



BODHI INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE



An Online Peer Reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

Vol – 1 No – 2 January 2017 ISSN: 2456-5571

www.bodhijournals.com

1000/- VOICES IN ASHWIN SANGHI'S *THE KRISHNA KEY*

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Abstract

This study looks into the various voices presented in Ashwin Sanghi's The Krishna Key which is a postmodern Indian English novel. This study aims to explore the multiple voices present in Ashwin Sanghi's The Krishna Key (2012) which is an anthropological thriller that revolves around a history lecturer who has been framed for his friend's murder. Bakhtin's notion of Dialogism was chosen for this study because it is yet to be used to analyse an Indian English suspense thriller. To date, not many studies have applied Bakhtin's notion of Dialogism to a suspense thriller even lesser in the suspense thriller from the Indian continent. This study looks into the polyphony (multi voices) in the novel as each character reveal his or her views and intentions throughout the narrative. These instances has been identified and analysed according to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia. The analysis is grouped into categories such as author versus his country India to show what the author tries to present throughout his novel particularly about India's history; author versus style to prove that the author has his own style of writing with reference to all his other novels that was published prior to The Krishna Key and after, and finally character versus character to show how each character has his or her own consciousness and views.

Keywords: Polyphony, Dialogism, Heteroglossia, Bakhtin, anthropological thriller.

Introduction

One of Mikhail Bakhtin's literary concepts revolves around dialogues that take place in a novel where a character interacts with other characters and when more than two voices are involved it is known as what Bakhtin calls "polyphony". The concept of polyphony which was initially borrowed from music was developed when Bakhtin read Dostoevsky's work. Bakhtin claimed that Dostoevsky's novel consisted 'multiplicity of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness' (Bakhtin, 1984 p. 208). With that, Bakhtin developed the concept of polyphony by stating that the main feature of a polyphonic novel is the position of the author with regard to the hero of the novel. He also stated that it is not the author's point of view that develops the plot; instead in a polyphonic novel, plot is presented from the characters' point of view. The term

polyphony is derived from musical term which refers to synchronisation of independent melodies becoming whole (Williams, 2015). In a novel, on the other hand, polyphony is a metaphor for 'voice'. Lodge (1990, p. 86) claims that a polyphonic novel is a "novel in which a variety of conflicting ideological positions are given a voice and set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice". Lodge's claim in line with Bakhtin's argument in his 1934 paper called "Discourse of the Novel". In his paper, Bakhtin argues that the main feature of polyphony includes a variety of viewpoints and voices. As such, this study aims to explore the multiple voices present in Ashwin Sanghi's *The Krishna Key* (2012) which is an anthropological thriller that revolves around a history lecturer who has been framed as a murderer of his friend. It also involves

a set of ancient artefact and codes that the lecturer has to solve in order to prove himself innocent. In the course of proving himself innocent, the protagonist engages himself in a dialogue with other characters in this novel; thus the reader is able to hear different points of view about a single event. Hence, the presence of polyphony permits the participation of various characters and allowing them to express their views and thoughts. This is why in a polyphonic novel, all the characters' voices are heard instead of only one voice which is the author's. Bakhtin also claims that a "polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through" (Bakhtin, 40). Clark and Holquist agree with Bakhtin: "the phenomenon that Bakhtin calls 'polyphony' is simply another name for dialogism" (Clark and Holquist, 242). Therefore, this study reckons "polyphony" and "dialogism" as interchangeable terms where a polyphonic novel is dialogic and vice versa.

Not long after the introduction of "polyphony" and "dialogism", Bakhtin introduced yet another concept: "heteroglossia" in his essay *Discourse in the Novel* which can be found in *The Dialogic Imagination*. Bakhtin's heteroglossia is "another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way" (Bakhtin 1981: 324). Thus it can be concluded that "heteroglossia" looks into the social voices.

Besides, polyphony also involves intertextuality which is a term coined by a Bulgarian- French philosopher Julia Kristeva (Waghmare, 2011). The theory of intertextuality proposes that a text or in this case a novel is not self-contained, rather it is a transformation and a repetition of other texts (Alfaro, 1996). The instances of dialogism in *The Krishna Key* (2012) is visible and is presented in the next section.

Voices in the Krishna Keys (2012)

The examples of dialogism is presented in sections and explained as below.

Author vs. India

The author has a dialogic interaction with his cultural and historical heritage. The author himself an Indian like the protagonist of the novel. The author have clearly done much research about the history of India and also the ancient heritage of India thus he wants his

readers to know about it. This is quite clear as it is written in chapter 7 when he writes about the river Sarasvati which before this not many readers would have known. The world knows about the Indus civilisation, but as Sanghi writes: "Five thousand years ago, the Sarasvati would have been India's mightiest river with the Yamuna and the Sutlej as mere tributaries" (Sanghi, 2012: 31). Here, the author wants readers to know that India's civilisation actually predates the Indus civilisation and that the River Sarasvati is not just a myth but one that really existed once.

Author vs. Style

The Krishna Key is not Sanghi's first novel. Prior to this novel, Sanghi has written two other novels namely *The Rozabal Line* (2007) and *Chanakya's Chant* (2010). After the Krishna Key, Sanghi also published *The Sialkot Saga* (2016). All his novels demonstrates the same style of writing whereby the story of the past and the present time are told concurrently but in different chapters. In *The Krishna Key* the story of Lord Krishna is presented as an autobiography at the beginning of each new chapter, followed by the story of the present day. This is also an example of intertextuality as the story of Lord Krishna refers back to the epic *Mahabharata*.

Character vs. Character

Each and every character in Sanghi's novel is an individual with their own intentions and views. This shows that each character or rather each of these voices are able to control their own ending. Some of these characters are also in control of how their background is told to the reader whereby, these characters (Priya and Sir Khan) tell their own story themselves as shown in the excerpt below:

Priya's background

'Many years ago when I was still a little girl, my mother died of cancer. My father was all I had left in this world. My father—Sanjay Ratnani—had yet to become India's highest-paid criminal lawyer. He had to work exceedingly hard and would often leave early in the mornings and return late at night, coping with hundreds of petty cases,' said Priya. 'We lived in a small one-

bedroom apartment within a Mumbai chawl. We were not wealthy enough for me to be sent to boarding school and hence my father would leave me with our neighbour, a kind lady called Sarla Auntie.' (Sanghi, 2012: 235-236)

The above excerpt is an example of one of the antagonists' voice. Priya tells her background story to her follower Taarak when he asked about her strength. Priya goes on to talk about her baby-sitter Sarla Auntie and how she was attacked by Sarla Auntie's husband which leads to Priya unintentionally killing him in order to save Sarla Auntie.

Not only Priya, Sir Khan is also allowed to tell his background story to another character as shown in the excerpt below:

Sir Khan's revelation about himself

"But how can you be a Rajput with a name like Sir Khan?" asked Priya. Sir Khan laughed. 'That was just a title given to me by Rahim when I landed in Mumbai. My real name was Kanha —another name for Krishna,' he explained." (Sanghi, 2012: 379)

Here, Sir Khan reveals about himself to another character, Priya about his birth name. Although the reader already knows the background of Sir Khan being Kanha, the author treats as if the characters do not know so. This is because, when the author's voice is present it is only meant for the reader. Therefore, the characters reveal their story to each other when they interact.

Other than self-introduction, the characters also argue with each other as they question the validity of each other's version of historical account as shown in the following excerpt:

"What?" asked Priya incredulously. 'You mean to say that Ghazni was not after riches? That he did not attack because of his hatred for idol worship? That his objective was only to take away the Syamantaka?' 'Well, he certainly wanted those other things too. But he specifically wanted the stone. After all, Ghazni himself was a descendant of Krishna,' said Sir Khan, smiling.

'This is madness,' said Priya angrily. 'If you weren't my father's saviour I would have killed you on the spot for uttering such obscenities. To call that warmonger and looter, Ghazni, a descendant of

Krishna is to insult the Lord!" (Sanghi, 2012: 340-341)

Based on the above excerpt, it is clear that Priya was not happy with such blasphemous claim made by Sir Khan and threatens to kill him. This is in line with the claim made by Lodge (1990) that a polyphonic novel provides voice to opposing views and is set between the individual characters without the presence of the author's voice. The excerpt above is a clear opposing view between Priya and Sir Khan. Although Priya does not kill him during their argument in the above excerpt, she does eventually kill him later on in the story.

Conclusion

The researcher hopes to identify and explore more events that reveals the characters ideas and consciousness as the study is still on-going. The researchers also hopes to unfold how dialogism is used as the major force that develops suspense in the plot as it forms the identity of the protagonist. The researcher finds that although Bakhtin's literary concepts were created about a century ago, it is still valid to be applied in postmodern novels.

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BI-RACIAL IDENTITY PAINS IN LAWRENCE HILL'S, ANY KNOWN BLOOD

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Abstract

Establishing a sense of identity by an immigrant in exile is a hard issue. It becomes harder when an immigrant marries from another race or is born to racially different parents. The colonial practice of bringing people of different races into a certain society has brought about mixed marriages and bi-racial children. This study discusses how mixed marriages and bi-racial children affect the immigrants' sense of their identity. The discussion is based on the novel titled Any Known Blood (1997) which was written by a Canadian author named Lawrence Hill. Hill is born to a Black father and a White mother. Most of his works is dominated by the issues of bi-racial identity. The main objective of study is to discuss how a mixed marriage and bi-racial children spark a sense of identity crisis among the African Canadians. The discussion intends to examine the events and characters in the novel of Any Known Blood (1997) by Lawrence Hill.

Keywords: African Canadian, identity crisis, mixed marriage, bi-racial individual, racial belonging.

Introduction

The presence of Africans in Canada is closely connected with the experience of enslavement in USA. During the period of slavery, Canada remained as a land of freedom where enslavement is not encouraged. The early African immigrants are those who have made their way to Canada with the help of abolitionists via "underground railroad", a network of secret ways that the black fugitives have to walk through. It is the only option for the Africans who do not care to die as a price to get rid of their callous white American masters. If it happens that the African is caught and brought back to the white master, he/she gets a deadly punishment. Men are more ready to take such risky journey. Franca Iacovetta documents that the enslaved Africans who have arrived Canada from USA outnumbered the women (Iacovetta, 1998). As a result, the African community in Canada is suggested to have been established as a male-dominant one. Indeed, things have gone so until 1962 when Canada lifted the racial restrictions on immigration policy. The Africans who are estimated to form less than 3 percent of the total population of Canada, have the highest number of mixed marriages compared to other ethnic groups (Fischer, 2014). This

may help to understand why it becomes a common theme in Canadian writings to see an African man marrying a white woman. The main objective of this study is to discuss how a mixed marriage and bi-racial children spark a sense of identity crisis among the African Canadians. The discussion intends to examine the events and characters in the novel, *Any Known Blood* (1997) by Lawrence Hill.

Bi-racial Identity's Pains in Lawrence Hill's *Any Known Blood*

Born to a black father and a white mother, Lawrence Hill gives priority to the theme of racial identity in his writings. In his fiction *Any Known Blood* (1997), he illustrates how a son of an interracial marriage has troubles due to his racial identity. However, the critical issues of this study are subtitled into the following:

Signs of Identity Pains

According to the bi-racial author Claudine Chiawei O'Hearn, one of the essential aspects of identity crisis that afflict bi-racial individuals experiences in multiracial societies is that society fabricates stories about his/her identity. In other words, it is the people of

who makes and imposes identity upon bi-racial individuals. This means that a bi-racial individual identification reflects not what he/she wants to appear but what the others want him/her to be (O'Hearn, 1998). However, this vision is manifested in *Any Known Blood* where the bi-racial character Langston Cane V complains that people imposes various identities on him.

In Spain, people have wondered if I was French, In France, hotel manager ask if I was Moroccan. In Canada, I've been—always tentatively—if I was perhaps Peruvian, American, or Jamaican (p. 1).

The above quotation reflects a fact that the identity that is imposed on a bi-racial individual is unfixed; it depends on where he/she lives. Another image is constructed in *Any Known Blood* where the main character Langston Cane V is in Baltimore on USA border with Canada. The protagonist is helping a family in taking their son to the hospital. A black woman from that family surprises Cane V with the nagging question: "Are you black, If I may ask". Cane V answers indecisively "I suppose I am". In an attempt to decide an identity and imposes it on him, the black woman continues to say, "I knew you were one of us. You are about as light as a white man, I could tell you're one of us. Your hair, your nose. Your mouth" (p. 220). The ordeal of a bi-racial character is that he is usually placed in a socially critical position, and he/she has to be ready to accept whatever racial identity that people decide for him/her.

Family Environment and Identity Crisis

Frantz Fanon signifies the role of the family in shaping one's concept of his/her identity. For Fanon, the family is "a workshop in which one is shaped and trained for life in society" (Fanon, 2008, p. 115). When the family is unable to play this role, the bi-racial individual is thrown into confusion. The immigrant's crisis over his/her bi-racial identity originates in the family before it becomes a societal issue. In *Any Known Blood*, Lawrence Hill presents an example of an unhelpful family which does not respond to the aspiration of a bi-racial son in constructing his identity. Langston Cane V is born to a black father and a white mother. Although the parents give their son the right to construct his identity, the father

does not encourage his son to adopt racial considerations. Indeed, the father and son are split over priority of life in Canada. While the son is obsessed with unearthing the roots of his African identity, the father advises his son to focus on materialistic success. The son is advised to "get doctorate, get a job, hold on to your wife, [and] have children" (p. 331). The gap between the father and son widens, and it forces the son to travel to Africa leaving behind Ellen, his pregnant wife in Canada. Upon his return to Canada on emergency, Ellen loses her baby, the son is blamed by his father, "Africa doesn't need you, and you don't need it" (p. 57). Indeed, the father's speech reflects an assumption that, for a young man like Langston Cane V who is born and raised up in Canada to a black father and a white mother, Africa is no more his country of origin.

The son insists on unearthing his ancestor stories in North America, "it is to know my past. I have to know [it]... I have to get to the end of them" (p. 360). He travels to Baltimore where a great part of that history is buried. He visits his aunt Mill and meets every person who has stories about his grandfathers. By this, Hill inspires the critical ideas of the black American author James Baldwin which suggests that when an immigrant is confused over his/her identity, he/she needs to escape his/her birthplace into another country so as "to form a better sense of his [her] own identity" (Hill, 2001, p.51). Thus, Cane V's travel into Africa and US represents an attempt to escape his crisis and re-explore his racial identity.

In short, *Any Known Blood* presents an example on how the unresponsive attitudes of the family increase bi-racial children's confusion over their identities.

Bi-racial Character and the Problem of Belonging

The Canadian writings show that a bi-racial individual is usually trapped between people of two races. Indeed, the theorist Sneja Gunew is inspired by the life story of the Canadian poet Fred Wah who is born to a white mother and a Chinese father to establish the following critical idea: when an immigrant is born to parents from two different races, he/she is denied the right to have a space among the people of these two races (Gunew, 2004). This critical idea is well manifested

in the fiction of this study. Cane V is presented as a bi-racial character. He is viewed as a black by the whites and white by the blacks. When he applies for a job at Toronto Human Rights Committee, Cane V is received and interviewed as a nonwhite, and he takes advantage of that reception to claim that he is Algerian, the only way to get the job. The post is designed to a minority individual. In Baltimore, as he is making his way to a church of black people, he is stopped by a young black man who addresses him aggressively "Ain't there enough white churches where you-all come from" (p. 125). Indeed, the speaker reflects a sense that those who are bi-racial by birth have no space among the blacks.

Indeed, the bi-racial immigrant is torn between the rejection of ethnic nonwhite minority and the discrimination of the white majority. The question is, to what extent the minority's rejection and majority's discrimination are different in their effects on a bi-racial individual. Such a question is answered by Lawrence Hill:

For many people with one black and one white parent, it appears to hurt more when we are rejected by the black community than when we are discriminated against in the wider community for being black (Hill, 2001, p. 10).

Negative Attitudes towards Mixed Marriages

In his memoir (2001), Lawrence Hill uses the term of "unborn children" to refer to the children of mixed marriages. This term brings into discussion a vision that people from both relevant races declare the war over the bi-racial children before they are born by refusing the idea of a mixed marriage. The negative stand of these people comes from a sense that the children of such a marriage present a challenge to the 'purity' of these two races. Thus, bi-racial children are born to be hated by people of both races. *Any Known Blood* records negative attitudes towards the mixed marriage and bi-racial offspring from both races, white and nonwhite.

This could be realized through the story of Aberdeen Williams and Evelyn Morris. Aberdeen is a black man who devotes a lot of his time to reading. He meets Evelyn, a white girl who admires his knowledge. They are attracted to each other. When they plan for marriage, their families stand against this marriage.

Evelyn's mother threatens to kill herself and brings racist white gangsters called Ku Klux Klan to kill Aberdeen if the couple goes ahead in their plan for marriage. A similar stand is taken by Renata, Aberdeen's elder sister. Renata blames her brother who takes a shelter in a Reverend's house to escape death at the hands of the racist armed group by saying, "I oughta whip your behind, [for] consorting like that with white trash. Look what you [have] done" (Hill, 1997, p. 323).

A similar image is recognized through the story of Langston Cane IV in *Any Known Blood*. Once he decided to marry a white woman called Dorothy, he is boycotted by his sister Millicent Esmerelda Cane, (referred to as Mill). Such a marriage gives her a sense that she has lost her brother forever. Decades later, when her nephew Cane V pays a visit to his aunt in Baltimore, aunt Mill blames her brother for marrying a white lady. She addresses her nephew by saying, "I had nothing against your mother. I've never even met her. But she is white" (p.386). Indeed, these negative attitudes are attributed to racial disharmony not personal problems.

Mixed Marriages and the Sense of Racial Identity

Frantz Fanon does not sustain the idea of mixed marriages on the ground that when a nonwhite marries a white spouse, he/she loses his/hersense of racial identity (Fanon, 2008). This assumption is realized with the story of Langston Cane IV, a black man who marries a white woman. After long decades of being boycotted by his sister, Cane IV pays unexpected visit to his sister Mill in Baltimore. Upon his arrival, Cane IV is introduced to a group of African friends who are invited for dinner at Mill's house. When Cane IV is introduced as a physician, he is praised by Yoyo, one of the guests. Yoyo praises Cane IV as an example of the African who has made a professional progress in white society. Yoyo, along with the others, is shocked as they listen to the black physician saying, "I am not an African" (p. 248). What Cane IV wants to say that, although he is black in colour, he has no connection to Africa. This comment has sparked an argument among the guests over the concept of African identity.

Conclusion

Any Known Blood is a significant novel. The significance of the novel comes from the fact that it gives a voice to an increasing number of immigrants who are born to racially different parents. The significance of the novel is that it is at odds with the official authority who claims that the diversity in Canadian society has been sufficiently addressed. Canada has an immediate need to set up an umbrella identity that gives representation to all Canadians including those who don't represent a certain race, namely bi-racial immigrants.

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SHAKESPEAREAN SPIRIT IN JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

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Abstract

*William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is one of the greatest writer in English literature, he composed over than (150) sonnets. His plays are generally categorized as comedies, tragedies, and histories. A Shakespearean comedy may involve some very dramatic storylines; his comedies are defined in that it has a happy ending, usually marriage. Shakespeare's plays in general, and his comedies in particular affected the whole society in the 18th century and the centuries which follows , the authors have no exception of this effect , so the scope of this study is to examine this impact upon the writings of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. When examining Shakespeare's plays, especially the comedies, one can find that there are many similarities between these comedies and the writings of Jane Austen in many concepts and points of view towards the society of England in the 1800s. Their attitudes towards the role of women in the society of the 18th and 9th centuries are almost the same. The emancipation of women and permitting women take their active and important role in the life of their families, deciding their future, and eventually to change the society they live in into a better and liberated one. Both produced strong and mature women believing in the brilliant mind and the potential abilities of women and according to the above reasons and features of writing, Jane Austen and William Shakespeare both are the pioneers of liberation and emancipation of women.*

Key Words: Austen, Emancipation, Feminism, Liberation, Shakespeare, Society

Introduction

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is an English writer who first gives the novel its' modern character through the treatment of everyday life. She was born in Hampshire village of Stevenson. Austen began writing the novel which later became *Pride and Prejudice* in October of 1796 and finished it by the following year; she was then twenty-one years old. Little is known of this early version of the story beyond its original title: *First Impression*. *Pride and Prejudice* is a comedy of manners novel that criticizes the social structure between the rich and poor and the role of women in the family. News of a wealthy young man named Charles Bingley stirs up the hearts of women in the town and the girls in the Bennet family are one of them. Mr. Darcy meets Elizabeth Bennet at Bengley's ball and other social conjunctions over the next few weeks. He soon finds himself attracted to Elizabeth, but Elizabeth is utterly disgusted by his wealth, status, and arrogance. Through a series of unfortunate events that turn her family and her sisters upside down, Mr. Darcy is the last person Elizabeth expected to marry. Nonetheless; Mr. Darcy confesses his love for her and even proposes to no luck. Elizabeth

doesn't agree to his proposal until Mr. Darcy explains himself, secretly fixes her family's problems. The stumbling blocks of his love story begins with the tension created by the lover's personalities. Elizabeth is prideful and Mr. Darcy is prejudice despite their attitudes towards each other, their love for each other overcomes their pride and prejudice. In Austen's day, love was often scarified in place of marriage. Marriage was an institution that women depended on to survive. Women made no income and held no inheritances, so marriage to a man meant financial stability. Women did not often find love in their marriage. Elizabeth, however, struggles to find that love in marriage.

Discussion and Analysis

From the opening sentence in *Pride and prejudice* the idea of love and marriage seems to be demonstrated the whole environment of the novel "it is a truth universally acknowledges that a single man in a possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."¹ Marriage was a significant social concern in Austen's time and she was fully conscious of the advantages of being bachelor or single as she wrote a

letter to Fanny Knight, "Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor...which is one very strong argument in favor of matrimony" ². Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* belongs to the things she cares for mostly: family and values. Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen attempted to maintain the social decorum and a woman's place in society and marriage.

Austen by choosing the theme of marriage and such a kind of heroine, Elizabeth, is to display her opportunity of strength to demonstrate refinement under social and financial pressure. Through Elizabeth, Austen wanted to show that; women still have freedom of choice despite the pressures of society. Besides, such determination from Elizabeth to maintain her sentiment was enhanced by the marriage of her friend Charlotte, who believes "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance" ⁶ and her sister Jane both of them accepted their gendered fate. David Spring in his book, *Interpretation of Austen's Social World* comments that:

*High in the list of reasons for calling Jane Austen's society bourgeois, it would seem, is the ubiquity of money in her novels. Things and persons seem all to have their price. Even naval officers go to sea in a great war to make money.*⁸

In the sense of maturity and the self-respect of the character of Elizabeth Bennet, stands herself apart from the weakness of the women in her time and present a modern model of womanhood. Austen herself admired the character of Elizabeth in one of her letter to her sister Cassandra:

Miss Ben dined with us on the very day of the Books Coming, & in the even we set fairly at it & read half the 1st

*Vol. to wd soon appear we had desired him to send it whenever it came out--& I believe it passed with her unsuspected. She was amused, poor soul! That she cd not helping you know, with two such people to lead the way; but she really does seem to admire Elizabeth. I must confess that she delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, how I should tolerate those who do not like her at least, I do not know.*⁹

By writing novels of manners, Austen, presents heroines with gradual education and gradual maturation

of feeling such a kind of maturation was equal of their awareness about the menace of the social order, circumstances and the abilities. The heroine differs from one novel to another, but eventually they combined to make the moral philosophy of Austen's writing.

In Shakespeare's comedy the most outstanding features is pervading obsession with marriage. In many instances single or multiple marriages are used to provide comic closure, as in *As You Like It* and *Love's Labor's Lost*, in which four couples marry or are expect to marry, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Nothing and Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in each of which two couples marry. In other examples the very fact of marriage is used as the mainspring of the comedy, as in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, where the very title of the play indicates the importance of marriage, or, to a lesser extent, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*, in each of which a marital relationship plays a central part. Emma Smith in her book *Shakespeare Comedies* argues that: "To talk about Shakespeare's women is to talk about his men, because he refused to separate their worlds physically, intentionally, or spiritually." In *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare's women are strong and spoken, still ultimately yielding to male power, but firm and cunning enough to out with the opposite sex in the most critical situation. An example about Shakespeare's female characters that he has given license to act outside her role as a woman is the Lady Olivia of *Twelfth Night*: when she falls in love with Viola disguised as the young page Cesario, she works hard to try to woo him taking on the role of hunter where she would normally be the hunted. This gave her incredible appeal as a strong and empowered woman, beside he is "of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth" as well as "a gracious person", but like Hermia of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when faced with the love of Demetrius, Olivia refuses to back down and submit to man she doesn't want.

She is strong, and she rules over her household with an unquestioned hand, with servants at her beck and call even her live – in uncle firmly under her thumb. Another example of the female character in Shakespeare's comedy and their strength is the daughter of Shylock, Jessica, in the comedy entitled *The Merchant*

of Venice, she appears far stronger than Olivia, or more probably, simply more reckless as she immediately gives over the power she has seized; when she submits to marrying the Christian gentlemen Lorenzo and taking his faith as her own.

Another perfect example of Shakespeare's bright, strong and clever women is the lady Portia of Belmont, a woman of such renowned beauty and status that men are willing to risk the fate of their very lineage for a chance to win her hand. She stayed strong to the will of her father when it comes to the decision of who she will marry. Besides, Portia knows the intricacies of the law better than anyone even the Duke of Venice himself, although she has no business entering the male-dominated world of laws; Shakespeare presents a young woman who saves the entire male community in its most desperate hour and proves the agility, intelligence and untapped potential of her entire sex in the *Taming of the Shrew*. Shakespeare's intuition is the discovery of inward self, with love as personal, and hence with the relationship of lovers who face the problem of reconciling liberty and commitment in marriage. In the book of Shakespeare's *The Basics* the author stated that:

"Now it has to be born in mind that a woman was not supposed to have the right to choose for herself a suitor or spouse: that was the male's prerogative. Comedy can therefore be seen as challenge for sorts to the authority of fathers or husbands to-be, which is played out in some imaginary world-the magic wood, or a place where women in male disguise are never recognized as women until they wish to be. The whole play is itself, of course, a make believe world, too."²⁰

The economic helplessness of most women, the arranged marriages, the authority of fathers and husbands, whose obedience was expected from daughters and wives; were issues that touched the lives of everyone in Shakespeare's time. Shakespeare's genius for portraying human behavior had depicted the condition of women within a patriarchal system and the limitations of his time. Obedience and silence were very much part of the patriarchal conception of femininity. A conception which the female characters in Shakespeare's plays such as the *Taming of the Shrew* or *Antony and Cleopatra* or

Twelfth Night or *A Midsummer Night Dream* who refuses to adhere.

In *Taming of the Shrew*, because Katherine speaks freely and asserts herself she is labeled as "shrewish." When Hortensio describes her to Petruccio, he swept out that she is "renowned in Padua for her scolding tongue". And he also told him of her fair fortune if a suitable man comes courting and wins her hand in marriage. Petruccio is seeking his fortune in her dowry when he begins his ritual of winning the family and Katherine to his love. Katherine is representative of everything that a sixteenth-century woman should not be. The disobedience to her father initially and her husband, Petruccio, later, are the most socially unacceptable examples of her defiance. Katherine's character far from silent throughout the play, but only is she verbal; she is articulate and witty in being so. In her argument with Petruccio in Act 2 scene 1, Katherine matches her suitor's insult for insult demonstrating her equal intelligence to his.

Petruccio' (come, come, you wasp. I faith you are too angry)

'Katherine' if I be waspish, best beware my sting

Petruccio' My remedy is then to pick it out

Katherine' Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.²¹

These lines were used by Shakespeare to prove that women may be equal to men in mental capacity to depict such presence of equal female to male intellect, the reader needs to notice Katherine's sudden change of opinion in Act 4 Scene 6, that she realizes Petruccio's folly from the beginning. It becomes clear to her that each time she defies or argues with him, Petruccio responds by taking away something of importance to her. Shakespeare suggests that women may not be the weaker vessel as was commonly believed. Katherine uses her intellect unbeknownst to Petruccio to achieve what she wants. John Bean in the book of Shakespeare's *Comedies* argues that in reading *Taming of the Shrew*:

"Kate is tamed not in the automatic manner of behavioral psychology but in the spontaneous manner of the later romantic comedies where characters lose themselves in chaos and emerge,

as if from a dream, liberated into the bonds of love."²²

Accordingly, *Taming of the Shrew* is one of the feminist plays. It need to be read as an example of how women could achieve empowerment simply acting within their roles giving off a kind of exaggerated performance and allowing men to believe they have them in their place.

Conclusion

This essay has examined the Shakespearean feminist insights in Austen's novels of manner. The study has found that Austen uses feminist voices in her narrative as a means of empowerment. For this reason, the study's analysis has discussed some Shakespearean plays to demonstrate the integral influence of Shakespeare's utilization of dramatic personae to render females equality in a male-dominated society. In like fashion, the interpretation of this Shakespearean depiction of women empowerment has unraveled, and simultaneously explored, Shakespeare as a forerunner of *Austenian fictional feminist style*. As such, the study has explored the *against* androcentric hegemony in both authors' society in two different ages. Thus, Shakespeare and Austen have been scrutinized as the literary precursors of women empowerment.

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THE IMPACT OF JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN THE WRITINGS OF MALAYSIAN INDIAN WRITERS

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Abstract

The Japanese occupation in Malaya from 1942 -1945 during the World War Two has scarred the lives of many people. The victims and their descendents were haunted by the memories of the Japanese atrocities for decades. These untold cruelties committed by the Japanese army towards the Malayan people is often used as the theme by Malaysian Indian writers in their works. The struggle of the Indians during this period is narrated in most of the novels that has WW2 as a setting either it is written in English or Tamil language. The aim of this study is to show why Malaysian Indian writers often use the theme of war in their novels. This study will analyse two novels; Rani Manicka's, *The Rice Mother* (2002) which is written in English and *Siam Marana Rayil* (1993) by R. Shanmugam which is in Tamil. Both writers have used war as their setting and harp on the same issue which depicts the hardships faced by the people during the Japanese occupation. Their works will be analysed to highlight the sufferings encountered by the Malayan people especially the Indians during that period. It will also reveal the motive of these writers in using this theme in their works. Finally, this study will also show how these writings can be regarded as historical records for the Indians in Malaysia.

Keywords: Japanese occupation, World War Two, Malaysian Indian writers, history, atrocities.

Introduction

The Japanese Occupation in Malaya lasted for three years which is from 1942-1945. The harsh rule over Malaya and many other regions ended with the detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 by the Americans. Having no answer to the devastation caused by this monstrous weapon, the Japanese laid down their arms after the signing of *Instrument of Surrender* on board the American battleship, Missouri, in Tokyo Bay on 2nd September 1945. Thus, the war ended and the Japanese left. But the three years of cruel rule over Malaya became a nightmarish experience which refused to leave those people who were directly affected. Instead, it lingered in the minds of the Malayan people for decades. In the beginning, the Japanese came under the pretext of liberating Malaysians from the British encapsulating the slogan "Asia for Asians". But soon the people of Malaya came to realise that the Japanese too are nothing but another coloniser whose interest on this country was solely propelled by its natural wealth and strategic military location. These Japanese soldiers were very

well-trained to wage war in the tropical terrain and only used bicycles to travel through the jungles towards the south of Malaya in a very short period of time. The Japanese Occupation and the hardship encountered by the Malayan people has often been used as the theme by many of the Malaysian Indian writers. This paper will analyse the works of two Malaysian Indian writers. The first novel to be studied is Rani Manicka's debut novel titled *The Rice Mother* (2002). Rani Manicka was born and educated in Malaysia. In *The Rice Mother*, Manicka narrates the life of a fourteen year old bride named Lakshmi who came to Malaya after marrying a thirty seven year old widower who already had two children. The story chronicles three generations of family who failed to recover from the trauma caused by the Japanese army towards their family members. The second novel is by R. Shanmugam, titled *Siam Marana Rayil* which is written in Tamil. R. Shanmugam is also another Malaysian writer of Indian origin. This novel is about a young boy named Mayakrishnan who runs away from home in the pursuit of looking for his father who was taken away by the Japanese to work in the Death

Railway project. Maya's mother is employed by the Japanese to clean the long weeds in the scorching heat every day. She befriends a man named Muttiah and decides to marry him in order to save her family. She explains to Maya that the chance of returning for the men taken to build the railways is almost zero. Therefore, she needs to marry Muttiah in order to look after her three children. Maya gets angry over his mother's decision and flees home looking for his father. His journey by train to Siam and all the stories on the atrocities committed by the Japanese army is narrated through him in this novel. This study intends to show the sufferings encountered by the Malayan people during the Japanese occupation by analysing the selected characters and their experiences in the novels by Manicka and Shanmugam. This paper will also reveal the motive of these writers in using the Japanese atrocities as the theme in their works. The discussion will show why the Malaysian writers harp on the same issue. Finally, this study will show how these writings can be regarded as historical records for the Indians in Malaysia.

Hardships Endured by the People

The three years of Japanese rule over Malaya was like walking on smouldering fire for the Malaysians. People suffered from food shortage and were forced to live on boiled tapioca. Poverty was also widespread due to the scorched-earth policy carried out by retreating British forces causing production languish, rampant unemployment and ultimately leading to the near standstill in international trading. Socially, the locals were not allowed to move about freely when the Japanese introduced the peace-loving certificate. The Japanese language and culture were also taught in schools. Moreover, people suffered from malnutrition and diseases such as Beri-Beri as the locals did not have access to medications. Besides that, there was racial disparity and the races were treated differently by the Japanese. The Chinese received the worst treatment as they were considered their traditional enemies. The Chinese women were made prostitutes and comfort women for the Japanese soldiers and they were often brutally raped and murdered in front of their own families. Although the Indians were supported for their campaigns

for India to break free from the British rule, sometimes their women were also raped and killed. Beautiful Malay ladies were not spared too. In *The Rice Mother*, Manicka through the character of Lakshmi, shows the cruelty of the Japanese army. Lakshmi's husband, Ayah is caught by the Japanese and beaten up because they wanted some information about a Communist. Ayah barely escaped death. Besides the cruelty and torture, looting was also rampant. All the big and wealthy homes were taken over by the Japanese. Lakshmi who took her family to hide in Seremban came back to Kuantan and saw nothing was left in the house except for the "big iron bed and a heavy bench in the kitchen" (Manicka 2002:173). All the big European houses were also looted. The neighbourhood had changed drastically. "Girls turned into boys overnight and girls of certain age vanished into thin air" (Manicka 2002:174). Parents had to hide their young daughters from being taken away to be made into comfort women for the Japanese soldiers. Lakshmi also hid her beautiful daughter, Mohini below the floors of her house. Unfortunately, the Japanese broke into her house one day and Mohini was not fast enough to enter the trap door. Instead, her twin brother Lakshman fell into the hole and that became the last day for Mohini in her parents' house. The Japanese took her away to be made into a comfort woman. Life was never same for this family. Lakshman blamed himself for not being quick enough to save his twin sister. This episode destroyed the happiness of this family and the impact lasted forever in the lives of all the characters. Another pathetic character highlighted by Manicka is Mui Tsai. She is Lakshmi's friend and neighbour who is the servant of Old Soong. The Japanese who ransacked Old Soong's house raped Mui Tsai. "They (the Japanese) threw poor, unloved Mui Tsai on the kitchen table, queued up in an unexpectedly orderly fashion and used her until they were all satiated (Manicka, 2002: 202)". After being abused horribly by all those around her and the Japanese soldiers, she finally hanged herself.

Shanmugam in *Siam Marana Rayil* illustrates the cruelty of the Japanese soldiers through the lens of Mayakrishnan. After somehow making his way to Burma, Maya witnesses how the Chinese women were brought in as comfort women by the Japanese to satisfy the lust

of the Japanese soldiers monitoring the workers building the Death Railway in Kanchanaburi in January 1943. Shanmugam also shows how the system of *Ration Cards* were introduced by the Japanese government. The people were supplied with inedible rice which was mixed with calcium carbonate. The rice will still smell of calcium carbonate no matter how many times it is washed. It was the Japanese way of poisoning the people of Malaya (Shanmugam 1993:2). Through Maya, the readers are informed about the process of recruiting workers to build the railway tracks. The journey starts from Singapore with workers and halts in Kuala Lumpur where more people are gathered by force. The journey continues till north of Malaya and ends in Padang Serai station which was under the Siamese government at that time (Shanmugam 1993: 23). During the Japanese occupation, heads were often struck on bamboo poles and exhibited to the public as warning. This was done by the specially trained Manchurian soldiers who were brought in by the Japanese to kill their fellow Chinese. These young Manchurians were abducted from their homes when Japan invaded China. These boys were trained like slaves to kill their own kind (Shanmugam 1993:49).

Motive of the Writers

According to Mani in her article titled "Caryl Phillips's Novels: A Reminder of a Forgotten Issue", literary works are not "merely an art work that was created to entertain but it is the voice of the author that articulates his social and political visions" (Mani 2013:188). So, whenever a single theme dominates a writer's work, it means it is written with a motive of revealing something to the readers. Karl Marx wrote "the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." By reading these novels, one can recall the cruelty of the Japanese and the sufferings endured by their victims. These writers use the Japanese occupation as a theme in their work as a chance and opportunity to reveal the atrocities committed by them. These memories have lingered and have been talked about for generations by the families of the victims. These writers act as a voice to these victims. Manicka depicts the loss of a mother and her hatred towards the Japanese soldiers through Lakshmi:

They were arrogant, uncouth, cruel and unforgivable, as long as I live I shall hate them with a mother's wrath. I spit their ugly faces. My hate is such that I will never forget, even in my next life. I will remember what they have done to my family and I will curse them again and again so that they will one day taste the bitterness of my pain (Manicka 2002: 203-204).

The excerpt above shows the hatred harboured by a mother towards the Japanese army. Lakshmi represents the anguish of all the women who lost their children to the cruel Japanese army. Many mothers and families were haunted by these types of atrocities. Maya who runs away from home hears about the atrocities of the Japanese from his fellow travellers. A man named Velu who was travelling with him tells him about the mass graves near the Death Railways project site. According to him, people were just thrown into the big uncovered holes along the railway tracks when they died due to the harsh labour. Corpses were just left to decompose in those mass graves (Shanmugam 1993:113).

Historical Records for the Indians in Malaysia

Both novels involve the elements of the past and the present. As T.S. Elliot stated in his essay titled "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (Elliot 1963: 23). Elliot sees writing as an organic process and emphasizes the interaction between the past and the present. As mentioned by Elliot, these two writers have penned their novels to record the history of their people during the Japanese occupation. These novels are the unheard voices of the many helpless Indians who suffered during Japanese occupation. Homi Bhabha, in his essay "Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", claims that the subalterns' voices can be recovered in the narratives by symptomatic readings (Bhabha, 1994:8). Therefore, the works of these two writers can be considered as the unheard recordings of history. Like Manicka, Shanmugam too wants to remind the descendents of the Indians who sacrificed their lives in the Death Railway project. They want the later generations to know how their people suffered in the hands of the Japanese army when they were conscripted

to build the "Death Railway" over a stretch of 412 kilometres from Kanchanaburi in Thailand to Thanbyuzayat in Burma (McCormack 1993: 1). About 60 000 prisoners and 300 000 Asian labourers were put on hard labour from November 1942 and October 1943. Workers were brought in from Malaya, Singapore, Sumatera, Indonesia, Burma, Japan and as far as Manchuria to toil and build the railway track. In the preface of the novel *Siam Marana Rayil*, Shanmugam states that this novel is written to record the experiences of the Indians during the Japanese period and as a remembrance to those souls that perished in vain.

Conclusion

Rani Manicka and R. Shanmugam are the voices of the people who suffered in silence during the Japanese occupation. It is obvious that these authors do not want their sufferings to go unheard. They feel that it is their social responsibility to record these events in their works for the younger generations in their country to get a first hand glimpse of their history. The works of these writers carry lots of unrecorded information about their race and their struggle in the new land during the Japanese occupation. The characters represent the Indians who became victims to the atrocities of the Japanese in Malaya. By enacting them in the novels,

these writers believe that the incidences will become part of the Malaysian history.

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CASTLE AND CRISIS IN ASHWIN SANGHI'S *THE KRISHNA KEY*

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Abstract

*This study looks into the features of time and space in a postmodern Indian English novel. It is crucial to understand the meaning of temporal and spatial indicators and references in order to understand a narration. This study aims to explore the portrayal of chronotope in the chosen novel. Bakhtin's literary theory of Chronotope is chosen for this study because it is yet to be used to analyse an Indian English suspense thriller novels. Most studies that applied Bakhtin's literary theory of Chronotope are modern literary works. To date, there are very few studies that have applied this theory on postmodern literary works and even fewer that have used it to analyse Asian literary works what more suspense thrillers. This study has picked out a few of the time-space indicators from the novel *The Krishna Key* by Ashwin Sanghi in order to explore them according to Bakhtin's literary theory of Chronotope as he discussed in his essay *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel* in his essay collections, *The Dialogic Imagination*. The concepts discussed in this study are the chronotope of the castle and crisis / threshold.*

Keywords: Chronotope, castle, crisis, threshold, suspense.

Introduction

In the past, the epic of Mahabharata was made available mostly through comics and verbal communications passed down from one generation to another. Today, Indian Postmodern authors of English novels such as Ashwin Sanghi and Christopher Doyle tell the story of Mahabharata from a different view point. The focus of this study is to explore the portrayal of Chronotope in Sanghi's *The Krishna Key* (2012). Sawai (2015) claims that Indian fiction writers may retell mythology because they may relate the ancient past to the present. This can also be seen through Sanghi's writing style in *The Krishna Key* (2012) where events of the past and present are told concurrently that time and space of the two different time and places could be blurred for readers. *The Krishna Key* (2012) is an anthropological thriller. This novel follows a history professor who has to prove his innocence against a murder that he was accused of. It revolves around the Mahabharata historical events and portrays the biography of Lord Krishna in his own words, in parallel to the story-line.

Bakhtin's Theory of Literary Chronotope

Bakhtin's theory of literary chronotope was not translated into English until 1981 and only included the modern and postmodern novels in the early 20th century. Bakhtin (1981) defines chronotope as the:

"intrinsic connectedness of spatial and temporal relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. It expresses the inseparability of space and time. In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection axes and fusion of indicators characterises the artistic chronotope". (Bakhtin, 1981: 84-85)

The above quotation means a narrative (for Bakhtin) is predominantly made up of a fictional world that is created by chronotope with chronotope; it is not just made up of events and dialogue. Chronotope is a way of understanding a story because it frames the outline of a plot; also, Bakhtin considers it as a "bridge" from the story time-space to the real world (Lawson,

2011). Initially, Bakhtin's literary chronotope was created as an analytical instrument to establish general categories in the history of western novel. However, today it is used as a conceptual tool to enrich various fields such as narratology (Scholz, 2003), reception theory (Collington, 2006), cognitive approach to literature (Keunen, 2000), and gender studies (Pearce, 1994). For Bakhtin, time and space form a central unity, similar to the reality of human experience (Bemong & Borghart, 2010). Basically, Bakhtin concludes that narrative texts are created of a certain fictional world or chronotope (Bemong & Borghart, 2010). The concept of chronotope is portrayed in *The Krishna Key (2012)* as Sanghi presents the plot in such a way that the fictional world is very much related to the historical events that took place in India. Almost all of the chronotopes that Bakhtin described in his essay "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" from his collection of essays, *The Dialogic Imagination (1981)* have been identified in this novel. However due to constrain of length and time, this article reports only the minor chronotope of the castle, and crisis/threshold.

The Castle

Bakhtin claims that "The castle is saturated through and through with a time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word, that is, the time of the historical past... and is a constant reminder of past events" (Bakhtin, 2011: 246). The chronotope of the castle is identified in *The Krishna Key (2012)* when the protagonist, Ravi Mohan Saini explains about the Taj Mahal to another character, Radhika Singh. The Taj Mahal's architecture (space) and history (time) is explained in this scene where Saini explains how the Taj Mahal was once a Hindu raja's palace "that was given to Shah Jahan so that he could create a final resting place for his queen" (Sanghi, 2012: 432). He also goes on to explain the symbols on the Taj Mahal:

"It's not merely a crescent with stars, as is the usual Islamic symbolism. Yes, the crescent is indeed present, but above it is a water pot containing bent mango leaves with the leaves supporting a coconut. Do you see what I am saying?" (Sanghi, 2012: 426)

The excerpt above shows the symbols that many people may overlook or may not even know. Saini also concludes after a lengthy explanation about all the symbols on the Taj Mahal that it "represents Hindu-Muslim creative energies at their very best!" (Sanghi, 2012: 440). To the contemporary reader, this is a new information. We have always related the Taj Mahal to Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan and that it is a symbol of love till today. It is one of the tourist attractions in India; however, this particular scene in the novel breaks down the historical detail of the Taj Mahal which leaves the reader questioning or rather wanting to know more about it.

The Crisis / Threshold

According to Bakhtin, the chronotope of crisis / threshold is "highly charged with emotion and value... and is connected with a decision that changes a life.... It is the main places where crisis events occur, the falls, the resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decision that determine the whole life of a man" (Bakhtin, 2011: 248). There were more incidences that relate to the chronotope of the crisis / threshold, as *The Krishna Key (2012)* is a thriller where the protagonist is constantly in a state of conflict till the end of the novel. The excerpt below is taken from the scene where the protagonist, Saini meets one of his old friends who also has a seal given by their murdered friend. As the protagonist explains the significance of the many historical elements, the police shows up to arrest him and his student, Priya when Priya reacted. Here the chronotope of crisis / threshold is identified.

"Keeping the gun pointed at Rathore, Priya shuffled over to the desk on which Chhedi's seal lay. She picked it up and placed it in her pocket. 'What are you doing, Priya?' whispered Saini in panic. 'We may be fugitives but we're not criminals. Don't do anything that may jeopardise your life.' 'Oh, shut up and spare me the lecture!' snarled Priya, her suddenly fiery eyes drilling into Saini's. 'I'm not your delicate doctoral student anymore, Professor Ravi Mohan Saini! I'm fed up of your persistent whining. It's better that you accompany the police to the lockup. That's the only place where you'll be safe!"

Saini was stupefied. The transformation in Priya was incredible.” (Sanghi, 2012: 233)

The excerpt above shows the turning point in the novel, where we see Priya showing her real colour as the villain or in the novel known as the ‘*Mataji*’. This is a good temporal and spatial indicator as Priya waited for the right moment to make the move. She followed Saini all the way, up to the point she thought she had all the information then she made the choice to flee with all the seals leaving Saini to be with the police. This incident changes the course of the story where after this the police realizes that Saini is indeed innocent. However, knowing Saini is innocent does not end the novel, as now they have another conflict to solve - to get the artefacts and to know where those seals lead to. To the contemporary reader this is only partial release of suspense as they come to know who the mysterious “*Mataji*” was. However, the reader would still want to know what exactly the Krishna Key is. Here, suspense is used throughout the novel as there are many codes to be broken in order to solve the riddles. What adds to the suspense in this novel is the intertextual reference to the epic Mahabharata and other historical events, where the actual spatial references still exist in India; for example the Somnath temple which according to the legend Prabhas Patan, “it is the very place where Krishna breathed his last” (Sanghi, 2012: 265). The Somnath temple has also been built and destroyed many times in history. Another example of the crisis / threshold chronotope is found as shown in the excerpt below when Priya talks about her baby-sitter of many years before when she was a young girl. She talks about an incident that happened in Sarla Auntie’s house. Sarla Auntie tried to save her from her drunk husband. Priya having watched Sarla Auntie being beaten, attempted to defend her and accidentally killed him.

“One day, when my father was still at work and Sarla Auntie was in the kitchen warming up my dinner, her husband staggered in, pissed out of his mind. He stared at me lecherously and lunged at me, trying to grab hold of my breasts. I fell down and he fell on top of me. He started unzipping his trousers so that he could rape me, when Sarla Auntie came running in and desperately struggled to

pull him off me. He got up and swung his right arm viciously, catching her on her lower lip, which immediately began to bleed. He swung her around, and twisted her arm behind her back until I thought it would snap, while his other hand grabbed her hair and pulled her head back.... I ran into the kitchen and grabbed a knife that was lying on the counter....I held it tightly in my hand, ran behind Sarla Auntie’s evil husband and plunged the knife as deep as I could in his back. He screamed in agony. Unknowingly, I had penetrated his lung and hemothorax. I watched as he fell to the ground, blood gurgling from his mouth.” (Sanghi, 2012: 236-237)

Here we can see the role Sarla Auntie who is belongs to an older generation who submits to her husband no matter how abusive according to the cultural norms at that time. Priya on the other hand, who belongs to a younger generation, driven by survival instinct, decided to protect and defend herself and Sarla Auntie, but she also unintentionally killed him. Priya also explains that the incident and everything that followed that incident made her stronger and self-reliant in the present day. It is a good reflection point in relation to the cultural relevance and connection. It also shows the crisis of women’s roles and the threshold that modern women try to cross.

Conclusion

As the study is still on going, the researcher hopes to identify and explore more motifs or chronotopes as discovered by Bakhtin. Although this study does not claim to make any new discoveries in terms of the spatio-temporal studies, the researcher believes that new discoveries could be made if it is applied with other theories. A chronotope delivers a noteworthy meaning to the space-time indication and may be a good source of guide in understanding the space-time references in a narration. This study gives a new perspective to the whole literary style of writing. Besides that, future writers can also apply the time-space technique in their development of plots.

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MATRIARCHY THROUGH CULTURAL CHANGE IN ZAYNAB ALKALI'S *THE STILLBORN AND THE DESCENDANTS*

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Abstract

*Alkali's society is deeply patriarchal in nature and women's position does not go beyond a mere feeble and second class figure. In Northern Nigerian society, women have no say in whatever matters that may arise in the family. The men are the ones to decide, even if the matter affects the women. With this picture of Northern Nigerian society, Alkali has the boldness and courage to come up with questions on women's role in her literary writings. In the novels, *The Stillborn* and *The Descendants* Alkali established matriarchal society through cultural change which means supporting and encouraging gender conflict to continue. The objective of this paper is to examine how cultural change in Alkali's society is used in establishing matriarchal society using her female characters in the two texts. Textual analysis is to be conducted as the methodology, in order to discover how cultural change and female characters are used in establishing matriarchy. Nego-feminism is hoped to be the tool for bridging the gap created by Alkali in the two texts.*

Keywords: Nigerian society, gender conflict, matriarchy, nego-feminism

Introduction

Alkali's society (Northern Nigeria) is a society that values patriarchal life with Islam as its dominant religion. The common notion among the people in Nigeria is that women in Northern Nigeria have no say and their lives are handled by men. With such type of society in Nigeria, Alkali has the courage and boldness to discuss women's plight in her literary works. In most of her literary works, Alkali portrays women suffering from patriarchal shackle and their attempt to free themselves from such oppression. In *The Stillborn* (1984) and *The Descendants* (2005) Alkali sets to establish matriarchal society through cultural change and the role assign to selected female characters.

Literature Review

Alkali's literary writings have attracted many researchers and reviewers. Most of the works conducted on her literary writings were on women oppression and their struggle to emancipate themselves. For instance, in an article by Okereke (1996) entitled, "Women's Quest for Autonomy in Zaynab Alkali's *The Stillborn* sees women as insignificant, inferior sex, just considered as part of the male with no identity of her own apart from her father and male relations in the family. She is also unachiever in the social structure especially, education and economy (P.97). Also in another article by Alu (2007) entitled, "Dynamic of Power and the Face of the New Woman in Zaynab Alkali's *The Descendants*" examines how women are oppressed especially through the institution of marriage (P. 1-16). This paper intends to highlight that, Alkali in her struggle to establish

matriarchal society, ends up supporting and encouraging gender conflict that had been going on for many centuries ago. By creating a society where women dominate men, Alkali's literary writings seem to appear as a retaliatory works. This is because feminist writers accused male writers for failing to portray women in a positive picture in most of their literary works and so, they delved into writing in order to present a true picture of womanhood. And that what Alkali intends to do in the two selected novels.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to examine how cultural change and the female characters are used to establish matriarchal society in the two selected novels. As the picture of the situation shows that, gender war could remain unresolved issue this paper seeks to use nego-feminism as a reconciliatory tool for resolving the gender war or at least reduces it.

Methodology

This paper aims to conduct textual analysis on the two selected novels of Alkali (*The Stillborn* and *The Descendants*) as its methodology. A thorough reading of the two texts would be made, in order to see how cultural change and the use of female characters help in establishing matriarchal society. And by establishing a society where women dominate men, Alkali supports and encourages gender war to continue. Here nego-feminism theory is hope to attempt to bridge the gap between the sexes.

Theoretical Framework

Nego-feminism theory is to be used in this work. It is a new theory created by a Nigerian Obioma Nnaemeka in her article (1999) entitled, *Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way*, in which she defines it as, "feminist of negotiation; "no ego" feminism" (p. 360). Here, Nnaemeka seems to be advocating that gender conflict that has been going on for centuries could be resolved through nego-feminism theory. The theory encompasses issue of negotiation, cooperation, reconciliation and establishing peace. So, the issue of men oppressing women in almost all spheres

of human life could be settled using this theory. What is required of the two disagreeing parties is to agree that they want to resolve their problem(s) amicably. In this way, they can sit down to discuss and bring out their grievances and resolve them without even a third party coming into the process. This theory appears to be non-confrontational in approach, contrary to almost all the other theories established by feminist writers. Nnaemeka is inspired with the idea of forming this new theory through her wide experiences from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the grassroots constituencies in Africa from literature, health, human rights in some nations like, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, and to ethnicity, peace conflict and resolution in Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra Leone. The article she produces, entitled, *Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing and Pruning Africa's Way* reflects what she learned from men and women she worked with, and have helped her to ponder on.

Matriarchy through Cultural Change in *The Stillborn*

In *The Stillborn* Alkali uses education and economic aspects as the two potent weapons to change the established culture of her society which is patriarchal in nature to a matriarchal one. In *The Stillborn* Alkali sets Li to go through rigorous and difficult path in order to acquire education and economic independence as the tools for establishing matriarchal society. The path is classified into three stages. The first stage is the childhood period, then the puberty period, and third is the adulthood period. Li's little primary education had enlightened her to feel the life at her home uncomfortable and unbearable. "She felt trapped and unhappy. Already missed the kind of life she had lived at primary boarding school, free and gay" (p. 3). This life is what Li rejects and sets to fight, which is regarded as her childhood period. Li plans to marry Habu Adam, her boy friend and go to the city so as to escape her father's patriarchal restrictions. She dreams to be a grade 1 teacher and her man a medical doctor and live in the city like, "the white men in the village mission hospital" (p. 55). This is also considered as Li's puberty period. After their marriage, Habu excuses himself to go to the city and prepare for Li to join him later. Unfortunately for Li, the reality of marriage and the city life becomes an illusion, contrary to

her expectation. Habu abandons her in the village for four good years waiting. Finally, when she is conveyed to the house of Habu in the city, she “found an unsmiling welcome awaiting her” (p.69). As Li is anxious to escape her father’s patriarchal rules and unnecessary orders, she also dreams of marriage that is attached with love. But her dream of marriage to Habu appears contrary to her expectation. She doubts if really this is the Habu she knows in the village. Li nostalgically quaries:

Where is my man? ...That boyish man with incredible smile and mischievous twinkle in the eye? Where is that proud, self-confident, half-naked lover that defied the laughter of the village and walked the length and breadth of the village just to see me? ...This man wasn't the man she used to roll with on the sand in front of her father's compound (p. 70).

The reality here is that, the marriage Li considers as her redeeming factor from her father’s patriarchal oppression now turns out to be another oppressive structure. Alkali here attempts to show that, the solution of a woman’s plight does not depend entirely on any man. Therefore, with the emptiness of her marriage exposed, and the recognition that her solution lies within herself not from any man or marriage, Li dusts her primary seven certificate and proceeds to a Teacher’s College. She states her ambition which is to read Advanced Teachers’ Certificate and be the most educated woman in the village and beyond. Only then would she assume the role of the “man of the house” in her father’s compound” (p. 85). After her Programme, Li becomes “the man of the house,” not by changing her sex, but by performing those responsibilities that the head of every household ought to do. Her elder sister Awa informs her (Li) as she says: “the mourners are outside waiting for you. You are the man of the house now” (p. 101). This is how Alkali uses education and economic aspects as the tools for establishing matriarchy in *The Stillborn*.

Matriarchy through Cultural Change in *The Descendants*

In *The Descendants* Alkali presents a powerful and enlightened woman who not only dominates educational and economic sectors in the society she

initiates, but also dominates and control all in such society. Such character is Magira Milli, a wife to Lawani Duna, a great chief of Ramta village. She is an enlightened woman who sees education as such a tool that provides options in life, and as such, she sees to it that everybody acquires education. She does not want to repeat the mistake of not educating themselves and their children, which as a result, they lost their sons, except Aji Ramta who is fortunate enough to gain some knowledge in Borno. Milli nostalgically narrates:

*She realised, belatedly, that her late husband the great Lawni Duna, and herself had made a mistake. The paramount chief of Ramta had believed in royalty than education. He had not allowed his sons to go to school and so, they had not ventured out of their father's domain. One by one, they had perished in the land of ignorance and superstitions, a land of poverty and disease. Only Aji, who travelled out of Borno to pursue an education, had escaped. She was ready to make amends by seeing that her grandchildren did not walk the path of their fathers. They unlike her sons would have options, and only education can offer those options. That is why Magira Milli had seen to it that everybody went to school, including Seytu (*The Descendants*, p. 19-20).*

Apart from seeing her as an advocate for education, Milli is described as a woman that tries to dominate all. Dala the wife of late Abdullah reveals Magira Milli as a dominant woman who tries to control everybody in the family. Dala reveals:

Magira Milli had taken it upon herself to run the affairs of her sons' families single-handedly. No wonder, they died from being oppressed; Abdullahi, her dead husband, and all her children had been under Magira's control. Abdullahi had been incapable of stepping into her hut without going into his mother's first and now Aji and the children (p. 32).

Abbas also, describes Milli as a woman who for long controls and commands everybody in the house. She was “a field marshal.....” (p. 152). Other names given to her are, “the indomitable Magira Milli.... (p. 160),” “.....magnificent woman.....” (p. 229). The roles and

names Alkali gives to Milli portrays her as the dominant figure in Ramta dynasty. To add to this, Seytu tells us that, Milli is the initiator of Ramta dynasty. So, Alkali uses Milli with such endowed power to build a matriarchal society which is confirmed by a dirge singer who sings in honour of Milli when she passes away. Thus: "Behind T.K., [the head teacher], the traditional dirge singer sang in honour of the oldest matriarch in the village" (p. 282).

Nego-Feminism as a tool for Bridging the Gaps

Basically, looking at Alkali's two texts, she clearly creates gaps that need to be bridged, which is the exclusive work of nego-feminism. Through reading the pages of the two texts gaps are noticed as the selected female characters in *The Stillborn* and *The Descendants* are portrayed playing the role of domination and as negotiation is the concern of the theory, this paper attempts to bridge such wide gaps. For instance, in *The Stillborn*, Li is portrayed as a female character that plays the role of dominance which led to the establishment of matriarchy. Here Alkali should have elevated Habu, Li's husband with same level of role. In *The Descendants*, Milli is given a role that portrays her as the overall commander, controller of everything in Ramta dynasty as discussed earlier. Alkali here creates a gap between the sexes and supports gender conflict. As nego-feminism is out to resolve conflict in a peaceful manner, it suggests that, Alkali should have created another male character with such role assigned to Milli so as to have an equal

treatment and opportunity, and also have cooperation be established between the two, which could reduce conflict.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discusses Northern Nigeria as a society that is entrenched with patriarchal life, and how such society views women is discussed. Literature review is discussed, citing some examples of previous works on Alkali's literary writings which is mostly on women question. Then objective of the paper, methodology and theoretical framework are discussed. Finally, nego-feminism is used as a channel to reconcile the sexes.

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THE POSTMODERN DIMENSIONS IN UPAMANYUCHATTERJEE'S THE LAST BURDEN

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Twentieth century witnessed the rise of modernism and postmodernism. Amid the two world war struggles people get angst on the values of the society because the overmuch influence of wars and materialism. Postmodernism is a complicated term. It is hard to define, because it is a concept which appears in multi disciplinary studies such as literature, arts, film, music, theories, feminism, paintings and etcetera. Postmodern literature is literature which is concerned with various narrative techniques such as fragmentation, paradox, irony, destabilized meaning, and the unreliable narrator and so on. There are a bunch of features that already exists in the postmodern text. The postmodern text tests the boundaries of pre-modernism, modernism, postmodernism and post-postmodernism. It simply delineates what is happening today.

Postmodernity can be classified into a range of kinds like hyper modernity, hyper modernism in art, meta-modernism, post humanism, post materialism, post-postmodernism, and post-structuralism. Postmodernism can be isolated from postmodernity, because it deals with the study of anthropology, archaeology, architecture, art, Christianity, criminology, dance, feminism, film, literature, music, philosophy (anarchism, Marxism, and positivism), social construction of nature, psychology, political science, and theatre. The criticism of postmodernism is the central issue which always deals with several notions of alter-modern, anti-anti-art, hypermodernity, meta-modernism, neo-modern, neo-modernism, new sincerity, re-modernism and trans-modernism.

Postmodern fiction presents a diverse challenge to the reader. It helps to engage the readers in active creator of meaning and thoughts rather than a

passive consumer. This is true postmodern fiction deepens the knowledge of its readers and to interrogate the commonsense and commonplace assumption. There are different characteristic features in postmodern fiction. They are: random play rather than purposeful action, open ending rather than closure ending, surface rather than depth, scepticism rather than realism. There are innumerable practitioners in postmodern fiction such as Samuel Becket, John Fowles, Angela Carter, Julian Barnes, Peter Ackroyd, John Ashbery, Paul Muldoon, Vladimir Nabokov, John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut, Paul Auster, Salman Rushdie and Jeanette Winterson.

Upamanyu Chatterjee is a postmodern writer. His novels and short stories depict the anguish and conflicts of postmodern Indian characters. *The Last Burden* is a postmodern Indian English novel. Jamun is the central character in *The Last Burden* and its sequel is *Way to Go*. *The Last Burden* touches on many topics including family relationships, love, financial, social and emotional problem, childhood memories of Jamun, illness of his mother, father's affection of his wife, etc. The title signifies the struggle for their identity in the society and in the family, which creates a new level of tension in their life. So, the quest of whole life is struggle for them. The quest for identity is an often recurring theme in the postmodern texts. Some of the essential postmodern texts which reflect the theme of identity crisis: John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.

The postmodern identity crisis projects the subjects and complex series of intellectual, social,

cultural and political changes indicative of major transformation in the postmodern era. During the past seventy years, the identity of postmodern crisis presents the existence of world and its meaning depends on the presence of the subject, a world of absolute subjectivity. The subject inhabits both nature and the mind and which drives both inconsistent and contradictory usages of postmodern narratives. The theme of postmodern identity defines the subject rather than the objects. It sustains and transcends the difference in the postmodern character. This development in the novels by postmodern practitioners brings a sea change in the character of contemporary politics, the fate of personal and social life in a society. In *The Last Burden*, the identity crisis of Jamun is negative identity about his monotonous of life and mundane of love.

The Last Burden is the burden of family ties. The novel assimilates the values of joint Indian family system. It also tries to reveal the account of Jamun's life and his dying mother. Chatterjee brings out the oedipal relationship in *The Last Burden*. Chatterjee's mother died while he was writing this novel. This novel centres on two main characters such as Jamun and his mother, because Jamun's mother is dying. So, the relationship between mother, Urmila and her son, Jamun is intertextually connected to D.H. Lawrence's novel *Sons and Lovers*. In *Sons and Lovers* Paul Morel is a young man who is basically controlled by his mother. She is unhappy in her own marriage and she is also jealous of her son's lovers. But Jamun's love of his mother depends more on mental agony to separation, because she is going to be died. The postmodern text always emphasizes the existence of Freud's oedipal constructions of the mind between mother and son. Chatterjee is aware of Freud's theory and *The Last Burden* famously uses Freud's Oedipus complex as its base for exploring Jamun's lovable relationship with his dying mother. Jamun's mother advised him to lift her but Jamun nauseates to touch her:

Urmila asks Jamun to palm her upper chest. 'See, it's loose, floating about.' He is extremely unwilling to touch her. Something'll snap, he is certain, and life will rush out of her as out of a balloon, she'll shrivel to a scrap of puckered rubber in his hands,

because of him. 'No, Ma, my thumbing it won't help. I should inform Haldia at once.' (Chatterjee 111)

The postmodern philosophy emphasizes the concept of death. The whole family of Jamun is waiting for Urmila's death. Jamun reluctantly returns his homewhen he received a telegram about his mother's heart attack. He goes home not to meet his mother but his old love Kasturi, who is now married and pregnant. The milieu of the novel is imbued with morbid techniques. The scene of 'dying' connotes love, empathy, and sympathy. In the five days Urmila has spent at the ICU, Burfi's Christian wife Joyce who has not visited ever once. She is bored with parents-in-law and with their relationship. Instead she justifies that she may be correct in her action and feels alienated in Burfi's family. After a close textual analysis, through the concept of death, Chatterjee vividly describes the myth of family togetherness and the true nature of family relationship is exploited by modern world.

In Postmodernism, the centre is not the centre. The centre of dying mother creates the burden to Jamun and it decenters him. The family restriction does not allow him to enter into a responsible and independent life. The emotional bondage of Jamun in his family restricts him. In fact, he enervates in parental relationship. After the period of ritual rites of his mother, he visits Kasthuri's home and stays few days there. She is his friend and lover. She bears a child by someone. The postmodern Indian English literature generally foregrounds the breaking of tyranny of the straight line and interrogates the values of traditional social life. *The Last Burden* not only questions the values of traditional social life but it also interrogates and breaks the religious norms. Jamun's brother Burfi married a Christian girl Joyce. They lead a life and they become parents to be Pista and Doom. Logically, postmodernism has a tendency towards the reflexivity of logical ideas to break the views from traditional ideas and norms. At the end of the novel, Jamun is isolated and he finally longs his mother's love and he takes care about his father and stays with him.

Throughout the novel, Chatterjee portrays the aspect of Indian family system such as number of members in the family, educational background, type of family (lower or middle class) and so on. In India, the joint

family system is orthodox and still it is practiced. The novel talks of the three different generations in the same root of the family. Chatterjee tries to show family love between the three generations: the father Shyamanand, and his two sons Jamun and Burfi; and his two grandsons Pista and Doom. Chatterjee through his fiction presents the blurring of conventional boundaries between the relationships of the same family. The novel portrays the daily lives of the middle class Indians life. It encompasses the Indian reality in a postmodern way. The postmodern way in the sense, it is concerned with irony, parody, pastiche, wit, stream of consciousness and with cynical effects.

In *The Last Burden*, Chatterjee delves deep in the postmodern ethos especially because of his heightened sense of uncertainty in contemporary societies. This is well brought out in his novels. The principle of uncertainty is the major element in postmodernism. *The Last Burden* illustrates how Jamun has reshaped the Indian culture and tradition and also how he becomes an uncertainty in his marriage. His uncertainty continues not only in his marriage, but also in his life. So he is a representative of the wastelandish character of lower middle class family. The novel's title is quite relevant and prominent as it largely centres on the theme of life and death which is uncertainty. The novel touches upon the successes and failures, love and life, hopes and despairs, past and present, fair and foul, traditional and modern, and nature and culture. Chatterjee presents the Indian scenario and reality of contemporary urbanizing modern India through the historical compass of human labour. The social realism of Chatterjee turns its focus to the issue of sordid environment of emerging relationship in an ordinary middle class family.

Postmodernism always emphasizes the grand narration and its subjectivity. The postmodern texts gives significance to raises the rhetorical questions on grand narrations such as related to religious, traditions, cultures, and the narration of grand books like the Ramayana, the Bible, and the Koran. Christopher Butler acknowledged in his book *Postmodernism: A very short Introduction*, "Postmodernist liberally opposed all holistic explanations" (42). *The Last Burden* tries to claim the

breaking of the religious explanations through the incident of marriage of Burfi. It also questions the familial ties, cultures, traditions of India. The protagonist Jamun's brother Burfi breaks the marriage system and religious rules. Burfi marries Joyce, who belongs to the Christian community. Like Burfi, Chhana is against the culture that she smokes after her mother died. Jamun introduces Chhana: "Chhana, my cousin, and my father's niece" (35). The postmodern practitioners try to find out the logical thinking in their thoughts and demonstration of certain subject matters. They also concentrate on new ways of thinking by breaking the views of traditionalists. The questions of postmodernist never find answers.

The Last Burden begins with the postmodern concept of pastiche, the protagonist Jamun reading Robert Payne's life of Mahatma Gandhi with admiration. He gets the telegram from his family. It tells about his mother Urmila's heart attack. Jamun returns to see his mother. Chatterjee portrays that the love of the family is never ending through the character of dying Urmila. Urmila is not afraid of her death. But she is scared about her husband to leave alone and her family. She expects to meet her son Jamun who is far away from home. Urmila's expectation is to see Jamun and to join him to her family. "But it's good that the whole family is together. Except you, of course. Like the joint family of an earlier generation" (06). Urmila said to Jamun:

'I so wish I could go home,' she tells Jamun in her bumbling Hindi, and grins – 'home means parents, of course. When your parents pass away, you have no home at all – only your children do. Home is the hanky-panky of memory – honeyed, quilted – a fabulous once-upon-a-time lull'. (08)

The story moves with flash back techniques. Jamun occasionally reminisces the past moments like Agastya Sen reminisces the past in *The Mammaries of the Welfare State*. The feelings about Jamun's mother and the words of grandfather slowly come to Jamun's mind while he stands at verandah in the hospital. "You are good. You must visit me and not always only Satyavan. If you don't come and visit me, then I'll visit you" (11). The story moves towards both the directions of past and future directions. In postmodernism, it is very common that the narrator of the novels is in contact with

various time settings such as flash back and flash forward. The time settings of flash back and flash forward are considered as the narratological techniques. The former one may be considered as analepsis or back-take. The latter one may be considered as prolepsis or fore-take. The various times setting of the novel is to create the stream of consciousness in the mind of the readers. It creates the postmodern sense through the plurality of the time settings.

Postmodernism always connects with the nostalgic notions because the sense of the past retrospectively tends to share more ideas thematically. The nostalgic notions are concerned with progressive ideas of the actions, deeds, and times in the novels. It also decides the happened situations already in the past. It tries to provide the additional information of the characters, incidents and plots of the novel. The past is the part of living culture. Chatterjee reminds the inevitableness of past Indian family generation system. He exerts the view of tradition in his ideas, thoughts and consciousness. He holds the past influence of family system and proves the present life of modern humanity. The modern humanity mostly depends on science and technology. But Upamanyu Chatterjee provides the knowledge on family life. It explores the conditions of contemporary human beings. However, the rich inheritances of Indian novels by Indian writers are somehow kept alive with new facts related to the society and its contemporary situation in the portrayal of life.

Postmodern psychology is a significant approach to analyse the psychology of mind in the postmodern world. In *The Last Burden*, Chatterjee puts forth the narrative of Jamun's psychology and its trouble of opposing of parental love. Jamun's psychology in this novel relies on using a range of different methodologies to lead his life and is characterized by dissociative states. Postmodern psychology always challenges the modernist view of psychology and it questions the ability to know ultimate facts and uses multiple methodologies in its attempts to know. Moreover, it is integrated with transforming psychology because it tries to accept knowing without knowing in certain circumstances. In *Way to Go*, Jamun is the character who unknowingly decides in himself that his missing father would die

during his search. So, the self that is itself decentered. The new mentality of the characters challenges the psyche and complexity of the reality. Simply, it may call self-contradictory psychology. Perry Anderson denotes Jameson's view of postmodern psychology in his book *The Origins of Postmodernity*:

For Jameson, this is a general condition of postmodern experience, marked by a 'waning of affect' that ensues as the bounded self of old begins to fray. The result is a new depthlessness of the subject, no longer held within stable parameters, where the registers of high and low are unequivocal. Here, by contrast psychic life becomes unnervingly accented and spasmodic, marked by sudden dips of level or lurches of mood that recall something of the fragmentation of schizophrenia. (57)

Chatterjee's *The Last Burden* is a great example of postmodernist novel because of its general fragmentation of narrative style, tone, plot line and the actual narration of blurring of emotions. Chatterjee cannot access the meaning of his narration logically but brings out the real and sympathetic appearance of Urmila in *The Last Burden*. "The skin of Urmila's face is fragile, slack, rutted, softened by brooding, the fatigue of age, and the recent, rare badinage with Burfi" (140). When Jamun looks at his mother, he understands the conditions of his mother and "realizes then that this probably the one occasion in the lives of his parents that they are rejoicing together" (89). But his logic thinking does not collect the self-assertiveness in himself. So this postmodern condition of conflicts and contradictions in Jamun does not stand him to take the correct decisions in his life.

Upamanyu Chatterjee typically portrays the peculiarities and unpredictable events of the social context and everyday life of his characters in his novels. This paper tries to depict the various dimensions of postmodernism and its ideology in the works of Upamanyu Chatterjee. The objective of the present paper is to highlight the boundaries of the postmodern texts and its types; classified the ideas of postmodernity and the postmodern fiction. The literature of Chatterjee is to retrospect the Freud's oedipal complex relationship between Jamun and his mother in a postmodern aspect. Chatterjee's literature insists deconstructing the centre

and grand narratives of traditional and religious customs. It is not surprising that his writing provides an extensive reflection of nostalgic notions and postmodern psychology are exclusive focus in this paper.

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SEARCH FOR RACIAL AND SEXUAL IDENTITY IN AMIRI BARAKA'S THE TOILET

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Abstract

*African American Literature emphasizes mainly on the black people, their culture and history. The writers were sensitive realists who wrote on societal issues like culture, slavery, struggle for freedom and pleaded for equality. Almost forty-five years ago, Amiri Baraka examined the themes of racism and homophobia in his one-act play *The Toilet*. It served as metaphor for the current state of American race relations, sensationalized representations of Black masculinity to illuminate homophobic insecurities that couched issues of homosexuality in inter-racialist terms, and questioned racial reconciliation to show the intricate interplay of race, sex, and gender in the early 1960s.*

The Toilet brought the social anxieties and power dynamics associated with Black manhood and masculinity to the stage with full force. Moreover, since the sexual questions and the racial questions have always been intertwined the youth characters' homophobic understanding of the connections among race, gender, and sexuality goes hand in hand with the social and cultural politics of Black masculinity that undergirded the Black Power era.

The Toilet may be read as offering hope in that black and white seem to come together in the end, but one cannot overlook the representation of the fact that they inevitably come to blows first. The Toilet paralleled young Blacks personal/social power struggle to define and maintain their own identity in the midst of the revolving talks about racial equality. We must develop alliance with progressive black groups, organizations, and individuals to work together for the common good of the black community. The simple solution to hate is love, so simple we must revisit the question and solution from time to time.

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires. It irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become. African American Literature emphasizes mainly on the black people, their culture and history. The writers were sensitive realists who wrote on societal issues like culture, slavery, struggle for freedom and pleaded for equality. Throughout American history, African Americans have been discriminated against and subject to racist attitudes.

Thematically, the social upheavals of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s particularly the civil rights and women's movements, gay liberation, and the AIDS crisis, provided impetus for new plays that explored the lives of minorities and women. The attitude of homophobia predominates the African American community. In reviewing African American literature, one finds that black homophobic and heterosexist scholars believe homosexuality in the African American community is the result of: (1) the emasculation of black men by white oppression (2) the breakdown of the family structure and

the loss of male role models (3) a sinister plot perpetuated by diabolical racists who want to destroy the black race and (4) immorality as defined in scriptures.

Too often the homophobia and heterosexism within the African American community forces men to be the "hardest hard." They must nullify any feelings and emotions others may consider unmanly. To prove their manhood, they will often attack that which they fear in themselves. We should also include homophobia as another attitude that black males have adopted largely from the white culture.

Amiri Baraka is a controversial playwright, author, poet, activist, critic, and educator. His life has been a changing cycle through multiple philosophy and beliefs. He has been considered a literary genius among his peers and a man we all can learn from. A leader of the Black arts movement, Baraka's numerous plays, poems, and essays inspired a generation of black folks to stand up because it was nation time (Black Nation). He constantly denounces homosexuality in his writings.

Almost forty-five years ago, Amiri Baraka examined the themes of racism and homophobia in his one-act play *The Toilet*. It is an ugly but affecting racial play. It was presented at St. Mark's Playhouse in a double bill with *The Slave*. *The Toilet* served as metaphor for the current state of American race relations, sensationalized representations of Black masculinity to illuminate homophobic insecurities that couched issues of homosexuality in inter-racialist terms, and questioned racial reconciliation to show the intricate interplay of race, sex, and gender in the early 1960s. According to Baraka, since white men have black men doing their manual labor, white men have become estranged from actual physical work. As a consequence, white men are alienated from reality and nature. They have no real claim to manhood. Baraka characterizes white men as spineless, middle-class bureaucrats, and black men as natural super-strong studs.

Baraka tells us that the play is about the lives of black people. The set is a high school men's room, wherein he gathers a group of young men to decipher the meaning of love and hate. Mostly black, the young men appear to be at an urban manhood training rite. We see a myriad of personalities expressing themselves in the rhymes of the time—there are no pants sagging, no grills in teeth, but they are there seeking to discover their manhood, racial and sexual identity. *The Toilet* explored Black life, love, and social order.

The 1964 production of *The Toilet* intersected a critical social moment when young Black men challenged social constructions of race, sex, and gender by defying white America and defeating white power. The history of racial oppression and domination continued to emasculate Black men and leave them competing against whites for positions of power, so race relations further constituted and complicated "Black" manhood. *The Toilet* challenged social stereotypes by reversing the usual power positions. The Black youth manage the happenings in the bathroom and drive the action of the play.

Critics questioned the play's content, conclusion and casting that rendered mixed signals regarding the state of African American race relations. He used the culture of Black male youth as a backdrop for addressing issues of race and homosexuality particular to the 1960s. *The Toilet* presented Ray Foots, the main

character, coming of age while struggling to come to terms with being both Black and homosexual. As a piece of Revolutionary theatre, the play also suggested that before Blacks and whites could come together, they would inevitably come to blows first. Critics did not know, however, that Baraka intentionally shaped the play's conclusion to promote racial reconciliation.

The tragedy of that time and this time is that their search for manhood and sexual identity is unorganized and haphazard, thus then and now young men must grapple with self-discovery in isolated groups without mentor, elder or guide. No adult appears in *The Toilet* to give words of wisdom; thus the young men are adrift in their ignorance, seeking to find themselves in the midst of darkness. How ironic the setting is a high school where we assume learning is taking place, and yet learning occurs not in the classroom but the toilet. The toilet becomes the bush in African or primitive tradition, for there is terror, violence to bring transformation from hatred to love and interracial understanding.

A white boy writes a love letter to a black boy and the drama involves the resolution of this event. The white boy has crossed the racial line into the black brotherhood and suffers violence. As a result, he has been beaten into a pulp, bloody as a beet, half-dead when brought into the Toilet. Gang violence is a natural happening in urban culture, senseless violence to express manhood; even sexual violence is a natural part of this oppressed society. And so the black boy is finally confronted by the white boy who loves him and the brother is physically overcome by the white boy to the chagrin of the black brotherhood. The white boy is again attacked by the toilet gang and all depart, including another white boy who had come to the defense of his white brother. The play ends with the black boy returning to embrace the white boy.

In *The Toilet*, the victim is a black boy named Ray Foots who cannot express his love for a white boy named Karolis because of what Baraka calls the brutality of the social order. Karolis, the white boy, is more obviously a victim than is Foots, the black boy. It is the white boy who is beaten. But the meaning of the play comes from Karolis' revelation that the black boy he really loves is a hidden beautiful boy named Ray, not the Foots of this stinking toilet who is visible to his gang members. After Karolis is left bleeding on the toilet floor,

Foots sneaks back in, kneels by Karolis' form and weeping, and cradles his head in his arms as he wipes the blood from Karolis' face. For all of its ugliness, *The Toilet* is a play about love.

Ray Foots is the ultimate victim and revolutionary in *The Toilet*, for his coming of age hinges on his ability to overcome racism and homophobia and proclaim his Black, male, homosexual identity. Physically beating the white boy acts as a testament to the Black youth's manhood. Thus, the Black youth showcase their social power through the intra-racial and interracial proficient physical performance of Black masculinity. The Black community considers the projection of a strong racial identity to go hand in hand with masculinity:

The Toilet brought the social anxieties and power dynamics associated with Black manhood and masculinity to the stage with full force. In *The Toilet* Baraka clearly showed black masculinity securing its power by repudiating the (homosexual) other. The youth ultimately confront Karolis because they perceive his white homosexuality, confessed in the love letter he wrote to Foots, as a threat to their Black manhood. Moreover, since the sexual questions and the racial questions have always been intertwined the youth characters' homophobic understanding of the connections among race, gender, and sexuality goes hand in hand with the social and cultural politics of Black masculinity that undergirded the Black Power era.

The teenagers seek to protect themselves and their same race peer group from white outsiders who disrupt the cohesion of their Blackness and threaten their power. In this, *The Toilet* expands the performance of Black masculinity beyond the cohesion of the group's cultural community to address how issues of manhood spark racial conflict as well. *The Toilet* is certainly a play about tormented love. It is about a highly emotional love that is denied publicly then embraced privately, both literally and figuratively. Many critics interpreted the play's ending as a coming together of Black and white, a moment of racial reconciliation.

The Toilet may be read as offering hope in that black and white seem to come together in the end, but one cannot overlook the representation of the fact that they inevitably come to blows first. *The Toilet* paralleled

young Blacks personal/social power struggle to define and maintain their own identity in the midst of the revolving talks about racial equality. *The Toilet* challenged 1960s social norms in its depiction of Black youth culture and Black-white homosexual love. It stands a testament to Baraka's artistic agenda to unveil and reverse the atrocities forced on both Black Americas and homosexuals by the white establishment, we must continue to return to *The Toilet*, just as Foots returns to the toilet to care for Karolis, and lay bare the love, hate, and hope the play presents across lines of race, sex, and gender.

The Toilet is a state of mind, toxic and transfixed. It must be flushed clean with pure water. Let us flush ourselves and only love makes the day possible and the night bearable. If we join together in a "search for truth" that is mutually respectful of our differences, we will all benefit from the insights uncovered and the constructive criticism offered by each other. We must develop alliance with progressive black groups, organizations, and individuals to work together for the common good of the black community. The simple solution to hate is love, so simple we must revisit the question and solution from time to time.

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BREACH OF RELATIONSHIPS IN MAHESH DATTANI'S "WHERE THERE'S A WILL"

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Drama is the literary representation of human sensibility beyond the limitation of time and space. The theatre represents human life on the stage with all its facets and dimensions as well as complexities. Thus the playwright, the actor and the stage manager has to coordinate the dialogue, plot, metaphoric construction, psyche of the characters and audience, paraphernalia and stage craft

The twentieth century India witnessed a literary boom with the advent of playwrights like Bijan Bhattacharya, Utpal Dutt, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, Manoj Mitra and Girish Karnad. Moreover very recently Indian English drama has shot into prominence with the contribution of young writers like Manjula Padmanabhan and Mahesh Dattani, both focusing on the ugly and unhappy things of life and the distorted world that we live in. Mahesh Dattani, Indian director, actor and playwright has written around 9 plays, through which he voices out the problems of the marginalized in India. He is the first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award. The plays of Mahesh Dattani emerged as 'fresh arrival' in the domain of Indian English Drama in the last decade of the twentieth century. In many of his plays he deals with various issues like homosexuality, gender discrimination, communalism sexual abuse and identity crisis. His characters speak the kind of English that most middle class Indians do. Dattani's stage techniques are aimed at making the audience intimate with the life of the family portrayed, its trials and debilitating secrets

Where There is a Will is one of the four earliest plays of Mahesh Dattani. The play is a drawing room comedy of a rich businessman, who tries to control his family even after his death through his special 'will'. The play is very humorous at the same time it is very

introspective and thought provoking. The play was first performed by Playpen at Bangalore as part of the Deccan Herald Theatre Festival. The dramatist mainly reflects on the issues of gender discrimination and evils of patriarchy along with a host of other issues like interpersonal relationship within family, evils of capitalism in the post colonial purview etc. Dattani describes the play as the exorcism of patriarchal code.

Where There is a Will deals with the mechanics of middle class Gujarati family. The narrative of the play takes place in the lavish house of Hasmukh Mehta, a doyen businessman. The actions take place in the fancy dining cum living room or in the threbed room of Hasmukh and Sonal or in the trendy bedroom of their son Ajith and his wife Preeti. In *Where There is a Will* the protagonist has control over his family through his money and forges an opportunity to improve his interpersonal relationship. (Raina 451)

Hasmukh Mehta tries to dictate his son's life through his will after his death. He is dissatisfied with Ajit since he does not obey his father implicitly. Though Hasmukh makes Ajit as the joint director of his companies, he does not allow him to have any rights in policy making. Hasmukh fails to dominate Ajit while he is alive so he tries to subdue not only his son Ajit but his wife Sonal and his daughter-in-law Preeti through his 'will'. In his will he writes his properties to a trust that he had created and denies his son Ajit the ownership of the company till he becomes forty five years old. As the play proceeds, Hasmukh's ghost watches all the happenings in his house and company with triumph and finally realizes the folly of his desire.

The play apart from patriarchal theme, deals with the fractures interpersonal relationship among the

members of Hasmukh's family- that's between the father and the son, husband and the wife, mother in law and daughter in law, father in law and daughter in law and finally in the extramarital affair.

Hasmukh is described as an archetypal picture of an overbearing father and a domineering husband. He is unhappy with everyone around him and makes other's life too miserable. He often feels that no one has lived up to his expectation like he has fulfilled his father's. Hasmukh Mehta is the boss at his familial world and also in the business world. As an autocrat head he demands unquestionable obedience from his family members. His wife Sonal is quiet subservient and subordinate to him. Hasmukh often laments as. "When I was twenty one, the greatest tragedy of my life took place. I got married to my wife Sonal" (646). He never cherished his marriage to Sonal. He never respected her feelings too.

Sonal is introduced as someone who keeps 'cooking food like it's a new invention'. Hasmukh does not bother about Sonal care in feeding the family with good food, instead he charges of wasting so much of ghee, oil and rich food. He keeps criticizing every act of hers. When she makes special effort to make salad for him and orange flavors halwa for Ajit, Hasmukh scolds and insults her. "make her eat the salad"(CP467). Sonal really cares for her husband who is not only diabetic but has also got high blood pressure and kidney problem. She raises alarm when he smokes and tries to go for a walk to digest the halwa he ate. But this caring attitude irritates Hasmukh. When she wants to make parathas so that the family can have a complete meal, he loses his patience and yells at her, "stop irritating me and sit down" (470). As a husband he could never understand his wife. And as a wife Sonal could never understand the needs and priorities of her husband. Both of them try to fit in the other in their mould.

Sonal means 'gold' and she was as good as gold to him when they were newly married. But as days go by Hasmukh remarks, "I soon found out what a good for nothing she was. As good as mud". Hasmukh Mehta has neither love nor respect for his wife Sonal. He blames her for his failed sexual relationship too and finally he ends up having a mistress, who according to him, has got beauty and brains. He even justifies his act by questioning, "What is wrong with having a bit on the side? Especially since the main course is always without

salt?" (473) Sonal is so ignorant that she does not know about his lusty longings and his night life in the fashionable hotels.

Hasmukh means 'a smiling face'. But throughout the play he neither smiles nor looks happy at any point of the play. Sonal longs for a gentle reply and a smile from her husband but he disappoints her. She feels so hurt when he brands her to be without brain and can't do anything right and can't even cook like his mother. In fact his mother dies when he was just 4 years old and he would not even remember her face!

The husband and wife relationship is not healthy. Though Sonal was an obedient and a caring wife, she could not satisfy her husband. Hasmukh never cared for his wife's feelings. Sonal often consoled herself telling that she does her best for him in the sight of god. She learns to put up with life. So in spite of staying together for twenty five years their marital life was never a success.

Ajit loves his wife Preeti and really cares for her. According to Hasmukh Preeti is pretty, charming, graceful and sly as a snake. She is intelligent and has an eye on Hasmukh's money. She is a scheming daughter-in-law, who knows how to please her father-in-law. She never talks back to him like Ajit. She has a knack of replying others without hurting them. When Sonal wanted to make parathas, she stops her by gently replying, "It is a tragedy that we can't eat your delicious parathas, but we'll survive" (470). She does not really care for Hasmukh. At one point, against the doctor's advice she was willing to provide more salt to Hasmukh. Preeti too hated Hasmukh like the others in the family but never showed it out. She was expecting a baby and is quite calculative and assertive. After Hasmukh's death, her plot to kill him was unearthed by Kiran. Preeti replaces his blood pressure tablets with her visibly identical vitamin tablets. She was waiting for him to die so that she can inherit his property. Ajit trusted his wife but she married him for money. There was not a real love relationship between them. Preeti feigns love and care to him.

If the husband and wife relationship in the play were all failures then the father-son relationship is worse than that. Hasmukh wanted Ajit to obey him but Ajit questions him and rebels against him. He accuses his father "Ever since I was a little boy you have been running my life. Do this, do that or don't do that don't do

this . . . then when I grew up I learnt to answer you back” (487)

Hasmukh was furious about the son's disagreeing nature. According to him Ajit is wasting money and is on his way to bankruptcy. He makes a very satirical statement that God has just forgotten to open an account for Ajit. Hasmukh as a autocratic father controls and checks every movement of his son. Ajit can be called a filial subaltern. The play dramatizes the politics of patriarchy, marginalizing not only women but the other male members of the family too. Ajit has to execute the father's orders and commands.

Ajit: Don't I have any right at all?

Hasmukh: You have the right to listen to my advice and obey my orders (CP 458)

The father considers him as 'zero' and makes a mockery of his son and shows his displeasure towards his attitude.

Even after Hasmukh's death he tries to keep Ajit as a puppet through his 'will' and under the surveillance of his mistress Kiran. This makes Ajit rebellious. The father-son relationship was never cordial. As a father Hasmukh was a failure. He tries to impose himself on his son. As a son Ajit never looked up to his father. The play focuses on the emptiness and uselessness of strict adherence to patriarchal code. The play depicts the conflicting relationship between father and the son. It depicts the clash between conservative notions and contemporary generations.

If the relationship in Hasmukh's family is totally in discord then the relationship in Kiran Jhaveri's is worse. Her father, brothers and even her husband were drunkards. They come home drunk and beat their wives. "They were weak men with false strength" As a child she was denied the love and affection from her drunken father and as she grew up she was never cared by her drunken brothers and finally when she got married her husband never supportive. He was so concerned with his bottle of whiskey and allowed her to have an extra martial affair with her boss Hasmukh. She learnt to suffer silently. But questions at the end of the play, "Where will all this end? Will the scars our parents lay on us remain forever?" (CP 508)

Kiran never found solace in Hasmukh either. "Hasmukh didn't really want a mistress. He wanted a father. He was living his life in his father's shadow. He had no life on his own" (509) He was dependent on Kiran for everything thought he thought that he was the decision maker. So in such a empowered woman's life too the relationships were never in harmony.

All through the play some characters were dominated by other characters either consciously or unconsciously. Sonal lived in the shadow of her sister Minal, who decided Sonal's cook and even told her when to cry in her husband's funeral. Hasmukh was dominated by his father and later on guided by Kiran. Hasmukh tried to subdue his son Ajit. Preeti who is a schemer tries to outwit everyone and even has orchestrated her father-in-law's death.

So the play focuses on fractured interpersonal relationship within the range of familial relationship. Like all modern families there is a lack of emotional attachment and understanding towards other's views and opinions. There is discord and disharmony among all the characters. In the beginning of the play there is a forced harmony among the family members and also strong dependence and domination of characters. But in the end with the entry of Kiran from the margins to the centre, the tables turn. Unlike Hasmukh, Kiran uses power play to improve relationship. Kiran has determined to help them live a peaceful, regular and respectable life (Joshiyura 208). The play depicts man's rift in the relationships were cemented, the characters try to understand each other, the suppressed ones were emancipated and the domineering characters try to understand the feelings and desires of others.

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