would be largely destroyed as the backdrop of his novel. And eventually all life would cease



to exist. Golding's parable is a grim warning of what mankind must guard against if the human race is to survive.

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Nissim Ezekiel's Night of the Scorpion: A Study

B. Srinivasulu

Nissim Ezekiel was an Indian Jewish poet, actor, playwright, editor and art-critic. He was born on 14th December 1924 in Mumbai. He was one of the front runners in early modern Indian poetry. He was a poet of the mind rather than the heart. He occupies an important place in post-Independence Indian English literature. He has wielded a great influence as a leading poet, editor and an occasional playwright. Besides, he is a well-known critic. Sometimes he also emerges as a politician in the guise of a fighter for cultural freedom in India. He held many important positions. He was, for many years, a Professor of English in Bombay University. He is a noted name in the field of journalism. In this capacity he was editor of many journals including Poetry India (1966-67), Quest (1955-57) and Imprint (1961-70), He was an Associate Editor to the Indian P.E.N., Bombay. His poems are used in NCERT and ICSE English textbooks. He got Padmashri award in 1988 and the Sahitya Akademi Cultural award in 1983.

Nizzim Ezekiel accepts the established linguistic framework but his art lies in changing a unit of expression so as to make it expressive of a state of mind. He is capable of turning words into a metaphor, image or symbols as the situation demands. It is only rarely that the reader comes across poetic counters of expression but there is a strong undercurrent of poetry in the seemingly prosaic words. This is his characteristic mode which demonstrates his command over language and saves his poetry from degenerating into bare statement.

The new poetry (i.e., Indian English poetry after Independence) demanded a new use of language and called for the use of everyday speech rhythm in poetry. Thus, there is a demand as it were, for the creation of an Indian English idiom, to give an identity to modern Indian English Poetry independent of and different from the world literatures written in English including Anglo-American literatures. He has succeeded in creating a new Indian English idiom to a great extent.

Ezekiel never postulates a truth but works out, in terms of irony, an answer which is purely tentative. In effect, even in regard to ostensibly philosophic issues, the residue of significance lies not in the validity of the speculation but in the ironic stance of the contemplation. In his poetry, there is the truth of acknowledging what is felt and experienced in its complexity, contradictions, pleasures, fears and disillusionments without preconceived ideas of what poetry should say about the poet and life.

Metaphorically speaking, every doctrine, dream or ideal, whether realized or not, is analogous to the invention of a right poem or the writing of a real poem amounts to the discovery of a metaphysical truth. Poetry does not merely extenuate the pains of living in



the poet but much more than that, his search for the real idiom as expressed therein. Ezekiel brought a sense of discipline, self-criticism and mastery to Indian English poetry. He was the first Indian poet to have such a professional attitude.

The Night of the Scorpion is a eight stanza poem, each stanza of which contains between three and eighteen lines. This is one of Ezekiel's first poems, it was first anthologized in *Collected Poems (1952-1988)* The poem is free verse, meaning it does not contain a rhyme scheme. This choice adds to the seriousness of the poem subject matter and deadly nature of the story Ezekiel tells. it is one of the first poems of Ezekiel and presents a scary picture of the superstition ridden India, where an insect is given monstrous dimensions. It carries Ezekiel's stringiest of satires against the many maladies that affect the Indian society. It is typically an Indian poem by a typical Indian poet whose interest in the Indian soil and its ordinary human events of day-to-day Indian life is superb. A good many Indian are illiterate and are blindly superstitious. but they are simple, loving and lovable. The poem is not really about the scorpion or its sting. It contrasts the reactions of the family members and neighbours with the dignity and courage of his mother.

The poem is interpreted as a symbolic juxtaposition of darkness and light. The night, the scorpion, the poison and the suffering represent darkness. The incessant rain stands for hop and regeneration. Candles, lanterns, neighbours and ultimately the recovery of the mother represent light. The poem can also be thought of as symbolic of good and evil too.

In the poem the poet, the narrator recalls the night that his mother was stung by a scorpion. The poem is in its highly narrative style. It opens with the poet's reminiscence of a childhood experience and in a way that suggests reflection. The speaker remembers the night his mother was stung by a scorpion. It starts in a house at night where it is raining and a scorpion, in order to take some shelter, comes to the house. Ten hours of steady rain had driven the scorpion to hiding beneath a sack of rice. It bit the mother because of its predatory impulse, that hid beneath a bag of rice to escape from the rain. The speaker specifically remembers this night, because there was a reason it was memorable. The speaker manages to suggest that the scorpion is demonic with its "diabolic" tail. The scorpion then flees the scene and has to risk the rain again. The woman lies on the floor as the villagers have surrounded with their attempts to save her from the poison. The villagers chants God's name in a big buzz.

This poem is about how the scorpion stung the poets mother and how she escaped and the mother's love for her children. Images of the dark forces of evil abound in The Night of the Scorpion; the diabolic tail of the scorpion, giant scorpion shadows on the sun-baked walls and the night itself point to evil. In fact, the poem is about the pertinent question as to what can conquer evil. Where superstition, rationalism and religion proved futile, the self-effacing love of a mother had its say.



The poem is not really about the scorpion or its sting. It contrasts the reactions of family, neighbours and his father with the dignity and courage of his mother. He sympathetically, describes the scorpion as it shelters from ten hours of rain but it is so frightened that it risks the rain again when it has stung his mother. The peasant folk of the village came like swarms of flies and expressed their sympathy. With lighted candles and lanterns they began to search for the scorpion but in vain. They believed that with every movement the scorpion made, the poison would move in mother's blood. Here superstition plays a major role.

*May the sum of evil
Balanced in this unreal world
against the sum of good
become diminished by your pain, they said*

These lines amply testify that the poem aims at achieving something higher than its narrative simplicity. The choric refrain 'they said' in the chain of reactions made by the village peasants is undoubtedly ironic, but the poet hasn't as much to stress the concept of sin, redemption or rebirth as he has to insinuate the indomitable force of darkness gripping the minds of the unenlightened. Going through the poem attentively more than once, it can't fail in catching our notice that modern rationalism is also equally shallow and perverse. The good and evil in the world has to be balanced and therefore, her endurance of pain will reduce the amount of evil. This also reminds us of the peasant's belief in rebirth. They are illiterate, ignorant and superstitious and they do not know anything other than turn into ritualistic and incantations.

it is now time for the narrator's father to enter the scene. He is described as "rationalist" and with good reason too, for he is the only one who tries to revive the sick woman with medicines. He uses his posse of powders, herbs and mixtures to alleviate the pain. As a last resort, he also pours a little paraffin over the affected flesh and applies a burning matchstick to it in order to burn the sting from the woman's toe. His action reveals his sheer desperation to heal his wife and relieve her from suffering. It seems that the father does not share the superstitious beliefs with the villagers. Yet his extreme anxiety towards the wife makes him try "every curse and blessing" which is an action natural and common to every human being. The painful night was long and the holy man came and played his part. He performed his rites and tried to tame the poison with an incantation. After twenty hours the pain subsides and the woman speaks.

The last part of the poem upholds the dignity of the Indian motherhood. The mother's comment

*Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children*



The mother rises over the sympathy of others with her maternal empathy. She is relieved to find that the scorpion let her children alone and thanks God for it. The entire poem may be taken as a tribute to the incomparable love of a mother. The mother is an inch taller than the others in that, she did not perceive how empty the glass was; she only observed how full it is. The mother's agonizing bearing of the pain was taken as a tribute to the incomparable love of a mother. Her pain causes considerable disturbance not only to the members of the family but to the whole neighbourhood. All are anxious to alleviate her pain. Different attempts are made by different people. All these go to prove that the poem is woven around the theme of reverence to the mother.

The title of the poem itself is somewhat different from the message of the poem because than the scorpion, the poem describes the reactions of the people regarding the incident. the poet's narrative style, contrasting views of both father and villagers, use of reported speech and repetition make the poem more effective and successful.

The poem is interpreted as symbolic juxtaposition of darkness and light. The night, the scorpion, the poison and the suffering represent darkness. The incessant rain stands for hope and regeneration. Candles, lanterns, neighbours and ultimately the recovery of the mother represent light. The poem can also be thought of as symbolic of Good and Evil too.

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Woman of Colours

Subhashini Dimple B

Introduction:

Women were considered as distinct group on the basis of gender and they were deprived of their rights in ancient India. In modern India Women execute multiple roles in the society such as a breadwinner of her family, a care taker of her family as a mother, wife, daughter and also service provider to the society. The women's contribution to the country's development is equal or more to that of men; still they experience a number of limitations that restrain them from comprehending their potential for expansion. It is against this background that the governments all over the world felt the need to prioritize the interests of women to ensure their participation at every stage of the developmental process. Women's empowerment implies the ability of the women to take all the important decisions independently related to her, throughout her life span that will ensure success in all aspects of life.

Violence against women is extreme violation of human right. Despite of increase in the literacy rate, despite the stringent laws, women are being exploited every second, at home, at work place, at public places, so on and so forth. Dowry, domestic violence, rape, acid throwing, sexual harassment are the common forms of women violence in our country.

In fact women in India are often deprived of their fundamental right to live a life of dignity also, leave alone the question of gender equality. The article attempts to grapple with the few challenges faced by the women in India such of, female foeticide, denial of inheritance, sale and trafficking of girls etc. The objective of the article is to evolve strategies to empower women so that they can feel that they are also human beings as men are.

Few of the Examples of Women Rights Violations in India

- **Missing of girl child**

The idiom "missing women" was for the first time used by Nobel laureate Prof. Amartya Sen when he showed that in India the proportion of women as compared to that of men in the population is suspiciously low. The sex ratio is decreasing because minor girls & young women are being sold off mostly in the backward regions of Northern India by the brokers to foreign countries. The issue is very serious and need to be addressed immediately by identifying the root cause of such trafficking. The government should take stringent actions against those who are involved in this. The severity of this problem lies in the fact that in most of such cases the offenders have the consent of the girls' parents,



because they feel girls are burden and the point of resentment. Unless this deep rooted feeling of considering girl as a bane, uprooted completely such heinous crimes against girls will be continued. So the government should take initiative with help of the community to create awareness amongst the people.

- **Dowry Deaths**

Dowry related violence has become a common place in India, wherein every now and then reports such as physical and mental harassments, suicides and killings have been reporting. Dowry deaths have been increasing alarmingly. Dowry disputes are quite a serious problem. According to The National Crime Record Bureau "crime against women" category reported an increase of 2.9% in 2016 over 2015. "Cruelty by husband or his relatives" is around 32.6 % followed by "assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty" 25.0 %. Even though Section 498A of the Indian Penal code has declared taking and giving of dowry as a crime it is still been widely practiced in India. And of late it's been spreading to other countries as well. It is said that practice of dowry started in traditional Hindu families. It started mainly because in earlier days Hindu girls did not have the right to inherit their father's property. So the father of the bride would give away something valuables with the bride. It was not obligatory then. Later the groom started demanding gifts. Now in the practiced at all levels of the Indian society, upper class, middle class, and even amongst lower classes. So irrespective of caste, community and class it exists everywhere. And of late it has become a biggest menace modern Indian society is facing. Despite 'The Dowry Prohibition Act' which is strong enough to act as deterrent dowry problem is continuing unabatedly because it has not been properly implemented in India. Most of the states in India neither have a Dowry Prohibition Officers nor do they make it obligatory to keep the record of things given and received.

There is a need to create Positive awareness against Dowry. There is a need to change the mindset of the people that it's ok not to get married; it's ok to get married late rather than marrying to a person who demands dowry and being subjected to dowry harassment throughout. There are some people, some organizations voluntarily working towards creating such awareness. They are using the powerful statement that says, "Taking Dowry means Begging, Taking Dowry means losing personality"

- **Crimes against scheduled caste women:**

Dalit women stand at the lower level of the society and have undergone multiple deprivations and humiliations ever since the dawn of caste system. They were deprived of the basic amenities and due to this they are lowest achievers in the socio-economic developmental process of the country. They are the most susceptible to harassment of various degrees in today's world. The reports of atrocities, mob attacks, and lynching, parading them in public and even killings are reported quite often from states like Uttar



Pradesh and Bihar, where the society is still under the grips of dominant castes. The oppressors are not afraid of the laws, they don't care for the law of the land and oppressed people are either unaware of the laws that are there to protect their dignity or they are helpless because the officers who are in charge of implementing such laws have become just silent spectators and have no courage to take action against powerful people. No society can be called Progressive if any section of the society is being ill-treated just on the grounds of caste and sex. As once said by Dr. Ambedkar, the independence of our country will not be attained in true sense unless and until the status of Dalit women improves in the society.

- **Domestic violence:**

Domestic violence is the most serious problem that the modern Indian society is facing. Women are tortured mentally and physically by their male counter parts behind the closed doors of the homes. At the lower class level the husbands coming home drunk and beating up their wives is the common practice. At the middle class level physical violation, slapping is very common; they are tortured mentally by blaming that whatever wrong happens in the family is because of them. And finally in the higher class society women are tortured psychologically and also through humiliating them in public. The reason for domestic violence is due to the male domination of the society, the men are not able to digest and coming to the terms with the changed status of women thanks to the literacy and awareness of various laws that are there to protect them. Women has reached greatest of heights in all most all spheres, but she is being ill-treated at home, about once every five minutes an incident of domestic violence is reported in India, which is very disturbing because even though the women of today excelling in all fields on their own strength, she is being subject to ill treatment because the male chauvinism mentality has not gone as yet. And its high time that women should protest against this and make their male counterparts realize and make them understand and acknowledge changed status of women.

- **Sexual harassment of women at workplace:**

Ever since women started working outside she is being subjected to sexual harassment at work place. It's prevalent at educational institutions, at the corporate level, in the police department, in the political field, at the film industry and even at the armed forces. They have to face obscene comments and obscene gestures on daily basis. This is very serious issue because most of the women don't protest against this openly because she is always silenced by their families in order to protect their false prestige. The courageous women who raised their voice against such harassments will be shamed, silenced through pressure or trolled. It'll be projected as it is women's fault and she is herself responsible for such things. The most recent example is the actress Tanushree Dutta case. She was molested on the sets of a movie shooting and when she protested



against this her car was attacked by a mob while she was inside the car. These kinds of things will continue unless the society stop looking at her as a mere sex object and when such things reported women should show unity in condemning such heinous acts.

- **Education:**

Education is the basic necessity of human being and education is the most powerful tool in woman's empowerment. But the girls are being deprived of this facility also. Even today in rural areas girl's education is not at all given importance. The percentage of girl's school dropout was very high few years ago. But the government and community initiative programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been successful in bringing the girl children back to the schools. And this has created a ray of hope that through this initiative the aforesaid atrocities on women will be curtailed and women can lead a life of dignity and respect in the society.

- **Conclusion:**

The discrimination and atrocities against women cannot be managed unless the mindset of our male dominated world is changed. Still the basic human dignity of women is not recognized and respected by men, nor is no law (constitutional and legal) effective. The constitutionally assured principles of equality among men and women will just remain like empty book unless they are respected, understood and implemented effectively. The Violence against women can be curtailed only when cultural norms and attitudes towards the women are changed and this change should happen at the very young age and at the primary school level. Through academic curriculum moral concepts that the woman should be respected and treated equally on par with the men should be inculcated. And through this measure we can create the world of equality and society filled with empathy. These will definitely create a safer society for women and also a society wherein men and women can co-exist harmoniously.

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Disjunctive Irony in James Joyce's "Counterparts"

Sushil Ghimire & Beerendra Pandey

Introduction

James Joyce (1882-1941), a major novelist of the modernist period, wrote very few works of short fiction. Among them there is only one collection of short fiction – *Dubliners*. The collection portrays the Irish capital at the turn of the century through the life of the narrator starting in childhood and progressing through various possibilities of love, marriage, profession, political allegiance, and religion to the final picture of stasis and mortality. Joyce's Dublin is possessed by its past and by inertia. "Counterparts" is the ninth story in *Dubliners*. Joyce had finished it by July 12, 1905. He is very meticulous about the use of every word so that the point is unmistakable. This essay tries to argue that Joyce He uses irony to guide his readers unerringly towards character interpretation. In Joyce the line from tropic irony to narrative meaning is direct. In "Counterparts, "irony helps delineate the moral paralysis of the Irish with remarkable intensity but without a clear-cut resolution of the paradox it gives rise to, and it is in this sense that Joyce's irony turns out to be what Beci Dobbin (2014) calls "modernism's shy irony" (464). The protagonist, ironically transformed into a counterpart of his bullying employer, undergoes an even more despicable transformation as he takes revenge by getting drunk and by brutally beating his little son.

Methodology

The theoretical framework for analysis comes from generally the theory of irony and particularly from the notion of modernist irony as posited by Alan Wilde (1981) in *Horizons of Assent*. Irony is classically taken as a trope which conveys something at odds with the surface meaning. The classic definition of irony is traceable to pragmatics which puts a premium on the author's intent. However, as Claire Colebrook (2004) asserts, irony may "go beyond the authorial intent" (13). One of the strong senses in which irony transcends the authorial intent is when it, as Wilde posits, becomes "a mode of [the author's] consciousness" (2). It is fundamentally the modern attitude of mind, typical of post-Enlightenment Europe's domination of human life through commerce, industry, and colonization which only climaxed during the modernist era. Alan Wilde comes up with three kinds of irony to start with: (i) mediate irony, which seems to be irony as we know it, implying the opposite of what is actually said; (ii) disjunctive irony, characteristic of modernism, whose form resembles the New Critical paradox; and (iii) suspensive irony, typical of postmodernism, and willy-nilly owning up the moral chaos. As Beerendra Pandey (1992) rightly postulates, disjunctive irony, which is a sign of the morally incoherent modernist world, "centres on 'a theme of puzzled defeat'" (113). As Pandey clarifies, in James Joyce moral incoherence "is not 'resolved' or 'unified' in the manner envisaged by I. A. Richards and Cleanth Brooks but is controlled through a projection in



the form of binary oppositions" (113). The use of irony in "Counterparts" allows Joyce to produce a sharp and yet an assenting response to morally paralysed Irish existence.

Discussion & Analysis

Before launching into an analysis of Joyce's "Counterparts" along the lines of disjunctive irony, it is worthwhile to first streamline the story itself. Farrington who emerges as the main character in the story works as a copyist for the legal firm of Crosbie & Alleyne. The story reveals the battered psyche of this man. In fact, the story opens with Mr. Alleyne, one of the firm's partners issuing the harsh peremptory command: "Send Farrington here. The command presages the first of a series of humiliations that Farrington endures, and in some cases precipitate, over the course of the afternoon in his job at the firm of Crosbie & Alleyne. After Mr. Alleyne confronts a slow and lazy Farrington several times with his shortcomings, the matter comes to a head when Farrington is publicly rebuked and made to apologize for an inadvertent witticism made at the expense of his employer. The exchange puts Farrington in a towering rage. It forces him to confront his impotent position at the firm, and whets his appetite for alcohol. He pawns his watch to finance an evening of drinking, and sets off to use alcohol as a means of forgetting the day's humiliations.

As he makes the rounds of a series of pubs located in the centre of the city, Farrington recounts the story of his exchanges with Mr. Alleyne altering the details and omitting the embarrassing portions to show himself in a better light. As the evening wears on, however, he finds himself getting increasingly less satisfaction from the rounds of drinks that he has been buying. Finally, his night of riotous drinking comes to a bitter end when he finds himself teased by a young actress at Mulligan's pub and then beaten at arm wrestling by a young man whom he had treated to drinks.

Not surprisingly, Farrington returns home in a sullen, angry state. He rages that with all the money he has spent he still cannot feel properly drunk. Seeking some way to vent his fury, Farrington threatens and then beats his son, Tom, on the grounds that the boy has let the hearth fire go out, though in fact his violence strikingly reflects frustration over his own inadequacies.

The story looks linear in structure. Scenically, incidents of ignoble personal humiliation alternate with incidents of still more ignoble personal triumph to blind the hero more and more to his deficiencies. But who or what are the counterparts in "Counterparts"? The title is a good word for analogies, and suggests the symmetry between Farrington's relationships with his boss and his son. It is probably safer, however, to assume that the word "counterparts" implies both similarities and differences or, in other words, counterpoints and contrasts between different things which are similar, and between similar things which are different. Thus it is that Farrington is counterpart to Mr.



Alleyne in abuse of authority, and yet he is counterpart to his son—Tom—as victim of such abuse.

Another scenic pattern that lends linearity to the story is its tripartite structure: its three basic parts of the office, the pubs, and home—the three different locales which hold a crisis for Farrington to which he responds with increasing fury. Moreover, in each crucial scene of the story a woman figures as an immediate contributing cause of Farrington's outbursts of rage. It is also true that each scene involves a triangle of sorts: first between Farrington, Mr. Alleyne, and Miss Delacour, then between Farrington, Weathers, and the London woman, and finally between Farrington, his son, and his wife, whose influence is clearly felt, even in her absence. In each case, Farrington is driven to a rash attempt at defending his threatened masculine pride. First is the smart answer Farrington gives to Mr. Alleyne, and for which he is forced to apologize. Second is the arm wrestling match with Weathers, who defeats him twice. In both cases, Farrington has been beaten and humiliated, and he reacts always with brutish and sullen rage. Embedded in this tripartite structure lies, what Jordan Burr (2012) calls Joyce's "mythic method" (493). Burr asserts that "Counterparts" contains a significant number of both narrative parallels to and verbal recalls of Homer's *The Iliad* (494)—a mythic method which, like that of T. S. Eliot's in *The Waste Land*, provides ironic contrast: "While the epic form of the *Iliad* ultimately sanctions this violence, Joyce's anti-heroic iteration rejects the violence at the heart of the narrative as abusive and misplaced" (496). By beating his little boy in the final scene, then, Farrington is turning the tables, attempting to counteract his defeats and vent his wrath at the same time. The boy's bashing is another example of the mythic, ironic contrast:

While Achilles is finally able to quench his intractable rage with the blood of scores of Trojans, Farrington resorts to venting his impotent rage on his innocent son, Tom, in a cruel parody of Achilles's famous battle with Hector. While Achilles rages against Hector to avenge the slaying of his best friend, Patroclus, Farrington's violence results from a far less heroic offense: his son 'let the fire out' in the hearth, leaving 'the place in darkness.' (Burr 500)

The whole point of the irony is a dramatization of the vicious cycle, which reveals that Farrington is sinned against as well as sinning: that he is a product as well as a perpetrator of the paralysis of Dublin.

Farrington's vicious cycle is associatively linked up with a specific cycle of the Church Year, which along with additional references to time, forms the setting of the story. Bemoaning his lack of money, Farrington notes that "the middle of the month was passed" (Joyce 331), and a short while later, as he sneaks out of a tavern, "darkness . . . was gaining upon the dusk of February" (332). On the liturgical calendar this is the season of preparing oneself spiritually for the advent of Easter and the Resurrection of the Saviour. According to the practice of his faith, Farrington ought to be expiating his sins, engaging in prayer and charity, and humbly thanking God for the grace that will enable him to become a new man. Instead he ironically perverts these traditional devotions by



surrendering to the temptations of pride, sloth, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, and avarice, for each of these seven deadly sins, at one time or another frame the various manifestations of Farrington's dissolute behaviour.

Joyce makes us see Farrington's depravity against the background of the loss of time. The numerous references to time build up the increasing emphasis on the loss of time as the story progresses. In fact, the story opens on a note of urgency: "The bell rang furiously" (330). Farrington is summoned by Mr. Alleyne, a man who does "not lose a moment" (330), and is told in no uncertain terms that the contract which he is at work on "must be ready by four o'clock" (331). Thus, from the very outset of the story the reader is made conscious of time, which is to be Farrington's continual nemesis. Throughout the story Joyce continually mentions time, specifically the loss of time. Mr. Alleyne warns Farrington that he only gets "half an hour for your lunch and not an hour and a half" (331). Furthermore, "the evening was falling" (331), and Farrington realizes "how hopeless was the task of finishing his copy of the contract before half past five" (332). With time running out for Farrington, Joyce tells us:

The chief clerk began to hurry Miss Parker, saying she would never have the letters typed in time for post. The man listened to the clicking of the machine for a few minutes and then set to work to finish his copy. But his head was not clear and his mind wandered away to the glare and rattle of the public-house. It was a night for hot punches. He struggled on with his copy, but when the clock struck five he had still fourteen pages to write. Blast it! He couldn't finish it in time. He longed to execrate aloud, to bring his fist down on something violently. (333)

Thus Farrington, feeling the pressure of time and feeling put upon by the mechanized routine of his office and his superior Mr. Alleyne whom he knew "would never give him an hour's rest" (334), escapes to the unrushed and almost timelessly idyllic world of the public house. On the way, to get money for drink, which he believes will help him to cancel time and remove him from his immediate worries, he pawns his watch. By this action he has symbolically removed himself from time. In the public house, when Farrington retells the story of his confrontation with Mr. Alleyne for the benefit of his cronies, he adds an inaccurate detail: "So, I just looked at him—coolly, you know, and looked at her. Then I looked back at him again—taking my time, you know. I don't think that that's a fair question to put to me," says I" (335). At the time of the confrontation, however, Farrington does not take his time but ironically the opposite:

*The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head and back again; and, almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment:
"I don't think, sir," he said, "that that's a fair question to put to me."
There was a pause in the very breathing of the clerks. Everyone was astounded (the author of the witticism no less than his neighbours) . . . (334)*



Clearly, for Farrington, there is a significant difference between the hustle bustle world of the office and the relaxed and almost timeless world of the public house. Later on Farrington meets Weathers who twice defeats him at arm wrestling, admires a young woman who "after a little time"(336) answers his gaze, and spends all of his money without even being able to get drunk. When he leaves the public house he is a broken man, trapped by his circumstances and by time itself. He has been ironically reduced to the nameless, anonymous man he was in the office at the outset of the story:"He cursed everything. He had done for himself in the office, pawned his watch, spent all his money; and he had not even got drunk"(337-38).Farrington, time bound and time pressed, is crushed as much by the machine of ongoing time as he is by the mechanized society of Dublin. Even when he tries to escape time, to regress to some sort of idyllic non-concern outside of time, for which he is willing to pawn his watch—even then he cannot escape time or get drunk enough to cancel it. This loss of time in "Counterparts" verges on the ironic and by deploying this rhetorical tactic Joyce sharply dramatizes his thematic motif of the paralysis of Dublin.

"Counterparts" explores the idea of a life compelled by a mediating force to live at a paralysing distance from its own vital interests. The protagonist Farrington's humanity is steadily repressed by the bureaucratic machine of the modern workplace. Farrington's position as an office copy-clerk exemplifies the automaticity of his working environment; exiled from spontaneous human interaction he spends his days mechanically copying other people's words. The voice of his employer, Mr Alleyne, descends to him through a speaking-tube. This depersonalised routine of call-and-response reduces Farrington to a mere functionary within a faceless and impersonal system.

However, the systemic determination of working relations devitalises everyone within it; when Farrington actually encounters his employer in a professional situation all he sees before him is a "manikin" (333). Alleyne too has been reduced to the mechanical role he performs; and this reduction of life to a fixed form is captured at the level of the image. Reacting furiously to Farrington's insolent rejoinder, Alleyne "shook his fist in the man's face till it seemed to vibrate like the hub of some electric machine" (334). This lifeless rhythm of machinic repetition and reflexive response is reproduced in Farrington's pub-rituals; his social life is structured around the same predetermined system of exchanges that have come to define the hell of his working day. Returning home he repeats the tyranny of petty domination visited upon him in the office by beating his own child. Only now does his body experience free play by enforcing humiliating discipline upon a creature one further level down the social scale. In the story's darkest irony, his son's desperate pleading, "I'll say a *Hail Mary* for you, pa, if you don't beat me" (339), offers no escape from the world of emotional paralysis and social repression it attempts to transcend; the rote repetition of prayer is ironically one more way in which the individual cedes autonomy to a power greater than itself.



Conclusion

The disjunctive nature of the story's irony intensifies Farrington's moral paralysis to dizzying heights. The locus of the text's disjunctive irony is the aesthetic consciousness of the inability to resolve the crisis it posits. The story arrests the paradox, inviting the readers to see the depth of Farrington's moral degradation but, as Beerendra Pandey observes with reference to the use of disjunctive irony in *The Waste Land*, "not calling up them to reconcile or fuse the discordant" (117). The disjunctive irony in the story lends a serrated edge to the political allegory: Farrington, who remains subordinate to his British boss(es), gets allegorized as a figure of maltreated Irish manhood at the hands of a succession of publicans and pawnbrokers whose vulture-like pursuit of British-capitalist interests preys on the energies of native Ireland while at the same time criminalizing her young citizenry.

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The Impact of Christianity and Communism on Dalits: A Critical Study of G.Kalyan Rao's *Antarani Vasantham*

B. Venkat Rao

G. Kalyan Rao emerges out of the left movements of the 1970s and 80s and from the 90's Dalit movement, and holds an esteemed position in VIRASAM (Revolutionary Writers Association). He exposes that the Hindu caste order is the major source for the practice of Untouchability. Also, in the novel all discussion on the emancipation of Dalits is set against two polarized opinions: one which most of the Dalits uphold—that conversion to Christianity opens up an alternative socio-religious space for them, and another, generally upheld by Hindu reformists, nationalists and Gandhians, that conversion is a subversion of the culture of India. Kalyan Rao rejects both the Hindu reformist and the Gandhian way of Harijan upliftment, and presents Christian conversion as far better than these two elite enterprises. Since his novel has touched on all the substantial socio-political issues that hover around the question of 'conversion' in the Dalit context, and has played an important role in influencing Telugu literary circles and readers in the Dalit community, it is useful to study the question of conversion from the writers' perspective. Kalyan Rao historicizes Christianity as an alternative political, cultural and social agency for Dalits in the context of colonial modernity,. Here, the most important question, and one that we need to provide a critical analysis of, is that of the writers' personal experience on the subject of Christian conversion.

Antarani Vasantham: Exploring the Dalit Experience of Christianity and Communism.

G. Kalyan Rao is a socially committed writer. The voice of change and struggle speaks in his works. He has been the editor of *Aruna Taara* Magazine for a long time, which portrays current and prevalent issues from radical Marxist point of view. His novel *Antarani Vasantham* (2000) stands as a highly valued and widely read literary piece in Andhra Pradesh and particularly among Dalits. It has been recently translated into Tamil. This novel is an intensely realistic portrayal of Dalits' lives and a reflection of the writer's vision for Dalits. Apart from this novel he had written many plays like *Toli Poddu* (Dawn), *Satire*, *Kulam* (Caste) and *Laakapu*. He himself has directed and also acted in them. He has also written many skits like *A Night in Those Days*, *Jail*, *Aruna*, *Sannivaesam*, *Parilament Payeekhana*, *Idiot*, *Needa* (Shade), and *Saakshi* (Witness). He wrote an anthology of short stories titled *Nenemi Adiganani* (What Did I Ask). He also wrote a long narrative poem called *Kaalam* (Time). He wrote a critical treatise on *The Roots of Telugu Drama*. In every piece of his work we see the question of Dalits and their struggle for emancipation.

He is a serious activist struggling against all ills of society— that of rooting out caste barriers, breaking social shackles and attacking all that is injurious to the growth of



healthy human relations. That is why his fictional protagonists, unlike those of Unnava, are rebellious and uncompromising. Kalyan Rao has set up his characters in small villages called Ennela Dinne and Vulavapaadu in Prakasham District of Andhra Pradesh. This society is rural and feudal. The story is a saga spread over many decades and six generations, and its protagonists, both male and female are mature and experienced persons. This novel deals with various historical issues proven to be of central import in Dalit life, such as Hinduism, Colonialism, Nationalism, Gandhism, Christianity, Communism, Naxalism and the meaning of Independence for Dalits. At this juncture, we shall try to confine the discussion to the question of caste, conversion and communism, particularly to identify the essential role of Christian conversion and communism in the Dalits' life precisely from Kalyan Rao's perspective.

The novel is a saga of six generations of Dalit life. Religion plays an important role and lies behind their exploitation. The trajectory of their life from so-called Untouchables to Dalits is historically delineated. Their desire for freedom from caste discrimination becomes possible, in the author's opinion, through Christian conversion, which in his story plays a key role in shaping the experience of Dalits and in the modern history of Dalits. In addition, conversion to Christianity is a first step in the move of the community towards participation in progressive movements.

Kalyan Rao's *Antarani Vasantham* opens with a woman called Ruth, who is a Christian and one of the protagonists of the story, who sits in front of a dilapidated church and remembers her glorious past associated with the mission compound as well as the bitter stories told by her husband, Ruben such as ones about the origin of the Malas' and Madigas' birth in Puranas, how and why they were cursed and how Dalits were denied place or status in socio-religious and cultural spheres. The novel traces six generations of Dalit lives in Andhra Pradesh. Ruth and Ruben belong to the third generation. Christianity is projected through many characters such as Martin, Simon, Ruth and Ruben, Emmanuel, Jessie and Ruby.

Kalyan Rao documents the historical background of conversion through the story of Sivaiah. Sivaiah grew up in Ennela Dinne village. When drought hits the area, all of his relatives died of starvation and disease. Helpless, he buries them all together in the same grave. Many people died like this of famine and of starvation in the 1850s. Both the Mala and Madiga untouchables' colonies are reduced to mere graveyards. Being a victim of the severe drought and the starvation, he decides to leave his village and becomes a migrant labourer along with his wife Chaudhury Rekha. He has no choice but to leave his home for the sake of survival. Sivaiah and his wife move from place to place in order to survive at any cost. They walk many miles without food along with other migrant labourers from different villages. All of them have lost their kith and kin, like Sivaiah. They shared their sorrows and sufferings with one another. Their conversation shocks and pains the readers:



“Six elder and younger sisters. They turned into dust very much before my eyes. I am Bayyaram Madiga, who remained alone, in the midst of them. Father had passed away much earlier and mother followed him.” (Kalyan Rao 120)

Due to their long walking and wailing without food, they are completely tired out. As soon as they fall on the land they go into sound sleep. Jinkodu’s hunting for food, is an example of Kalyan Rao’s realistic understanding of the feelings of those who were suffering for lack of basic amenities such as food, shelter and clothes. Jinkodu forces Sivaiah to steal food, which is a very practical response in the position he is.

Let us go to steal food anywhere. All the women are deep in sleep. We are very near the village. All the villagers should have slept so that we can easily steal food. I know how to steal the food from my childhood days onwards. Come with me. Come with me. (Kalyan Rao 123)

They anxiously search for food in every house. But they cannot find food anywhere. Sivaiah is tired but Jinkodu is not. He is still searching for the food and at last finds a small amount in a very old woman’s house. When Jinkodu finds half a plate of food he feels delighted but his happiness is short-lived. He realises a terrible incident that has taken place in that hut. That is the food left aside by an old man who had just died before they entered the hut. The old woman mournfully says, “My husband...he died without eating all the food.” Sivaiah and Jinkodu look with fear and astonishment in the direction that the words are coming from. There is a very old and ugly woman completely unclothed except for a *Gocha* (loincloth), behind the shadow of the central pillar. “Great man. He kept this for us and died...” Jinkodu says with a laugh. Sivaiah and Jinkodu come to know that while the old man was eating he had died. His wife sat unmoved on her bed. At this terrible time, they do not even worry about the old man or the old woman. They simply focus on getting food from her. At one time Jinkodu comments that there was no devil other than hunger.

The moment they were ready to flee from the place, the old woman suddenly fell on Jinkodu and held him by his collar. Meanwhile she had lost her loincloth also. She was like a strange animal. Sivaiah wanted to flee immediately from the spot. But Jinkodu pushed the old woman away very forcefully. She fell down. He held Sivaiah’s hand and led him out of the house. With great strength, the old woman pursued them. Jinkodu and Sivaiah were running recklessly without any direction and the old woman was scolding and running behind them. When they looked back she was terrible. Moreover the dogs were pursuing the old woman. She was on one hand hitting the dogs and on the other hand she was abusing Jinkodu. She could not catch them. She stopped running suddenly. Now, only the cries of the dogs were being heard. When they reached their destination they looked back and came to know that she had fallen amidst the dogs. They were listening to the cries of dogs but could not hear the voice of the old woman (Kalyan Rao 124).

After long days of no food, they reach the Buckingham canal. This canal is a major colonial project for the development of agriculture and transportation during the mid-



nineteenth century. They think of their survival at that point. The place is completely filled with labourers. It seemed to be the place where crowds of coolies, who came from different areas, gathered, looking for livelihood. Sivaiah and Chaudhury Rekha were happy to reach there. They think that they would definitely get work so that they could live. But the moment Sivaiah asks the leader of the workers for work he is quickly abused and beaten up by the leader and his followers because he is from the Mala community. The writer, coming from a radical Marxist background, objectively tries to disclose the gravity of caste system even among the workers.

This Mala son wants work, he bursts out like a burning fire. The workers suddenly stopped work and started pelting stones at Sivaiah; a few of them raised their spades and walked towards him. Sivaiah cannot understand why the round-faced (leader of the labourers) man is shouting, why the workers are raising their spades? And why some others are pelting stones at them from four sides? But he understood one thing that if he hesitated to go off from there, and stood still a minute, they would be in danger for their lives. Holding Chaudhury Rekha's hand, Sivaiah ran fast from the spot. Yet, the workers were pursuing them; after chasing them far away, the workers returned. Sivaiah and Rekha had lost their strength and fell down on the burning sand. (Kalyan Rao 126-127)

From these pitiable situations the untouchables convert to the Christianity. Kalyan Rao depicts the conversion as inevitable in the lives of Dalits. The root of conversion, as it is portrayed in this novel, is the result of caste hierarchy of Hindu society and he endorses the missionaries' repeated interpretation that famine is the historical juncture for conversion.

According to Kalyan Rao, conversion is not simply a way for material benefits, rather as emancipation and as subversion of Hindu caste hierarchy. He shows that conversion is neither imposition by Christian missionaries nor a project of colonial administration. He strongly believes that it is the collective and conscious choice by the Dalits themselves in a historically desperate situation. Dalits explored a sort of substantial alliance with the missionaries for social respect, social mobility, social development, social respect and dignity. They could gain to some extent these values in the process of transformation. Interestingly, the writer coming from revolutionary Marxist thought literally invokes the spirit of the Christ to emancipate the Untouchables from the age-long discrimination and deprivation. The spirit of the Bible, its inspiration in the lives of the poor and the downtrodden, is unique:

*Foxes have holes, and birds of air have nests;
But the son of man hath not place to lay his head" (Luke; ch: 9:58)
Nehemiah! Let it happen what you have written! Joyful sound born
in Jerusalem is heard far away, and even further away. (Kalyan Rao 131)*

The spirit of the Divine falls upon Sivaiah and Sasi Rekha when they are almost in dying condition, through Martin who is a preacher of the Bible. Martin sprinkles water on their faces; he gives them food when they need it for survival. He is a padre, preaching



under the denomination of American Baptist Mission, *Lone Star*. The Lone Star Mission has been rendering its marvellous service around Nellore and exclusively in the lives of Malas and Madigas.

Untouchables in the early days of their conversion are confronted with new Christian messages and its practice. Martin touches them when they are weak and exhausted, lying on the scorching sand. Sivaiah and Sasi Rekha are astonished, as they had neither seen such a person nor expected such a treatment from anyone from a different community. As a padre, Martin, who introduces them to the word of God and the miracles, inspires them. He says repeatedly: Jesus is kind. They stare at his words. Martin eventually comes to know that they were from the Mala community; and had come for work, and that they were scolded, scoffed at and even beaten up by upper caste workers. Martin shivers on hearing what had happened to them.

The writer, as we said, comes from a Marxist background and yet poses a serious question to the Marxist perspective on the question of caste discrimination in the Indian context. He strongly exhibits a feeling that without revoking the caste system, it will not be feasible to ensure social equality in Indian context. Even though they are all workers, employed in digging the Buckingham Canal, the caste Hindu workers do not accept workers from the "Untouchable" castes to work along with them. Upper caste workers responded to Sivaiah and Sasi Rekha just as they had done to many Malas and Madigas who came there for their survival. Many of those victims died as a result of such cruel treatment. For generations together, the Dalits were kept as slaves with no cultural, social, and religious rights to claim for justice.

Kalyan Rao records the Baptist Mission's involvement and draws on the work of John E. Clough, a dedicated missionary from whose memoirs we have also drawn. He considers Clough's work for the upliftment of Dalits when they were persecuted by the caste-Hindus as exemplary. Clough was committed to building strong confidence and leadership in the Dalit community. In this process, he never took any policy decision connected with the mission without Dalit Christian preachers' concurrence. Dr. Clough once stated "I had given instructions to Rangaiah to take counsel with Periah and then jointly lay it upon this growing Christian community, as a duty that they must set apart some of their members to become teachers and preachers." Later on, Mission schools and colleges, were established where education was provided to the Dalits. The church buildings constructed in every village were also used as school-buildings. It was arranged that the preacher and teachers, and the Bible women were to be fed by the concerned village Christian community. Clough said, "Periah always treated me as a teacher, but I never took any decision without his concurrence. It must be that the Lord Jesus gave to Periah a clear conception of the design, which we were to work out, and that he gave to me sufficient spiritual vision to grasp its bearings. He gave me an allegiance of a high order." (Johan E. Clough 100)



The role of Periah, the prominent early convert, in the years of the Famine is a historical fact of Dalit history. Kalyan Rao draws on these stories as models for his fictional characters. There arose a famine in 1876 where the worst sufferers were the untouchables. During this time thousands died of starvation. Dr. Clough took up the work of Buckingham canal because the line passed through the region of the Christians living in Ongole, for he thought by doing this they could be saved from starvation. Meanwhile cholera had broken out, adding to their miseries. The work of digging the canal began on Feb 24, 1877 and many gathered there to join the work. They were very hungry and weak and several of them died. Some quietly left without saying anything. Some were sick and only a few remained. (Santhi Sudha Monica 243-244) A large number of people from the Mala and Madiga communities came to join the camp

The love and benevolence Clough and Periah had for these people was proved by the way they treated the weak ones. The weakest were cared for the most. Those who were too weak to work were also given food and everyone was treated well. The project went a very long way in spreading the real message of Christianity, and moreover the social status of the Madigas was rising. (Santhi Sudha Monica 244) As a result of the famine, fourteen hospitals and dispensaries were established. The famine of 1876 was followed by mass movements from many Mala and Madiga communities. We can see how Martin represents the early Christianity into Dalits' life in the following paragraphs. Martin brings Sivaiah and Sasi Rekha to the place where all the downtrodden untouchables are working separately. On that day they become close to Martin and his wife, Saramma, who looks after them very affectionately.

All of them sat together for the meal. It seems to be a strange experience for both of them. Martin was observing them.... Saramma tells them. "We will pray". While Sivaiah looks away, Sasi Rekha looks towards Sivaiah. Martin tells them "close your eyes". Saramma speaks by closing her eyes. They are hearing the word 'Yohova' for the first time. In her prayer, they hear their names and feel an unknown anxiety. She is speaking that the good things will happen to them. She is asking 'do good things for them.... Finally, Saramma says we ask in the name of your loving son, our Jesus Christ. She ends prayer by saying 'Amen'. (Kalyan Rao 134-135)

Sivaiah and Sasi Rekha could experience the taste of love, kindness, mercy, communion and humanity literally, in their lives for the first time, in the presence of Martin and Saramma. They haven't experienced this sort of treatment from any caste Hindus in their lives so far. Wholeheartedly they associate with the Martin family. Moreover, they became part and parcel of this family and eventually they convert to Christianity, which is the mightiest and most happy miracle to happen in their lives.

Reminiscence is the narrative technique used in this novel recurrently. Reminiscence is a form of history for those whose voice is not heard in written history. The purpose of this technique is to emphasise that Mala and Madiga communities have converted to Christianity with their will and wish and rather on their own choice, due to the caste discrimination in Hindu society. It is nothing to do with the repeated Hindutva



arguments that Dalits were allured or forced to convert to Christianity or else with the arguments like Nicholas B Dirks', who proposes that it is due to colonial power politics that Dalits are enticed towards Christian conversion. Kalyan Rao's narration clearly disproves all sorts of reformist, nationalist, Gandhian and Hindutva arguments that conversion has taken place with all sorts of allurements. When Martin heard the hardships of Sivaiah's father, Yellanna, who renounced his family to mobilise the marginalized people and enlighten them on the question of caste barriers, he couldn't but recollect his own bygone terrible days. It was a time when untouchables were converting to Christianity. Martin's earlier name was Chinnodu. He belonged to the Madiga community and came from a rural area of Kanigiri. His fathers' job, as Manu preordained and predestined it, was stitching and cleaning shoes. In fact, Chinnodu (Martin) did not like this hereditary job. He was a rationalist; he could not tolerate the dominance, arrogance and callousness of upper castes. The upper caste way of discrimination against untouchables is very emphatically narrated in an unforgettable incident, which leads to Christian conversion in the life of Chinnodu who becomes Martin

Chinna Kapu [an upper caste person] came into the colony. Suddenly, everyone stood up straight from his or her position.... Chinnodu did not like to stand up like the others. The persons standing are standing by folding their hands. They stood by bowing their heads. Even a very old woman strengthens herself, stands up quickly, but falls down. Another very old man who is on the verge of death shouts for the help of his grandson in order to stand up at the presence of Chinna Kapu. (Kalyan Rao 140)

As a rationalist, Chinnodu cannot bear this. He decides not to surrender at any cost. He is determined and staunch like a lion. Chinna Kapu frowns at him and subsequently Martin is beaten up severely. Nevertheless, Martin does not stand up. He hugs the land and does not want to lose his self-esteem and dignity. ...At this time, Chinnodu is touched and consoled by a white man who comes there on a horse. The white man holds his hands with love and affection and leads him into Christianity. Chinnodu is quite amazed at the treatment rendered by the white man. Chinnodu is conscious that the white man was not from this village, nor had he come from this area, but he touches him and treats him affectionately as a human being whereas the caste-Hindus neither touched him nor treated him as a human being so far, rather everywhere he and his community people were discriminated against cruelly for no reason.

The white man says that nobody is an untouchable for Christ. This inspires them. As a consequence, Chinnodu converts to Christianity, and he is baptized and given the name Martin. Chinnodu's wife Polamma is also baptized and given the name Saramma. Eventually they become the preachers in the Nellore Mission Compound. The untouchables acquired abundant assistance from the Missions. They get material benefits such as education and employment. Their names, their culture, their social and economic status were also transformed. They found a new agency called Christianity; at first it came



into their lives upholding human values and later on it provided various benefits for Dalits in the course of socio-political changes in colonial Andhra

As thousands of converts embraced Christianity, the Madiga and Mala hamlets gradually started forming new Christian communities as the villages received Christianity with hope, courage and encouragement. In reality, they were rebelling against the Hindu religious systems of *Karma Siddhantha* and caste. They were challenging the oppression, which had prevailed for several thousands of years. They started to strive for gaining equal human rights, while the high castes tried in vain to keep them in submissiveness. The caste Hindus started to persecute the Christians at many places. (Santhi Sudha Monica 240)

Kalyan Rao strongly believes that Christianity provided an alternative space for critical articulation against caste discrimination and the early converts were involved in the project of emancipating their communities from the shackles of all social and religious oppression. Martin and Sivaiah are involved in doing this. Even though Martin became a preacher of the gospel, he did not hesitate to bring change in the lifestyle of Dalits. Dalits had been pushed to the level of eating the meat of dead animals. Martin closely observes the conditions in which both Mala and Madiga communities were eagerly gathering around the dead animals and they used to scold and scuffle with one another to share the dead animals' meat.

Martin thinks it is his responsibility to change the position of the untouchables. He exhorts his community not to eat the meat of the dead animals. He even teaches them in the prayer meetings not to eat the meat of dead animals. Everyone looks at him strangely. They feel that they have heard something that was not supposed to be heard from Martin. They struggle internally, asking how it can be possible. One of the community elders claims that it was their caste right. Martin laughs at his words. He tries to sensitize the community about upward mobility. We should not look at this from the framework of Sanskritization that M. N. Srinivas proposes that the lower castes had the passion for emulating the upper castes cultural practices. On the contrary, the change that Martin wants here is a structural transformation. It is a change to not be part of a Brahmanical Hindu vegetarian culture. Martin was not at all exhorting that beef-eating should be stopped; only that one should not eat dead-animal meat. We can see how Martin, Christian preacher, puts his model of change:

The lands at the river Penna are the rights of Reddys. The lands at the river Krishna are the rights of Kammas. But the dead animals who die here and there are the rights of the Madigas. (Kalyan Rao 143)

Martin's formula works out and could bring considerable changes in the community. They no longer liked to eat the meat of a dead animal. Gradually by practicing these precepts, the new Christian community starts securing their liberty,



delinking themselves from the Hindu mythological inhuman system, and starts becoming altogether a new community with a culture of human values and dignity. Martin's dreams slowly begin to come true, and he was striving tirelessly to achieve this.

Soon a test comes to the untouchable community. An ox that belonged to Venkayamma, an upper caste woman, died. Sinenkadu who used to remove the dead animals, goes to fetch the dead ox along with his son. As usual, he removes the carcass from the spot. As per the word of preacher, Martin, he peels the skin and buries the skeleton and bones without taking any meat. Moreover nobody from the untouchables' colony goes there. Buchi Chaudhury and Chinna Chaudhury (upper caste's leaders) could not tolerate the untouchables' unwillingness to eat the dead animal. When the untouchables became Christians and changed their life style considerably, the upper castes could not bear the change that took place in the untouchables. Caste Hindus persecute Dalits to maintain the old status quo of all evil practices.

Chinna Chaudhury chased Sinenkadu upto the place of the buried carcass. They forced him to dig it out from the ground where he had buried the skeleton and bones of the dead animal. Sinenkadu did as he was told. They commanded him to pick up the meat, which was stinking and filled with mud and they forced him to eat that stinking meat. Otherwise they threatened that they would bury him in the same pond...they returned to their place as if they had protected a great culture. Martin still remembers the day of Sinenkadu; how he came to the home holding the meat which was filled with mud.(Kalyan Rao 145)...

Those unforgettable days still rewind in Martin's mind. Sivaiah observes keenly how Martin talks in the neighborhoods; how he preaches in the homes; how he mingles and how he explains more social issues in the prayer. Sivaiah likes Martin's boldness and straightforwardness. He wishes to be like Martin. Eventually Sivaiah is rechristened Simon. Martin explains the symbolic meaning of the name Simon in the Bible.

This is one aspect of the Dalit experience of conversion. What happens in this specific historical and geographical location gives us an insight into what Christianity meant to Dalits in colonial Andhra and what was their experience of conversion. However, Kalyan Rao also presents another face of Christianity. What becomes visible on this face is the continuing domination of the upper castes within the domain of church – in its power structures, policies and politics. This happens although the Dalits were the first to own up to Christianity as a religion, either as individuals or through mass movements in colonial Andhra. In fact there is evidence to show that upper caste Hindus were inspired by the Dalits to enter the Christian fold. J. Waskom Pickett studies the impact of Dalit conversions on Sudra (Kamma and Reddy) upper castes who came into the Christian fold. In the observation of Pickett

These Sudra movements are directly connected with earlier movements of Malas and Madigas. The pastors, catechists, evangelists and school-teachers under whose ministry the Sudras are being won



to Christ have, with very few exceptions, been recruited from Mala and Madiga converts... Moreover, except in one area, the villages in which the Malas and Madigas have been Christians for a number of years are the ones in which the Sudras in largest numbers are being converted, and in all areas the change they have seen in the outcaste converts is said by many of the Sudras to have convinced them of the real and unique power of Christianity. A Government official, belonging to one of the highest of Sudra castes, the Khammas, speaking to the writer, ventured the prophecy that entire village populations would soon become Christians. Asked why, he said there were three reasons: 1) the changed lives of the outcaste converts, 2) the loss of faith in Hinduism, and 3) the influence of the schools and churches. "Hinduism," he said, "is sick. The priests and the gods and goddesses can do nothing for the people, and don't want to do anything. The Christians have started schools and churches and have shown power to help the weakest. Everybody believes in Christianity now." (J. Waskom Pickett 298)

And he further continues to explain us the positive impact of Dalit Christians on Sudras

A Telugu convert told the writer that his interest in Christianity began when he met a courteous, kindly, and learned Christian Mala preacher. He was at a loss to account for a personality so winsome and a mind so well stored with learning in a Mala. (J. Waskom Pickett 306)

But there is also another side to this coin. Kalyan Rao points out that as a result of the conversion of upper castes into Christianity, caste prejudices began growing within the churches also. Their entry led to confrontations and spoiled the congenial atmosphere in the churches. He regards Dalits as suffering a serious setback with the conversion of upper caste converts. Dalit conversion to Christianity lies in the desire for equality and emancipation whereas the conversion of upper castes led to the use of caste hierarchy to exploit church resources and slowly to re-impose the caste system on Dalits. He graphically presents the difference between upper caste interest in Christianity with that of the Dalits through the character of Simon.

We will return to this discussion after a comment on Indian Christian theology. Kalyan Rao's depiction of Christianity in Dalit experience has close parallels with what is spoken of in the 1960s and 70s as the liberation theological understanding on the marginalized people. Arvind P. Nirmal, a pioneer in the explorations for a Dalit Christian theology, notes the drift of Indian Christian theology. He writes that "most of the contributions to Indian Christian theology in the past came from high caste converts to Christianity. The result has been that Indian Christian theology has perpetuated within itself what I prefer to call a 'Brahminic' tradition." (Nirmal, Arvind 65) Rowena Robinson also notes that the experiences and lived reality of the majority of Christians, who come from the lowest rungs of society, are overlooked in the workings of this theology. It is ironic—and an index of the hold of caste hierarchy even within the Church—that Indian Christian theology made no attempt to come to terms with the experiences of the lowliest. It was largely limited to the philosophical contemplation of Brahmins and other upper-



caste Christians and failed to engage in dialogue with non-Brahminical Indian traditions (Rowena Robinson 196)

Dalit theology is visualized as a counter-culture to the theology of the Brahminical elite. As Oommen notes, “Dalits felt that the theological task in India could not be the preserve of the ‘Brahminic Tradition’ within the Indian Church. Dalit theology must be a reflection by Dalits for Dalits, of themselves as Christians and members of a single human community. An authentic Dalit theology must be an expression of the suffering and aspirations of the Dalits. It is the story of their pathos, their protest and their hopes.” (Oommen, George 26). Such a theology narrates their subjugation through history but also becomes the means and expression of their liberation. Kalyan Rao’s historical narration can be regarded as a contribution to the making of a new Dalit theology.

Sivaiah, who is christened as Simon, keenly observes the changes that are taking place in church activities with the conversion of upper castes. Simon feels sad and baffled when he finds the upper castes in the Gospel meetings. He finds out their names still retaining their upper caste identity as in John Paul Reddy, Emmanuel Sastri, or Yohosuva Chaudhury. He realizes that the upper castes, particularly Kamma, Reddy and Brahmins, do not want to abandon their castes names. On the contrary they want to use their caste identities in order to exploit the resources of missionaries.

Simon cannot sleep when he realizes this unexpected turn from the upper castes. He is filled with anxiety that his communities may again be subjugated and thrown down within the Christian fold also. He cannot imagine the maker and bearer of the cross living in the same yard. As the days pass, Chaudhury Rekha, the wife of Simon, gives birth to a son, Ruben. Ruben is brought up by Martin and Saramma. Since they have no children they become very fond of Ruben.

Meanwhile there were mounting movements of untouchables into Christianity. Malas and Madigas were turning to Christianity as if in a great struggle. The more conversions took place, the more were the attacks on Christians, especially on the Mala and Madiga Christians. Simon questions that:

There were no reports of attacks on the Kamma Christians in the Krishna district. There were no reports of attacks on the Reddy Christians in the Nellore dist. There were no reports of attacks on the Brahmins who were doing their jobs in the Govt. offices. What was done was only on the Mala and Madiga and Untouchable Christians. (Kalyan Rao 150)

The writer seems to think that with the entering of upper castes into Christianity, the untouchables are once again systematically targeted. He makes it a point to demonstrate that only Dalit Christians were persecuted. And his strong appeal to the reader is to find out the hidden agenda and the opportunism of the upper castes who converted to Christianity.



Everyday there was news. Every village has its heinous stories. In Markapuram, 16 Mala and Madigas were forcefully kept in the darkroom; upper castes tortured them. They forced Untouchable Christians to worship Hindu Gods like Krishna by forgetting Christ. But the Untouchables sing the songs of Christ. In Kanigire, a Madiga Christian was moved in the nude around the village. They burnt the Bible publicly. They attacked Christians. In Kuchupudi, the munsiff forced the ten untouchable Christians to plunge into the water in order to denounce Christianity...(Kalyan Rao 150)

There have been many missionary reports of how Dalits stood courageously during the persecutions on them. Since Dalits denied performing the caste-assigned duties they had been persecuted by the upper castes. Kalyan Rao vividly presents the heroic role that the Dalits had adopted during the attacks on them.

Equally importantly he observes that there has been an economic and religious interest in order to keep intact of the Hindu social fabric behind the upper castes attacks on Dalit Christians. Martin, who observes all the conspiracies of upper castes, ceaselessly fights for social justice, and he strongly believes that it is possible through the very essence of Christian precepts. Martin does not remain silent about the atrocities. He tries to mobilize the victims. He repudiates the attacks and draws helpful precepts from the Bible by identifying himself with the radical spirit for social change:

Behold... Christ's spirit was on me. He blessed me to proclaim the Gospel to the poor. He chooses me to deliver for the people who were in the shackles. He sent me to deliver to the people who were tortured. If it was not like that why should I go near Christ? (Kalyan Rao 151)

Robinson, talking about the Dalits' engagement with Christianity in India, observes "Christ identified himself totally with the poor. He was the one who was hungry, the one who was the thirsty, the reviled, and the imprisoned. He was rejected, outcast, spat upon and reviled. He was, in a word, Dalit. Christ's Dalitness is best symbolized on the cross. Christ crucified is Christ broken, crushed, mangled" (Rowena Robinson 199) Similarly, Martin identifies himself with the image of Christ. He teaches and warns the people to be alert in order to confront the attacks of the upper castes at any time. Martin and Simon were staunch believers as well as community well-wishers. They moved from place to place to preaching the Bible. When upper caste Christians occupy the wasteland near the untouchable colony of Valasapadu, Martin fights against the upper castes and finally succeeds with the benevolence of the British officials.

Martin and Simon, are returning one December evening after they had delivered Christmas messages at different churches. A group of upper castes attack Martin and brutally murder him on the outskirts of the village and Simon is terribly injured. The diabolic act was that the upper castes force Simon to carry the bloodied dead body of Martin on his shoulders like Christ who carried the cross at the time of his crucifixion. On



the same day, the whole Untouchable colony is burnt down completely. In this heinous act the upper castes do not exclude even the women, kids and old ones. When Simon enters the colony, bearing the dead body of Martin, he finds that the whole colony is like a burning graveyard. Fortunately he finds his little son, Ruben crying amidst the burning huts. He strengthens himself, picks up his son, and hurries to a neighboring village where he hands over his son to Yokobu, the Bible preacher.

We need to understand Kalyan Rao's critical observation that at this juncture, that when Dalit Christians were attacked by the upper caste Hindus, the upper caste Christian converts remained indifferent and silent. While the writer acknowledges the fact that untouchables undoubtedly benefited from Christian fold, at the same time he makes a critical observation that the impact of caste stigma still plays a negative role on the untouchables' lives within church.

Kalyan Rao shows us yet another face of the impact of Christianity on Dalits. He shows us that Christianity could not make Dalits passive but that it led them to participate in progressive movements for their equal rights. Many changes occur after the independence of India. But there was no light in the plight of the Untouchables. They are still discriminated and oppressed. With the Communist Movement entering into the Untouchables' colonies, Dalits began to fight steadily against the upper caste oppression. Oommen, making a similar point, says that in the Latin American context the Exodus liberation paradigm had tremendous implications for Liberation theologians, which has also influenced the articulation of Dalit theology in India. He notes that, in the Indian context, the account from the Biblical text of Deuteronomy recounting the toil, affliction and oppression of the ancestors of the Israelites is used to construct the movement of the Dalits from a 'no-people' to 'God's people' (Oommen, George 32). Kalyan Rao demonstrates this relation between Dalit theology and Dalit liberation through the character of Ruben:

Ruben, being a Christian preacher, does not fear to say at any time that he is an Untouchable. He once says "I was at first an untouchable and then a Christian" He deliberately assists Ramanujam who is a great follower of Marxist ideology. He does not confine himself only to the teachings of the Bible. He does not tolerate the domination of the Brahmins in the Govt. offices, in the courts, and in the hospitals. He openly abhors the upper caste people who changed their religion merely to exploit the wealth of the Church. He openly says that the upper caste people have not at all come for the sake of Christ but they came to dominate. When a Reddy is appointed as the head master of Mission School, Ruben roared at the church authorities. He questioned the authorities openly "Could you find no Mala Christian or Madiga Christian? (Kalyan Rao 173)"

The issue of discrimination against Dalit Christians by the fellow (upper caste) Christians in modern times is not totally unknown. The Bishop in Madras of the Church of South India (a United Protestant Church) M. Azariah observes:



The Scheduled Castes (Dalit) Christians are thus discriminated against and oppressed by fellow Christians within the various Churches for no fault of their own but the accident of birth, even when they are 2nd, 3rd or 4th generation Christians. The high caste Christians who are in a minority in the Church carry their caste prejudices even after generations, unaffected by Christian belief and practice. (M. Azariah 10)

Much earlier than these Christian sources, a number of scholars from other religions also argued the same point. For example, B. R. Ambedkar not only raised this issue, but also made a commendable analysis why the status of Christian Dalits remained largely unchanged even after conversion (B. R. Ambedkar.Vol.5.7). All the Christian groups of India retain the mark of the caste system. People who converted from upper castes continue to take pride in their caste and maintain their caste status even after many generations. On the other hand, Dalits have explored Christianity to fight against caste discrimination. Christianity may not have completely fulfilled the promise of equality, but at the same time it did not force the Dalits to passively stick to the old values. Rather it encouraged them to participate in various progressive and democratic struggles. Kalyan Rao presents the importance of Christian conversion in Dalits' lives even as they are part of the Communist party. Ruben is a priest and his son Emmanuel is a teacher, who is active in the Communist party affairs. Emmanuel also struggles for social justice. He marries Mary Suvartha and they have a son named Jessie. Emmanuel keenly observes the evil practice of the Untouchability, and the discrimination and exploitation of the Untouchables. In the course of time, he leaves home and joins Ramanujam who is involved in the Naxalite movement at Srikakulam with the hope of extirpating the stigma of Untouchability and caste exploitation. However, Emmanuel gets killed in an encounter.

What needs to be stressed here is the response of Emmanuel's parents—Ruth and Ruben—to this tragedy. Having a struggling spirit for gaining socio-economical equality, they do not mourn like any other parents. Rather they feel proud of their martyr son who sacrificed his life for the poor. Even though Ruben is a pastor, he is not ashamed of his son dying as a Naxalite. When confronted by the police officials, Ruben declares: "Christ is my belief but struggle is my need." Continuing the legacy of his father, Emmanuel's son Jessie joins the movement. His grandmother Ruth blesses Jessie and prays for his remarkable victory which, she hopes, will emancipate poor Dalits from socio-economic exploitation.

In conclusion we can clearly underline that Kalyan Rao, unlike several upper caste writers and reformers such as Gurazada Apparao, Kandukoori Veeresalingam and Unnava Lashmi Narayana, does not depict dalits as mere passive consumers of a foreign religion. Nor does he depict Christian conversion as a colonial conspiracy, which was supposed to have enticed the gullible Dalits. Kalyan Rao's understanding not only interrogates the narrow mainstream notion of conversion but also illuminates our perception of the role of conversion in the lives of Dalits. It is also significant to note here that Kalyan Rao grants agency to Dalits, which is denied to them by well known upper caste reformers or nationalists. Kalyan Rao, in his novel, documents how Dalits, who



converted to Christianity, in fact played an important role as active agents of socio-political change in various progressive/communist movements and also for their emancipation. He traces the trajectory thus: from untouchables to Christians, from Christians to Communists, from Communists into Naxalites and from Naxalites into Dalits. At the same time, Kalyan Rao doesn't uncritically romanticize Christianity and Communism. He also sounds a word of caution to us: even though Christianity and Communist movements have immensely influenced the lives of Untouchables, there still remains the phenomenon of caste discrimination by which the Untouchables have been subjugated, stigmatized, ostracized and exploited even in these movements. However, he strongly hints through his narration of different dynamic dalit characters' that Christianity and Communism became part of their body and they are two eyes for the emancipation of dalits.

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How do Errors and Task Difficulty reflect the Inference Generation Ability of ESL Learners?

Monal Dewle

Introduction:

Inference generation ability is a higher order skill in reading comprehension and it is essential for the learners to know this ability because it refers to the process where the reader has to look for the information that is 'implicitly stated' in the text and has to use all the resources available to him/her to get the intended message of the writer. In most cases, the text is not straight-forward, and the writer consciously or unconsciously leaves gaps in writing, which the learner has to fill in order to make sense of the text.

Inferences have been understood and classified in different ways by different researchers. Here the two types of inference generation, text-connecting and gap-filing inferences are included because these two types are essential to construct coherent text representations. Various studies such as Cain & Oakhill (1999); Cain et. al (2001) have looked at the how inference generation is essential for reading comprehension and it was found that the learners who are not able to generate inferences lead to a reading comprehension failure.

The Study:

The present study does not investigate the reading comprehension failure of the learners but to ascertain whether they are able to generate inferences or not, which type of inference generation questions they were able to solve more, errors they made while solving these questions to identify their problems in reading comprehension and whether they faced difficulty in answering these questions. The learners selected in the study were from two different schools which followed two different syllabus patterns. This was done specifically to investigate whether learners of a particular syllabus pattern had more problems solving inferential questions compared to others and vice-versa. Moreover, it tried to identify through errors what are the implications that can be drawn for the reading practices in ESL context.

Subjects:

The subjects were ESL learners of Grade 3 and 5 from two different schools. These schools were selected based on their syllabus pattern: School A has Andhra Pradesh State Board and School B follows CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education). The subjects



were 10, out of which 6 were boys and 4 were girls. They were in the age group of 7-11 years old. All the learners had at least 3 to 5 years of exposure to English language.

Research Questions:

- a) How do learners of State Board syllabus pattern answer inferential questions compared to learners of CBSE syllabus pattern?
- b) How do errors help in identifying the problems faced by the learners of Grade 3 and 5 in reading comprehension?
- c) What difficulties learners of Grade 3 and 5 face in answering text-connecting and gap-filing inferential questions?

Tasks used in the study:

In the study three different types of tasks were used: Oral (10); Sentence (5) and Text (3). These tasks were based upon the words selected in the NCERT (1) textbooks of Grade 3 and 5. The oral tasks were designed to know whether the children were able to infer. These tasks were based upon the everyday context so that learners would not have any difficulty in answering the questions. They were asked to listen to them carefully and answer all the ten questions. These tasks were one sentence long and each situation was different from each other which they might have faced sometime, like stealing mangoes, flying kites.

The sentence task was also designed on the same criteria that it should reflect situations which the children are familiar with and would not increase the task difficulty level or unfamiliarity with the task. Only 5 sentence tasks were selected because they were similar to the situations learners face, for e.g. keeping a boat in the water, buying vegetables. The tasks that were selected included two-three sentences, a form of story where the characters were given and the learners had to write answers. The questions were factual and inferential (gap filing and text connecting). Multiple choice questions were not included because these questions did not reflect the learners' understanding of the text and the questions given along with the text. Moreover, learners have the tendency to tick the options even without reading it clearly.

In the text task, out of 10 texts only 3 were selected because most of these texts did not reflect the Indian culture, or Indian context, for e.g. a rainy day, is the story of a boy who likes rainy day because his family spend the next day cleaning the yard together. Those memories were good to him. However, this story includes words such as *yard, the leaves will be flying down, mom and dad will rake the yard with me* which did not reflect the Indian culture. Other stories which were Panchtantra or Jataka tales, for e.g. the fox and the villagers, the well-bred and ill bred; the glow worm and the sparrow were not selected because of their word length. All the stories which were had 50-100 words and included both factual and inferential questions (text-connecting and gap-filing).

**Procedure:**

The tasks were trailed in three sessions and all the tasks were completed in three and half hours for each school. The first session focused on the oral task where the students had to listen and respond to the tasks orally. In this task, while trailing in School A, the children had trouble in understanding these situations in English so these tasks were explained in Hindi or Telugu (first language). This is because the students did not have enough English background though they were learning English since grade 1. The second session focused on the sentence task, where the students were asked to read the sentences and answer the questions given. In sentence task, while trial the problems the tasks had to be explained with different situations to the learners of both schools. They were translated either in Hindi or Telugu.

The text task session was similar to the sentence task. During the trial of this task, School A learners had trouble in understanding, so the entire story was explained to them and the questions as well. Whereas in School B, only the certain parts of the story had to be explained. There were no problems in solving the questions in all the tasks by the learners of this school because they understood what they had to do. However, they wanted to know whether it would increase their marks or help them to get good marks and who would be highest among them.

Scoring:

The tasks were scored objectively: 1 for a correct answer and 0 for a wrong answer. The correct answers were then calculated in percentage for both the schools. It helped to understand the reading comprehension ability of the learners and whether learners have difficulty in answering inferential than factual questions. There were 30 scripts and all the scripts were closely studied and the errors in factual and inferential questions were coded.

Analysis:**a) Ability to solve the inferential questions:**

There are total 18 factual and 32 inferential questions in the tasks and marks obtained in the oral, sentence and text task of Grade 3 and 5 of School A is mentioned in table 1.



		Factual	Inferential
Grade 3	Oral		13
	sentence	24	9
	text	14	9
	Total	38	31
	%	79.16	33.33
Grade 5	Oral		7
	sentence	27	6
	text	15	8
	Total	42	21
	%	87.5	22.22

Table 1: Total no. of Questions answered by learners of School A

It shows the number of factual and inferential questions answered by each grade. However, the learners of both Grades 3 and 5 answered factual questions more than the inferential questions (Grade III: 38; Grade V: 42). This is because the factual information was easily available in the text whereas in the inferential questions, the learners had to integrate information in the text with the background knowledge. In case of School A, as mentioned earlier though they had exposure to English language but they were not fluent enough in English.

The table given below shows the marks obtained by Grade 3 and 5 of School B.

		Factual	Inferential
Grade 3	Oral		11
	sentence	18	6
	text	12	13
	Total	30	30
	%	93.75	48.38
Grade 5	Oral		18
	sentence	17	7
	text	13	15
	Total	30	40
	%	93.75	64.51

Table 2: Total no. of Questions answered by learners of School B

The factual questions answered by Grade 3 and 5 (30) are same. However, the no. of inferential questions answered by Grade 5 (40) is greater than Grade 3 (30). This is because the learners in School B were able to integrate the information in the text with the background knowledge they had. Also, these learners had exposure of more than 3 years of English language and the social background of the learners, syllabus pattern and the exposure to the reading texts helped them to answer inferential questions.

Thus from table 1 and 2, it is clear that learners of both the schools were able to answer inferential questions. However, there is an interesting fact to be noted that in case of School A, grade 3 students performed better on both the types of questions compared to



the grade 5 students. There might be several reasons to it, one of the most prominent being that all the though these tasks were explained to them but the learners of grade 3 asked questions when they faced problems whereas grade 5 students did not. Moreover, they solved gap-filing inferential questions more compared to text-connecting questions as these were more in number compared to text-connecting inferential questions in all the tasks.

In case of syllabus pattern followed by School A and School B, from the tables 1 and 2 it was clear that learners of School B which followed CBSE syllabus pattern answered more inferential questions (Grade 3: 48.38%; Grade 5: 64.51%) compared to the learners of School A which followed Andhra Pradesh state board syllabus (Grade 3: 33.33%; Grade 5: 22.22%). The reasons for this difference are due to the insufficient exposure to the English language both at home and school, their socio-economic status and the types of text, questions used in their school. The next section deals with the errors done by the students in inference generation which is discussed in detail in the next section.

b) Errors in factual and inferential questions

When the learners answered both factual and inference generation questions and they made errors while answering these questions. In factual questions, errors occurred when the answer for the question was in the text but no textual sentence would be supplied as an answer. For instance, in the lion and the mouse text, the question asked was:

What was the lion doing?

The text has a sentence 'the lion was awakened from his sleep by a mouse...'. The answer required learners to say that the lion was sleeping. However, nine learners have supplied the textual sentence. This shows that even within factual questions, children have difficulty where the question demands a textual sentence to be reworded or changed before it is provided as an answer.

In case of inferential questions, there were two types of errors done by the learners: background knowledge and integrating information in the text. These two errors types were further divided to understand the comprehension problems faced by the learners. These errors are discussed below:

Background Knowledge

(i) *Wrong background knowledge*

Why did he ask Jay to bring a towel? (answer: to go for a swim, clues: Saturday morning, perfect day)

S1, S2: to wipe his body (School B, Class III)

S1, S2 and S3: washing (School A, Class III)



Why do you think they need a towel? (Answer: to wipe after the swim, clue: jay took the two and left the house)

S2: to take bath (School B, Class V)

S3: before we bath, we clean our body (School B, Class V)

(ii) *Background knowledge not used*

Why did the fishing rod break? (answer: fish was big and heavy!... begins to pulls at)

S2: he did not know how to catch fish (School B, Class V)

S3: When he suddenly pull, it was broken (School B, Class V)

Why did the stork die? (answer: the crab has sharp stings, clues: tried to eat it and died later)

S1: not the eat and the die (School A, Class III).

S2: crab eat is dive (School A, Class III).

S2: stork could not and later it School A, Class V).

Why did Rita search her purse? (answer: to search for money, clues: saw a beautiful dress and searched her purse)

S2: Rita searched her purse and looked again at the dress (School A, Class V).

Integrating information given in the text

(iii) *Not being able to integrate the information in the text*

What is he going to do? (fishing rod, drop hook into the water)... should give enough clue that he has gone fishing

S1: carrying a rod (School A, Class III).

S2: carrying a fishing rod (School A, Class V)

Why was he not able to catch the fish? (answer: fishing rod breaks, hears a nose, crack...)

S2: Mohan pulls up the fish (School A, Class III).

Why did the mouse save the lion? (answer: lion has spared the mouse's life and to repay lion's kindness, clues: I will repay your kindness and the lion let him go).

S3: the mouse save lion because he like. (School B, Class V).

S2: the mouse recognised the lion's roar and came and cut the rope and set him free (School A, Class III).

S3: repay your kindness (School A, Class III).

(iv) *Not being able to connect the information mentioned in the text*

Why was Mohan sad? (answer: he missed the fish and the fishing rod broke, clues: he hears a noise CRACK! Mohan is sad)



S2: suddenly something pulls up at the fishing rod (School A, Class III).

S3: stake (SCHOOL A, Class III).

S2: but then he hears a noise. CRACK! He is sad (School A, Class V).

How did the hunters trap the lion? (answer: net/rope, clue: mouse came and cut the rope with his teeth)

S2: he roared loudly (SCHOOL A, Class III)

S2: the lion was caught by some hunters (School A, Class V).

(v) *Not being able to make future connection*

What do you think Bharat did? (answer: ran after the thief, clue: suddenly Ravi shouted, "thief, thief")

S1: thief see and shouted (School A, Class III)

S2: thief see and shouted and calling (School A, Class III).

S2: Bharat was planning to buy mangoes from her (School A, Class V).

When we look at these types of errors done by the students, we understand that the learners were able to use the background knowledge but did not use the relevant knowledge to get the answer for the question asked. This implies that the learners had relevant knowledge but they are not exposed to such types of questions which probe them to use the knowledge they gained from the surroundings and context. This in turn led them to use the wrong background knowledge. Similarly in case of integration of information provided in the different sections of the text, the learners were not used to look for information given in the different parts and then integrate to make sense of the text. This is not taught to them, so they had difficulty in answering these questions.

This is an indication that in our schools, more focus should be provided in terms of text, which generates discussion and where the discussion itself leads to question the information mentioned in the text and the answer provided by the context. However, in most cases, learners are not exposed to and they make such kinds of errors. The next section deals with the difficulties faced by the learners while answering both factual and inferential questions.

d) Task difficulty

As mentioned earlier, there were three types of tasks used in the study. Here the difficulties faced by the learners in all these tasks were discussed.

i. Oral task:

The oral task was based on the everyday life situations. These situations were asking the students to make predictions, conclusions or tell what will happen next based



on what they have listened. The learners were able to answer them but they have faced certain problems like:

Oral task 6:

Ravi was on tree happily eating a ripe mango. Below was a man shouting and waving a stick at him. Why was the man shouting at him?

Here the child was not able to understand the situation that the man who is shouting down is the gardener. He is shouting at Ravi because Ravi has stolen the mangoes and he could not do anything since Ravi is sitting up on the branch and eating mango. The child did not have the background knowledge that usually children everywhere like to eat mangoes and sometimes it happens to be the other people's farm or house.

Oral task 7:

Lohit was in the bathroom taking a shower. Suddenly he saw a tail emerging from behind the bucket and he screamed. Why?

In this question the child could not relate to the knowledge of a snake coming in the bathroom through a hole. It can be due to the fact that most of the students are staying in the flats or houses where there is no vegetation or snakes. Some of them have pointed out monkey (Class III: S1 of School B) or fox tail (Class V: S2 of School A). This may be because they have seen monkey often than snakes or were relating to any stories of Panchatantra.

Oral Task 9:

Sneha was watching a horror film. She screamed when someone put a hand on her shoulder. Why?

The question asked was why did she scream? The answers which were given by most of the students: "danger" (Class V: S3 of School A) or "skeleton came" (Class V: S2 of School A) or "stranger came" (Class V: S2 of School B). Here the children could not understand the concept of being engrossed in. Sneha is engrossed in watching the film so she is not aware of what is happening outside. Therefore she screams when someone put a hand on her shoulder. They were not able to relate this situation to this concept.

Oral Task 10:

Ravi had been practicing for the cricket match. He set the alarm clock before going to sleep but he was late for school the next morning. Why?

The answers provided by most of the learners were: "alarm clock not worked" (Class III: S1,S2 of School A), "practiced late" (Class V: S2 of School B; Class V: S1, S2, S3 of School A). Here the children drew a common conclusion that alarm clock did not work. However, they did not consider the possibility that he might have switched the alarm clock and went off to sleep. They have considered another possibility of being late to school because he practiced late at night.

**ii. Sentence task:**

There were 5 sentence tasks and each consists of two-three sentences each. These tasks were based on situations or stories they have heard or read before. They have to read these tasks and write the answers to the questions in the space provided. The tasks where students faced difficulties were:

1. Hari made a paper boat and he kept in the water. After that he could not use that boat again.
 - a. What happened after he kept the boat in the water?
 - b. Why couldn't Hari use the boat again?

The construction of the text was creating problem as the boat is always on the water not in the water. Therefore, most of the students got confused and they wrote, "gone away or went away (Class III, V of School A& B)". This indicated a general notion that boat is always on the water not in the water. Therefore, all such answers were treated wrong.

2. A woman was selling mangoes in the market. Bharat was planning to buy mangoes from her. Suddenly he shouted, "Thief! Thief!"
 - a. Why did Bharat shout?

The answer to this question was: "Bharat shouted because he saw a thief". However, children got confused since they did not read this sentence properly, "Bharat was planning to buy mangoes". They thought he shouted so that he could distract the lady and take mangoes himself (Class III: S1, S2, School B; Class V: S2 of School B).

iii) Text task

In the text task, the first text is about a son and his father going for a swim on Saturday morning. This concept of going for a swim on Saturday created problem for the children because it does not happen in the Indian society. Though they go for swim classes on Saturday but the concept of father taking a child for a swim is not in our thinking. Therefore, the inferential questions created problem for all the learners (mentioned in the error types).

- a) Why did he ask Jay to bring a towel?
- b) Where do you think are they going?
- c) Why do you think they need a towel?

In the second text, Mohan goes for fishing but he lost the fish because it is heavy and also the fishing rod. Most of the questions were inferential but the question (c) created problem for the children. The question is as follows:



c) What did he catch?

1. He caught a fish.
2. He finally had nothing in hand.

This question can be answered in two ways:

- (i) If one considered the fish at the end of the fishing line to be an act of catching a fish. Then 1 is the right answer.
- (ii) If getting the finally is treated as catching the fish then 2 is the right answer.

Therefore, it is essential to understand that task difficulty also creates a problem for the learners to solve the task easily. It is important to keep in mind that when we create a text for inference generation, the text itself should lead to inferring information rather than creating a context for inference. Also, it should not create confusion among the learners when they answer the questions related to the text. Further, it is essential to take into account the background knowledge of the learners, though it might be seem as easy and common to the teachers but the learners' knowledge should also be considered.

From the analysis, it is clear that inference making ability is an essential skill in reading comprehension. If it is not available to a reader then it leads to reading comprehension failure. Moreover, in ESL context it is difficult to acquire due to insufficient language exposure or inadequate teaching. Therefore, some of the strategies that have been suggested by researchers and practicing teachers which need to be taught at all levels. So that learners would not face difficulty in answering inferential questions. These are:

1. **Explicit instruction:** in this strategy the teacher should focus on providing instruction very explicitly in terms of generating inferences in the text by asking probing questions or point to the information where the inference is generation and provide the learners practice. Further, the teacher should provide a checklist to the learners which would help them to monitor their learning and their peers. (Dole et al (1999); Harvey and Goudvis, 2000).
2. **Skilled readers generate inferences in a text:** in this the teacher should provide instances to the reader how skilled reader thinks or connects information to get the meaning of an unfamiliar word in the context or to fill in the gaps which are not explicitly stated in the text by the writer. This can be done through think aloud or to point the clues from which the answer can be generated (Beers, 2003; Tovani, 2000; Keene and Zimmermann, 1997; Harvey and Goudvis, 2000).



3. Combining clues from the text and background knowledge: reading comprehension fails if the reader does not apply the background when necessary. Therefore, the teacher should provide a preview of the text that is to be taught along with the illustrations or pictures to build up the background knowledge. Also, the reader should be made aware of the cues or the clues that are in the text and encourage them to use their personal experience in situation so that they would know how to relate the background knowledge with the information presented in the text to draw a conclusion (Tovani, 2000).
4. Question- Answer relationships: it is a strategy (Taffy Raphael) where the teacher should ask the learner questions pertaining their reading like “Why do you think this is the correct answer?” “Are you sure?” “which lines helped you to get this answer?” to monitor their comprehension. The reader should also be made aware that there are different types of questions (literal and inferential) and different ways of finding answers (found directly and use background knowledge and information in the text to fill the gaps) {Wilhelm et al., 2001}. Moreover, readers should also be encouraged to ask questions to themselves in order to monitor their own comprehension. They should also be taught the meaning of different question words such as “why, who, what, where” so that they would know the function of each question word (Kispal, 2008).
5. Marking texts: is another way the teacher should incorporate to monitor the comprehension of their learners. Here the teacher should use sticky notes to ask the readers to jot the questions or thoughts that come in their mind while they are reading (Harvey and Goudvis, 2000).
6. To Code the thinking process: in this the teacher would teach the reader how to code the strategies he/she uses while reading a text, for e.g. if a short text is given to the reader and in order to understand the text the reader uses background knowledge then s/he should write BK. If s/he makes an inference then the reader would write I or has a question related to the story of the text or the characters then s/he should write ‘?’ while reading the text. This would help the reader to monitor the strategies they use while they read (Kopitski, 2007).
7. Labelling clues: when the readers have basic understanding of making inferences then the teacher should encourage them to label the types of inferences they make while reading like, textual evidence or background knowledge they would need to make inferences (Kopitski, 2007).

Conclusion:

The study focused whether the ESL learners of different syllabus patterns are able to solve inferential questions. Further, it tried to identify the errors done by the students



and the difficulties faced by the students while solving the different types of tasks included in the study. The analysis showed that learners were able to solve inferential questions but learners from School A had problems in solving inferential questions due to various reasons such as lack of exposure, economic background and the texts used in the school. The tasks that were included in the study: a) oral task b) sentence task and the text task. It was found that though the tasks were thought to be based on real-life but the tasks that were included were not. These tasks created problems for the learners to answer the questions and the analysis further implied that the context and background of the learners need to be taken into consideration for the creation of tasks.

End Notes

- (1) **The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is set up by the Government of India in 1961. It is autonomous and focuses to provide suggestions and help on the policies and programmes to improve the quality of school education of the Central and State Governments.**

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