



EISSN 2456-5571



An Online, Peer-reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

BODHI

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN
HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE

VOLUME 9 | SPECIAL ISSUE 1
DECEMBER 2024 | E-ISSN: 2456-5571

Special Issue on
WORLD AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. P. KANNAN



BODHI

International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science

An Online, Peer Reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

Vol.9

Special Issue 1

December 2024

E-ISSN: 2456-5571



**CENTRE FOR RESOURCE, RESEARCH &
PUBLICATION SERVICES (CRRPS)**

www.crrps.in | www.bodhijournals.com

BIJRHAS

The **BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science** (E-ISSN: 2456-5571) is online, peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal, which is powered & published by **Center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS)** India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of humanities, arts and science.

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

Dr. S. Balakrishnan

Publisher and Managing Editor

bodhijournal@gmail.com

www.bodhijournals.com

09944212131



BODHI INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE

An Online, peer reviewed, refereed and quarterly Journal with Impact Factor
www.bodhijournals.com, bodhijournal@gmail.com, 7540077733
4/27, Achampathu, Madurai-625019, Tamil Nadu, India

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. P. KANNAN

Senior Professor & Chairman

Department of English

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Associate Chief Editors

Dr. KLAUS STIERSTORFER

Dean

Chair of British Studies

University of Muenster, Germany

Dr. AKSHAY YARDI

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Editors

Dr. DEEPAK H SHINDE

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Dr. POOJA P HALIYAL

Associate Professor

Department of English

Rani Channamma University, Belgaum, Karnataka

Smt. VIDYAVATI S GOTUR

Associate Professor

Department of English

Government First Grade Colleges, Kushtagi, Karnataka

About Bodhi

The BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science (E-ISSN:2456-5571) is open access, peer reviewed, referred and quarterly journal, which is powered & published by center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS) India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the field of humanities, arts and science.

Subjects for Papers

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. Agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Call for Papers

The journal invites balanced mix of theoretical or empirical, conceptual papers to publish including research articles, case studies, review papers, comparative studies, dissertation chapters, reports of projects in progress, analytical and simulation models, technical notes, and book reviews, leading academicians, business peoples, corporate sectors, researcher scholars and students from academic institutions, research organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), corporate sectors, civil societies, industries, and others from India and abroad.

Submission of Manuscript

1. Submit your article by email to **bodhijournal@gmail.com**
2. The manuscripts/papers should be research based or related, original and comprise of previously unpublished material and must be presented following scientific methodology.
3. Authors must send an abstract of the paper not exceeding 250 words, all manuscripts must be in font style of Times New Roman, size: 12, line spacing: double spaced and submitted only in MS Word 2003/ 2007 version.
4. All manuscripts should follow the MLA or APA style manual. The full paper must not exceed 3000 words, including tables and references.
5. The manuscript should be well-organized to have Title page, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Literature Survey, Problem Definition, Material & Methods, Findings & Results, Interpretation & Discussion, Conclusion and References.
6. All quoted, reproduced material should clearly be referenced.
7. Tables and figures should appear in the document near / after where they are referenced in the text.
8. All contents should be original – authors' own words, ideas, findings and arguments.

9. Tables and figures should appear in the document near / after where they are referenced in the text. All figures and tables must have an intelligible caption in relation to the text.
10. Photographs must be sharp, and exhibit good contrast.
11. Correct and complete referencing of quoted and reproduced material is the obligation of the author. In the text, references should be inserted in parentheses in full.
12. If author uses a reference from an out-source, author should cite relevant source giving credit to the original author/contributor.

Review of Article / Manuscript

1. The manuscript will be numbered and sent to the review committee for review-report.
2. The author will be intimidated of the review and the process will take a maximum period of 15 – 20 days.

Ethical Policy

1. Authors are advised to adhere to the ethics of publication of his/her article to be considered for publication.
2. Acknowledgement of the original ideas, borrowed from other sources is imperative.
3. The authors of original research work (previously unpublished / under process for the publication elsewhere) should be an accurate submission of the work carried out, provide the rationale of the significance of the research work in context with previous works, and should contain sufficient details to allow others for further research.
4. It will be the wholesome responsibility of the authors for such lapses if any on legal bindings and against ethical code of publication or communication media.

Plagiarism Alert & Disclaimer

1. The publisher & editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts.
2. All submissions should be original and must have a “statement of declaration” assuring their research paper as an original and fresh work and it has not been published anywhere else.
3. It will be authors are sole responsibility for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.
4. Contributors are advised to be aware about Plagiarism and ensure their paper is beyond plagiarism as per UGC norms.

Publication Policy & Peer-review Process

Peer review exists to ensure that journals publish article which is of benefit to entire research community. Peer reviewers' comments and recommendations are an essential guide to inform the editor's decision on a manuscript that revisions and improvement. They are part of the publication process and actually help raise the quality of the manuscript. It also helps the readers to trust the research integrity of the article.

1. The Editor-in-Chief will primarily examine each manuscript.
2. The editor-in- Chief will advise the authors about the acceptance of the manuscript by email.
3. The manuscript will be evaluated on parameters of originality, practical importance, subject relevance, scientific level and contribution to the current academic scenario.
4. If the manuscript is accepted following publication policies.

5. Accepted manuscript will be forwarded to the double-blind peer review process. Such that the journal does not disclose the identity of the reviewer(s) to the author(s) and does not disclose the identity of the author(s) to the reviewer(s).
6. The review committee is not responsible for stripping of any information during panel review as the original author is not known to the committee.
7. Manuscript/paper will be published only when the article is 'commended for publication' from the review committee/editorial board.
8. If necessary the copy-editing work will be done by the members of the Editorial Board.
9. The review process may take minimum 20 working days.
10. In case of acceptance of the manuscript and commended for publication favorably, the manuscript will be published in online mode of time. If paper/article/manuscript is not commended for publication, the rejected manuscripts shall not be returned.

Copyright Notice

Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, without the written consent to the Publisher. The Editors reserve the right to edit or otherwise alter all contributions, but authors will receive proofs for approval before publication.

Copyrights for articles published in Bodhi International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science are retained by the authors, with first publication rights granted to the journal. The journal/publisher is not responsible for subsequent uses of the work. It is the author's responsibility to bring any infringement action if so desired by the author.

Indexed & Open Access

The journal will be indexed as per database norms. The Indexing will provide the manuscript to achieve its purpose of being accessible to worldwide readers. Easy accessible will increase as manuscript's and journal's reputation. It will be a source of the quality information in respective areas/studies.

Privacy Statement

We may collect the contact details from authors like names, designation with Institutional address, email addresses, postal address, phone numbers and other information to understand needs and provide with a better service that are entered in this journal site and will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal.

Frequency of Publication of the Journal

BODHI is a quarterly journal, will be published in January, April, July and October on respective Years.

Review and Evaluation Committee

Quarterly review committee meeting will be convened by the editor-in-chief. Authors are expected to submit their manuscript before 20 working days of the publication of the respective month. The journal will be published regularly as per Journal publication policy.

Article Submission

Authors are kindly advised to send manuscripts along with registration & copyright forms. (Duly filled-in Registration form is mandatory with the paper for acceptance) Soft copy of the papers should be mailed to **bodhijournal@gmail.com**

Conference Proceedings

Bodhi will be published as special issues for the national / international conference and seminars volumes. The group of papers also will be published in Bodhi journal.



ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಅಕ್ಕಮಹಾದೇವಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ
(ಹಿಂದಿನ ಪದನಾಮ "ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮಹಿಳಾ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ, ವಿಜಯಪುರ")

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

(Formerly known as "Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura")

VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE



Prof. B. K. Tulasimala

Vice Chancellor's

Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

It is my pleasure to write this message for the Department of English on the occasion of their International seminar organised in collaboration with Chair of British Studies, University of Muenster, Germany and K. S. A. W. University's College Teachers' Association on "World and Comparative Literature: History – Theory – Practice on 19th & 20th of December 2024.

It is indeed very heartening to learn that the Department of English has been organising various academic activities since 2012-13 successfully to attract the attention of serious researchers across India. The department has also organised various webinars during Covid -19 periods on several pertinent literary areas to encourage academic exchange for all.

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field that studies literature across national borders, time periods, languages, and genres, boundaries between literature and the other arts and across disciplines. It is defined most broadly; it is also called "literature without borders". What scholars in comparative literature share is a desire to study literature beyond national boundaries and an interest in languages so that they can read foreign texts in their original form. Many comparatists also share the desire to integrate literary experience with other cultural phenomena such as historical change, philosophical concepts, and social movements. Thus, the scope of comparative literature and theory is extremely diverse as well as vast. Understanding our own times is of utmost importance as we move parallel to it, and it gives us the insight to look into our present times in a better way.

It is a matter of great privilege that the Department of English of our university publishes the research articles received for presentation in the international seminar on "World and Comparative Literature: History – Theory – Practice on 19th & 20th of December 2024. I look forward to see many more collaborative activities of these kinds in the department to attract academicians, researchers and students for healthy literary environment.

I wholeheartedly congratulate the Department of English and wish you all the grand success.

CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE

The Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in English, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapur is pleased to publish as many as eighty five research articles received from the research scholars and academics in various colleges and universities in India for presentation at the two-day International Seminar on “World and Comparative Literature” on 19 and 20, December 2024 in International Pre-Reviewed Journal. The papers reflect a scholarly study of a wide range of genres, themes and perspectives of literatures in English. It is strongly believed that these articles shall be useful for the students, research scholars and teachers of English Literary Studies across the world. The service of the Associate Editors and Editors in bringing out this issue is earnestly acknowledged.

Dr. P. KANNAN

*Senior Professor & Chairman, Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University
Vijayapura, Karnataka*

BODHI
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE
An Online, Peer-reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

Vol. 9

Special Issue 1

December 2024

E-ISSN: 2456-5571

Aim & Objectives

Academic Excellence in research is continued promoting in research support for young Scholars. Humanities, Arts and Science of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in an multidisciplinary views, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of Books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

Disclaimer

Contributors are advised to be strict in academic ethics with respect to acknowledgment of the original ideas borrowed from others. The Publisher & editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts. All submissions should be original and must be accompanied by a declaration stating your research paper as an original work and has not been published anywhere else. It will be the sole responsibility of the authors for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.

Communication

Papers should be mailed to
bodhijournal@gmail.com

CONTENTS

S. No.	Title	Page No.
1	Beyond Flesh and Roots: A Feminist Analysis of Han Kang's <i>The Vegetarian</i> Umesh Kumar & Dr. Stella Steven	1
2	Complexities of Diaspora in Uma Parameswaran's <i>Mangoes on The Maple Tree</i> Dr. Dathatri Elchala	7
3	Myth and Marginality: Reconnaissance The Intersection of Myth, Culture and Identity in Indian and African Literature Chethankumar. G.N	14
4	Ecological Collapse as a Postmodern Crisis: Interplay of Nature, Technology, and Humanity in <i>Oryx and Crake</i> Mrs. Deepa. G & Dr. A. Chandra Bose	18
5	Cultural Consciousness in Chinua Achebe's Novels Krishnaveni. B & Dr. Umakant S Patil	21
6	The White Tiger: A Novel of Modern India by Aravind Adiga's-A Study Bharati Gani	24
7	Bound By Culture: The Intersection of Patriarchal Violence and Female Powerlessness in Cho Nam-Joo's Novel <i>Kim Ji-Young, Born 1982</i> M. Swathi & Dr. R. Dhayalakrishnan	29
8	The Decolonial Politics and Philosophy of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o Dr. Patil Sheshikant. U	35
9	The Quest for Meaning Amidst The Turmoil: An Existential Study in Anthony Doerr's <i>All The Light We Cannot See</i> M. Sruthi Sreee & Dr. M. Kannadhasan	39
10	Dalits as The Protectors of Ecosystem - An Ecological Study of Cho. Dharman's Novel <i>Koogai The Owl</i> B. Senthilkumar & Dr. K. Ravichandran	43

11	Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: A Study of Sudha Murty's <i>Three Thousand Stitches</i> Afrin Bankalagi & Dr. Deepak H. Shinde	47	19	A Reading of Toru Dutt's Poem "Lakshman" Padma shree	86
12	Cyprus's Silent Witness: An Exploration of Colonial and Postcolonial Perspectives in ELIF Shafak's <i>The Island of Missing Trees</i> T. Shainisha & Dr. M. Kannadhasan	50	20	Om Prakash Valmiki's <i>Joothan</i> : The Depiction of Pain and Resistance Dr. Dhanukumar & Anju Saxena	89
13	'No Act of Kindness However Small is Ever Wasted' in The Light of Three Thousand Stitches by Sudha Murthy Dr. Roopavati S Koregol	53	21	Breaking Chains: Caste, Oppression, and the Human Spirit in Mulk Raj Anand's <i>Untouchable</i> Ms. T. Kezia Priya Darshni & Dr. K. Ravichandran	95
14	Feminist Perspectives in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's <i>The Forest of Enchantments</i> and R.K.Narayanan's <i>The Ramayana</i> A Comparative Study Dr. Dhanukumar Tukaram Angadi & Mrs. M. Chitra	58	22	Deconstructing The Facets of Resistance; A Study of Vargas Llosa as A Postmodernist Mahesha. C.D	97
15	Symbolism, Representation of Gender and Class In Mahashwethadevi's Novel <i>Rudaali</i> Dr. Abdul Rahaman	67	23	Treatment of Subaltern Characters in U. R. Ananthamurthy's <i>Samskara</i> Mr. Sadanand Dhavaleshwar	101
16	Reflection of Post-Colonialism in Arundhati Roy's <i>The God of Small Things</i> Prabhavati Talawar & Dr. Deepak shinde	73	24	Navigating Love and Loyalty: analyzing Social Boundaries and Family Conflicts in Jaishree Misra's <i>A Love Story for My Sister</i> Mr. S. Kashif Kafel Ahmed & Dr. K. Ravichandran	105
17	Tracing Cultural Identity through Fragmented Subjectivities: A Critical Study on Anuradha Roy's <i>An Atlas of Impossible Longing</i> Ms. B. Vivilia Arivu Mani & Dr. M. Kannadhasan	77	25	Reclaiming Nature: Comparative Ecocriticism in Poornachandra Tejaswi and Thomas Hardy Syed Sirajuddin Quadri & Dr. Santhosha. G.K	108
18	Staging Resilience With Humour, Hope and Solidarity: A Study of Lynn Nottage's Plays P. Revathi & Dr. S. Boopathi	82			

BEYOND FLESH AND ROOTS: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF HAN KANG'S *THE VEGETARIAN*

UMESH KUMAR

Research Scholar, Department of Studies in English
Karnatak University, Dharwad

Dr. STELLA STEVEN

Research Guide, Assistant Professor
Karnataka Arts College, Dharwad

Abstract

Radical feminism represents a transformative branch of feminist thought that seeks to completely uproot patriarchy, viewing it as an all-encompassing system embedded in every aspect of society. Unlike liberal feminism, which often advocates for equality within the existing social and political structures, radical feminism argues that these structures themselves are inherently oppressive and must be dismantled and reimagined. Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is a profound exploration of gender, autonomy, and the gender-based violence embedded within patriarchal constructs. A feminist analysis of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* foregrounds the female protagonist's decision initially dismissed as a whimsical rebellion, develops into a powerful resistance against a system that dictates female subservience and conformity. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* offers a framework to analyse Han Kang's work. This article is an exploration of disembodiment and self-erasure, and aims to find answer for the research question, how does *The Vegetarian* illustrate the silencing of women's voices in a patriarchal society, and what strategies does the protagonist use to assert her identity.

Keywords: disembodiment, feminist, gendered oppression, patriarchy, resistance

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is a haunting exploration of one woman's rebellion against societal norms and the profound psychological consequences that follow. The novel centres on Yeong-hye, a seemingly ordinary woman who, after a series of violent dreams, renounces meat and begins an intense journey toward self-erasure and autonomy. Her family and society are unable to understand her choice, interpreting her actions as rebellion and responding with escalating attempts to control her. As Yeong-hye withdraws further, embracing a transformation that aligns her with nature over humanity, she becomes a canvas onto which others project their own desires, fears, and frustrations. Through Yeong-hye's story, Kang critiques the ways in which society imposes its expectations onto women, reducing them to objects and stripping away their agency. Her character's defiance against patriarchal and societal control reveals the deep psychological toll of living within

rigid gender constraints and exposes the violence—both physical and psychological—that accompanies this resistance. *The Vegetarian* is thus both a meditation on bodily autonomy and a critique of how patriarchal societies suppress individuality, forcing conformity at the expense of identity and freedom. In Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*, the protagonist, Yeong-hye, stops eating meat as an act of rebellion and a means of asserting her agency in a repressive and patriarchal society. Her decision is catalysed by a series of disturbing and surreal dreams involving violence, blood, and animal slaughter. These visions horrify her and make her reject meat as a symbol of violence and aggression.

A feminist interpretation highlights Yeong-hye's choice to reject meat as a symbolic form of resistance, which not only challenges her immediate social surroundings but critiques broader patriarchal expectations. As noted by Bordo, the "feminine body" has often been constructed by cultural norms

to display compliance and passivity, with food and consumption representing deeper societal impositions on women's lives. (Bordo 36) Yeong-hye's abstention from meat, which escalates into a broader withdrawal from social participation, threatens the patriarchal ideals that define her value as a wife and daughter. Her defiance against consuming meat thus represents her rejection of social conditioning, positioning her as an outsider who no longer adheres to the standards of femininity that mandate submission, self-sacrifice, and corporeal regulation.

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* provides insight into this dynamic by analysing the construction of women as the "Other," where femininity is defined not by autonomy but by compliance with male-defined standards. (de Beauvoir 29) Yeong-hye's family, particularly her husband and father, represent this patriarchal force, seeking to control her through violence and public shaming when she deviates from her prescribed roles. Her husband's shock and disapproval illustrate how he views her body as an extension of his own desires, rather than as an entity with independent agency. This behaviour emphasizes de Beauvoir's assertion that men see women as "the inessential in front of the essential," existing merely to fulfil male needs rather than embodying their own subjectivity. The novel's focus on body politics deepens its feminist critique by foregrounding how Yeong-hye's self-determination manifests through her physical transformation. Her transition from a conventional woman to a figure almost plant-like in her attempts to reject nourishment, physical intimacy, and eventually humanity, is a radical response to the social order that has objectified her body. By attempting to become a tree, Yeong-hye claims a form of purity that subverts the oppressive forces in her life. This metamorphosis aligns with ecofeminist thought, as articulated by Val Plumwood, who argues that patriarchal societies often draw dualisms that subordinate women and nature together, categorizing both as exploitable resources. (Plumwood 66) Yeong-hye's transition towards a plant-like existence can be

seen as an attempt to reclaim her body, aligning herself with nature in defiance of a society that seeks to exploit and control both.

The Vegetarian further explores the intersections of gendered violence and the cultural policing of female bodies. The novel's depiction of Yeong-hye's father attempting to force-feed her meat at a family gathering exemplifies the intrusive violence that patriarchy enacts on women who defy societal norms. This act of force-feeding is more than a physical assault; it signifies an ideological reassertion of control over her autonomy. Scholar bell hooks discusses how patriarchy often legitimizes violence as a disciplinary tool to enforce gender roles and suppress female rebellion. (hooks 45) Yeong-hye's father embodies this concept, perceiving her nonconformity as a form of madness that must be corrected through violence, emphasizing the lengths to which patriarchal systems will go to control women's choices. *The Vegetarian* reinforces feminist critiques of women's marginalization and silencing. Yeong-hye's voice is almost entirely absent, with the novel narrated instead from the perspectives of her husband, brother-in-law, and sister. This stylistic choice highlights how her experiences and emotions are filtered through others, reflecting the ways in which women's voices are often marginalized in real life. This exclusion of her perspective mirrors the broader societal tendency to ignore women's subjective experiences and reinforces the power imbalance inherent in patriarchal structures. Feminist literary critic Sandra Gilbert argues that patriarchal storytelling traditions have historically limited women's access to self-representation, a theme mirrored in the absence of Yeong-hye's direct voice throughout much of the novel. (Gilbert 23) The novel's nuanced portrayal of Yeong-hye's mental health suggests that women's psychological struggles are often dismissed or misunderstood in a patriarchal framework. Rather than addressing the underlying causes of her distress, Yeong-hye's family and society label her as insane, pushing her toward psychiatric institutionalization instead of empathy or understanding. Feminist scholar Phyllis Chesler's

Women and Madness critiques this very tendency, arguing that women who defy social expectations are often pathologized, with their defiance dismissed as irrational rather than a legitimate reaction to oppression. (Chesler 52) Yeong-hye's increasing alienation from her family and society underscores how women's struggles are pathologized, revealing the absence of meaningful support for those who challenge patriarchal norms.

Han Kang's portrayal of the female body as a contested space challenges the commodification and objectification that women face under patriarchy. Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, who becomes obsessed with her transformation, represents the voyeuristic male gaze, perceiving her body as an erotic object rather than a human being with autonomy. This objectification aligns with Laura Mulvey's theory of the "male gaze," which posits that women are often positioned as objects of visual pleasure within patriarchal narratives, their bodies commodified to satisfy male desire. (Mulvey 11) His fixation on Yeong-hye's body highlights the invasive nature of the male gaze and reveals how deeply ingrained patriarchy is in reducing women's autonomy to superficial qualities, ultimately resulting in the commodification of Yeong-hye's rebellion. *The Vegetarian* becomes a profound feminist text by examining the intersectional forces—cultural, familial, and societal—that work to regulate women's bodies and limit their autonomy. Han Kang's work resonates with feminist scholarship, from Bordo's insights into bodily discipline to ecofeminist critiques of patriarchal violence against both women and nature. Through Yeong-hye's journey of defiance, the novel not only critiques the gendered constraints imposed upon her but also celebrates her pursuit of agency. Her tragic, surrealistic transformation reveals the costs of such resistance in a society that upholds patriarchal ideals. In doing so, *The Vegetarian* lays bare the intricate connections between gender, autonomy, and the body, illustrating how feminist thought can illuminate the costs of self-assertion in a society that relentlessly disciplines and constrains women.

In a feminist reading, *The Vegetarian* engages profoundly with the idea of bodily autonomy, situating Yeong-hye's refusal to eat meat as an act of resistance against patriarchal control. Feminist theorist Susan Bordo argues that "the body is a powerful symbolic form... which is both shaped by and shapes social structures." (Bordo 13) Yeong-hye's decision to become vegetarian, though personal, quickly escalates into a public and social crisis, as her family—particularly her husband and father—interpret her behaviour as defiance against traditional roles. Her body, which they believe should conform to societal norms, becomes a battleground for cultural and familial control. When her husband notes, "Before my wife turned vegetarian, I'd always thought of her as completely unremarkable in every way," (Kang 11) he reduces her to a passive, submissive entity, echoing Bordo's notion of the "docile body," where women are disciplined through cultural norms to align with societal expectations. Yeong-hye's resistance can be interpreted as an assertion of her individuality and autonomy, "Her father gave a sudden shout and seized her by the wrists, lifting her arms up and pinning them behind her back... He forced the piece of pork into her mouth." (Kang 34) This violent act exemplifies the physical enforcement of conformity, underscoring the novel's theme of patriarchal control over women's bodies and choices. But it is her family's violent reaction that brings the feminist critique to light. Her husband, for instance, is concerned not about her health but about how her vegetarianism affects his own life and reputation. He views her as an extension of himself rather than an individual with her own desires, saying, "I was ill at ease...she should have just stayed the way she was." (Kang 12) This attitude reflects Simone de Beauvoir's concept of the "Other," where women are socially constructed as subservient and as existing in relation to men. (de Beauvoir 12) Yeong-hye's body becomes a symbol of patriarchal oppression, emphasizing the gendered expectations imposed on women. Her rejection of meat becomes a metaphor

for her rejection of these limiting social roles and her quest for self-definition.

The Vegetarian also critiques the normalization of violence against women's bodies, detailing various forms of physical and psychological violence inflicted on Yeong-hye, often by the people closest to her. Her husband's sexual exploitation and her family's physical assault during her "interventions" illustrate the ways in which patriarchal structures enforce compliance through violence. Feminist critic bell hooks discusses how patriarchy perpetuates itself by normalizing the subjugation of women through psychological manipulation and physical force. (hooks 23) This normalization of violence against women is embedded deeply within the family structure in *The Vegetarian*, which becomes a space of control and subjugation rather than support. When her brother-in-law films her painted body, captivated by his own exploitative fixation, the narration describes how he "had to restrain himself, stop himself from reaching out his hand and grazing her skin with his fingers." (Kang 123) Yeong-hye's body becomes a site where this violence is enacted, reinforcing the notion that patriarchal societies objectify and control women's bodies to maintain gender hierarchies.

The power dynamics in *The Vegetarian* reflect a broader critique of patriarchal structures and their impact on individual identity. Yeong-hye's journey symbolizes a deeply personal resistance against societal constraints, one that embodies feminist principles of bodily autonomy, self-expression, and freedom from oppression. "I had a dream. I was standing in an endless forest, with trees that stretched up so high I couldn't see their tops. And it was all silent, nothing moving at all. Just that cold, clear silence." (Kang 24) This line reflects Yeong-hye's sense of liberation in breaking away from societal norms, even if this freedom comes at the cost of her sanity and social standing. Her transformation and ultimate alienation reveal the extent to which patriarchal norms are internalized and reinforced by family, society, and cultural expectations. The novel, in this sense, becomes a powerful feminist text that

critiques the objectification of women's bodies, the normalization of gendered violence, and the cultural pressures that suppress female autonomy. Through its complex narrative and evocative symbolism, *The Vegetarian* provides a compelling exploration of feminism, emphasizing the resilience of female agency even in the face of overwhelming societal constraints. Yeong-hye is objectified by her husband and brother-in-law, both of whom view her as a passive object rather than an autonomous person. Her husband, for instance, describes her as "unremarkable" and assumes that she will conform to his expectations. (Kang 11) When she deviates, he is more embarrassed by the impact on his social standing than concerned for her well-being. This objectification is intensified in her interactions with her brother-in-law, who becomes obsessed with her body, painting her with flowers and filming her in an attempt to fulfil his own artistic and erotic fantasies. This fixation reflects the "male gaze" as theorized by Laura Mulvey, in which women are reduced to aesthetic objects meant to gratify male desires. Yeong-hye's lack of agency within these scenes illustrates how her rebellion against one form of control inadvertently exposes her to another form of objectification. Yeong-hye's decision to become vegetarian, initially driven by disturbing dreams, is more than a dietary choice—it represents her assertion of control over her own body in a society that enforces strict gender norms. Her family, particularly her husband and father, interprets this choice as an irrational rebellion against her prescribed role as a submissive wife and daughter. This aligns with feminist theorist Susan Bordo's view that the body can serve as a form of resistance or protest against societal pressures. By rejecting meat, Yeong-hye symbolically rejects the consumption and control imposed on her as a woman. This rebellion is particularly significant in a patriarchal society where her body is expected to align with cultural norms. In *The Vegetarian*, Han Kang uses the protagonist Yeong-hye's rebellion to explore themes of resistance against societal norms, familial expectations, and traditional gender roles. Yeong-hye's choice to

become vegetarian, which may seem benign in other contexts, becomes a powerful act of defiance in her conservative South Korean family. Her rebellion is not limited to diet but extends to her rejection of conventional femininity and the roles assigned to her as a wife and daughter.

Yeong-hye's refusal to conform embodies a silent but profound protest against patriarchal constraints. Her husband and family interpret her vegetarianism as a personal affront and a disruption of social order. For them, food and eating are deeply embedded in family and social rituals, and her refusal to partake signifies a symbolic rejection of the cultural and familial control they exert over her life. Her journey from vegetarianism to her eventual aspiration to "become a plant" marks her increasing withdrawal from human desires and societal expectations. By refusing to submit to the pressures of family and society, Yeong-hye's rebellion transforms from passive resistance into a pursuit of complete autonomy, even if it means detachment from humanity itself. This nonconformity challenges the notion that women's identities should be rooted in their roles within the family and society, revealing the struggle for agency in a restrictive environment. Through Yeong-hye's radical act of defiance, Han Kang crafts a narrative that critiques the oppressive frameworks of family, gender, and tradition, painting her protagonist's rebellion as a desperate quest for personal liberation that ultimately questions the cost of nonconformity in a society resistant to change.

Conclusion

To conclude, Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* encapsulate the novel's intricate examination of agency, body autonomy, and societal oppression in the face of personal transformation. Han Kang's protagonist, Yeong-hye, embodies a radical defiance against traditional cultural norms and the expectations of patriarchal society by rejecting meat and, subsequently, all human desires and needs. This rebellion against conventional desires and corporeal existence becomes a symbolic act of reclaiming autonomy over her body and identity, leading her

towards a transformative, yet tragic, liberation. Through Yeong-hye's progressive withdrawal from society and descent into a near-vegetal state, Kang critiques the oppressive forces that dictate bodily conformity and feminine docility, emphasizing how the constraints of culture, family, and gender roles stifle individual expression and selfhood. The narrative structure, told through the perspectives of those around Yeong-hye, further highlights the limitations of others in comprehending her journey, underscoring the isolating nature of radical personal liberation in a conformist society. *The Vegetarian* stands as a complex narrative that interrogates the extent to which individuals can assert their will within rigid cultural structures and questions the very nature of freedom and self-determination. Han Kang's work thus holds profound implications for feminist and existential discourse, inviting readers to contemplate the costs of reclaiming bodily sovereignty and the often-destructive societal forces that dictate our understanding of normalcy and deviance. In *The Vegetarian*, Han Kang presents a haunting exploration of how patriarchal society controls, objectifies, and subjugates women's bodies and minds. Through Yeong-hye's journey, the novel exposes the trauma inflicted on women who deviate from cultural expectations and the extent of psychological and physical violence that patriarchal systems impose to maintain control. Yeong-hye's transformation—her rejection of humanity and eventual identification with the natural world—serves as both a protest against and a tragic response to the pervasive control over her identity and autonomy.

References

- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. University of California Press, 1993.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Translated by H.M. Parshley, Vintage, 1989.

Chesler, Phyllis. *Women and Madness*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2005.

hooks, bell. *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love*. Washington Square Press, 2004.

Kang, Han *The Vegetarian*. Translated by Deborah Smith, Hogarth Press, 2015.

Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, 1993.

COMPLEXITIES OF DIASPORA IN UMA PARAMESWARAN'S *MANGOES ON THE MAPLE TREE*

Dr.DATHATRI ELCHALA

Assistant Professor (PT), Department of English
Veeranari Chakali Ilamma Women's University, Koti, Hyderabad

Abstract

The present paper deals with Mangoes on the Maple Tree by Uma Parameswaran adroitly examines the details of diaspora via the prisms of identity, cultural displacement, and immigrant families' intergenerational conflict. The complex knowledges of the Indian diaspora in Canada are captured in Parameswaran's story, which also emphasizes the psychological and emotional problems people encounter when juggling their several identities. The titular mangoes, which stand for both nostalgia and the difficulty of retrieving a lost past, portray the protagonist's yearning for her native country in contrast to the authenticities of living in a different country. The novel explores themes of alienation and belonging, highlighting the cultural hybridity that describes the experience of immigrants. With rich symbolism and striking images. The conflicts between tradition and modernity, as well as the inspiration of societal expectations on individual identity, are all depicted by Parameswaran. The relationships between generations, as children struggle with their parents' cultural history while creating their own identities in a multicultural setting, further it illustrates the complexity of diaspora and it offers a contemplation on the flexibility and perseverance of people who live on two continents, while also serving as a moving reminder of the complex network of relationships that characterize the diaspora experience.

Keywords: diaspora, cultural dislocation, identity, immigrant experience, intergenerational struggle, nostalgia, belonging, alienation, cultural hybridity, tradition

Introduction

Mangoes on the Maple Tree by Uma Parameswaran is a moving examination of the Indian diaspora, encapsulating the complex relationship between cultural identity, longing, and the desire to fit in in a strange place. *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* by Uma Parameswaran is a moving examination of the Indian diaspora that captures the complex relationship between cultural identity, nostalgia, and the desire to fit in in a strange country. The novel eloquently portrays the lives of Indian immigrants in Canada. "Indian immigrants in Canada commonly face a dual struggle: adapting to a new social environment while conserving their cultural heritage, which is indispensable to their sense of identity" (Uma 56) where the protagonists struggle with the dichotomy of their lives-straddling the rich customs of their native country and the clear-cut reality of living in a foreign setting.

Parameswaran sheds light on the psychological and emotional challenges brought on by cultural

displacement in this story. Hall, Stuart says, "The sense of dislocation, of not fitting anywhere, is frequently intensified among members of diasporic communities as they circumnavigate the complex terrain of identity and belonging between homeland and host land" (34), shows how the necessity to adapt and thrive in a heterogeneous society frequently coexists with the desire to return to one's roots. Mango symbolism plays a major role in the story, signifying both the bitter reality of separation and distance as well as the sweetness of childhood memories and the safety of home.

The mango tree represents both the beauty of their lineage and the difficulties of assimilating into a new culture, serving as a metaphor for the protagonists' attempts to reconcile their past with their present. Parameswaran expertly uses this imagery to arouse sentimental responses and emphasize the conflict between accepting a new identity established by the immigrant experience and yearning for a lost motherland. "Exile is strangely

convincing to think about but dreadful to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (Edward Said,45). The issues of identification and belonging are further complicated by the generational relationships within the immigrant family. Children born in the diaspora, frequently torn between tradition and independence, negotiate their parents' expectations while attempting to carve out their own paths.

The difficulties of integration and cultural negotiation are highlighted by this intergenerational struggle, which shows how the search for identity “The question ‘Who am I?’ is a question all of us have to answer at some point in our lives, but for some, it is more obstinate and complex, often shaping every choice they make” (Erik H. Erikson, 34) is a complex journey impacted by memory, history, and the constant conversation between the past and present. In addition to offering a vivid account of the diaspora experience, Parameswaran's *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* challenges readers to consider the larger ramifications of migration and the pursuit of home in a world growing more interconnected by the day.

Uma Parameswaran

Prominent Indo-Canadian author, educator, and cultural analyst Uma Parameswaran is renowned for her perceptive examinations of the challenges of cultural identity and the immigrant experience. She was born in India and immigrated to Canada, where she established herself as a significant literary personality and advanced knowledge of the Indian diaspora. Her writings, such as *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, frequently incorporate themes of nostalgia, belonging, and the difficulties of juggling several cultural identities, all of which are based on her own experiences.

Parameswaran is a prominent figure in modern literature because of her work, which is distinguished by vivid imagery and moving narrative. Apart from writing fiction, Parameswaran has taken part in a

number of scholarly and community-based projects that support multicultural awareness and the value of storytelling in overcoming cultural barriers. For her services to literature and education, she has won multiple honours, including the esteemed National Literary Award. In addition to enhancing the literary environment, Parameswaran's writing stimulates discussion about the varied experiences of immigrants and invites readers to consider their own identities and links to their homeland.

Diaspora

The term ‘diaspora’ describes the movement of individuals from their native country to different regions of the world, frequently leading to a complicated fusion of identity, culture, “Identity is never singular but is multiply constructed across intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions” (Stuart Hall, 23) as well as belonging. It entails the difficulty of maintaining one's cultural heritage as well as adjusting to new surroundings, resulting in a distinct, frequently dual identity. Many diasporans have sentiments of displacement or dual belonging as a result of juggling conflicts between their cultural heritage and the conventions of their new nation. The diasporic experiences that Parameswaran writes about are varied, Stuart Hall opines: “Diaspora identities are those which are continually producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference”(56).

However, themes of resiliency, nostalgia, and the blending of various cultural influences are frequently present. It depicts the experiences of an Indian family in Winnipeg, Canada, deftly navigating the topics of diaspora, identity, and cultural integration. Parameswaran uses the Bharati family's experiences to show how diasporic people “Diasporic individuals often find themselves at the connection of multiple cultures, navigating a complex landscape of identity that is shaped by both their heritage and their new surroundings”(Suvendrini Perera, 45) frequently have a sense of dual identity, torn between their chosen country's customs and their native traditions. Every member of the family struggles with these

emotions differently, exhibiting a range of reactions to displacement, nostalgia, Edward Said opines: “Exile, like nostalgia, is a place of absurdity a place where longing for the past coexists with a constant need to adapt to an ever-changing present”(45) as well as belonging.

The term itself denotes the meeting point of two worlds: ‘maple’ stands for the new life in Canada, while ‘mangoes’ conjure the warmth and richness of India. In addition, Parameswaran draws attention to the generational conflict that frequently develops in immigrant families as they struggle with their identities and ideals. “Identity is a complex thing, shaped by experiences, beliefs, and values, and it can evolve over time as we encounter new perspectives and challenges” (Henrietta L. Moore 23). The younger generation, who are more sensitive to Canadian values and customs, may feel cut off from their cultural background, whereas the elder generation tends to cling more firmly to it. James Tully opines: “Canada is a country built on the principles of multiculturalism, tolerance, and respect for multiplicity, which shapes its identity and informs its social norms” (67).

The Bharati children exhibit this difference, finding it difficult to strike a balance between their own aspirations for independence and self-definition and their parents' expectations. The subtleties of these disputes are depicted by Parameswaran, who demonstrates how each family member adjusts to their diasporic reality in a way that is representative of their individual struggles, goals, and experiences. The novel also emphasizes how the experience of dispersion entails both identity extension and loss. V. S. Naipaul says: “The experience of diaspora often involves a profound sense of loss-of home, of belonging-yet concurrently offers the possibility of a broader, more complex identity that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries” (34).

The Bharati family faces discrimination and misinterpretation from the outside world, but they also discover that they are resilient and adaptive. Parameswaran illustrates how diasporic families create places of belonging in strange settings by

fusing Indian and Canadian customs. She demonstrates the fluidity of identity, memory, and culture via nuanced yet moving storytelling. “Memory is a key component of identity; it shapes who we are by influencing our perceptions, experiences, and influences to the past, while also allowing us to navigate our present and envision our future” (John H. Brubaker 56) altered by space, time, and individual development, capturing the beauty and difficulties of diaspora in the contemporary world.

Theoretical Perspective

Several theoretical frameworks can be used to analyse *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, but postcolonial theory and diaspora studies offer important insights into the characters' complex experiences of identification and belonging. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin opines: “Postcolonial theory seeks to understand the multifaceted ways in which colonialism has shaped the identities, cultures, and power subtleties of formerly colonized societies, revealing the ongoing impacts of these legacies in contemporary contexts” (67). By examining colonialism's effects on cultural identity and how the characters' conflicts mirror larger themes of power, displacement, and cultural negotiation, postcolonial theory sheds light on these issues. Aihwa Ong says: “The struggles of displaced persons often reflect larger themes of power and cultural negotiation, as they circumnavigate their identities in contexts that challenge their sense of belonging and autonomy” (67).

The story illustrates how people deal with the fallout from colonial histories and how their identities are influenced by both their Indian ancestry and the social dynamics of their new Canadian environment. S. P. M. B. R. S. H. Brar says, “Immigrants in Canada navigate a landscape of sociocultural undercurrents that shape their identities and experiences, as they balance the retention of their cultural heritage with the demands of integrating into a diverse and multicultural society” (45). By concentrating on the experiences of

displaced populations and the development of hybrid identities, diaspora studies enhance our comprehension of Parameswaran's work even more. "Hybrid identities emerge in the interaction between cultures, where entities negotiate their sense of self by participating elements from their heritage and the dominant culture, creating a fluid and dynamic sense of belonging" (Homi K. Bhabha 34).

Characters in this framework alternate between the influences of their adopted homeland and their ancestral culture, highlighting the importance of transnational ties. The novel demonstrates that diaspora encompasses more than just geographic relocation. Edward said opines: "Geographical movement is not merely a physical relocation; it profoundly affects individuals' identities, as they grapple with feelings of loss, estrangement, and the challenge of redefining their sense of home in unaccustomed environments" (78), but incorporates cultural and emotional aspects as well. In addition to emphasizing the characters' interaction with Canadian society and capturing their yearning for home through the symbolic mangoes, Parameswaran also highlights the fluidity and complexity of identity in a diasporic setting. Cultural hybridity, which examines the blending of customs and behaviours that frequently takes place in immigrant communities, is another critical perspective. This hybridity is embodied by Parameswaran's characters, who negotiate the conflicts between their Indian heritage and their Canadian environment. "The process of negotiating their identity for many Indian immigrants in Canada entails a constant interaction between their deeply ingrained cultural customs and the various realities of their new Canadian environment, resulting in a unique tapestry of experience"(Uma 23).

As younger generations navigate their identities in a multicultural environment, intergenerational conflict exacerbates this hybridity. The characters' efforts to reconcile their ancestry with modern life demonstrate how identity formation is dynamic and how people are always changing who they are in reaction to their surroundings. Lastly,

comprehending the characters' experiences in the diaspora requires an awareness of the interconnectedness of gender, race, and class. Parameswaran emphasizes how these social categories influence her characters' identities and hardships, especially for the women who frequently shoulder the majority of the burden of home duties and cultural expectations. Rina A. D. S. T. Bhattacharya says: As people strike a careful balance between upholding their familial obligations and pursuing their own goals in a foreign society, "cultural expectations frequently weigh heavily on immigrant families" (56).

This viewpoint highlights the tenacity of people who deal with these intertwining issues and enables a detailed examination of how institutional injustices impact the immigrant experience. *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* uses these theoretical frameworks to engage with larger discussions about identity, belonging, and cultural negotiation in a globalized society, in addition to offering a nuanced depiction of the complications of diaspora. The intricate nuances of identity, belonging, and cultural negotiation are depicted in this rich tapestry of the Indian diaspora in Canada.

The story is told from the perspective of family ties, emphasizing the psychological and emotional challenges faced by immigrant families as they attempt to balance the demands of a new environment with their cultural history. *Mangoes* represent both the potential for adaptability and development in a strange country as well as the bittersweet aspect of nostalgia, encapsulating the yearning for home. The novel shows how the protagonists manage their dual identities by deftly combining themes of cultural displacement and hybridity. The conflicts between tradition and modernity surface when they deal with the difficulties of assimilation, especially in the connections between generations. The continuous conversation between the past and present is highlighted by younger characters who struggle with the weight of their parents' expectations as they try to create their own identities in a multicultural society.

The story by Parameswaran also explores the intricacies of family ties, where conflict and love coexist. The battle for comprehension and acceptance is highlighted by the intergenerational dynamics, which also show how the characters' identities are shaped by their cultural heritage. The way these connections are portrayed speaks to a larger reflection on the experience of immigrants, highlighting the importance of support and connection in the face of cultural dislocation. In the end, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* is a potent examination of the diaspora experience that shows how resilient and adaptive people can be when traversing many cultural contexts. Amartya Sen says: "The ability to flourish in a variety of cultural contexts demonstrates not only adaptability but also resilience, enabling people to weave their identities into a rich tapestry that embraces both new and traditional influences" (45).

Readers are prompted to consider the complex network of relationships that define identity in a globalized world by Parameswaran's rich symbolism and evocative imagery. The story is a moving depiction of the immigrant journey and the need for home because it speaks to themes of longing, belonging, and transformation. The loneliness and nostalgia that immigrants experience in the early phases of settling in a foreign country are the main themes of Uma Parameswaran's book *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*. Among the immigrants, there are a variety of sorts and attitudes; some are emotionally aloof, while others will unite despite disparities in status or culture. Not everyone has the same definition of home, country, and cultural identity, or belongingness to the place of ancestry.

Since first-generation immigrants continue to adhere to the cultural norms, beliefs, and practices of their home country, migrating causes them to feel alienated, nostalgic for the past, and rootless in their new location. Therefore, the ideas of double consciousness and homelessness that characterize diasporic identity are born out of the experience of loss or 'living in border.' The yearning to rediscover one's Indian heritage and a regretful longing for it

are both evident in Uma Parameswaran's writings. Through her work, one can see how immigrants are crushed under the weight of alienation and rootlessness and how Canadian society creates disenchantment in their thoughts. First-generation immigrants experience rootlessness, yearning for the past, and alienation as a result of migration. She has a vast collection of memories of her native country that she has left behind as a diasporic writer. It has given her the motivation she needs to forge her identity in the host culture. The universality of real-life events is illustrated by her characters.

The fact that someone turns to ethnocentric community organizations proves that the immigrant never gets over the emotion of 'nostalgia,' even if Uma Parameswaran has classified nostalgia as a component of the first phase. Therefore, maintaining ties to one's roots is the best strategy for surviving the stresses of hybridity. In actuality, hybridization goes beyond human bounds to produce a complex blend of multicultural and multiethnic society. The immigrants' experience of alienation has taught them something they did not learn in the foreign culture: assimilation is required to replace the old system.

The immigrant's age and duration of residence in the two cultures also play a role. Although they are quite aware of the events in their home country, the majority of first-generation immigrants do not become emotionally invested in the events of their new nations. Although they are not completely cut off from their mother country, second-generation immigrants also experience feelings of unease and unsettling recollections of their parents.

Methodology

The uses a qualitative methodological approach, combining theoretical frameworks and literary analysis to improve comprehension of the text's issues. This multifaceted approach makes it possible for Analysis of Texts Close reading of the text with an emphasis on significant passages that shed light on the characters' emotional landscapes and cultural battles is the main analytical technique. Conceptual Structures The analysis uses a number of theoretical

frameworks, such as postcolonial theory, diaspora studies, and cultural hybridity, to put the findings in context. Comparative Evaluation The methodology is further enhanced by a comparison study with other diaspora literary works.

Empirical Investigations Finally, a review of the body of research on diaspora and cultural identity may be part of the process, based on academic papers, essays, and criticisms that discuss Parameswaran's work and related stories. The analysis and understanding of the main topics of 'Mangoes on the Maple Tree' are strengthened by the additional scholarly context this secondary study offers. The goal of this methodology is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nuances of diaspora as they are expressed in Parameswaran's writing by combining textual analysis with theoretical viewpoints and comparative observations.

Conclusion

Therefore, it is possible to comprehend the various, generational stages of diaspora life in Canada through Parameswaran's novel: first, the intense and overwhelming longing for one's native land and fear of the new one is now a part of; second, the time when one is adjusting to the new environment and unable to engage creatively; third, the active participation in the diasporic life through ethno-cultural practices; and fourth, the active political and social participation in the world and society that one is now a part of. Her deftly explores questions of identity, belonging, and cultural negotiation while capturing the complex dynamics of the Indian diaspora. She demonstrates the significant effects of immigration on interpersonal and familial connections via the experiences of her characters, exposing the emotional intricacies that result from cultural displacement.

In addition to representing the possibility of development and adaptation in a new setting, the symbolic mangoes act as a compelling reminder of nostalgia and the yearning for home. This dichotomy highlights the complex character of the immigrant experience, where happy and sad times coexist. The

intergenerational disputes that frequently arise in immigrant families are also highlighted in the novel. Sunaina Marr Maira illustrates: "When younger members of immigrant families attempt to negotiate their identities in a society that frequently deviates from the standards and expectations upheld by their parents, the conflict between traditional values and contemporary aspirations can result in intergenerational conflicts" (34), illustrating the challenges that parents and kids encounter when juggling the demands of preserving cultural history and integrating into a new society.

Reflecting the frequently tense interaction between generations, Parameswaran skilfully illustrates the difficulties of striking a balance between tradition and modernity. She challenges readers to think about the wider ramifications of cultural identity and how it changes over time, influenced by both societal and personal factors, by highlighting these interactions. In the end, Parameswaran's art is a moving reminder of how resilient and adaptive people can be while they are living abroad.

In addition to providing a compelling account of the immigrant experience, *Mangoes on the Maple Tree* promotes empathy and comprehension of the challenges associated with cultural identification in a world growing more interconnected by the day. Parameswaran contributes to the literary world with her vivid storytelling, inspiring readers to consider issues of home, belonging, and the continuous quest for identity in the face of migration's difficulties.

References

- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bhattacharya, Rina A. D. S. T. *The Transnational Family: New European Perspectives*. Routledge, 2009.
- Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 1989.

- Brar, S. P. M. B. R. S. H. *Canadian Multiculturalism: A Critical Approach*. University of Toronto Press, 2013.
- Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Erikson, Erik H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company, 1968.
- Hall, Stuart. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1994.
- Hall, Stuart. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.
- John H. Brubaker, *The Rhetoric of Memory in the American South*, 1995.
- Maira, Sunaina Marr. *Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley*. University of California Press, 2012.
- Moore, Henrietta L. *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*. Polity Press, 1994.
- Naipaul, V. S. *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.
- Ong, Aihwa. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Duke University Press, 1999.
- Parameswaran, Uma. *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*. The University of Alberta Press, 1996.
- Parameswaran, Uma. *Sons Must Die and Other Plays*. Prestige Books, 1998.
- Perera, Suvendrini. *Imagining the Diaspora: The Politics of Dislocation*. University of Queensland Press, 2000.
- Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Stuart Hall, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, 1990.
- Tully, James. *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

MYTH AND MARGINALITY: RECONNAISSANCE THE INTERSECTION OF MYTH, CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN INDIAN AND AFRICAN LITERATURE

CHETHANKUMAR. G.N

Ph. D Research Scholar, Department of English
Bengaluru University, Bengaluru

Abstract

The research paper examines the issues of myth, marginality, culture, and identity in mainstream and subaltern literature by comparing a few fictional works from Indian literature and African literature. The present study investigates how the identities and culture projected mainstream and subaltern literature in contrast, through a comparative analysis of novels like "Sita: Warrior of Mithila" by Amish Tripathi, "Karna's Wife, The Outcast's Queen" by Kavita Kane, "Children of Blood and Bone" by Tomi Adeyemi, and "The Gilded Ones" by NaminaForna. The research paper looks at how mythical stories shape cultural identities and advance modern conceptions of the individual and the community. The research makes the case that, especially in postcolonial situations, mythical stories are an effective means of resistance, identity construction, and cultural expression. This study attempts to advance knowledge of the intricate connection between cultural narrative, identity, and power by investigating the ways that myth, marginality, culture, and identity intersect in mainstream and subaltern Indian and African literatures.

Keywords: marginality, identity, postcolonialism, intersectionality, comparative literature, mainstream literature, subaltern literature, resistance

Introduction

Mythology is a powerful vehicle to carry out the culture, tradition, heritage, and customs of a particular group of society. As we live in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the Internet of Things, reimagining, revisioning, and recreating mythology is in full force in world literature, particularly in the context of postcolonial and marginal literature. Revisiting the past certainly serves purposes as every piece of literature does. Contemporary socio-political, regional conflicts, and regional politics play significant roles in the production of revisionist works. India and Africa, are best known for their rich cultural diversity, diverse linguistic practices, and endless beliefs on mythological figures, rituals, and practices. Both nations are rich in mainstream and subaltern literature.

Amish Tripathi is one such revisionist, mythological writer in India, whose works are designated as mainstream literature. Mainstream

literature often projects the dominant ideology of the ruling class and the interest of society, and the same literature is well-received and acclaimed by mass readers. Amish Tripathi's novel, "Sita – Warrior of Mithila" and "The Gilded Ones" by NaminaForna are examples of this category of genre. NaminaForna is, a West African young adult fiction writer, best known for her mythology-based fantasy fiction.

On the other hand, Kavita Kane is well known for her writing on Indian mythological works but focuses on subaltern characters in Indian mythology. Subaltern literature focuses on marginalized groups, whose voices are neglected in dominant narratives and excluded from mainstream power structures. Kavitha Kane's "Karna's Wife, The Outcast's Queen" and Tomi Adeyemi's "Children of Blood and Bone" are classified as subaltern texts for the present study. Tomi Adeyemi is a Nigerian American fantasy and creative writer.

The paper critically analyses how the above writers reimagine traditional myths and cultural

narratives to explain the themes of power, culture, identity, and resistance through the lens of marginalized characters, especially women, who oppose their assigned roles and forge new identities.

The paper, through textual analysis and comparative approach, conducts close reading of passages of above texts, compare and contrast the protagonists journey to examine how each text reflect issues of power, myth, culture and identity.

Analysis

Amish Tripathi's "Sita – Warrior of Mithila", Kavita Kane's "Karna's Wife, The Outcast's Queen: Reimagining the Identity of Women in Indian Mythology.

Myth, Identity, and cultural reinterpretation

Ramayana, one of the oldest mythologies in the world, offers multiple characters, events, perspectives, and narratives. Sitadevi is one of the prominent pious characters across Indian mythologies. She is a synonym for loyalty, purity, and chastity. In the history of mythology and mainstream literature, the character Sita is portrayed as not only a loyal wife and a hausfrau, but one who is confined to societal, and familial principles and a role model to every household in Indian society. The dominant narratives confined Sita to the palace, and to perform ritual and religious practices. Amish Tripathi in this novel offers a different perspective on the traditionally mainstream character, Sita who is projected as a powerful warrior who fights for her kingdom against the Ravan army. "Sita looked at her right. There was no way a single archer could have shot two arrows in such rapid succession. There were great archers who could shoot arrows by relying on sound. But very few could throw knives at the source of a sound. Sita was one of those very few" (*Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. P3-4). The Identity of Sita is been recreated and projected as a professional warrior and symbol of revolt against the conventional norms that exist in society. According to the author, Sita is not dependent but self-sufficient in her potentialities. "I am not just a wife, I am not

just a daughter, I am not just a woman, I am Sita". (p-267)

Kavita Kane's work, based on Mahabharatha, another prominent Hindu mythology, is the holy book of Hindus. Karna, the brave hero, who fought for Dhuryodhana, is often seen as a subaltern character due to his upbringing in a marginalized community of fishermen. Uruvi, the outcast wife of Karna is double marginalized and neglected first as a woman, then as an outcast person. Even though she is neglected by the author, because Uruvi is called just Karna's wife, can't place herself in the title of the novel! In the novel the author portrays Uruvi as a self-sufficient ruler, warrior, and an independent decision-maker as the following lines show "I am looking forward to my new life. I shall live in the home of the man I love, looking after him and his family. There will be enough strength in me to be his wife and I shall be proud of that" (*Karna's wife* p-24). Throughout the novel, she is projected as a strong and brave woman, who stood against the atrocities of a patriarchal society.

Both the authors, Amish Tripathi and Kavita Kane, use their creative language to revisit the past to re-center the main characters of Indian mythology according to contemporary needs. M. R Yardi, in his Epilogue of Ramayana, categorically observes that 'authors use their creative license to alter the existing Ramayana subject to fit their interpretations of the story' (Yardi p-164). This creative ability made the two authors offer a different perspective to the characters of Sita and Uruvi. Through creative writings, writers like Amish Tripathi and Kavita Kane reimagined the mythology according to the needs of the contemporary world.

Power and Resistance

Both the texts by Amish Tripathi and Kavita Kane offer postcolonial perspectives of power and resistance. Sita's worlds of Mithila and Ayodhya, both are patriarchal societies where power is concentrated in the hands of male rulers. Amish Tripathi reimagined and recreated Sita as a fierce

warrior rather than a passive and submissive follower of age-old conventions of society and patriarchy.

On the other hand, in Kavita Kane's "*Karna's Wife, The Outcast's Queen*", Urvi an upper cast, brahmin brave heart, became an outcast, for challenging Brahmanical ideologies and marrying Karna. The novel questions the historical power structures rooted in cast hierarchies and tries to expose oppressive cultural traditions.

Children of Blood and Bone and The Gilded Ones

Myth and Marginalization

Myth and Marginalization

"*Children of Blood and Bone*", by Tomi Adeyemi set in the West African mythical land of Orisha, narrates the story of Zelig Adebola, a lower-class maji, - people who could manipulate the elements or perform magic. However, the Maji were persecuted by King Saran, who ordered brutal killings of magic users. During the raids, Zelig lost her mother. The protagonist embarks on a quest to bring back magic to her community, blending mythology with the class dynamics of African society. In the journey of restoring magic in their society, Zelig fought like a warrior with the support and suggestions of Mama Agba, "Patience, Zelig, it is not your time to attack. Observe, react- wait for your opponent to strike" (p-14). Another prominent character in the novel is Amari, an upper-class Princess, who helps Zelig in her adventure. Zelig is determined to honor her mother's memory and bring back magic to her people.

As Zelig's white hair marks her as a maji, a symbol of marginalized identity, Cultural practices play a crucial role in the identity formation of an individual in society. Erasing cultural roots and practices is the first step to pushing a community towards marginality and enforcing a dominant ideology. In the novel, the king orders to elimination of the Maji community who practice magic, because they refuse to follow the dominant ideology of the state. The community belongs to a socio-economically lower class, and King Saran's systematic oppression made them a marginalized

community in society. Zelig's fight is not only for the identity of magic but for the right to exist and be treated equally.

NaminaForna's "*The Glided Ones*" delves between the myth of purity and impurity. The chief character, Dekka lives in the male-dominant state of Otera, inspired by West African mythology. Dekka belongs to an affluent and prominent family and discovers her mythical powers after being deemed an outcast. The story begins with the rituals of purity, where in the kingdom of Otera, girls are tested for their purity by the color of blood. Red blood signifies purity, but gold blood shows someone as an alaki, a ghostly being who cannot die. The girls in the village live in mental stress and in fear of being marginalized. Dekka felt a sense of alienation even before the ritual took place. "what if my blood doesn't run pure? What if I'm taken away by the priests-banished?" (p-8). In the test of purity of blood, as Dekka's blood turns to gold, the villagers reject her to accept as a human being, tortured. Dekka is rescued by a mysterious emissary of the emperor, who gave the chance to join the army of alaki warriors tasked with fighting monstrous creatures called deathshrieks. After joining the army, she begins to discover disturbing facts. She can command the deathshrieks, who are revealed to be alaki transformed after their deaths. This fact leads her to question the Emperor's motives for the war.

As Dekka embraces her mythical superpowers, she finds out her connection to the Glided Ones – imprisoned Goddesses whose tears created her. Her journey becomes a rebellion against the empire's oppressive rule, confronts the emperor, and frees the Goddesses.

The Goddesses known as the Glided Ones reflect mythical elements that shape the protagonist's journey.

McLeod in his article on Humanistic Approach in Psychology argues that "Humanistic Psychology begins with the existential assumptions that people have free will and are motivated to achieve their potential and self-actualize". Dekka fits into this humanistic approach perfectly. She rediscovered her

capabilities of mythical superpowers at a crucial life junction.

The novel rejects the conventional myth of purity on women's bodies. The mainstream and dominant ideologies from the past, compel women to be honest and maintain purity of body and mind.

Power and Identity

"*Children of Blood and Bone*" is perfectly established postcolonial discourse, particularly the way Zolie, and the marginalized Maji community, seek to reclaim power and identity from the dominant ruling class. Atrocities and massacres caused by King Saran on Maji's during the raid were deliberate attempts of erasure of indigenous cultures. This act of injustice resembles colonizers, who sought to suppress the power and cultural identities of indigenous populations by eliminating their culture, religion, and identity. Zolie's adventurous journey to reclaim her identity as a Maji is a conflicting one. The struggle to control and suppress magic symbolizes a larger socio-political conflict over power.

Namina Forna's "*The Glided Ones*" draws on West African folklore and mythology, exploring themes of identity and belonging.

Identity crises and sense of alienation and Marginalization are the central themes in the novel. The society of Otera mirrors the traditional patriarchal values and cultural practices with the ritual of purity, which marginalizes girls based on their blood type. "Are we girls or are we demons? Are we going to die or are we going to survive?". (p-1) Deka's journey is basically discovering her real identity as an alaki. As she progresses from a submissive village girl to a warrior accepting uniqueness, explores self-acceptance and empowerment

Conclusion

Revisiting mythology is the latest trend in contemporary Indian and African literature. It allows writers to use their creative skills and imaginative writing. Mythology is a powerful tool to carry forward culture, ethics, and traditional practices. All four writers based on their respective Indian and African mythologies, blended fantasy and myth in their writing. All women protagonists show resistance against the patriarchal atrocities of mainstream society. Kavita Kane and Tomi Adeyemi, picked their protagonists from marginalized communities and made the subaltern speak against the dominant. Although the characters of Sita and Deka belong to mainstream society, they offer new perspectives beyond conventional history. The paper finds that all four mythological narratives serve as a powerful tool for cultural expression, resistance, and identity formation, particularly for marginalized communities. Through comparative and critical analysis of four contemporary novels, the paper demonstrates how mythological narratives can be a challenge to dominant cultural and social ideologies, and explore themes of identity, culture, and marginality.

References

- Tripathi, Amish. *Sita: Warrior of Mithila*. Westland Press, 2017.
- Kane, Kavita. *Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen*. Westland Ltd, 2013.
- Adeyemi, Tomi. *Children of Blood and Bone*. Henry Holt and Company, 2018.
- Forna, Namina. *The Glided Ones*. Delacorte Press, 2021.
- Yardi, M. R. *Epilogue of Ramayana*. India: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2001.
- McLeod, Saul. "Humanistic Approach in Psychology." *Simple Psychology*, updated 20 Dec. 2023, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/humanistic.html>.

ECOLOGICAL COLLAPSE AS A POSTMODERN CRISIS: INTERPLAY OF NATURE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMANITY IN *ORYX AND CRAKE*

Mrs. DEEPA. G

Part-Time PhD, Research Scholar, PG & Research Department of English
The Madura College, Madurai

Dr. A. CHANDRA BOSE

Associate Professor of English, PG & Research Department of English
The Madura College, Madurai

Abstract

Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake is a prescient exploration of ecological collapse framed through the lens of postmodern dystopia. This research examines how the novel critiques humanity's reckless exploitation of nature and its overreliance on technology to solve self-inflicted ecological crises. By analyzing the interplay between nature, technology, and humanity, the paper argues that Oryx and Crake functions as a cautionary tale about the fragility of ecological systems and the moral ambiguities of scientific innovation. The study employs postmodern theories to interpret Atwood's fragmented narrative and its critique of grand narratives of progress, offering insights into the ecological anxieties of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: *postmodern dystopias, ecological collapse, technology, nature, humanity, exploitation*

Introduction

Postmodern dystopias reflect the anxieties of a world grappling with crises of identity, technology, and ecology. Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* situates itself in a postmodern framework, blending speculativefiction with contemporary ecological concerns. This paper examines the novel's portrayal of ecological collapse, focusing on the triadic interplay of nature, technology, and humanity. It argues that Atwood's narrative critiques the hubris of human innovation and underscores the interconnectedness of life systems, warning against the unchecked commodification of nature and ethical lapses in scientific endeavors.

The Postmodern Lens: Fragmentation and the Critique of Progress

Postmodernism, with its skepticism toward grand narratives and linear progress, provides an apt framework for analyzing *Oryx and Crake*. Atwood's fragmented storytelling mirrors the disjointed nature

of ecological degradation—there is no single cause or solution. The novel's structure, interweaving past and present through Snowman's recollections, reflects the chaotic consequences of humanity's actions.

Atwood dismantles the Enlightenment ideal of progress by presenting a dystopia where technological advancements exacerbate ecological decline. Crake's creation of genetically engineered humanoids (the Crakers) epitomizes the postmodern critique of human exceptionalism, as these beings are designed to "replace" humanity after its self-destruction.

Nature Under Siege: Exploitation and Commodification

In *Oryx and Crake*, nature is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the narrative, suffering the consequences of human exploitation. The novel portrays a world where ecosystems have been

irreparably altered by biotechnological tampering and corporate greed.

Environmental Degradation

The novel depicts a near-future where climate change, deforestation, and species extinction have reached catastrophic levels. This environmental decay is exacerbated by corporate compounds that prioritize profit over sustainability. The extinction of species is normalized, and their genetic material is exploited to create hybrid creatures like “rakunks” and “pigoons.”

Commodification of Life

Nature is commodified to the extent that life itself becomes a marketable product. The “ChickieNobs,” genetically engineered chickens bred without brains, epitomize humanity’s disregard for ethical boundaries in the pursuit of efficiency and profit. This commodification reveals a postmodern dystopia where the natural world is entirely subsumed under capitalist logic.

Technology as Savior and Destroyer

Atwood’s novel critiques the dual role of technology as both a potential savior and a destroyer of ecosystems. While technology is ostensibly employed to address ecological crises, its misuse exacerbates the very problems it seeks to solve.

Genetic Engineering and its Consequences

Crake’s biotechnological innovations, such as the Crakers, are designed to create a species immune to human flaws like violence and environmental destruction. However, these creations highlight humanity’s hubris in attempting to “play God.” The unintended consequences of such innovations—biological plagues, hybrid predators, and ecological instability—underscore the risks of tampering with nature.

Technological Alienation

The novel also explores how technology alienates humanity from nature. The corporate compounds, with their sterile environments and artificial

lifestyles, symbolize humanity’s detachment from the natural world. This alienation contributes to the degradation of ecosystems, as people lose their intrinsic connection to the environment.

Humanity’s Role: Ethical and Moral Failures

Atwood’s dystopia critiques humanity’s ethical and moral lapses in addressing ecological collapse. The characters of Crake and Snowman embody different facets of human complicity in environmental degradation.

Crake as a Symbol of Scientific Hubris

Crake represents the dangers of unchecked scientific ambition. His belief in the supremacy of reason and his disregard for ethical boundaries lead to catastrophic consequences. By creating the Crakers, he attempts to eliminate humanity’s flaws but instead perpetuates a cycle of ecological instability.

Snowman as a Witness to Collapse

Snowman, the protagonist, serves as a witness to humanity’s ecological self-destruction. His reflections reveal the interconnectedness of ecological and human systems, emphasizing the irreparable harm caused by greed and shortsightedness. Snowman’s guilt and helplessness underscore the moral ambiguity of humanity’s role in ecological collapse.

Ecological Collapse and Postmodernism: A Cautionary Tale

Atwood’s narrative aligns with postmodern themes by rejecting simplistic solutions to ecological crises. Instead, it presents a complex, interconnected web of causes and effects. The novel critiques humanity’s overreliance on technology, its commodification of nature, and its ethical failures, urging readers to reconsider their relationship with the environment.

Postmodernism’s skepticism toward progress and grand narratives is evident in Atwood’s depiction of ecological collapse. The novel suggests that humanity’s belief in its ability to control and manipulate nature is both flawed and dangerous. The

Crakers, designed to be a “perfect” species, are a testament to the unpredictability and fragility of ecological systems.

Conclusion

Oryx and Crake serves as a powerful critique of humanity’s role in ecological collapse, highlighting the destructive interplay of nature, technology, and human ambition. By employing a postmodern lens, Atwood underscores the moral and ethical complexities of addressing ecological crises in an age of technological advancement. The novel’s fragmented narrative and ambiguous resolution reflect the uncertain future of a world grappling with environmental degradation. Ultimately, *Oryx and Crake* warns against the hubris of attempting to

dominate nature, emphasizing the need for humility and coexistence in the face of ecological collapse.

References

- Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1991.
- Morton, Timothy. *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. University of Chicago Press, 2016.

CULTURAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S NOVELS

KRISHNAVENI. B

Research Scholar, SRU, Alwar, Rajasthan

Dr. UMAKANT S PATIL

Research Guide, SRU, Alwar, Rajasthan

Abstract

Achebe, like Amos Tutuola, as a traditional story teller attempts to pass on what is good in the Igbo tradition by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses to his African leadership. Achebe said in an interview that he wrote "Things Fall Apart" "Purely from personal experience and a bit of imagination and not from a historical point of view describing history". Ofcourse native customs and anthropological details in his novel reflect the philosophy of life and attitudes of people. Achebe has deftly interwoven the Igbo social customs into the fabric of the story. In his narrative, Achebe has endeavored to show from his ambivalent position the complexities of a colonial situation and decolonization so as to establish that the disintegration of the Igbo traditional society is not due to the impact of alien culture but due to the already existing cracks in the traditional culture which failed to provide happiness and security to the individuals. People who are disabled in the old tradition like Okonkwo, Ezeulu & Odili become the first victims of the new dispensation.

Keywords: culture, consciousness, traditional, imagination, cinema, african oral tradition, east-west

Chinua Achebe, is an eminent writer of Nigeria. He is one of the most distinguished novelists in commonwealth writing. In all his works Achebe has focused his attention on his society. He gives the glimpses of his society, its socio-cultural and religious values and norms and the transformation of his society after colonization.

Chinua Achebe, Christened Albert Chinualomugu Achebe by his Igbo Christian parents, Isaiah Okafare Achebe, a Christian Churchman and Janet N. Achebe, was born on November 16, 1930 in Ogidi Eastern Nigeria to devout Christian parents. Janet and Isaac, Achebe had the advantage of having been brought up against a twice blessed background. On the one hand he sang hymns in the church and was well instructed in the tenets of Christianity, and on the other he closely observed his relatives practicing the native religion, which is full of interesting folklore traditions and customs.

He went to a missionary school and then joined Ibadan University where he graduated. It was during his university days at Ibadan that he read some novels of English writers such as Joyce, Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene.

Things Fall Apart is a widely acknowledged fact that it is with the publication of Things Fall Apart in 1958 that the African English novel has come of age and the world at large recognized African literature as 'powerful literary force to reckon with'. It has since been enjoying equal position of importance along with other literatures of the world and has become an indispensable part of academic curriculum in various universities all over the world. Achebe is one of the best loved writers of Africa. As pointed out by a discerning critic.

He touched the hearts from East to West as one who reflects authentic African situations in his writings He doesn't write for Africa alone.....

Obviously Achebe's writings contain universal values. They are no doubt situated in Africa but the human predicament he depicts is true and possible anywhere. The characters he created such as the imposing OKonkwo and the magnificent priest of Ulu, Ezeulu remain unforgettably etched out on our minds as much as the characters of Shakespeare, Hardy and George Eliot. It is of great significance that "Things Fall Apart", reached international audience through the European Literary form and the

English language, which was imposed by the colonial regime and inherited by the Anglophone Africa.

Things Fall Apart was the first novel of Chinua Achebe, which was intended to reveal the hitherto unknown phases and facets of the life of the people of Africa. The novel addressed in the native Africans who in extreme self abnegation, started believing the European colonizers' image of themselves as a hapless bunch of savages saved from a fate worse than death by their white masters. It has made a deeper impression upon the literary sensibility of Africa than all the valued labours of historians and archeologists put together. The form of the novel is decidedly evolved by the history of the local events. Its flexibility allowed all the details of social change to be incorporated into 200 pages. It was one of the first books to present European colonialism from an African point of view and to express in English the way Africans spoke in their native tongues. The book has been translated into 50 languages and has sold more than 8 million copies world wide. The unprecedented success of Things Fall Apart is also due to the fact that it was first of its kind and that it was a result of genuine experience of the author. Altogether Achebe has written five novels, Things Fall Apart (1958), No Longer at Ease (1960), Arrow of God (1964), A Man of the People (1966), Anthills of Savannah (1987). The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories (1962), Beware Soul and Other Poems (1972), which was reprinted in America as Christmas in Biafra and other Poems. Girls at War and Other Stories (1973), Morning yet on Creation Day Essays (1975). The trouble with Nigeria (Essays 1983) and Hope and Impediments Essays (1987). He has also edited a collection, the Insider stories of war and peace from Nigeria (1971).

Achebe, like Amos Tutuola, as a traditional story teller attempts to pass on what is good in the Igbo tradition by highlighting its strengths and weaknesses to his African leadership. Achebe said in an interview that he wrote "Things Fall Apart" "Purely from personal experience and a bit of imagination and not from a historical point of view describing history". Ofcourse native customs

and anthropological details in his novel reflect the philosophy of life and attitudes of people. Achebe has deftly interwoven the Igbo social customs into the fabric of the story. In his narrative, Achebe has endeavored to show from his ambivalent position the complexities of a colonial situation and decolonization so as to establish that the disintegration of the Igbo traditional society is not due to the impact of alien culture but due to the already existing cracks in the traditional culture which failed to provide happiness and security to the individuals. People who are disabled in the old tradition like Okonkwo, Ezeulu & Odili become the first victims of the new dispensation.

Achebe has chosen the tragic mode for his theme of exposure vest with its consequences, and a particular order of events to reveal a tragic pattern. His novels document the traumatic experiences of colonization and its onslaught on African culture.

Achebe, through elaborate descriptions of native rituals and customs, has depicted in the first part of Things Fall Apart the ceremony of innocence of precolonial Igbo Society. Okonkwo at the Zenith of his glory is banished for seven years by a tribal law. The banishment of Okonkwo is a very important structural device used by Achebe to separate Okonkwo from his people. On his return, Okonkwo is shocked to find his people changed: "what has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight". (159) Okokwo makes a powerful appeal to his clansmen for total unity against the force of disintegration, fails to woo his people, kills the court messenger who symbolizes an oppressive administration responsible for communal disruption and finally kills himself. Okonkwo's killing of Kotma is a 'revenge'. The events of novel are skillfully arranged by Achebe to bring the communal moral issues to a personal confrontation. Okonkwo championing his society in his excessive belief in masculinity transgresses the reasonable and permissible norms of his society. In Obierikas questioning the brutal law banishing Okonkwo and the traditional values, Achebe has shown his evolution from a - man of action to a man of thought.

The final fragmentation of Igbo society is prefigured in Nwoye's failure to come up to the expectation of Okonkwo and in his deserting his father to join the new faith. In the novel the dialogues are very short and there are no extended speeches, nor lengthy conversations and even the authorial commentary is limited. The story in Achebe's novels is developed by exposition and not by the dramatic rendering of scenes, Achebe tells the reader something about the hero many a time but he rarely depicts the events and rarely shows Okonkwo in action. He presents the Whiteman's administration and Christian missionaries dispassionately and objectively to establish the presence of the Whiteman as only a catalyst and that the internal feuds and dissensions are more responsible for the disintegration of the Igbo society.

The theme of Arrow of God has elaborated the destruction of the tribal world but through a more sustained character. Achebe in alternating chapters depicts the two worlds which could never come closer Naïve folk tales and legends woven into the novel do not have much relevance to the plot but create the atmosphere to strengthen the traditional life. The threat of collapse of the 'old order because of its exposure to a superior order is stated by Achebe in a proverb "a man who brings ant ridden faggots into his but should expect the visit of lizards".(178).

Achebe has chosen a different pattern for *No Longer at Ease*. The novel opens with Obi's trial scene in a court of Law. "No Longer at Ease" is not just about Obi's crime, but about the reasons behind it. The structure of the novel invites the reader to analyse motives and examine every event responsible for Obi's fall. The moral decline of Obi is rather sudden as indicated in the last four pages of the novel. The rest of the novel prepares the reader for his fall not by suggesting a series of temptations and corruption but by showing his moral nature and the psychological stresses that have dulled his sensibility. The novel speaks of

Obi's confusion of values of confusion not only between 'good tradition and blind, ugly superstitious traditions, but also between new 'advance' and new corruptions. Achebe has shown the new values maintained by wisdom and strength of mind. Achebe describing the life in Lagos also paints a moving picture of traditional rural life suffering the onslaughts of modernity. He has in the novel portrayed the African myth of the man of two worlds suffering from intolerable internal stresses, liable to desert his career and virtues at a crisis. Interwoven with the Socio-Cultural crisis, the novel also deals with the personal affair of Obi with Clara resulting in marriage, which is considered not a private but communal affair in the traditional society and which is not approved by his mother and Umuofia progressive union. The ending of "No Longer at Ease" is far more than a mere case study of Obi, an isolated individual.

A *Man of the People* is hailed by Nigerian reviewers as a sign of Achebe's new 'commitment'. The electoral campaign of October—December 1964 and its immediate aftermath might have inspired Achebe to write the novel. This society of "A Man of the People" represents the new contemporary African nation. Less at the mercy of the Whiteman the novel is about the legacy of colonialism and it reflects the breakdown in the continuity and unity of tribal life vested in the intricate balance between the pursuit of material things and observance of religious customs and traditions³.

References

- Quoted from Achebe's interview with Dennis Duerden, Lagos, September 1965.
- David Carroll, *Chinua Achebe* (London Macmillan, 1980), P. 13.
- G.D. Killam, *The Novels of Chinua Achebe* (London Heinmann, 1969), P.85.

THE WHITE TIGER: A NOVEL OF MODERN INDIA BY ARAVIND ADIGA'S -A STUDY

BHARATI GANI

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Full -Time), Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

Abstract

*The recent paper *The White Tiger*, written by Aravind Adiga in the year 2008, offers a bold and critical exploration of modern India's socio-economic disparities, class struggles, and the complexities of urbanization. Here is itself through the eyes of its protagonist and narrator of the novel Balram Halwai. This novel's focus delves into themes of corruption, social mobility, and the oppressive dynamics of rural and urban life. Balram's journey from a poor village boy to a self-made entrepreneur serves as a critique of India's emerging global identity while also highlighting the stark inequalities that persist in the nation. Through a blend of dark humor and brutal realism, this story of *The White Tiger* challenges the notion of the "Indian dream" and paints a sobering picture of the costs associated with it. Adiga presents a critical portrait of India's darker realities, highlighting the moral compromises individuals must make in order to survive and succeed in an increasingly competitive and globalized world.*

Keywords: *modern india, social class, corruption, caste system, social mobility, balram halwai, inequality, post-colonial critique*

Introduction

Aravind Adiga was born on October 23, 1974. He is a journalist and writer from India. *The White Tiger*, his debut novel, was awarded the 2008 Man Booker Prize. Aravind Adiga was born in Madras (now Chennai) to Dr. K. Madhava Adiga and Usha Adiga, who were originally from Mangalore. His maternal great-grandfather, U. Rama Rao, was a well-known Madras-based physician and Congress leader. His paternal grandpa, K. Suryanarayana Adiga, was a former chairman of Karnataka Bank. He attended Canara High School and then St. Aloysius College in Mangalore, where he graduated with honors in 1990. Following his family's emigration to Sydney, Aravind attended James Ruse Agricultural High School. Later, he attended Columbia to study English literature. Under Simon Schama at Columbia University in New York City and graduated as salutatorian in 1997. His articles on the stock market and investing were published in *Money* and *Time*. Later that year, he relocated to New Delhi from New York to work as *Time's* reporter for South Asia. "Being a journalist afforded me a path to go back to

India," he clarified in a 2017 interview. The Second Circle. Adiga began work on his first book, *The White Tiger*, shortly after leaving his job at *Time*. The book was published in March 2008 and went on to win the Booker Prize in the same year. After **Kiran Desai, Salman Rushdie, and Arundhati Roy**, he is the fourth author of Indian descent to receive the prize. This study aims at focusing on Arvind Adiga's novels and short stories. His first novel was *The White Tiger*, published in 2008; his second novel was *Between the Assassinations*, published in 2008; and his third novel was published in 2011. The fourth novel was *Selection Day*. Published in 2016, the fifth novel was *Amnesty*, published in 2020. He also authored numerous novels and short stories. Some famous ones are *The Sultan's Battery* (2008), *Smack* (2008), *Last Christmas in Bandra* (2008), and *The Elephant* 2009. Richard Wright's *Native Son* by USA Today, which named it "one of the most powerful books I've read in decades." Balram Halwai is born into a **lower-caste** family in the village of **Laxmangarh**, a poor and underdeveloped region in northern India.

His family belongs to the "Halwai" caste, which is considered inferior in the rigid caste hierarchy. The story begins with Balram's reflections on his family's struggles. His father, a poor rickshaw-puller, dies from tuberculosis, leaving the family even more destitute. Balram is expected to follow in his father's footsteps, living a life of servitude and poverty. However, even as a child, Balram is highly intelligent and observant, which sets him apart from others in his village.

Plot

The White Tiger, written by Aravind Adiga in the year 2008, is a gripping, darkly comic novel that explores the themes of social inequality, corruption, and the cost of ambition in contemporary India. The story follows the journey of **Balram Halwai**, a man born into poverty and oppression in rural India who rises to become a wealthy entrepreneur in the urban centers of modern India, but at great personal and moral cost. These letters serve as both a personal confession and a reflection on the complex social dynamics of India.

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* is a critically acclaimed and darkly satirical novel that examines the harsh realities of contemporary Indian society. Through the life story of Balram Halwai, the protagonist, the novel provides a sharp critique of the deep-rooted corruption, social inequality, and class divisions that pervade modern India. Balram's rise from a poor, low-caste village boy to a self-made entrepreneur in Bangalore is marked by violence, betrayal, and moral ambiguity, reflecting the moral decay that accompanies social mobility in a society fraught with injustice.

The novel begins with Balram Halwai, a man in his mid-thirties, addressing a series of letters to a Chinese official. Balram is recounting his life, explaining how he rose from the depths of poverty in rural India to become a successful businessman in Bangalore. The letter format serves as both a confession and a justification for his actions. Balram's story is presented as a personal narrative of

survival, but it also reflects the broader socio-political issues of modern India.

Balram was born into a poor, low-caste family in the village of Laxmangarh, in northern India. His family, belonging to the Halwai caste (a lower caste), is impoverished and oppressed by the dominant, upper-caste landlords. His father is a rickshaw puller who dies from tuberculosis, and Balram is forced to abandon his education to help support his family. He is expected to follow in his father's footsteps, but Balram harbors dreams of escape, recognizing that the rigid caste system offers little opportunity for advancement.

Balram's opportunity to escape comes when he is hired as a driver for Mr. Ashok, the son of a wealthy landlord. Ashok and his family, despite being educated and seemingly progressive, are deeply entangled in the corrupt and exploitative systems that control India's political and economic spheres. Balram moves to Delhi with Ashok's family, where he witnesses firsthand the moral decay and hypocrisy of the rich. Although Ashok appears to be different from his family, trying to avoid corruption, he is ultimately forced to participate in the family's corrupt dealings.

He described "The White Tiger" as a book about a man's search for freedom in an interview with Aravind Adiga. The main character of the book, Balram, transcended the social constraints that previously bound his family and worked his way out of his low social caste, which is sometimes referred to as "the darkness." As Balram moves up the social scale, he overcomes the social constraints that prevent him from experiencing life to the fullest and lets go of the burdens and limitations of his past. Balram describes how he was in a rooster coop and how he managed to escape from there in the book. In a way, the book recalls his quest for independence in contemporary capitalist India.

Society. Balram quotes a poem by Muslim poet Iqbal on slaves toward the start of the book, saying, "They remain slaves because they can't see what is beautiful in this world." As he moves up the social scale and discovers his freedom, Balram sees himself

as the personification of the poem, the one who sees the world and takes it.

The novel depicts a contemporary, capitalist, free-market, free-business Indian society. It also demonstrates the potential for economic division. There are castes and social classes in India. India's society is portrayed in the story as being extremely hostile to the lower castes. Discrimination against Muslims, the largest religious minority in India, is highlighted in parts of the book. The main character's employers want to know if he practices Islam. Later in the book, the protagonist exposes a character who is secretly practicing Islam, leading to his blackmail and eventual termination. The story centers on the contrasts between two worlds: the lighted world, which is populated by zamindars, politicians, businesspeople, and others, and the dark world, which is inhabited by the impoverished and disadvantaged who are unable to even meet the most basic necessities. Makes the people from the dark poorer and increases their own wealth by unscrupulous exploitation. The "darkness" is what Balram calls this. Balram was aware that being questioned whose caste he belonged to would eventually lead to a biased attitude from his employer and affect his job prospects. The lifestyles, customs, and standards of living of Balram's current higher caste and his lower caste from back home undoubtedly differ greatly. The social discrimination in India's economic structure that causes rifts in Indian society is highlighted in this book. It restricts health, social mobility, opportunity, and other rights and pleasures that everyone should have. The amount of money that is distributed in today's society varies greatly and that reality is hinted to in this work.

Through Balram's observations, Adiga exposes pervasive corruption at all levels of Indian society. Ashok's family is involved in bribery, political manipulation, and criminal activities. Balram sees how the rich, while outwardly progressive, continue to exploit the poor. He also witnesses the deep social divide between the powerful elite and the poor underclass. Despite his loyalty and hard work, Balram is treated as little more than a tool for his

employers, never able to escape the chains of servitude.

As Balram grows increasingly disillusioned with his life and the system that keeps him in a position of servitude, he becomes increasingly aware of the moral decay surrounding him. He begins to understand that the only way to escape the cycle of poverty and servitude is to reject the system entirely. Balram starts to view the rich as morally bankrupt and sees the corruption and exploitation around him as inescapable. He realizes that to escape his fate, he must break free from the expectations of servitude, even if it requires betraying the very people he works for.

The pivotal moment in the novel comes when Balram, unable to bear the system any longer, makes a radical decision. When Ashok is tasked with delivering a bribe to corrupt politicians, Balram sees an opportunity for liberation. In a shocking and brutal act, he murders Ashok, steals the bribe money, and runs away to Bangalore. This act of violence is both an act of rebellion against the oppressive social system and a desperate attempt to assert control over his own life. Balram's justification for murder is that in order to escape the hierarchical caste system and the corrupt society, one must sometimes break the law and discard morality.

After committing the murder, Balram flees to Bangalore, where he uses the stolen money to reinvent himself as a successful entrepreneur. He establishes a call center, capitalizing on the growing demand for outsourcing in India. Balram's success represents a complete break from his past life as a servant and marks his transformation into a self-made businessman. He manages to escape the servile role that had been imposed on him by society and rises to a position of power and wealth.

However, while he enjoys material success, Balram is constantly haunted by the ethical costs of his rise. His transformation is a symbolic rejection of the caste system, but it comes at a great personal and moral price. His success is built on a foundation of betrayal and violence, and despite his wealth, he remains a deeply conflicted character.

The novel critiques the rigid caste system and the deep socio-economic divisions in Indian society. Balram's life story exposes the harsh realities faced by the poor, particularly those from lower castes, who are trapped in a cycle of poverty and servitude. The novel paints a grim picture of the pervasive corruption in India, from politics to business. It shows how the rich and powerful use their influence to exploit the poor and maintain their dominance.

Balram's rebellion against the social system is a key theme. The novel explores the lengths to which an individual must go to break free from oppression and whether the cost of success and freedom is worth the moral compromises involved.

Adiga examines the effects of globalization and modernization on India, particularly the rise of new business opportunities, such as call centers. While these opportunities provide financial success for some, they do little to address the systemic inequalities that continue to plague the majority of the population.

"I'm always a man who sees 'tomorrow' when others see 'today.'" Balram's recognition of the increasing competition resulting from globalization contributes to his corruption. Throughout the book, there are references to show how Balram is very different from his home environment. He is referred to as the "white tiger" (which also happens to be the title of the book). A white tiger symbolizes power in East Asian cultures, such as in Vietnam. It is also a symbol for freedom and individuality. Balram is seen as different from those he grew up with. He is the one who got out of the "darkness" and found his way into the "light." In an interview with Aravind Adiga, he talked about how "The White Tiger" was a book about a man's quest for freedom. Balram, the main character protagonist in the novel, worked his way out of his low social caste (often referred to as "the Darkness") and overcame the social obstacles that limited his family in the past. Climbing up the social ladder, Balram sheds the weights and limits of his past and overcomes the social obstacles that keep him from living life to the fullest that he can. In the book, Balram talks about how he was in a rooster

coop and how he broke free from his coop. The novel is somewhat a memory of his journey to finding his freedom in India's modern-day capitalist society. Abhorrent to corruption, injustice, dishonesty, hypocrisy, social

Irresponsibility and male dominance: Pinky Madam left her husband, Mr. Ashok Behind, to opt for an American life. Alone in Delhi, Mr. Ashok started a debauched life. Balram hated such degradation of his master and felt extremely alienated. He soon realized working with him was not for the best interest of his career. Earlier, he had to take the blame for the hit-and-run accident of Pinky Madam on himself and was made ready to go to jail, and now his master was pondering terminating him from the job. Determined to protect him from such blind obedience and slavery, one day, when he got a suitable opportunity, he murdered his master, Mr. Ashok, and ran away with his cash to Bangalore. Rich with the money of Mr. Ashok, he started a successful business in taxi service.

The *White Tiger* is a powerful, thought-provoking novel that delves into the moral and social complexities of contemporary India. Through Balram's story, Adiga sheds light on the deep injustices of caste and class and offers a critique of the inequalities that persist in a society striving for modernization. The novel is both a personal journey and a broader social commentary, making it a significant work in the context of postcolonial literature.

Methodology

Which I have adopted is the present study, which aims at the qualitative analysis of the text, examining its narrative structure, themes, and character development. It also draws on postcolonial and socio-economic theories to contextualize the novel within India's contemporary social and political landscape.

Conclusion

This study revolves around The White Tiger, a thought-provoking, incisive critique of modern Indian society. Through the eyes of Balram Halwai,

Adiga reveals the moral, social, and political contradictions that define contemporary India. Balram's journey from servitude to entrepreneurship serves as both a personal story of survival and a broader commentary on the complexities of class, caste, and corruption. The novel raises important questions about the nature of success, the cost of freedom, and the ethical compromises that individuals must make in a deeply unequal society. In the end, *The White Tiger* is a stark and compelling portrayal of a society in transition, where the pursuit of wealth and power often comes at the expense of morality and integrity.

References

Primary Source

Adiga, Aravind (2008). *The White Tiger*. New Delhi: Harper Collins. 2008. Print.

Secondary Sources

- Singh, Krishna. "Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*: The Voice of the Underclass—A Postcolonial Dialectics." *Journal of Literature, Culture, and Media Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Jul-Dec 2009. Print.
- Yadav, Mukesh. "The (Un) Changing India in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*." *International Journal of English Language, Literature, and Translation Studies (IJELR)* Vol. 2, Issue 4, 2015 (Oct.-Dec.). Print.
- Abell, Stephen, (2009), *Between the Assassinations by Aravind Adiga: review*. [Online] Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>(March 23, 2014)

BOUND BY CULTURE: THE INTERSECTION OF PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE AND FEMALE POWERLESSNESS IN CHO NAM-JOO'S NOVEL *KIM JI-YOUNG, BORN 1982*

M. SWATHI

Research Scholar, Department of English
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Dr. R. DHAYALAKRISHNAN

Assistant Professor & Head i/c, Department of English
Directorate of Distance Education
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

Cho Nam-Joo's novel Kim Ji-young, Born 1982 is a profound exploration of the ways patriarchal structures perpetuate systemic violence and female powerlessness in contemporary South Korea. This paper investigates the intersection of patriarchal violence and gendered oppression as portrayed in the novel, focusing on the protagonist, Kim Ji-young, whose life is emblematic of countless women bound by cultural expectations and institutionalized gender inequality. Through the lens of feminist theory and cultural critique, the study examines how societal norms, workplace discrimination, and familial expectations reinforce women's marginalization and silence their voices. The research paper answers How does Cho Nam-Joo's Kim Ji-young, Born 1982 depict the mechanisms of patriarchal violence, and in what ways does the narrative highlight female powerlessness and resilience within such structures?. By contextualizing the novel in both a Korean and global framework, this paper aims to demonstrate how cultural specificity intertwines with universal patterns of gender inequality. The study contributes to societal understanding by illuminating the pervasive and often normalized forms of gender-based violence embedded in everyday life. It provides a critical framework for understanding the invisible barriers women face in achieving equality, offering insights into the cultural and institutional dynamics that hinder their progress. By addressing these issues, the research underscores the novel's relevance as a tool for raising awareness and fostering dialogue about gender-based oppression, both within South Korea and globally.

Keywords: patriarchal violence, female powerlessness, gender inequality, cultural expectations, cho nam-joo, kim ji-young, born 1982

In recent decades, the way women are portrayed in Korean literature, especially in modern works, has changed dramatically, reflecting both feminist movements in South Korea and broader socioeconomic shifts. Confucian patriarchy, which limited women's positions and voices in literature and society, has historically had a significant influence on Korean literature. Nonetheless, feminist viewpoints have steadily gained traction since the late 20th century, resulting in increasingly complex representations of women and their challenges in a patriarchal society.

In pre-modern and early modern Korean literature, women were largely depicted in stereotypical roles that conformed to the patriarchal ideals of Confucianism. Female characters were often portrayed as passive, self-sacrificing figures, bound by familial duties and moral codes. In works such as *Chunhyangjeon* (The Tale of Chunhyang) and *Hong Gildong jeon* (The Story of Hong Gildong), women were celebrated for their loyalty, beauty, and virtue, but they rarely had agency or independence outside of their prescribed roles as daughters or wives.

The emergence of modern Korean literature in the early 20th century marked a shift in some

respects, though women still faced significant marginalization, particularly in a rapidly industrializing and patriarchal society. Authors such as Kim Suyoung and Park Kyung-ni depicted women within these evolving social structures but often portrayed them as tragic figures struggling against restrictive norms. The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of feminist movements in South Korea, coinciding with significant political, social, and economic changes, including democratization and economic liberalization. During this period, feminist writers began to challenge traditional representations of women in literature, seeking to portray female characters as active agents rather than passive victims of male-dominated systems. This period also marked the growth of women's literary journals and a new generation of female authors who explored gender, sexuality, and the complexities of women's lives. Numerous writers, like Kim Young-ha and Shin Kyung-sook, have written extensively about the difficulties women encounter in patriarchal societies, emphasising the psychological and personal hardships associated with living in a gendered society. *Please Look After Mom (2008)* by Shin Kyung-sook examines the roles of women in family structures by concentrating on the lives of a mother who has been neglected by her husband and kids. The novel examines the erasure of women's identities and their commitment to self-sacrifice, which frequently results in the neglect of their own needs, through the mother's disappearance.

At its core, *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* is a critique of a deeply ingrained patriarchal system that normalizes female subjugation and limits women's autonomy. The novel transcends its cultural specificity, resonating with global audiences and sparking widespread discussions about the nature of gender inequality in both public and private life. Ji-young's story is not just her own it is a collective narrative that exposes the invisible structures sustaining patriarchy while urging society to confront uncomfortable truths about gender roles and expectations. This research examines the intersection of patriarchal violence and female powerlessness as

portrayed in the novel, with a focus on the cultural mechanisms that perpetuate systemic oppression.

Korean literature has been impacted by the worldwide feminist movement, especially in the aftermath of #MeToo, as numerous writers have tackled topics such as gender violence, sexual harassment, and the evolving roles of women. In addition to bringing attention to themes of oppression and abuse, this changing literary discourse has also highlighted women's agency, empowerment, and resistance. These international feminist influences are reflected in writers such as Park Min-gyu, whose novels examine the conflicts between individualism and social expectations, and Hwang Sok-yong, whose works frequently centre on the problems of the marginalised. They provide intricate depictions of women navigating the intricacies of modern life, emphasising their agency and tenacity in the face of structural oppression. *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* chronicles the life of a typical South Korean woman named Kim Ji-young as she negotiates the structural injustices that are deeply embedded in a patriarchal culture. The narrative starts in Ji-young's adult life when she begins acting strangely and appears to be adopting the personalities of other women in her life. As a result of her illness, her spouse seeks mental health treatment, which sets up a sequence of flashbacks that reveal her life story. Ji-young has experienced gender-based discrimination since she was a young child, from her brother being given preference to social norms restricting her access to school and employment. As an adult, she faces sexism at work, battles the rigours of motherhood, and gives up her dreams in order to fit in with society's expectations. In order to paint a multigenerational picture of systematic oppression, her experience is intertwined with that of other women who face comparable challenges, including her mother, grandmother, and coworkers. The widespread patriarchal systems that determine women's duties and conduct in both public and private domains are criticised in the book. Ji-young's experiences bring to light structural injustices in family dynamics, work, and education where women

are routinely marginalised and silenced. The accumulated impact of social pressures and the silence of women's voices are symbolised by Ji-young's psychological collapse. In spite of South Korea's fast modernisation, the novel examines how conventional gender roles endure, exposing a societal backlash against gender equality. Ji-young is a symbol of the collective female oppression and resistance since her tale is not only her own but also reflects the challenges that women have faced over the years. *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* becomes a mirror to society and a call to action, imploring readers to face and destroy the structures that sustain gender inequality through its unapologetic depiction of commonplace sexism.

The research questions are, How does the novel depict the insidious nature of everyday sexism and its cumulative effects on women? In what ways does the novel expose the limitations of individual agency within a patriarchal system? How does the novel challenge traditional gender roles and expectations? What are the implications of the novel's portrayal of female powerlessness for contemporary Korean society? *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* by Cho Nam-Joo, which challenges patriarchal systems and the experiences of women in a male-dominated society, provides a rich field for feminist literary criticism. The term "intersectionality," which was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, emphasises how overlapping oppressive systems such as gender, class, racism, and age interact to influence a person's lived experience. awareness the protagonist's struggles which are shaped not only by her gender but also by her responsibilities as a daughter, wife, mother, and employee in the context of *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* requires an awareness of intersectionality. Due to cultural stigmas against working moms and insufficient maternity leave policies, Ji-young's life is characterised by financial constraints, such as her incapacity to fully engage in the workforce. From Ji-young's grandmother, who was denied an education, to Ji-young herself, who forgoes her professional goals in order to support her family, the book also emphasises the ways in which patriarchal norms

impact women across generations. In a culture that disproportionately focusses domestic responsibilities on women, Ji-young's experiences highlight the combined challenges of being a working mother and a woman. According to intersectionality, Ji-young's oppression is the product of a number of systemic injustices rather than a single, isolated force.

Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity argues that gender is not an inherent identity but rather a socially constructed role, performed and reinforced through repetitive actions and societal expectations. This concept is evident in *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*, where Ji-young's life is governed by the expectations tied to her gender. Ji-young is expected to embody the ideal woman: a dutiful daughter, a supportive wife, and a self-sacrificing mother. These roles are imposed on her not through explicit coercion but through cultural norms that shape her behavior and choices. Ji-young's psychological collapse symbolizes the unsustainable nature of these performative roles. Her mental health issues serve as a rebellion against the rigid gender expectations that suppress her identity. Ji-young's breakdown and her husband's inability to understand her plight underscore how societal norms silence women, denying them agency and authenticity in their roles. By examining Ji-young's life through the lens of gender performativity, the novel critiques the ways in which societal norms perpetuate oppressive gender roles and prevent women from asserting their individuality.

Kim Ji-Young had approximately three hours to herself. Most of that time was spent doing laundry and the dishes, tidying up, and making snacks and food for the baby. (Kim Ji-Young Born 1982, 145)

The overt and covert kinds of sexism that influence the lives of the main character, Kim Ji-young, are expertly portrayed by Cho Nam-Joo. Ji-young encounters sexism at a young age, which is so embedded in her culture that it is nearly imperceptible. For example, her internalised conception of gender roles is influenced by her family's preference for her brother over her. In her

early years, Ji-young is expected to fit into the roles that are prescribed by traditional gender norms: her brother is encouraged to be assertive and ambitious, while she is trained to be meek and selfless. She was expected to do well in school and take care of the house, while her brother was allowed to attend the best school and play any games he wanted. Ji-young's early exposure to gendered expectations establishes a pattern for the remainder of her life, instilling in her the belief that women must perform emotional and household labour while pursuing their own goals.

As Ji-young grows up and starts working, sexism becomes more obvious, yet it is still frequently covered up as "normal" or "natural" behaviour. Even when they are better qualified, women are expected to keep up a certain appearance, preserve their humility, and submit to male authority figures. She was constantly reminded that she needed to put forth more effort, smile, and be friendlier than the males. Despite having the same degree and professional experience, she was always required to prove herself.

Three people from the middle management section managers known for their

competence, and the two male colleagues who started at the same time as Ji

Young was assigned to the planning team. the company treated the planning team

like an elite squad, which made Ji Young and the other female employee who

started with the Kang Hyesu, feel robbed. (Kim Ji-Young Born 1982, 109)

Ji-young's experiences at work illustrate the subtle but enduring ways that men are allowed to express themselves more freely while women are expected to adhere to cultural norms of femininity, such as being submissive and polite. Because she is a woman, her competency is continuously questioned, which feeds the cycle of inferiority. Additional instances of how gender norms subtly affect Ji-young's emotional and mental health can be found in her experiences as a mother. Although her husband, who has a similar educational level, is not expected

to make the same sacrifices, she is expected to give up her career goals and devote herself entirely to childcare after having a kid. Even when she hadn't mentioned her intention to go back to work, her coworkers would advise her, "You should be at home taking care of your baby." Even when the duties were divided, she was always burdened with the responsibility of being a good mother. This kind of misogyny is so pervasive that it seems natural to everyone, including Ji-young's coworkers, that a woman's primary role is to be a mother, but males are not held to the same standard.

Male coworkers' objectification and harassment of her are dismissed as "jokes" or as a part of the "culture." This demonstrates how sexism is accepted and even normalised in workplaces. Her employer would casually comment on how she looked, telling her that her legs were too short for skirts or that she should wear less makeup. Despite his constant claims that it was a praise, she felt imprisoned and uneasy. Due to the buildup of social demands and emotional labour, Ji-young starts to exhibit signs of mental discomfort. However, her family and husband reject her troubles as unimportant or as a momentary error in judgement. This downplays the very real consequences of being a woman in a patriarchal culture where selflessness is required of her. Although he was concerned about her, her husband continued repeating things like, 'You're simply tired.'? This differs from you. He was unaware that she was crumbling now, even though she had always been the one to keep everything together. There is a significant emotional and psychological cost associated with these covert and overt types of sexism. Ji-young's breakdown is not merely a personal problem; rather, it is an expression of the greater oppressive social forces that have been influencing her life for years in both covert and overt ways. Her "feminine nature," which is supposed to be empathetic and nurturing, is blamed for her mental health issues, which are not taken seriously.

Ji-Young spent twelfth grade washing and ironing her and her brothers school

uniforms, packing their lunch from time to time, sitting her straying younger

brother down and making him study, and getting

her studying alone. (Kim Ji-Young Born 1982, 66)

Ji-young lives in a society where gender-based violence, discrimination, and emotional labour are accepted rather than questioned due to the normalisation of both covert and overt sexism. These daily encounters with injustice influence her relationships, identity, and mental well-being. She internalises the idea that the needs of others around her, particularly the males in her life, come before her own wants and needs. These demands eventually become too much for her, causing her to feel invisible, frustrated, and disillusioned. Because of the ongoing disrespect for her mental health and the normalisation of her pain, she is unable to ask for assistance or even acknowledge her own value.

On the bus and the underground, many suspicious hands grazed her bottom and breasts. (Kim Ji-Young Born 1982, 78)

By including this moment in the narrative, Cho Nam-Joo forces readers to confront the everyday violence women endure in public spaces and the structural failure to address or prevent such behavior. Through Ji-young's story, Cho Nam-Joo calls for a reevaluation of societal attitudes toward gender-based harassment, advocating for accountability, awareness, and systemic change to ensure women's safety and dignity in all aspects of life. Cho Nam-Joo challenges the ways in which patriarchy both covertly and blatantly upholds gender inequity, causing psychological pain and emotional exhaustion in women. By authentically depicting these experiences, the book highlights the pervasive violence of sexism and its severe effects on women's lives.

Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* exposes the pervasive and deeply entrenched patriarchal structures that shape women's lives, highlighting both subtle and overt forms of sexism. Through Ji-young's experiences, the novel critiques societal norms that normalize gender-based discrimination, silence women's voices, and undermine their agency. This work not only gives voice to the shared struggles of countless women but

also serves as a call to action for dismantling these oppressive systems. It challenges readers to reflect on the cultural norms that sustain gender inequality and emphasizes the urgent need for structural change to create a society where women can live with dignity, agency, and equality. Through its raw portrayal of lived experiences, *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* stands as a powerful feminist critique and a vital contribution to the global discourse on gender justice.

References

- Cho, Nam-Joo. *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*. Translated by Jamie Chang, Scribner, 2020.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Vintage, 2011.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. South End Press, 2000.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. W. W. Norton & Company, 1963.
- Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. University of California Press, 1999.
- Ortner, Sherry B. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Beacon Press, 1996.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press, 2003.
- Articles on South Korean Feminism and Society
- Abelmann, Nancy. "Women in South Korea: Class, Family, and the State." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1993, pp. 451–467.
- Song, Jesook. "South Korea's Uneven Development and Globalization in the 1990s: Female Labor in the Apparel Industry." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2000, pp. 556–580.
- Park, Mi-Kyung. "Gender and Nation in South Korea." *Cultural Studies*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2002, pp. 431–452.
- Kendall, Laurel. *Getting Married in Korea: of Gender, Morality, and Modernity*. University of California Press, 1996.
- Kim, Eun Mee. "Globalization of the South Korean Chaebol and Labor." *Asian Survey*, vol. 37, no. 8, 1997, pp. 719–734.

- Ryang, Sonia. "The Cultures of Inequality: Women, Modernity, and Nationhood in Korea and Japan." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 60, no. 3, 2001, pp. 815–817.
- Works on Cultural Representation and Literature
- Lee, Kyunghye. "Korean Feminist Literature: Reading Women's Narratives of Patriarchy." *Korea Journal*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2014, pp. 123–142.
- Choi, Hyun-Mi. "The Representation of Women's Lives in Contemporary Korean Literature." *World Literature Today*, vol. 83, no. 3, 2009, pp. 44–48.
- Kang, Eun Shil. "Reclaiming the Everyday: Women's Subjectivity and Domestic Space in Korean Literature." *Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2011, pp. 253–273.
- Bae, Youngmin. *Traces of Trauma: Korean War Literature*. Routledge, 2019.
- Feminism and Violence
- Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*. Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Kabeer, Naila. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. Verso, 1994.
- Walby, Sylvia. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Hunnicut, Gwen. "Varieties of Patriarchy and Violence Against Women." *Violence Against Women*, vol. 15, no. 5, 2009, pp. 553–573.
- Social, Economic, and Cultural Studies
- Han, Ju Hui Judy. "Navigating Korean Modernity: Gender and Labor in the Era of Globalization." *Korea Journal*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2005, pp. 45–67.
- Lie, John. *Modern Peoplehood: On Nationhood, Citizenship, and Democracy*. Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Hagen, Trever. *The Political Economy of South Korea: From Industrialization to Post-Industrialization*. Routledge, 2020.
- Kendall, Laurel. *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea*. University of Hawaii Press, 2002.
- Articles on Kim Ji-young, Born 1982
- Kwak, Jiyoung. "Literary Feminism in Korea: The Social and Cultural Impact of *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*." *Asian Literature Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2021, pp. 45–63.
- Shin, Jiyeon. "Challenging the Patriarchal Norms in Korean Literature: A Study of Cho Nam-Joo's *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982*." *Journal of Korean Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2020, pp. 89–110.
- Park, Sunhee. "Feminism in Literature: An Analysis of Cho Nam-Joo's Work." *Korea Literature Review*, vol. 55, 2020, pp. 77–92.
- Global Feminism and Gender Studies
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. *Gender and Nation*. Sage, 1997.
- Eisenstein, Zillah. *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*. Longman, 1981.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. Routledge, 1987.
- Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, editors. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Media and Public Perception
- Jung, Sun. "K-pop, Gender, and Media Representation in South Korea." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 14, no. 6, 2011, pp. 546–563.
- Kim, Youna. *Women, Television and Everyday Life in Korea: Journeys of Hope*. Routledge, 2005.
- Jang, Ji-Hye. "Media Representation of Feminist Themes in South Korean Society." *Asia-Pacific Media Review*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2019, pp. 123–136.
- South Korean Laws and Policies
- Moon, Seungsook. *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea*. Duke University Press, 2005.
- Hahm, Chaibong. "Constitutionalism, Confucianism, and Democracy in South Korea." *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 59, no. 2, 2000, pp. 421–441.

THE DECOLONIAL POLITICS AND PHILOSOPHY OF NGUGI WA THIONG'O

Dr. PATIL SHESHIKANT U

Assistant Professor of English

Residential Government First Grade College, Ghodampalli

Abstract

It has already been established without doubt that Ngugi's literary beginnings are shaped by the realities of colonialism and the struggle for independence. Through his works, he has brought the narrative of colonialism, which had dominated African literature for at least two centuries, to an unavoidable close. When Ngugi began writing his books, colonialism was no longer the defining feature of African life as it had been in the past. His books are set in an environment where independence is celebrated, developing new states. It is anticipated that autonomy and freedom would be established on the African continent in general and Kenya in particular. This narrative dominates the atmosphere in which they are written. As a result of his postcolonial identity, Ngugi's relationship to – and distinction from – the pioneering group of African authors may be explained. For Ngugi, as for Achebe and the first generation of modern African writers, a reasonably coherent set of questions and ideas preoccupies him: the process of colonization and its impact on Africa's cultures and selves; the efficacy and limits of old traditions in the formation of new African identities; and the necessity of decolonization. As a result of his colonial schooling.

Keywords: *colonialism, identity, african writers, decolonization, efficacy traditions, independence, politics*

In today's world, postcolonial studies encompass a diverse variety of topics. It is the kind of thing we used to do when we narrowly study commonwealth literature. Postcolonial literature encompasses indigenous literature in all languages where imperialism previously reigned supreme. This literature may be in any language at the time of publication. This corpus of literature includes works that are not necessarily literary. The topics covered in this category are diasporas, historical fiction, new writing, east-west encounter, language and cultural concerns, political conflicts, and globalization. On the other hand, post-colonial studies are vibrant and gratifying to pursue.

Ngugi waThiong'o is widely regarded as one of the most talented African authors working today. He is a native of Kenya. Aside from being a social activist and thinker, he is also a talented dramatist, writer, and critic, among other things. What is more, Ngugi is a nativist academic in the vein of India's BalachandraNemade. Ngugi's overall point of view has served as an inspiration to authors across the Third World. Ngugi waThiong'o is regarded as the best writer in Africa, surpassing authors like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka.

England dominated Kenya and numerous other African republics in the same way as they ruled the whole Indian subcontinent, not to mention their colonies in other parts of the world. Beginning in the 17th century, the English used diarchy (divide and rule), the theory of lapses, and the disarmament of armaments to maintain control over the indigenous population. They started their colonization for commerce purposes but soon saw weakness, disunity, and a lack of culture wherever they went. So they turned their attention to political conquest. Later on, their missionary schools assisted them in maintaining control over the locals and expanding their imperialist policies. They started English education schools and colleges instead of Greek and Latin schools and colleges because Lord Macaulay believed that this would generate a class of individuals who could assist in the administration of the Raj.

It has already been established without doubt that Ngugi's literary beginnings are shaped by the realities of colonialism and the struggle for independence. Through his works, he has brought the

narrative of colonialism, which had dominated African literature for at least two centuries, to an unavoidable close. When Ngugi began writing his books, colonialism was no longer the defining feature of African life as it had been in the past. His books are set in an environment where independence is celebrated, developing new states. It is anticipated that autonomy and freedom would be established on the African continent in general and Kenya in particular. This narrative dominates the atmosphere in which they are written. As a result of his postcolonial identity, Ngugi's relationship to – and distinction from – the pioneering group of African authors may be explained. For Ngugi, as for Achebe and the first generation of modern African writers, a reasonably coherent set of questions and ideas preoccupies him: the process of colonization and its impact on Africa's cultures and selves; the efficacy and limits of old traditions in the formation of new African identities; and the necessity of decolonization. As a result of his colonial schooling, Ngugi's novels grapple with the challenging subject of whether literature devoted to decolonization might be created in English and other European languages, as well as in their corresponding literary traditions. Even though Ngugi is now well-known for his refusal to write in English throughout his novel-writing career, his perspective on the topic of language and literary tradition is evident in his assertion that African authors had no option but to write in the European language: It was our guide, and the only thing that troubled us was how to best make the borrowed languages bear witness to our African experience by, for example allowing them to 'prey' on African proverbs and other distinctive features of African speech and culture" (DM 7). Three critical cultural institutions have shaped Ngugi's work. All expected to survive official colonialism in terms of appeal and influence: the Christian missionary movement, the colonial school system and university system, and the European literary canon. This subtle divergence distinguishes Ngugi's attitude to these institutions and the process of colonialism, and this

distinction exposes the universal tale of colonization and decolonization in Africa.

When Ngugi wrote the preface to *Homecoming*, his first collection of essays, he drew attention to the close relationship between his fictional and non-fictional works. He argues that, while his critical prose and literary works are differentiated by genre and writing protocols, and reading conventions, their production conditions differ. Many of his articles were written simultaneously as his first three books around the same period. The fictional works and the analytical articles share a symbiotic connection, but the two should not be confused. According to eminent culture critics like Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis, Ngugi inherits a liberal notion of art that is based on the belief that, while art cannot be wholly separated from political and cultural forces, its value is found in the subjective, spiritual, and cultural forces that it contains; it is an idea based on the belief that, particularly in literature, art can provide protection against radical change and violence associated with it. Ngugi's interest in "Mau Mau" is not motivated by an ideological imperative, but rather by a desire to demonstrate the impact it has on regular people and the impact it has on society as a whole: Dennis Duerden in a 1964 interview that is concerned about the "destruction of family life, the deterioration of family bonds" (Duerden 121). Ngugi tells his interlocutors that modernists such as D. H. Lawrence, who has "a way of entering into the spirit of things," and Joseph Conrad, who impresses by his mastery of "the morality of action" and the representation of human suffering, are the ones who have had the most significant influence on his art (Duerden 122). Ngugi's aesthetic base is not anchored in Marx or Fanon, whom he finds later in his career, but in Englishness concepts connected with Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis, which were propagated in the imperial domain by colonial institutions and universities. We now have a comprehensive examination of Ngugi's captivity in the colonial library and aesthetic, thanks to Carol Sicherman's work. Ngugi's journalistic works from the early 1960s give compelling evidence of colonialism's grip

on his age, even as the country was preparing to leave the British Empire. Even though these essays were written on the eve of Kenya's independence, they are not concerned with the political project of the time, driven by the desire to redefine the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Instead, they are concerned with the relationship between colonizers and colonized.

With the immensity of the "postcolonial," there has been an explosion of lively disputes. Even though some criticize it for its fuzziness, blurriness, and loss of historical and material memory, others contend that most former colonies are still far from being free of colonial control or power and hence cannot be considered postcolonial in any meaningful sense. Instead, the premature celebration of freedom masks the advance of neocolonialism under the guise of modernization and betterment in an era of increasing globalization and transnationalism; meanwhile, they have colonized nations that are still subject to foreign power or influence. Furthermore, focusing on colonizer / colonized relationships makes it more difficult to understand how internal oppression operates inside the colonies. Meanwhile, others decry the Western academy's increasing receptivity to postcolonial literature and theory compatible with postmodern constructions of hybridity, syncretism, spoofing, and parody while dismissing the critical realism of more critical writers interested in the specifics of social and racial oppression. Critical analysis has shown that Ngugi is principally concerned with these themes. His fictional works reveal the commentary on the painful realities of exploitation in the First, Second, and Third Worlds and the United States.

It is clear from Ngugi's literary accomplishments and influence in postcolonial writing that colonialism in Kenya is distinct from other colonial contexts, such as the presence of a significant settler population, the expropriation of large tracts of African land, and the dominance of a radicalized colonial culture defined by what Fanon would call "the principle of reciprocal exclusivity," according to which the relations between the colonizer and the

colonized are exclusive of one another (Fanon 27-40). While it is impossible to claim that colonialism seems more violent in Ngugi's books than it does in Achebe's, it is reasonable to assert that the violence is more immediate and understood in a subjective language in Ngugi's works. It is clear that violence has left its mark on the language of *Weep Not, Child*, and *The River Between*, which Ngugi wrote in the aftermath of the "Mau Mau" uprising and harsh colonial response; the spatial and human relationships depicted in these novels are over-determined by colonial attempts to force Africans into submission and compliance. Nonetheless, the oppressive nature of colonial rule in Kenya has had an unintended effect on Ngugi's works, one that goes to the very heart of the narrative language of his first novels: set against the acute sense of loss generated by the expropriation of African lands. These narratives are memorable for their romantic invocation of the landscape, associated with personal loss and communal longing. Ngugi has concisely stated that this devotion to place is one of the distinguishing qualities of East African writing: "the natural environment dominates the East African literary imagination." East African writers are distinguished from their counterparts on the continent by their knowledge of the land as the major player in our lives. This understanding of the land figures prominently in my works, from *The River Between* to *Matigari*," says the author (MC 163). While Ngugi's work is heavily influenced by the realities of British imperial control in Kenya, it is also sensitive to indigenous resistance to colonialism's culture of oppression and oppression. Violent and resistant responses are fundamental dimensions that are mainly concerned with a shared and joint quest for identity that involves both the author and the people he portrays. Among Ngugi's primary concerns are the formation of empire, the impact of colonization on postcolonial history, economy, science, and culture, the cultural productions of colonized societies, feminism and post-colonialism, marginalized people's agency, and the

state of the post colony in contemporary economic and cultural contexts.

When the authority of African cultures and arguments about African customs had all been ensured by the independence of Ghana and Nigeria, Ngugi decided to become a writer. Thus, his works are not marked by the defensiveness against African cultures and traditions that can be found in the works of his ancestors, as can be seen in their works. In contrast, the fact that Ngugi's novels assume that African culture exists is precise because of the existence of novels by Achebe and Laye, which, in addition to clearing the space in which African literary culture flourished during the 1950s and 1960s, also engaged with colonial mythologies about African subjects and cultures in what appear to be definitive ways during the 1950s and 1960s. By the time Ngugi began writing in the early 1960s, safeguarding African customs and traditions had become no longer a political or literary necessity, thanks to the work of his predecessors, who ranged from the Negritude poets to proponents of the African image, who had already completed the mission. It is also possible to examine Ngugi's effect on the formation and re-shaping of the postcolonial tradition of letters by considering his novels' methodological and theoretical issues. Specifically, three of these challenges have determined the types

of strategies that can be used to identify individualities: the problem of reading texts and contexts, a reconsideration of the roles of authors and readers in literary interpretation, and the nature of oppositional writing in general. Ngugi's books highlight the complicated, ambiguous, and dialectical interaction between texts and circumstances in general and between texts and contexts in a postcolonial culture specifically. Weep Not, Child's educational trope, The River Between's spatial structure, the use of interior monologue in A Grain of Wheat's epic dimension, the political fable told through oral narrative technique in Devil on the Cross, and the use of gossip and rumor in Matigari's discourse are all difficult to comprehend.

References

- Duerden, Dennis and Cosmos Pieterse (eds.) African Writers Talking, London: Heinemann, 1972. Print
- Fanon, Frantz. The Wretched of the Earth, trans. Constance Farrington. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1967. Print.
- Thiong'o, Ngugi wa. Decolonising the Mind. London: James Currey, 1986. Print.
- Thiong'o, Ngugi wa. Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics. London: Heinemann, 1972. Print.

THE QUEST FOR MEANING AMIDST THE TURMOIL: AN EXISTENTIAL STUDY IN ANTHONY DOERR'S *ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE*

M. SRUTHI SRIEE

PhD Research Scholar, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Dr. M. KANNADHASAN

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

The paper aims to explore the existential perspectives in Anthony Doerr's novel *All the Light We Cannot See*. It examines the search for meaning that persists amidst the turmoil of second world war. Through the parallel lives of two central characters, Marie-Laure, a blind French girl, and Werner, a German soldier, the novel delves into the human condition, grappling with questions of fate, morality, and survival. Drawing on existential philosophy, particularly the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, the paper attempts to explore Doerr's characters navigating into a world in which traditional sources of meaning namely family, nation, and religion are disrupted by the violence and absurdity of war. The paper explores that the novel portrays the characters' individual quests for significance in an often indifferent and hostile universe, expressing that meaning is not found in grand, cosmic truths but in personal acts of love, compassion, and resilience.

Keywords: existentialism, meaning, chaos, anthony doerr, all the light we cannot see, war, survival, and jean-paul sartre

The search for meaning is fundamental human motivation. It drives individuals to find significance and purpose for their existence. The quest is a universal concern irrespective of culture, age, and other backgrounds. It maybe influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors which can shape one's understanding of purpose and significance. The search for meaning can be approached from various perspectives, namely philosophical, religious, psychological and existential perspectives.

For millennia, attempting to understand what makes life meaningful had been the task of artists, theologians, and philosophers. Following World War I, some influential philosophers asserted that life is inherently meaningless. They believed that there was no higher purpose to the universe, and therefore people were all alone in trying to figure out what their individual lives were all about (iresearchnet).

Albert Camus in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* uses the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a boulder up a hill, only for it to roll back down, repeating the cycle indefinitely. He argues that Sisyphus's futile labour is a metaphor for human existence. Despite the futility, Sisyphus chooses to continue his task, finding a sense of purpose and fulfilment in the act itself and he concludes that we, too, can find meaning in our own "Sisyphian" struggles, by embracing the absurd and creating our own meaning. "It is individuals who are killing us today. Why should not individuals manage to give the world peace? We must simply begin without thinking of such grandiose aims." (Popova)

The philosophy of existentialism emphasizes on one's individual responsibility for creating meaning in their life. The meaning of life is something each individual must discover for themselves. Every individual is responsible for their actions and

consequences. The existential philosophers teach that one is completely free to invent ourselves and responsible for their identities, they chose to adopt. “Existentialism encourages us to reflect on the nature of our existence and the choices we make, ultimately inviting us to take responsibility for our lives and find our own authentic path.” (Loução)

Many novels offer thought-provoking explorations of the human search for meaning, encouraging readers to reflect on their own existential questions and the significance of their lives. For instance, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz and *The Buried Giant* by Kazuo Ishiguro and so on share themes of human quest for purpose and significance and the struggle to find meaning in the face of adversity or uncertainty.

Similar to these, the novel *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, explores existential questions about the meaning of life, the nature of humanity, and communities, hope, and purpose in the face of adversity, and the impact of war on individuals and communities.

Anthony Doerr is an American author known for his lyrical and nuanced prose. His novels often explore themes of hope, resilience, and the human condition. His novels frequently take place in significant historical periods, such as World War II in *All the Light We Cannot See* and the fall of Constantinople in *Cloud Cuckoo Land*. Doerr's writing is characterized by evocative descriptions of nature, architecture, and human experience, drawing readers into the narrative. He employs rich symbolism and metaphor to convey themes and emotions, adding depth and complexity to his stories. His novels frequently focus on the connections between people, examining the ways in which individuals navigate trauma, loss, and hope. “his prose insists, right here on the page: a world made of words, a world we make up in our heads as we read, using all the light we cannot see.” (Bourne)

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr is a historical novel set during World War II, following the intersecting lives of two main

characters, Marie-Laure LeBlanc, a blind French girl, and Werner Pfennig, a German soldier. A Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, featuring intricate descriptions of radio technology and carbon bonds. Marie-Laure, who loses her sight at a young age, is forced to flee Paris with her father to the coastal town of Saint-Malo after the German occupation of France. Her father, a locksmith at the Museum of Natural History, is entrusted with a valuable diamond, the Sea of Flames, which the Nazis are eager to capture. As the war intensifies, Marie-Laure and her father are separated, and she struggles to survive in the besieged town with the help of a local man, Etienne.

Meanwhile, Werner, a brilliant but conflicted German boy, is recruited by the Nazis and trained as a soldier. He is sent to find and destroy resistance radio transmissions in France, leading him to Saint-Malo, where his path crosses with Marie-Laure's. “*Open your eyes, concludes the man, and see what you can with them before they close forever.*” (Doerr 48)

The novel alternates between their perspectives, exploring themes of survival, resilience, and the impact of war on individuals. Doerr's lyrical writing and detailed descriptions bring the characters' experiences to life, particularly Marie-Laure's inner world as she navigates her blindness in a world of chaos.

Marie Laure LeBlanc, the blind French girl played a significant role in the novel, while her blindness presents unique character, faces challenges. Her resilience, determination and resourcefulness enable her to make a remarkable contribution to the French Resistance during World War II. “To shut your eyes is to guess nothing of blindness. Beneath your world of skies and faces and buildings exists a rawer and older world, a place where surface planes disintegrate and sounds ribbon in shoals through the air.” (Doerr 390)

She flees along with her father to a small city, Saint-Malo, and both stay with her uncle, Etienne, who was a reclusive veteran of World War I. He serves a metaphorical character and teaches Marie to broadcast secret messages. She with her exceptional

auditory skills, also helps her uncle to transmit the coded messages, in the form of literary quotes and scientific facts and news, to the Allies. “She hears her snails in the grotto drag their bodies over the rocks.” (Doerr 391)

These broadcasts serve as an aid to depict their resistance in coordinating attacks and disrupting German communication. Despite her physical limitations, she seeks meaning and connection in the midst of World War II and the chaotic scenario of safe guarding the gem, “Sea of Flames”.

Jean Paul Sartre in his lecture, *Existentialism is Humanism*, a philosophical framework, emphasizes on human freedom and responsibility. He asserts that human beings must create their own meaning and value their conscious choice. Creating one’s own meaning and values is through subjective experiences and it is not bound by any external authorities and objective truths. He also states that meaning in life is not predetermined or inherent, but rather must be created through individual choice and action.

Marie-Laure LeBlanc’s actions in the novel, creates a personal sense of meaning. Though she faces significant physical struggles and survival limitations due to her blindness and the war, she still finds ways to exercise freedom in her choices. “Life itself is nothing until it is lived, it is we who give meaning, and value is nothing more than the meaning that we give it.” (Sartre 51) Her decision to survive on her own in Saint-Malo after being separated from her father, and her determination to contribute to the resistance by using Etienne’s radio to broadcast messages. She actively chose her path. By engaging in acts of defiance and connection, such as helping Etienne and resisting Nazi oppression, she creates a personal sense of meaning.

Werner Pffenig, is introduced as a young boy growing up in a coal mining town in Germany. Born into poverty, he demonstrates exceptional intelligence, particularly in science, and has a natural aptitude for mechanics and radio technology. His academic abilities set him apart from the grim reality of life in the mines and offer him a chance at escape.

His initial desire for knowledge and a better life is at odds with his harsh surroundings. However, his intelligence becomes both his blessing and curse, leading him to be recruited by the Nazi regime for his technical skills.

His quest for meaning is rooted in the human condition, where individuals must confront the uncertainty of life. He realizes that he lacks, an inherent meaning and has to create his own purpose. The struggles and choices, he embodies the individual responsibility, authenticity etc... “Some people are weak in some ways, sir. Others in other ways” (Doerr 193) His story is a testament to the human capacity for self-discovery and the pursuit of meaning in an uncertain world. He witnesses the brutality and senseless violence of war. “Man is nothing other than his own project. He exists only to the extent that he realizes himself, therefore he is nothing more than the sum of his actions, nothing more than his life.” (Sartre 37)

He begins to question the morality of his actions and purpose of his existence. His experiences illustrate the futility of seeking meaning in a world governed by chaos and randomness. His character embodies the existential human condition, characterized by freedom and responsibility. He is torn between his duty to serve the Nazi regime and his growing sense of moral obligation to protect others. “All the dangers he is willing to endure. For the Reich. For himself. No one stops him. No shells come whistling in. Sometimes the eye of a hurricane is the safest place to be.” (Doerr 209)

Werner experiences a moral awakening, particularly when he decides to protect Marie-Laure. By choosing to help her rather than following orders that could harm her, Werner embraces authenticity. He rejects the passive role he had played in the Nazi system and acts based on a personal moral choice rather than blind obedience. The act of compassion represents a form of redemption, as he seeks to make meaning from his past actions by acting according to his personal moral compass rather than external authority. “Your problem, Werner,” says Frederick,

“is that you still believe you own your life.” (Doerr 223)

As Werner begins to question his role in the war, he regains a sense of free will, culminating in his decision to help Marie-Laure and ultimately to resist the forces that have controlled his life. The shift reflects the existential idea that individuals can, through introspection and action, transcend the constraints of fate and carve out their own meaning. The characters’ journeys reflect the existential perspective and reflect that the meaning is not given but must be created through one’s actions, relationships, and choices.

This is humanism because we remind man that there is no legislator other than himself and that he must, in his abandoned state, make his own choices, and also because we show that it is not by turning inward, but by constantly seeking a goal outside of himself in the form of liberation, or of some special achievement, that man will realize himself as truly human (Sartre 53).

In a world where the forces of destruction and chaos often seem overwhelming in the novel *All the Light We Cannot See* it explores that the search for meaning is both a personal and collective endeavour, and despite being in the most brutal circumstances, human beings can find light in the darkness. Further scope of the study of the novel can be analysed across multiple disciplines, namely, history, and trauma studies. Further its exploration of human

resilience, the search for meaning, memory, and the role of technology in communication is timeless.

References

- Administrator. “Search for Meaning in Life - Iresearchnet.” *Psychology*, 25 Jan. 2016, psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/prosocial-behavior/search-for-meaning-in-life/.
- Bourne, Michael. “A World Made of Words: On Anthony Doerr’s Nouns and Verbs.” *The Millions*, 20 Jan. 2015, themillions.com/2015/01/a-world-made-of-words-on-anthony-doerrs-nouns-and-verbs.html.
- Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Translated by Justin O’Brien, Vintage International, 1991.
- Doerr, Anthony. *All the Light We Cannot See*. Scribner, 2014.
- Loução, Isabel. “Existentialism and the Quest for the Meaning of Life.” *Medium*, Medium, 20 Sept. 2023, medium.com/@isabelloucao18/existentialism-and-the-quest-for-the-meaning-of-life-279dcf14bbca.
- Popova, Maria. “A Life Worth Living: Albert Camus on Our Search for Meaning and Why Happiness Is Our Moral Obligation.” *The Marginalian*, 6 Nov. 2016, www.themarginalian.org/2014/09/22/a-life-worth-living-albert-camus/.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism Is a Humanism*. Yale University, 2007.

DALITS AS THE PROTECTORS OF ECOSYSTEM- AN ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF CHO. DHARMAN'S NOVEL *KOOGAI THE OWL*

B. SENTHILKUMAR

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore

Dr.K.RAVICHANDRAN

Professor & Head, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore

Abstract

Being socially, economically and politically marginalized, the Dalits, fortunately, have the blessings of being closely in communion with Nature. Instead of worrying about the challenges that the caste-polluted society has imposed upon them, these blessed inmates of the ecosystem ever strive to uplift the ecosystem which never marginalizes and keeps them away from its fold. Other than the casteists, all other living beings in the ecosystem allow Dalits into the fold and consider them to be fellow and 'touchable' inmates of the system. Dalits do not letdown any living or non-living organism of the ecosystem. They treat and respect all the members of the system equally. Cho. Dharman's novel Koogai The Owl delineates the close association that the Dalits have with Nature. The bird Owl is considered to be a bird of ill omen but Dalits, in the novel, respect it as their Clan- God. They are not in possession of fertile agricultural lands but the lands possess them. Whatever be the work on lands, it is the Dalits who have to carry it out. The novel paints a fantastic picture of how Dalits serve to preserve and protect the ecosystem. The protagonists of the novel being the Pallars, Paraiyars and Chakkiliyars, the novel details the contributionsto the system made by these Dalits. The Dalits play the roles of agricultural labourers, safe removers of dead bodies, keepers of the environment clean, and the like. This article makes an attempt to study the ecological consciousness of the Dalits who contribute quite a lot to protect the environment.

Keywords: *ecosystem, ecological consciousness, dalits, protectors, nature*

The theory of Anthropocentrism states that human beings are different from all other living creatures in the sense that they are superior to all of them in the environment. This human-centered attitude has devalued other living creatures of the ecosystem. For the benefit and comfort living of human beings, animals and birds get killed, trees are felled, bushes get uprooted and on the whole the ecosystem gets completely disturbed or destroyed. Because of the attitude of superiority, the human beings believe that all other living and non-living organisms, in the environment, are subservient to them. Triggered by the superiority complex, human beings exploit nature to the core.

Anthropocentrism, philosophical viewpoint arguing that human beings are the central or most

significant entities in the world. This is a basic belief embedded in many Western religions and philosophies. Anthropocentrism regards humans as separate from and superior to nature and holds that human life has intrinsic value while other entities (including animals, plants, mineral resources, and so on) are resources that may justifiably be exploited for the benefit of humankind. (Web Source)

Industrialization and Urbanization have kept the human beings completely away from nature. All other organisms in the ecosystem are brutally marginalized by the economically-advanced community just as Dalits get marginalized by the socially-advanced community in the Indian society. Having been deprived of the social and the economic advancement, Dalits have the opportunity of being

closely associated with the ecosystem. India is a land of agriculture and the landless Dalits have no other alternative but to be agricultural labourers. This has enabled Dalits to be even closer to plants, birds, animals and other inmates of the ecosystem. This closeness to ecosystem has resulted in Dalits to contribute quite a lot to preserve and protect the ecosystem. Dalits are never untouchables as long as they are in the midst of natural surroundings. Sun light touches them, moon shines on them, breeze embraces them, the fragrance of sweet-smelling flowers never hesitate to get into the nostrils of them and rain drenches them. It is a clear indication that caste-system is man-made and is completely not in keeping with the laws of the ecosystem.

Set in Chithirampatti, a village which belongs to Koyilpatti Taluk of Tamilnadu, Cho.Dharman's novel *Koogai The Owl* paints a vivid picture of the lives of Dalits whose lives are intermingled with those of the inmates of the ecosystem. To begin with, the novel lucidly differentiates between the type of dwelling places of the upper caste people and the dwelling places inhabited by Dalits; the modern houses of the upper caste people and the eco-friendly thatched hut of the Dalits.

Plastered houses, tiled houses—the *melakkudi*, where the

high castes lived — were full of these. Next were the twenty or

thirty thatched huts of the Pallar-kudi. All by themselves, out-

side the village and quite from it and at some distance

from each other were the hovels of the leather workers, and

the Paraiyar—the Chakkiliyar-kudi and the Paraiyar-kudi.

(*Koogai The Owl*, 19)

These huts, which are the dwelling places of Dalits, are built using the easily available materials like mud and clay, and the roofs of the huts are made of palm leaves. The materials used to construct the huts are eco-friendly and after use they can be easily disposed of without affecting the environment.

Old Seeni, a Dalit basket weaver, enjoys the beauty of plants, trees and flowers that surround the dilapidated Siddhan temple. He is fascinated by the fragrance of the flowers on Udai Tree. Most of the time he is found sitting under a Bunyan tree and weaving baskets using Udai tendrils. The Bunyan tree happens to be his day-time residence and not only for old Seeni but for other Dalit men in the village who sit or sleep under the tree which is closely related to them. The baskets that Seeni weaves are eco-friendly. They become manure to the soil after use and they are never a threat to the environment.

When Nataraja Iyer leaves for town to stay with his sons for good, he decides to divide his fertile agricultural lands into small portions and leaves them under the custody of the Pallars of the village with an agreement that half of the crop should be given to Iyer and the remaining half can be taken by the Pallars who cultivate the lands. Nataraja Iyer makes the sensible decision and leaves his lands under the care of the Dalits and not to people belonging to any other socially-advanced community. Because Nataraja Iyer firmly believes that Dalits can take care of his lands better than any other people belonging to any other community.

Living in close communion with nature, Dalits have developed the marvelous skill of understanding the languages of birds and animals. The different chirpings of birds and different cries of animals convey different emotions which can be easily understood by them. On an evening, after weaving is over, old Seeni stacks the baskets one after the other under the banyan tree. Birds return to their nests after their day-long search for food. As they come to their nests, they converse among themselves their experiences of wondering over different places in search of food. The conversation had by the birds which live in the nests built upon the branches of banyan tree is lucidly understood by old Seeni who is well-versed in the languages of birds.

He knew it well: the language of birds. Seeni's great-grandfather,

who had held conversations with the owl-god himself, had

instructed his grandfather in it, and he in turn had passed it

on to Seeni. (*Koogai The Owl*, 75)

Seeni has acquired the skill of understanding the languages of birds because of being in close relationship with birds. This skill has been passed on to him from his fore-parents. Peichi, a woman belonging to Pallar community, tries to talk to a crow that lives in the neem tree that grows near her hovel even though she finds it difficult to comprehend the language of it. But she is able to make out that it is a female crow. She also finds out that the lower beak of the female crow is crippled. When the crippled crow is hungry and is unable to peck food grains of its own, the male crow comes and feeds it. By seeing this she is reminded of her husband bringing food to her who is crippled too. The intimacy that Dalits have with the ecosystem is conspicuous from the rapport that Peichi has developed with the crows. She even goes to the extent of comparing herself with the female crow and the male crow with her husband. This lucidly explains the attitude of Dalits who treat all the inmates of the ecosystem equally. They consider birds also be a fellow living being which needs to be respected.

The caste-polluted Indian society has a discriminative attitude towards Dalits. Not only towards Dalits, but the discriminative attitude can be found towards animals, birds, and plants too. Some animals are more equal than the other ones. Animals like cows deserve to be worshipped, whereas buffaloes and pigs are not treated equally on par with cows. Trees like Indian blackberry are not allowed to grow in the area that surrounds a house. The bird owl is considered to be a bird of ill-omen. People who love to listen to chirpings of birds and enjoy the songs of nightingale and linnet shun the chirpings of owl. People who worship an eagle (Garuda) believe that the mere sight of an owl will bring them misfortune. The discriminative attitude is embedded in the psyche of the society. But the Pallars, in the novel *Koogai The Owl* worship owl as their clan-deity.

‘Saami! For generation after generation we Pallar-kudi folk

have been worshipping you. Only you. Thousands of people

have mocked us, saying “Crazy fools! Would any man go

haven’t forgotten you. We’ve done without a gulp of gruel or

a rag to cover the loins, but we’ve never left you in the dark.

(*Koogai The Owl*, 39)

The Pallars are insulted by the upper caste people for worshipping owl as their God. They call the Pallars as owl-worshippers and beat them up and kick them for doing this. As Seeni refuses to stop worshipping owl, he is chased out of his village. For the upper caste people an owl is an untouchable bird which is not worth even looking at. But for the Pallars of Chithirampatti, owl is a bird of worship and their clan-deity. Dalits never discriminate birds and animals because they never have the superiority complex. They do not think that the birds, animals and plants are subservient to them rather the Dalits are of the view that the survival of them is dependent upon all other members of the ecosystem. Trees happen to be the shrines of Gods in villages. When Nataraja Iyer and Seeni talk about worshipping God, Nataraja Iyer makes the remark that Gods and trees are not separate but they are one and the same.

In our time we saw

everything as God, we never regarded anything as separate,

existing all by itself. Ayyanaar Saami of the banyan tree,

Maari-amman of the neem, Pillaiyaar of the peepal tree...

The vanni, the pungai, the naagalinga tree, and the mango—

all of them we connected to God, or to the holy laws. That’s

how we lived. And that’s not all – we worshipped the fiery

burning sun, calling was “Bhooma Devi”. Rain was “Varuna

Bhagavaan”, earth was “Bhooma Devi”. Snake and rat, buffalo

and dog, cow and horse, and elephant –we looked on them

all as God. Even the death that came to us we saw as Yaman,

and we bowed down to Him, too.

(*Koogai The Owl*, 248)

In the threshing floor, the cropped sheaves of grain from Thathaiya Nayakar’s lands are being treaded upon by oxen. Dalits and oxen are involved in the process of separating food grains from the sheaves. A minstrel drives the oxen which circulate the field. The minstrel knows how to get the work done by the oxen. He sings songs so that the oxen move about without feeling the tiredness of treading upon the sheaves. His closeness with the animals is what makes the minstrel drive the oxen properly without getting them go astray. The oxen also should like the songs and that should be the reason as to why they follow the instructions of the minstrel and act accordingly. There is a great deal of rapport and intimacy between the minstrel and the oxen that make the drudgery of separating food grains from the sheaves under the hot sun a pleasant one.

Dalits, in the novel *Koogai The Owl*, are basically docile and peace-loving people. Even when they are ill-treated, humiliated and beaten up, they stay calm and composed without reacting angrily to the atrocities done to them by the upper caste people. This attitude of Dalits help to maintain peace in the environment. They never resort any violence which will cause disruption to the ecosystem. They are hard-working and spend the whole day nourishing and taking care of the plants and animals. Just as they take the best care of their children, they look after the plants and the animals in the best possible manner. This attitude of them contributes a lot for the preservation of peace and development in the ecosystem.

Besides being agricultural labourers, Dalits are forced to be manual scavengers, grave-diggers and informers of death. They have to remove the dead bodies of animals other than keeping the whole environment spick and span. If there is a death in the

house an upper caste, it is the Dalits who have to go to the relatives’ places to break the news. It is they who have to dig graves for dead bodies to be safely disposed of and buried. It is the Dalit women who have to sing dirge at the funeral ceremony. Right from informing the death news, announcing it by beating drums till the dead body is buried or burnt to ashes, it is the Dalits who take the responsibilities of accomplishing the death-related assignments.

Pallars, Paraiyars, Chakkiliyars. All of them were gathered

before the house of the bereaved. Each was called by name

and assigned a village, handed a note and some money.

Each humbly spread out his uppercloth and received the note and

the money they gave with it. Men were assigned also assigned also to dig the

grave and to prepare the bereaved’s ‘chariot’— his festooned

corpse-cart. One man was dispatched to fetch the drummer

whose leather *parai* would thrum out the new of the death.

(*Koogai The Owl*, 26)

Whether it is the dead body of an animal or a bird or a human being, it gets safely removed from the environment where the human beings inhabit. This act of removing dead bodies may appear to be an act of humiliation but as matter of fact it is an act of keeping the environment clean. If cleanliness is next only to Godliness, the Dalits deserve to be regarded divine-creatures. By playing multiple roles such as cultivators of agricultural lands, care takers of birds and animals and keepers of the environment clean, the nature-loving Dalits protect the ecosystem which ensures a healthy and peaceful stay on earth.

References

- Dharman Cho, *Koogai The Owl*, Trans.Vasantha Surya, New Delhi: Oxford University Press., 2015,
Print.<https://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropocentrism>

ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY LIVES: A STUDY OF SUDHA MURTY'S *THREE THOUSAND STITCHES*

AFRIN BANKALAGI

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur

Dr. DEEPAK H. SHINDE

Assistant Professor & Research Supervisor, Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur

Abstract

Sudha Murty is a renowned writer in contemporary Indian English literature. Author works frequently explore women's activist subjects, advancing orientation uniformity, and testing cultural standards. Three Thousand Stitches is a non-fiction book. The book is a collection of true stories about ordinary people who have made a significant impact in their communities. "Three Thousand Stitches" is a heartwarming and inspiring book that celebrates the human spirit and encourages readers to make a positive difference in the world. The three thousand stitches exposes Resilience and Perseverance, Human Values, Simple Living and Value, Empathy and Social Work, Personal Experiences. Author significant life illustrations. The Eleven stories reflect the different aspects of Indian culture and society as the system of devadasi, cast discrimination, Inequality, Education, poverty, human values and Philanthropy. Stories that depend on her own life lessons and life illustrations. These stories author battles and triumphs, and her advice on life. Sudha Murty uses Narrative technique a simple, yet effective narrative technique to tell the stories, making them relatable and engaging.

Keywords: social reformation, gender inequality, culture, women's rights, autobiography

Introduction

Sudha Murty is an eminent Indian writer who writes in English, regardless of Kannada being her primary language. Here are a few fascinating parts of her composition with regards to English. Accessible language Sudha Murty's composing style is straightforward, clear, and succinct, making her books straightforward for a great many perusers. Universal themes author accounts investigate all inclusive topics like love, family, social issues, and self-disclosure, Indian context Sudha Murty's composing frequently reflects Indian culture, customs, and values, offering a one of a kind point of view on contemporary Indian culture. Translation A considerable lot of Sudha Murty's books have been made an interpretation of from English into other Indian dialects, making her work open to a more extensive crowd. Global appeal Sudha Murty's composing has earned worldwide respect, with perusers from different foundations valuing her

accounts and experiences. Influences Her composing is affected by Indian folklore, old stories, and reasoning, as well as her encounters as a specialist, instructor, and social laborer. Contribution to Indian English literature Sudha Murty has made huge commitments to Indian English writing, making ready for other Indian scholars to investigate this classification. Sudha Murty's writing in English has empowered her to contact a worldwide crowd, sharing Indian stories, values, and points of view with perusers around the world.

Plot

"*Three Thousand Stitches*" is a non-fiction book by Sudha Murty that tells the story of author experiences as a young engineer and social worker, and her journey to empower women and children in rural India. The book focuses on Sudha Murty's work with the Devadasi community, a marginalized group of women dedicated to a life of prostitution

Her efforts to educate and rehabilitate these women, and help them find alternative livelihoods. The challenges and obstacles she faced, including resistance from local authorities and societal norms. The triumphs and successes of the women who benefited from her work. Through this book, Sudha Murty highlights: The importance of empowering women and girls through education and economic independence. The need to challenge societal norms and stereotypes. The power of individual action and grassroots initiatives to bring about change. "*Three Thousand Stitches*" is a heartwarming and inspiring book that showcases Sudha Murty's compassion, dedication, and commitment to social change.

How to Beat the Boysis the Chapter, the author shares author experience with a young girl who dreams of a better life. Sudha Murty highlights the importance of education and how it can empower individuals to overcome difficult situations. The narrative emphasizes hope, resilience, and the transformative power of education. ***The Empathy of a Stranger*** is the story revolves around an encounter with a stranger who shows unconditional kindness in a moment of need. It reinforces the theme that empathy and compassion can come from unexpected places and can significantly alter someone's life. ***The Journey of Life*** Here, Sudha Murty talks about her life journey, reflecting on the experiences that shaped her values. The story encourages readers to embrace life's ups and downs, showing that every experience contributes to personal growth. ***The Unseen Parent*** In this touching tale, Sudha narrates the story of an elderly woman who finds her place in the world after losing her husband. It explores themes of identity, love, and the emotional journey experienced throughout life. ***The Gift of a New Life*** This story details her experience in a hospital, where she meets a mother who faces enormous challenges while caring for her sick child. It highlights the significance of hope, love, and support during difficult times. ***Who Is a Mother*** Sudha discusses the different dimensions of motherhood through the lens of various women she encounters. The narrative showcases the various forms that maternal love can

take and the sacrifices made by mothers. ***The Idealist*** This story features an idealistic youth who wants to change the world. Sudha reflects on the importance of youthful dreams and aspirations, and how they can inspire actions that lead to meaningful changes in society. ***The Tryst with Education*** In this tale, Sudha recounts her commitment to promoting education among rural girls, highlighting stories of girls who overcame obstacles to pursue their dreams. It speaks to the importance of education as a fundamental right. ***The Power of Dreams*** Sudha shares anecdotes of individuals who followed their dreams despite societal pressures and expectations. The story underscores the importance of pursuing one's passion and the impact of supportive relationships. ***The Last Wish*** In this emotionally charged narrative, Sudha tells the story of a dying man's last wish, which reveals the importance of relationships and the values we hold dear. It prompts readers to reflect on their own lives and priorities.

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives: A Study of Sudha Murthy's Three Thousand Stitches

Ordinary people, extraordinary lives. The stories showcase how ordinary people can lead extraordinary lives through their courage, resilience, and kindness. The book highlights the importance of selfless service and its impact on individuals and communities. Social responsibility and activism. The book emphasizes the need for individuals to take responsibility for creating positive change in their communities. The characters in the stories are well-developed and complex, making them easy to identify with. The stories illustrate personal growth and transformation, how individuals can transform their own lives and the lives of others through their actions.

'Who are you? Did we invite you here?

Have you come to write about us? In that case, we don't want to talk to you.'

Are you an officer? Or a minister? If we tell you our problems, how will you solve them

'Go back to where you came from.' (p3)

In first chapter of Three thousand stitches Sudha Murty's went to change Devadasi System when author faced several difficulties and humiliation but also never give up the social reformation author changed herself by wearing Indian culture saree, bangles, flowers

'We want to give our akka a special gift. It is an embroidered bedspread and each of us has stitched some portion of it'.(p 16)

So there are three thousand stitches that is the best gift Sudha Murty received.

***'Doctor Sahib, I have a small Doctor Sahib, I have a small request. Please ask her to wear a sari to college as it is a man's world out there and the saree will be an appropriate dress for the environment she will be in. She should not talk to the boys unnecessarily because that will give rise to rumours and that's never good for a girl in our society. Also, tell her to avoid going to the college canteen and spending time there with the boys.'* (p 21)**

Sudha Murty shows Gender inequality in chapter two *'How to beat the boys'*

' Oh my God! It's a girl! She cried. 'Her life will be just like mine'.(p 77)

Sudha Murty represent female suffering in male dominated society in *A life Unwritten*.

'Tell me, why do you continue to give Your remaining years to this thankless job?' she asked.

'You can sit back, relax, spend time with your Grandchildren,' (p. 112).

"The truth is that I am the luckiest Of them all. I love what I do and..."(p.113).

Her friend's suggestion Rejected by author in *'A Day in Infosys' inspiring personality Sudha Murty have.*

'Well, everybody knows how you invested ten thousand rupees in Infosys and made million in

return'.(p 154)Sudha Murty inspires to present generation in *I Can't, We Can* .

This book features inspiring stories of ordinary people who have made a significant impact in their communities. These stories highlight the selfless acts of individuals who have dedicated their lives to helping other The book sheds light on the harsh realities of poverty and inequality in India. Murty emphasizes the importance of education in empowering individuals and communities. Sudha Murty shares her personal experiences and reflections on the stories featured in the book. The book also touches upon Murty's own philanthropic work and her experiences with the Infosys Foundation. The book is a source of inspiration, encouraging readers to make a positive impact In their own communities. It raises awareness about various social issues and the importance of addressing them. The stories featured In the book demonstrate the power of individual action and the impact it can have on others. *"Three Thousand Stitches"* is a thought-provoking and inspiring book that celebrates the human spirit and encourages readers to make a difference. *"Three Thousand Stitches"* is a heartwarming and inspiring book that celebrates the human spirit and encourages readers to make a positive difference in the world.

Bibliography

Murty, Sudha. *Three Thousand Stitches*. New Delhi Penguin Books,2017

Webliography

[https://books.google.co.in/books?id=-](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=-WYpDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

[WYpDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.in/books?id=-WYpDwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

CYPRUS'S SILENT WITNESS: AN EXPLORATION OF COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES IN ELIF SHAFAK'S *THE ISLAND OF MISSING TREES*

T. SHAINISHA

PhD Research Scholar, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Dr. M. KANNADHASAN

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

Elif Shafak's The Island of Missing Trees presents a complex story that interweaves individual tales with the broader historical and political context of Cyprus. The paper aims to explore the novel through colonial and postcolonial perspectives, assessing Shafak's exploration of the enduring impacts of British colonialism on Cyprus and its inhabitants, alongside the intricacies of identity and memory in a post-colonial framework. The fig tree, as the novel's key metaphor, acts as a "silent witness" to the divisions imposed by colonial control, symbolizing the ecological and psychological wounds of the island's history. Shafak's portrayal of the illicit romance between Kostas and Defne underscores the deleterious effects of colonialism in intensifying ethnic divisions, while also depicting efforts toward reconciliation and healing post-conflict. The paper attempts to analyse Shafak's novel and its connectivity of the colonial and postcolonial gap, highlighting the significance of memory, nature, and individual agency in transcending historical barriers.

Keywords: colonialism, postcolonialism, cyprus, identity, memory, trauma, reconciliation, elif shafak, the island of missing trees

Elif Shafak is a renowned author, public intellectual, and advocate for human rights whose work has earned her a prominent position in contemporary global literature. Born in Strasbourg in 1971 and raised in Turkey, Shafak's multicultural background deeply informs her writing. As a bilingual writer, she crafts her works in both Turkish and English, making her voice a significant contributor to both literary traditions. She has captivated readers worldwide with her insightful and thought-provoking novels. Among her most acclaimed works are *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and *The Island of Missing Trees*, a finalist for the Costa Award and Women's Prize for Fiction. Shafak is the recipient of the Halldór Laxness International Literature Prize for her contribution to the renewal of the art of storytelling. In 2024, Shafak was awarded the British Academy President's Medal for her excellent body of work which demonstrates an incredible intercultural range.

Shafak's writing is celebrated for its poetic and evocative prose, interwoven with themes of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity. She is particularly adept at blending the personal and political, creating narratives that resonate with universal human experiences while addressing pressing societal issues. Her work often incorporates elements of magical realism and mysticism, especially drawing on the traditions of Sufism. Shafak is also recognized for her experimental narrative structures, often employing multiple perspectives, nonlinear timelines, and symbolic imagery to craft multilayered stories. She frequently tackles controversial and complex themes, such as gender inequality, the intersection of tradition and modernity, and historical memory. Her novels often challenge societal norms and prejudices, offering a voice to marginalized and silenced individuals.

Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees* is a profound exploration of love, identity, and the lasting scars of conflict. Shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2022, the novel weaves a poignant narrative set against the backdrop of the divided island of Cyprus. Shafak masterfully intertwines human and ecological storytelling, using the voice of a fig tree as a unique narrative device to connect past and present, memory and healing. Thematically, the novel delves into the consequences of political strife and cultural dislocation, examining how trauma reverberates across generations. Shafak addresses issues of exile, belonging, and the resilience of love, crafting a tale that is both intimate and universal.

Praised for its lyrical prose and inventive structure, *The Island of Missing Trees* has been lauded for its ability to balance deeply personal stories with broader socio-political commentary. Critics have commended Shafak's empathetic portrayal of marginalized voices and her capacity to evoke a sense of place with vivid imagery. The novel solidifies Shafak's reputation as one of the most significant contemporary authors addressing themes of migration, memory, and coexistence.

"History is a canvas painted by the victors, but the truth lives in the shadows, in the voices we choose not to hear" (Shafak 178), Elif Shafak underscores the subjectivity and power dynamics inherent in the construction of historical narratives. By likening history to a "canvas painted by the victors," she emphasizes that dominant groups often shape collective memory, highlighting their achievements while marginalizing dissenting voices. The "truth" residing in the "shadows" symbolizes the suppressed perspectives and experiences of the defeated, disenfranchised, or marginalized. Shafak critiques the selective nature of historical representation, advocating for an inclusive approach that recognizes these silenced narratives. This aligns with postcolonial and subaltern studies, which challenge hegemonic histories by recovering the voices of those excluded from traditional records.

The Island of Missing Trees is a powerful exploration of the colonial legacies that continue to

shape Cyprus's society, politics, and culture. As Bill Ashcroft notes, "Colonialism is a process of cultural and economic domination that has a profound impact on the colonized society" (Ashcroft 12). Through the character of Kostas, a Greek Cypriot who is struggling to come to terms with his family's past, Shafak highlights the ways in which colonialism has erased the island's cultural heritage and imposed a dominant narrative that has been used to justify violence and exclusion. As Kostas notes, "The past is a burden we carry with us" (Shafak 123). This statement underscores the significance of memory and history in shaping the postcolonial experience.

Through the story of two teenagers, Kostas and Defne, who fall in love despite the animosity between their communities, Shafak masterfully weaves together a narrative that challenges colonial discourses, reclaims the island's cultural heritage, and explores the intersections of identity, memory, and ecology.

Shafak's use of magical realism and folklore creates a vivid and immersive world that highlights the importance of the environment and our connection to it. As one study notes, "The novel presents a nuanced and complex view of human-nature harmony" (Ramzan 478). This ecocritical perspective underscores the interconnectedness of human and natural worlds, emphasizing the need for environmental awareness and responsibility.

In *The Island of Missing Trees*, Shafak merges postcolonial and ecological discourses to address the intertwined exploitation of land and people. The fig tree becomes a metaphor for resilience against colonial exploitation and environmental degradation. Postcolonial ecocriticism, as Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin suggest, "seeks to articulate the interconnectedness of human and ecological systems" (Huggan & Tiffin 12). By giving voice to the fig tree, Shafak disrupts anthropocentric narratives, suggesting that nature is an active participant in the island's history. For instance, the fig tree recalls its forced relocation from Cyprus to London, a poignant reflection on the diasporic experiences of Cypriots: "Uprooted, I am now an

exile. Yet I carry within me the soil of my homeland, as do the people who have left Cyprus behind” (Shafak 89). This parallel between ecological displacement and human migration underscores the shared vulnerabilities wrought by colonial histories.

Shafak’s exploration of identity in *The Island of Missing Trees* resonates with Bhabha’s concept of hybridity, which challenges the binary opposition of colonizer and colonized. Kostas and Defne’s relationship embodies the hybridity of Cypriot identity, navigating the tensions between Greek and Turkish heritage. The fig tree, as a hybrid entity that transcends cultural and national boundaries, symbolizes the possibility of reconciliation and coexistence.

As the tree reflects, “I am neither Greek nor Turk, neither wholly of the past nor entirely of the present. I am what remains” (Shafak 217). This statement echoes Bhabha’s assertion that hybridity “opens up the possibility of a cultural future beyond binary divisions” (Bhabha 39). The novel positions the fig tree as a narrative device that bridges past and present, nature and culture, human and ecological trauma. As Homi Bhabha notes, “the past is not simply a historical record; it is an active agent in shaping identities” (Bhabha 218). Shafak’s *The Island of Missing Trees* exemplifies this notion by embedding historical memory within the fig tree, symbolizing Cyprus’s silenced histories and ongoing struggles. Elif Shafak’s *The Island of Missing Trees* offers a powerful exploration of colonial and postcolonial perspectives in the context of Cyprus’s complex histories, using the fig tree as both a literal and symbolic witness. By integrating human and ecological narratives, Shafak not only critiques the legacies of colonialism but also envisions a more inclusive and hybrid cultural identity for Cyprus. The novel’s postcolonial perspective invites readers to reconsider the silenced voices of history—both human and non-human—thus affirming the importance of memory, resilience, and reconciliation in the face of division.

“Memory is not just about what we choose to remember; it is also about what we cannot forget”

(Shafak 178), Elif Shafak encapsulates the duality of memory: its voluntary and involuntary nature. Memory is shaped not only by conscious acts of recollection but also by the persistence of certain experiences and emotions that resist suppression. Shafak suggests that the things we cannot forget—trauma, loss, or profound joy—often define us as much as, if not more than, the memories we choose to cherish. This highlights the intricate relationship between identity and memory, where unbidden memories act as reminders of our past, shaping our understanding of the present and influencing future choices. *The Island of Missing Trees* serves as a profound narrative that bridges colonial and postcolonial perspectives, shedding light on Cyprus’s complex historical and cultural identity. Through its nuanced exploration of themes such as memory, trauma, and belonging, the novel unveils the enduring scars of colonial legacies and the struggles for reconciliation in the postcolonial era. By intertwining human and ecological narratives, Shafak emphasizes the interconnectedness of history, nature, and personal stories, offering a lens to examine the silenced voices of the past. This paper underscores the novel’s role in fostering critical dialogue about Cyprus’s unresolved tensions.

References

- A Postcolonial Analysis of Elif Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees*. (n.d.).
- Ashcroft, B. (2001). *Post-colonial studies: The key concepts*. Routledge.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Huggan, G., & Tiffin, H. (2010). *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Routledge.
- Ramzan, S., Arif, S., Nusrat, G., & Shakir, F. N. (2023). Human-Nature Relationship in Shafak’s *The Island of The Missing Trees: An Ecocritical Approach*. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 20(1), 473-483.
- Shafak, E. (2021). *The Island of Missing Trees*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

‘NO ACT OF KINDNESS HOWEVER SMALL IS EVER WASTED’ IN THE LIGHT OF *THREE THOUSAND STITCHES*

BY SUDHA MURTHY

Dr. ROOPAVATI S KOREGOL

Assistant Master

Government High School Jumanal, Karnataka

Abstract

Three Thousand Stitches is an amazing book written by Sudha Murthy. She is one of the prolific writers in Kannada and English Language and a Philanthropist. She was awarded with the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan for her contribution to social work and education. The present book is the beautiful collection of 11 different anecdotes from the author's real life experiences. She reveals different walks of life, about the unprivileged women, or the rich and affluent persons judging on appearances, her childhood memories, during her engineering college days experiences, her father's kindness, travel encounters and so on. She explores myriad faced life and the undaunted human spirit. Sudha Murthy through her exceptional work of the Infosys Foundation and by being compassionate towards needy she wins the heart of readers through her simple language and precise and apt style. Her narrative way transforms into a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Three Thousand Stitches is the first story. Sudha Murthy candidly reveals that they set up the Infosys Foundation in 1996 to make some difference to the common man with the concept 'Bahujan Hitaya Bahujan Sukhaya.' It must provide a compassionate aid. Hence they pondered over many issues such as malnutrition, education, rural development, self sufficiency access to medicine cultural activities and the revival of the arts. Among many others, there was one major issue that deeply embedded into her mind was that of the devadasi, which means the servant of Lord. She wanted to empower them. Traditionally devadasis were musicians and dancers who practiced their craft in temples to please the Gods. They had a high status in society. The evidences are seen in the caves of Badami, as well as in stories of the devadasi 'Vinapodi' who was very dear to the ruling king of the Chalukya dynasty between the Six and Seventh century in the northern Karnataka. The king donated enormous sums of money to temples. However over the course of time, temples were destroyed and the tradition of the devadasis fell into the wrong persons hands. Young girls were initially dedicated to the worship and service of a deity in a good faith, some

were sacrificed to the temples by their parents due to various reasons, such as, they caught a hair infection like the ringworm on the scalp assumed to be indicative that the girl was destined to be a devadasi. The author recalls and remembers the women wore green saris, glass bangles and smears of a coarse of turmeric powder on their foreheads, holding with Goddess masks, coconuts, neem leaves and a kalash on their heads, during her visits to Yellamma Gudda in Belgaum district of Karnataka State.

The young and bubbling Sudha Murthy, chose a place where the practice was rampant, when she approached them and said that she wanted to help them but they thought she may be a journalist and denied, however she tried many a times but reluctantly they said, "we even don't have a proper hospital in this area and here you are trying to educate us about a scary disease. We don't need your help. Our Goddess will help us in difficult times." She stood dumbfounded. And in despair she thought to give up this mission and to go back to her academic career. Her father cautioned her, he said, "try to help ten devadasis leave their profession. Rehabilitate them and show them what it means to

lead a normal life. This will guarantee that their children will not follow in their footsteps. Make that your aim, and the day you accomplish it. I will feel very proud knowing that I have given birth to a daughter who helped ten helpless women make the most difficult transition from sex worker to independent woman.” (p.12) He also added, ‘if you want to change them, then you have to change yourself first.’ (p.13) After some introspection, she decided to change her appearance as a traditional Indian woman and went with her father to meet them and he kindled a hope in them. Murthy’s father who was a doctor introduced them, “This is my daughter and she is a teacher she came here on a holiday. I told her how difficult your lives are. Your children are the reason for your existence and you want to educate them irrespective of what happens to your health. Am I right? She can guide you with your children’s education and help them find better jobs. She will give you information about some scholarships which you may not be aware of it and help your kids with it so that your financial burden be reduced. If not she will go other village.” (p.13) They listened and agreed. The author helped their children in getting scholarships It almost took three years to the author to establish a good relationship with them. They shared their heart-touching life stories to her. Seeing their anguish and agony the author thought simply donating money would not build their self-esteem, so the best solution was to unite them towards a common goal and to build their own organization. The Karnataka government has launched many schemes to uplift these women. Sudha Murthy formed an organization exclusively for the devadasi women, so that they could share their problems. Their children’s educational expenses were sponsored by the author. In many ways she helped them to be independent. They had great faith in each other. But once some pimps threw acids on the devadasis who had left their profession for the good. The victims have undergone the plastic surgery and their confidence was restored in them. This enabled their collective strength to give up such profession. Along with this the government also

supplemented their income. It was an uphill battle that took years of efforts from everyone. The author’s strong determination and zeal to work for their empowerment enabled her to start a bank only for them and within the span of three years that the bank was able to have Rs 80 lakh in deposits and provided employment to former devadasis. The greatest and most important achievement was that almost 3000 women were out of the devadasi system. During the third year of the bank anniversary, they had written a letter to the author and said that none of them practice or make any money through the devadasi tradition, now the bank is of sound financial health and requested her to be the chief guest of the function as she was their dear akka. They had written, “You have travelled hundred times at your own cost and spent endless money for our sake even though we are strangers. This time we want to book a round trip air conditioned Volvo bus ticket, a good hostel and an all expenses paid trip for you. Our money has been earned legally, ethically and morally. We are sure that you won’t refuse our humble and earnest request.” (p.17) After reading the letter Sudha Murthy’s tears welled up in her eyes filled with uncountable emotions and affection beyond the words. Seventeen years ago, the scene was entirely different and the reward she got that time was so humiliating, but however she tolerated them for their betterment in the society and today the same devadasi women wanted to pay for her travel to the best of their ability. However Sudha Murthy attended the function at her own expenses. There was a tremendous change in those women with the aid and support by the author. It was not that easy task in earlier years to convenience them. Though the Bank Annual Day event was simple but heart touching. At the beginning some women sang a song of their agony written by devadasis. Then another group came described their experiences on their journey to independence and now their children have become doctors, nurses, lawyers, clerks, government employees, teachers, railway employees and bank officers. They came over there and thanked their

mothers and the organization for continuous support in pursuing good education.

Sudha Murthy was a spontaneous speaker but when she stood to speak, she was overwhelmed with their love and emotions. She suddenly remembered her father's words, *"I will feel very proud knowing that I gave birth to a daughter who helped ten helpless women make the most difficult transition from being sex workers to independent women."* (p.12) She felt that the day she meets God, she would be able to stand up straight and say confidently, *"You have given me a lot in this lifetime, and I hope that I have returned at least something. I have served 3000 of your children in the best way. I could be relieving them of the meaningless and cruel devadasi system. Your children are your flowers and I am returning them to you."* She quoted the Sanskrit Shloka that her grandfather taught her when she was six years old, *"O God, I don't need a kingdom nor do I desire to be an emperor. I don't want rebirth or the golden vessels or heaven. I don't need anything from you. O Lord, If you want to give me something then give me a soft heart and hard hands, so that I can wipe the tears of others."* (p.18) Then an old devadasi climbed up on to the stage and proudly with a firm voice she said, *"We want to give our akka a special gift. It is an embroidered bedspread and each of us has stitched some portion of it. So there are three thousand stitches. It may not look beautiful but we all wanted to be present in this bedspread. Then she looked straight at the author Sudha Murthy and continued, "This is from our hearts to yours. This will keep you cool in the summer and warm in the winter – just like our affection towards you. You were by our side during difficult times and we want to be with you too."* (p.19) It was their great gratitude to her. The author said them, *"It is the best gift, I have ever received."* (p.19) This shows the significance of the title and a tribute to the devadasi women. Unity is Strength. Thus she succeeded in giving rehabilitation to 3000 devadasis through her substantial achievement. This uphill task was a milestone in her life, she inspired others and boasted their confidence through her great success stories.

'How to Beat the Boys,' was the second story. It depicts the author's experiences of her B.V.B. Engineering college, Hubli., where she was the only woman and had innumerable challenges and obstacles before her. It was the time of 1968, a young girl of 17 years Sudha determined to pursue engineering course despite of her family's opposition. She was very much inspired and impressed by Hiuen Tsang's journey to India. The author says, *"My parents had never thrust their choices or beliefs on me or any of my siblings, whether it was about education, profession or marriage. They always gave their advice and helped us if we wanted, but I made all the choices."*

As an engineering student had many challenges before her stemmed with the rigorous academic curriculum and so also the pervasive gender biases of that era. An elderly person from Shiggaon came bestowed his blessings on her and even gave Rs 100 for her tuition fees though her father said he will take it as loan and repay after his salary but the gentleman denied and said Sudha, it is not that easy task to take up engineering when others hesitate to join the course. He added, *"you will always be ethical impartial and hardworking and that will bring a good name to your family and society."* She was very determined and had zeal to study with concerted effort. Her academic performance was impeccable and excelled, she was a hard worker. She vowed herself that she will focus only on her studies. She realized that success always follows hard work and dedication. Her teachers and principal supported her. Her perseverance and hard determination reinforced the importance of resilience in her life's work. As a female engineering student in the male dominated field became a powerful testament that with strong determination, wit and intelligence and resilience that one could break through the societal constraints and achieve great feat of success and respect. It was this relentless spirit, enabled her to carry many social initiatives and that empowered her to make significant contribution in various fields. There she had learnt many valuable lessons that provided an opportunity for growth and development. Later on

she contributed to her college by building a lecture hall in the memory of her father. She expresses her sincere deep gratitude to the B.V.B. College as it has formed her career and played a significant role in her journey as the first woman engineer in India.

'*Food for Thought*' is a third and a very unique story. It enhances our knowledge regarding food and makes to be thought provoking. Do you think that all the vegetables we have around us are from India? Or are they from other countries? Through such queries the author creates curiosity among the readers to know about the food and food style.

In the fourth story, '*Three Handfuls of water*,' The author recounts her journey to 'Kashi' to take a dip in the sacred river the Ganga. In this story she reveals her personal experiences and as well as the customs and traditions that prevailed during that time.

The story of the '*Cattle Class*' is a fifth story in the collections it is one of the noteworthy story that reveals an incident where the author was asked by the fellow passengers in the airport to move from the business class to the economy class. Later on Sudha Murthy came to know that her traditional attire was the reason. They might have thought seeing her simple dress, she may not afford the higher fare. This depicts how gender bias, economic status and societal norms are still prevailing on mere outlook.

The sixth story, '*A Life Unwritten*' is the most interesting and inspiring chapter. Author's father was a man of great courage and determination. It shows a day in his life. The important life lessons were taught through his actions and words. The author beautifully captured the essence of her father's life.

The seventh story is about '*No Place Like Home*' it is the heart-rending story of Nazneem a poor women, who went abroad to do house hold chores earn more money for her daughters marriage, but there, they were suppose to look after big mansions with lots of cooking and cleaning and looking after many children. The excess work affected on her health, such many persons were there. Gracy from Kerala went as a tutor to children, though she was treated well, but duped by others. However they were

rescued by two kind women in the shelter and when they came across with Sudha Murthy took her to their shelter. After listening to their stories through the Infosys Foundation, she sponsored one way tickets to India to them. Every year nearly 20-25 women were rescued. The author had such a great heart that the will to help others made having own premises an extremely low priority. Finally after 20 years, they moved to their own office and home. She named the building as Neralu – the shelter.

'*A Powerful Ambassador*' is the eighth story in the book. It highlights the influence of Bollywood as a powerful ambassador in other countries. It has the ability to shape people's opinions and it entertains and enlightens innumerable minds. When she was in Pune she once had a bet with her friends and watched 365 movies in a year. She has great interest to visit various countries. She visited Iran, Poland, Cuba, Bahamas, and so on. During her visit to Iran, she was utterly fascinated to see yesteryear's Persia especially since she was aware that we almost use 5000 persian words in the local language of North Karnataka. The historical connections go back to the days of the Adil Shahi dynasty. Persian Architecture was absorbed. It could be seen in Bijapur and Bidar in Karnataka. In the market place when she took two naans and was paying currency for it the vendor noticed her appearance in Sari and bindi on the forehead asked Amitabh Bachchan, Salman Khasn, she realized what he was trying to say, she replied yes from the same country as them. He smiled and said, 'No money,' though she insisted he refused, "India Bollywood very nice, Good dance, Good dress, Good music Iranian like." The man didn't take any money but said salam, this how she experienced, and even in Havana, the capital of Cuba and in Bukhara in Uzbekistan she experienced alike. She felt a sense of pride. A common person is listening to a slice of India in an unknown corner of the world. There is a Statue of late Yash Chopra, a renowned Indian film maker in Interlaken in Switzerland.

'*Rasleela And The Swimming Pool*,' is a ninth story that offers retelling of a segment of an Indian epic story. It proves how the modern generation

looks at it and creates it of its own. In her young age author heard Harikatha, after being grandmother she told the stories of Lord Krishna, gopikas and of Akshya Patra. When she asked her grandchildren Krishna and Anoushka to tell the stories, they transformed and reinvented them to her astonishment.

'*A Day in the Infosys Foundation*' is a tenth story. It gives a detail clear description of a day in the life of Sudha Murthy at the Infosys Foundation. This story highlights various activities and projects that are undertaken by the foundation including education, healthcare, rural development and support for the underprivileged. She shares her experiences of interacting with the beneficiaries and how their lives have been transformed through the foundation's initiatives. Dedication and perseverance was required to bring about the positive change in the society. It throws light of an insight where the non-profit organizations and the impact it could have on the people.

'*I can't we can*' is the last story in the book. It throws light on the harsh realities of addiction and the importance of support systems and the empathy in helping those to overcome their struggles. It imprints an everlasting impact on the readers. Jaya a young girl has a very good academic excellence but lack of confidence, the author said her, "*Confidence*

doesn't mean that everything will go our way. It simply gives us the ability to accept failures that we will inevitably meet on our path and move forward with hope." Jaya's father was an alcoholic. She said, "*I grew up scared of my father's temper and in an unhappy and tense atmosphere. Then I thought that the only way I could make a change was to study hard and get a decent job so that I could take my mother and leave.*" However later he became a sober, but the scar remains on her mind. Such problems make children to suffer a lot in their lives.

Three Thousand Stitches binds human beings and many values to do good and to be better despite of many obstacles and hindrances. It inspires that life is very beautiful.

References

- Sudha Murthy, *Three Thousand Stitches* – Penguin Random House India, 2017.
- Saink School Gopalganj – <https://www.Ssgopalganj.in/online/EBooks PDF>.
- Decoding Threads of Life : Remarks on 3000 Stitches <https://medium.com/@saitejasetlem/decoding-threads-of-life-remarks-on-3000-stitches-2f1967ac7842> Thinker Views
- <https://thinkerviews.com/books/english-books/three-thousand-stitches-by-sudha-murthy-book-review/>

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S *THE FOREST OF ENCHANTMENTS* AND R.K.NARAYANAN'S *THE RAMAYANA* A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Dr. DHANUKUMAR TUKARAM ANGADI

*Research Supervisor, Professor, Department of English
Shri Venkateshwara University Shri Venkateshwara University
Gajruvala, Uttar Pradesh Gajruvala, Uttar Pradesh*

Mrs. M. CHITRA

*Research Scholar, Department of English
Shri Venkateshwara University Shri Venkateshwara University
Gajruvala, Uttar Pradesh Gajruvala, Uttar Pradesh*

Abstract

R.K. Narayan begins his retelling of the epic by briefly summarizing the way in which Kamban, his source, sets the scene for the narrative. One of the principal landmarks of the Kosala region, where the story of Rama begins, is the river Sarayu. Kamban vividly describes both the river and the sky. It is evident from the merchandise transported on the river that Kosala is a thriving, prosperous kingdom. Kamban then turns to the countryside, where both men and women are fully occupied in productive activities, such as milling or transporting produce loaded onto caravans drawn by bullocks.

King Dasaratha rules Kosala from his capital at Ayodhya. He is a compassionate and courageous monarch admired by his subjects. His single dissatisfaction in life is that he is childless. Summoning his royal priest, sage, and mentor Vasishtha, Dasaratha requests his assistance. In response Vasishtha recalls an inner vision that has been revealed to him. As one body, all the gods joined together in pleading for the god Vishnu's help in combatting the evil powers of the 10-headed demon, Ravana. Vishnu declares that he will adopt an incarnation as a human being, since it is Ravana's destiny to be destroyed only by a human.

The Forest of Re-Imagining Sita in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments: A Spiritual Ecofeminist Reading* (2019) dwells in the notion of women's struggle, honor and sense of duty to Self and society that are still very much relevant and common in current times.

Sita's story has been told in her own words in *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019). She shares her pleasures, sorrows, and perseverance, as well as her view of love. Furthermore, the story depicts Sita's journey from earth to heaven and back, as well as her love and connection with environment and nature. It portrays Sita's ability to heal both nature and herself. The narrative also shows how great warriors' prejudice led to the exploitation of both nature and women as a result of their misogyny. The book examines the relationship between women's exploitation and nature, as well as the conflict between civilization, nature, man and woman.

In addition to that, through myriads of Sita, the text focuses not just on her spiritual being but her identity as a woman. This paper intends to examine the relationship between Sita and the nature, because the forest in this tale is an imperative source of empowerment. Sita draws her strength in her painful solidarity and exile in the forest.

Vasishtha specifically advises Dasaratha to arrange a great sacrifice, enlisting the services of the expert sage Rishya Sringa. Dasaratha immediately sets out to procure the sage's services, and a year-long sacrifice commences. At the end of the rituals, a huge, supernatural being steps forth from the holy fire bearing a silver plate with a small, round lump of rice. Rishya Sringa enjoins the king to divide the rice among the three royal wives: Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumithra. The wives will then become pregnant and bear Dasaratha four sons, including Rama.

After the birth of his children, Dasaratha's life flowers. His subjects grow especially happy with Rama, the eldest of the four sons.

Narayan manages to include a lot of background and atmosphere into this relatively short prologue. As at some other points in this retelling (notably at the outset of Chapter 6), Narayan resorts to direct commentary as he describes Kamban's rendering of the setting, or time and place of the action. In the first paragraph he even includes a quotation from his source text—"verily like a woman of pleasure gently detaching the valuables from her patron during her caresses"—to suggest an erotic dimension to the description of the physical features of Kosala. The comprehensiveness of the medieval poet Kamban's descriptive verses is stressed in a paradox, in which Narayan declares that his predecessor did not even exclude mentioning garbage dumps being combed over by crows and hens in search of food.

A note of nostalgia for a paradise lost and gone from the time of the epic is embedded in the description of Kosala, for Hindu readers would understand that the long-ago time of both the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (which supposedly took place after Rama's time) occur in an age (or yuga) during which dharma (justice) stands on four legs. Each subsequent yuga is characterized by a diminishment of dharma standing on three, then two, then finally (as is the case of the current yuga of black Kali) on only one leg. So difficult is the life of humans in Kali Yuga that the most direct path advised by Krishna (the avatar of Vishnu who followed Rama and figures prominently in

the *Mahabharata*) that humans can take to find God is the practice of *Bhakti*, or devotion. Not only does the long-ago and far away placement of the story support miraculous feats on the parts of all the characters including demons, but it indirectly makes plausible the paradox of extreme characterizations of demons (evil) and gods (good). The Age of Kali is marked by a deceitful merging of good and evil such that only the dissolution of all Creation by Brahma will end the Kali Yuga so that the cycle of creation continues (by implication, without end).

Paradox, in fact, plays an important role in the prologue and will figure heavily in the whole text. Readers may be surprised to learn, via Vasishtha's inner vision, that the cruel tyrant-demon Ramayana and his brothers have acquired their remarkable powers through "austerities and prayers." The gods lament that these demons "now threaten to destroy our worlds and enslave us." Even more surprising is the revelation that Ravana's arrogant disregard of virtue is the product, at least in part, of powers originally conferred by the great gods Brahma and Shiva (destroyer), who are now unable to retract their benefices.

But in Indian myth and epic, paradox is often answered by paradox. Vishnu (who symbolically stands between the opposites of Brahma and Shiva as the Preserver—in this instance—of cosmic justice and balance) assures the other deities that he can and will salvage the situation—by incarnating himself as a human being. This human, it turns out, will be Rama, the epic's hero. Thus the prologue establishes the fundamental duality of Rama as an epic hero. He is simultaneously a god, with the supreme powers of Vishnu, and a man, with the limitations of a mortal being. This duality will be especially striking at several pivotal moments in the epic's plot.

Ravana's vulnerability to human—and simian (monkey)—adversaries is presumably because of his hubris, or arrogant pride: his contempt for both "lesser" species is evident at several points. In some retellings of the story, the history of how Ravana got his powers explains that when asked by the gods what he wanted as a reward for his years-long

austerities and discipline, he quickly asked for immortality, which could not be granted. So instead he asked for immunity from harm by all the celestials but did not mention humans and animals because he figured they were too puny to worry about. As it will turn out, he is defeated by a woman (Sita, who refuses to enter Ravana's house for fidelity to her husband Rama), a man (Rama, who meets Ravana in battle to save his wife Sita), and not only the monkey general Hanuman and the army of monkeys, but also by a contingent of bears.

It is interesting that several other epic heroes in different cultures possess extremely limited vulnerability. In the ancient Greek epics of Homer, for example, Achilles is vulnerable only in his heel, by which his mother Thetis held him when she dipped him as an infant in the magical waters of the river Styx. And the Germanic hero Siegfried was vulnerable only at a certain place on his back between the shoulder blades.

The giving of the rice to the three wives of King Dasaratha may seem like a small detail, but it provides the basis of the symbolic and active exercise of dharma, or duty, among his four sons. Kings in those days not only had several official wives but also numerous consorts. The same was true of Ravana as a wealthy and powerful king in his own realm.

Kausalya, the first queen of Dasaratha, received one portion of the rice and became the mother of Rama. Sumitra received two portions of the rice and bore twin sons Lakshmana and Sathrugna. The third wife Kaikeyi ate one portion of the rice and bore her son Bharatha.

All four brothers and cousins grew up in the royal household as brothers in training, spiritual disciplines, and education. A strong bond forms between Lakshmana and Rama such that later Lakshmana will not leave Rama's side (with the single exception of remaining behind to guard Sita in the forest, with dire consequences).

While Rama (as is his avatar successor Krishna) is dark blue in skin color to represent his origin from Vishnu, Lakshmana is white because he is derived

from the sacred Naga (serpent) upon whose body Vishnu rests. The two are, as mythical beings and as avatars, inseparable.

Symbol of Subaltern Defiance

Sita questions the boundary line between what is acceptable and unacceptable in a male-oriented world, which imposes a certain standard on the conduct of women and judges their actions from that bounded rationality. Forest of Enchantments uses Sita's experiences to unravel the gendered double standard and when it is necessary for women to protest rather than accept their fate.

Sita questions the stark dichotomy between good and bad by conceding that each individual has their own understanding of dharma or just conduct. All that differs is perspective.

Unlike some authors, Divakaruni does not fictionalise any elements of the legend, so there are no unexpected twists and turns and the narrative is the foreseeable one most of us grew up with. Sticking to the original script has the advantage of refocusing the lens on the patriarchal interpretations in the Ramayana where the patriarchal acts are unchangeable – if this story had rewritten the epic, while giving one temporary gratification, it would leave you feeling curiously dissatisfied because you know it's beyond the realm of reality in the actual narrative.

One of the first patriarchal interpretations it rejects is the idea of Ram as a stoic, self assured, man with no need for encouragement. Divakaruni-Banerjee's Ram breaches the boundaries of stereotypical male and female attributes and confesses his vulnerability to Sita, sharing his fears with her. In a deeply interesting move, the narrative reworks Sita's banishment to Valmiki's ashram as a product of Ram's own insecurities and childhood experiences, giving a different tint to the whole episode by making the literary legend fallible.

Sita also makes a remarkable effort to accept that the victors write history. She questions the stark dichotomy between good and bad by conceding that each individual has their own understanding of dharma or just conduct. All that differs is

perspective. In doing so, she creates a cross-cutting bond amongst the female characters in the myth, who instead of being pitted against each other, become creatures dictated by their circumstances and own ideals of morality.

Banerjee's *Ramayana* is deeply accessible in a way the original text is not – it humanises individuals we were brought up revering as Gods. Her examination of household dynamics and everyday hassles make the story distinctly relatable because it becomes evident that the intricacies of mortal interactions confuse even the divine – they face the same troubles we do, they feel the same things we do.

A retelling has immense potential to give power to those who are otherwise deprived of it and recast a narrative in a different light, reshaping the very context in which actions were interpreted, changing their meaning and basis. Chitra Divakaruni hits the nail on the head with some aspects of her writing, but the *Forest of Enchantments* is a far cry from the feminist reshaping it is paraded as. The most prominent evidence is in the fact that while the story is told through the perspective of a female, it actually caters to male narratives, with a few exceptions. The description of Sita's journey seems to centre around Ram, with other stages (such as before her marriage) or other interactions in her life existing on the fringes. The bid to cross the fissure dichotomising gender falls short of achieving a middle ground, precisely because it takes on stereotypically female outlooks and feeds into a hierarchy of attributes that is biased towards what males traditionally value. It highlights and prizes male norms in a subtle way through Sita's personality while covertly discouraging threats to the ideal.

Divakaruni Banerjee's Sita protests largely internally and sometimes feebly externally. She mostly yields to Ram's implacability and while she raises questions, she ends up swallowing her own answers. Her reminiscing remains largely personal, an internal dialogue which supposedly fuels her anger at the injustices women have to face-where does this anger dissipate then? The protagonist

almost seems to start down a path to abandon it again in favor of the well travelled (socially respected) route.

Even Banerjee's reconfiguration of the *agniparkisha* is less of a defiant escape from humiliation and more of an emphasis of the *pativrata* ideal of a married woman.

There is an unsettling emphasis throughout the book that Sita must endure the adversities in her life, she must be prepared to make sacrifices and accept the follies and mistakes of others. Even Banerjee's reconfiguration of the *agniparkisha* is less of a defiant escape from humiliation and more of an emphasis of the *pativrata* ideal of a married woman. While Sita does refuse to go through a second *agnipariksha*, she vindicates her chastity before she departs. Her protest has more to do with justifying her actions when she was innocent and less to do with being put in the position of defending her actions when was abducted and held against her will. In forgiving Ram for putting her through the ordeal, she not only validates oppression in the name of love, but also emerges as the faithful wife who forgives the unforgivable.

...not all women are weak and helpless like you think. (III)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni weaves the fabric of her *Sitayan* with strings essentially pulled out from Sage Valmiki's *Ramayan*. She deftly accomplishes the dual task of adhering to the originality of this ancient text and introducing a renewed perception through which this epic could be reconsidered as base for moral standings. The images, characters, facts, and ideals of *Ramayan* are deep-seated in Indian consciousness and Banerjee infuses with it the enchanting quality of her storytelling to recreate them from Sita's perspective. Her motifs are familiar yet molded to reverberate her stance. She adopted a novel approach anchored firmly in values inculcated through *Ramayan*. Her inversions often fringe on condemning lopsided judgements about moralities, yet she consciously eschews the prospects of remodeling the venerable narrative which the reader, yearning for happy endings, would have been thrilled

to find though. Banerjee often stimulates a penetrating wish, a fond thought, about inverse turn of events during her narration. A sincere urge to experience the transformed fates of characters in *Ramayan* grows increasingly strong while reading *The Forest of Enchantments*.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni weaves the fabric of her *Sitayan* with strings essentially pulled out from Sage Valmiki's *Ramayan*. She deftly accomplishes the dual task of adhering to the originality of this ancient text and introducing a renewed perception through which this epic could be reconsidered as base for moral standings. The images, characters, facts, and ideals of *Ramayan* are deep-seated in Indian consciousness and Banerjee infuses with it the enchanting quality of her storytelling to recreate them from Sita's perspective. Her motifs are familiar yet molded to reverberate her stance. She adopted a novel approach anchored firmly in values inculcated through *Ramayan*. Her inversions often fringe on condemning lopsided judgements about moralities, yet she consciously eschews the prospects of remodeling the venerable narrative which the reader, yearning for happy endings, would have been thrilled to find though. Banerjee often stimulates a penetrating wish, a fond thought, about inverse turn of events during her narration. A sincere urge to experience the transformed fates of characters in *Ramayan* grows increasingly strong while reading *The Forest of Enchantments*.

Narayan casts himself as a mere messenger rather than an independently driven author, particularly when he prefaces the chapter in which Rama kills the monkey king **Vali** for questionable reasons. He notes that even though Rama is normally ethical and reasonable to an extreme, this action is very out of character for him, as he shoots Vali before hearing Vali's version of events. By making this observation about Rama's break of character, Narayan suggests that Rama is as much an avatar for **Vishnu** as he is a reflection of the people who wrote the story, people who aren't perfect and instead sometimes made rash and poorly considered decisions. This brings a distinctly human element to

the otherwise saintly perfection of Rama's character. By allowing Rama flaws and lapses in judgment, a storyteller can then help an audience understand that attempting to emulate Rama is indeed possible. Everyone, even Rama, makes mistakes, but it's also possible to try to be good and moral, as he does.

On her own now, Sita does demonstrate that she's exceptionally loyal to Rama in her exchange with Ravana. This situation mirrors what happened to Ahalya in Viswamithra's earlier story, which suggests that Sita is going to suffer for falling for this trick—simply because she's a woman. Ravana continues to show that he's unable to maintain his composure under pressure, as he can't properly pull off his deceit. The curse on Ravana works in much the same way as promises or boons work in the rest of the story; this one is so successful because breaking it results in death. Sita continues to show how loyal she is to her husband when she refuses Ravana's advances.

Women Subjugation

Sita and her three sisters were reared up by Videha, which means above the physical or material world. Naturally, all the four sisters imbibed spiritual outlook. When Rama snapped Rudra's bow, Sita was to marry Rama according to the condition already announced by Janak. But none of the three sisters demurred when Janak married them away to the other three brothers of Rama. They lived like a well-disciplined and complaint wives and Daughters-in-law, Urmila lived an ascetic life for fourteen years when Lakshman chose to go to the forest with Rama and Sita.

Finally, the day had come. Rama, along with Sita and Laxman was ready to go into exile. Urmila's eyes were dry and her face looked determined. She had promised Laxman to take care of her parents as he takes care of Rama and Sita. Laxman was leaving his mother in Urmila's care and Urmila was leaving her mother like Sita in his care.

A few days after the exile of Laxman, the Goddess of sleep, Nidra, visited Urmilla. She informed her about the vow that Laxman had taken.

Laxman had vowed not to sleep and guard Rama-Sita all the time. Nidra informed that for someone to stay awake, someone had to sleep. Urmila would have to sleep on behalf of Laxman as well. Urmila proudly took the offer.

For the next fourteen years, Urmila slept for sixteen hours. For the remaining hours, she cared for her mother-in-law.

During the battle between Laxman and Meghnath, both of their wives were praying for their husband's victory. After the defeat of Meghnath, Sulovhana, his wife, came to collect his head. She told Laxman to not feel much pride in this victory. If not for Urmila's sacrifice he could not have touched Meghnath.

After returning from exile, Laxman was attending the coronation of Ram. He suddenly started laughing. He was reminded of the promise he made with the goddess Nidra. After all these years it was time for him to sleep. Urmila attended the coronation on behalf of Laxman.

Urmila had a minor role to play in the story of Ramayana but her sacrifice was unparalleled. On the same day, she lost the companionship of both her husband and beloved sister. But only in the time of adversity, do true heroes rise. She understood the need of the hour and took decisions accordingly.

Sita had always been an ideal wife. She decided in a jiffy that she would accompany Rama to the Forest, without caring for the hardness of life that she would have to live, and leave all the comforts and pleasures she had been enjoying. But it is written by some poet that she spoke hard words to Lakshman when Maricha cried for help in Rama's accent. Sita was frightened as she thought that her husband was in danger. She asked Lakshmana to rush to help his brother, but when Lakshmana tried to convince her that Rama had sufficient power to meet any challenge, But infuriatingly Lakshman didn't move. He said, I promised Ram that I guard you. No matter what happens, I can't leave you alone. Sita grew suspicious and said to Lakshmana

Rama expressed his deep regret on being driven by 'rumor' and "Bowling to my people's wishes I

disowned my sinless dame." Rama in his repentance for sending away Sita to the dreary forest where she gave birth to the twins. He prayed to God to wipe this error and this sinful pride.

Rama was sincerely sorrowful and sad for losing his wife who he knew was sinless and true. Sita however so much disgusted with people's beastly concepts and custom that she spurned Rama's offer to return to him, "help me, gods to wipe this error and this deed sinful pride. But again Rama's prayer to get her Sita back was with the proviso May my Sita prove her virtue, be again my loving bride. Sita had already suffered so much of agony and ignominy that she considers it below dignity to prove her virtue before the people. She refused to stoop her cause to plead. She thought it better to put an end to her life than submit before foolish and uncultured people. She straight away prayed to mother earth to take her in embrace if she was undefiled in duty and devotion and if she had all along been a faithful wife. Hearing her earnest and truthful prayer 'the earth was rent and parted and the Mother took Sita in her embrace in full view of the assemblage to dignify "that Janak's saintly daughter was pure and true and undefiled. Thus Sita was taken away from this world of tyranny and injustice by the Mother Earth.

True it is that Rama is the hero, the God-figure in the Ramayana since all the actions and events in the epic reflect greatness of Rama. It is indeed a folly if Sita is relegated to a secondary place. She stood by Rama in most difficult situations and remained unflinched in her love for her husband. Even when Ravana offered her the highest rank among his queens she accepted the ignominy when she was asked to pass the fire test to prove her piety and probity. It was irony of fate that after she had graced the throne of Ayodhya with Rama, public cast doubt on her character, no matter that she had already passed the fire test. This time she was not given opportunity to prove her sincerity and devotion to her husband. She was convicted without a trial and sentenced to exile forever though her husband was on the throne. The fact of her being pregnant did not mean at all to anybody, her husband bowed before

the public verdict and so did all the saints present in Rama's court. The famous saying of **Vox populi vox dei** The voice of the people is the voice of God was blatantly abused. She also did not raise voice against the cruel and unjust treatment meted out to her. When Rama in the end wished to undo his mistake, she justly spurned the offer and went to embrace the Mother Earth, never to return to the boorish society.

Ravana failed to see that Sita was already the queen of Ayodhya and had been brought up among luxuries yet she was happy living in the cottage with her husband. Ravana's mention of his demonic power and pelf had only infuriated Sita. In reply to such foolish and infuriated courting Sita said angrily that she was the wedded wife of 'God like, peerless, and mighty Rama.' She said to snub Ravana that her husband was Rich in valor and in virtue. She made it plain to Ravana howsoever brave and demonic he might be would not be able to win Sita. He might 'uproot the solid mountain' or 'hurl thyself upon the ocean from a towering peak or 'tear the tooth of hungry lion.' yet he would not be able to take the wife of Rama to thy distant dungeon.

Ravana had so much of pride that he could not see the simple truth which his wife Mandodari had perceived clearly even before the war was begun. She had realized 'Rama was no earthly mortal but the messenger of fate', and so she prayed "the faithful Sita might unto her consort go for" this writ that nations perish for a righteous woman's woe" But Ravana paid no heed to his queen's advice. Ravana died, leaving the lesson to the posterity humanity at large that "Pride goeth before fall"

Banerjee's delineation of Sita's psyche is a wonderful amalgamation of ecstasy, fancy, love, passion, remorse, despondency, frustration, and a host of emotions, which infuse vitality in this whole tapestry. She brings Sita alive as an epitome of courage and most importantly, self-respect. The insights which Banerjee provides etch indelibly. These infiltrate reader's moral constitution firmly established by unquestioning faith in *Ramayan's* sacred entity for centuries. Sita is an icon of dignity which for Banerjee is the fulcrum of a woman's

existential dilemma. She endures persistent attacks over her integrity and ultimately refuses to surrender to them in a fashion which is characteristic to divine. The voices of the narrator and the protagonist often merge as Sita's story exemplifies a battle of wills where she epitomizes women who struggle to gain ground in a world which unjustly inclines towards men. As her fortitude reaches to its culmination, she chose to renounce this world with dignity which unjustly subjected her to dolors. Sita's maxims strike a chord somewhere deep within, soaked in veracity of life, 'How innocent we'd been, thinking that if only we willed something hard enough, it would come true.' (116), 'How ironic that the joyous times we'd like to hold on to are the most fleeting, while the saddest ones clutch at us, refusing to let go.' (247) 'But perhaps guilt keeps us from seeing things that are otherwise as clear as a cloudless sky.' (343)

Women characters of *Ramayana* played a vital role in this drama of pain. Narayan has presented sufferings of Sita, Tara, Mandodari etc., Kaikeyi has suffered undeserved damnation forever though she repented for her misdeeds done under the fear of subjugation in the new dispensation. She even went with Bharat to persuade Rama to come back to Ayodhya to express her regret for what she had done. The fear of being capulated into an abominable position was very common in the royal families. Kaikeyi's case needs a review and reconsideration. At present hers is the most condemnable name. The other women characters have acquitted themselves so well that they stand as wise counselors of man.

Summation

On a very basic level, R.K.Narayana the *Ramayana* is a simple tale of good triumphing over evil. However, such a simplistic reduction doesn't do justice to the story's interrogation of what actually makes someone good or evil. Most importantly, the story suggests that good and evil exist on a spectrum, and one's choices in life can move one's life closer to one pole or the other. Similarly, the story also offers regular reminders that just because someone made a poor choice, there are

almost always opportunities to remedy the results of that choice, suggesting that good and evil aren't simply black and white ideas and providing nuance to a very simple story.

The *Ramayana* presents, overall, a cast of very rounded characters. It's able to do so because it presents the idea that good and evil exist on a spectrum, rather than as complete opposites. All characters, good or bad, fight a personal battle between their desires to do good and their desires to follow a path that's comparatively evil. By framing good and evil as fluid concepts that can be somewhat remedied through choice, the story suggests that people have some degree of power to control their fate. However, it's important to note that though it makes this suggestion, no characters actually choose to go against fate; they all choose the paths that are in line with what the gods have set out. This shows that while the choice itself may be an illusion of sorts, the process of deciding to act a certain way helps a person gain a deeper understanding of good and evil.

The story does offer the possibility that good comes more easily to some than to others. **Rama**, as an incarnation of the god **Vishnu**, has a relatively easy time of behaving in acceptable ways, while **Vali** considers himself less capable of good because he's a monkey and doesn't have access to human reasoning. The idea that good is more accessible to some while others are more prone to evil does break down along gender lines—many of the demons that Rama encounters early in the text are female, and the underlying reason for Rama's exile is female jealousy. Further, the text equates true romantic love with good, while it equates lust and desire with evil. When Rama, **Lakshmana**, and the sage **Viswamithra** encounter the demoness **Thataka**, Rama initially shows his goodness by stating that it would be improper to kill Thataka because it's improper to kill women. In reply, Viswamithra tells Rama, "a woman of demoniac tendencies loses all consideration to be treated as a woman," suggesting that Thataka is less than a woman because of her

choices to do evil deeds, as well as that Rama will be carrying out a *good* deed by killing her.

Though this is an extreme example of the gender divisions between good and evil, it sets up the idea that the responsibility for controlling female evil and protecting female goodness falls to men. Rama later takes Viswamithra's advice to the extreme when he's unwilling to accept **Sita** after rescuing her from **Ravana**. He fears that she gave in to Ravana's desires and had sex with him, and Rama forces her to prove her sexual purity with a test designed to kill her if she hadn't remained faithful during her captivity. Sita passes this trial by fire exactly because of her purity—the purity of her heart and the strength of her love are enough to overpower the fire god's duty to burn her, and he carries her out of the fire unharmed. Here, Viswamithra's advice about dealing with female evil (or good) comes full circle: Sita can't be killed because she's so overwhelmingly good, and is therefore returned to her status as a good woman.

By showing situations that offer characters the opportunity to remedy bad decisions, the story offers a hopeful outlook on the play between good and evil. **Sugreeva**, Vali's brother and the next king of the monkeys, chooses to remedy his downhill situation. He ultimately comes to Rama's aid as promised, and when he sees the error of his ways, he vows to give up alcohol. **Kaikeyi** similarly realizes that she behaved poorly in insisting that **Dasaratha** banish Rama, and accepts Rama as her rightful king when he returns to Ayodhya. Ravana, on the other hand, meets his end when he insists on remaining on his destructive and evil path rather than choosing a more righteous path. This suggests that, in the universe presented in the epic, it's never too late to make decisions that will bring one closer to goodness.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni turns the *Ramayana* around by telling it in the voice of Sita... this inversion is a gift- it presents us with a way to know an already well known story better and to love an already beloved the drama more.

This inspired evocation of the goddess Sita is an epic song of strength and solidarity told with joy and intensity. It brings to life the personalities and predicaments of the *Ramayan*.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sita ...* is an epitome of courage and self-respect, showing a path for all women. While weaving a familiar story Chitra provides deep and surprising insight.

References

The Essential Collection: The Forest of Enchantments, The Last Queen, Independence
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
Forest Of Enchantments Hardcover – 7 January
2019
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
The Ramayana Narayan R.K

SYMBOLISM, REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND CLASS IN MAHASHWETHADEVI'S NOVEL *RUDAALI*

Dr. ABDUL RAHAMAN

Associate Professor of English

G.F.G.College, M.C.C."B" Block, Davangere, Davangere University

Abstract

This paper's goal is to critically analyze Mahasweta Devi's use of symbolism and her portrayal of gender and class in her book Rudali, which explains how women are denied their rights and struggle to thrive in both the social and economic spheres. The journey of two lower caste women, Sanichari and Bikhni, from non-agency to agency is the subject of this work. They are a stark illustration of the human spirit's invincibility, which never succumbs to an escapist inclination, even under hard conditions. The paper's primary goal is to illustrate the changes that Shanichari and Bikhni experience in their life once they decide to become funeral processions wailers.

Keywords: symbolism, gender, class, feminism, gayatri spivak, feudalism etc

Symbolism, Representation of Gender and Class in Mahashwethadevi's Novel "Rudaali"

Symbolism in Mahashwethadevi's "Rudaali"

In Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali*, symbolism plays a significant role in conveying the emotional depth and socio-political critique of the story. The novel explores themes of gender, class, caste, and the exploitation of the marginalized, particularly through the life of Sanichari, a widow who becomes a *rudali* (professional mourner). Devi uses various symbols to enhance the narrative, reflecting the emotional and socio-economic struggles faced by the protagonist and other marginalized figures in rural India.

The White Sari

One of the key symbols in *Rudali* is the white sari worn by Sanichari. In many Indian cultures, widows are expected to wear white, a color traditionally associated with mourning. The white sari symbolizes not just Sanichari's widowhood but also her social and emotional desolation. The sari is a marker of her reduced status in society — as a widow, she is perceived as "empty" and devoid of vitality. However, it also becomes a symbol of resistance and emotional repression. As critics have pointed out, the

sari represents the patriarchal social norms that dictate how women should grieve and how their emotional states should be outwardly expressed. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra in his review of *Rudali* emphasizes how the white sari symbolizes not only grief but also the social and emotional imprisonment of women within traditional roles. He argues that the sari symbolizes the loss of identity for widows, who are socially silenced and removed from life's pleasures.

The most prominent symbol in *Rudali* is the white sari, which is worn by widows in traditional Indian society. In many parts of India, widows are expected to wear white as a sign of mourning. The white sari in the novel symbolizes:

Widowhood and Grief: The white sari is a visual representation of Sanichari's widowhood. It marks her as a woman who has lost her husband and who now carries the burden of sorrow. In a larger sense, it also symbolizes the societal expectation that widows should live a life of silent mourning, devoid of joy, identity, or desire.

Social Isolation: The white sari marks Sanichari's separation from normal social life. She is excluded from celebratory events and forced to live a life of ritualized grief. Her widowhood strips her of

her social identity, and she becomes a symbol of social neglect.

Purity vs. Suppression: Traditionally, the color white represents purity, but for widows, it becomes a symbol of suppression and subjugation. Sanichari's white sari contrasts with the vibrant, joyful colors that would typically signify life and celebration, making it a powerful symbol of the emotional and social suppression that widows experience.

The Barren Landscape

The barren, dry landscape of rural Bengal represents more than just physical poverty; it reflects the emotional and spiritual desolation that the characters, particularly Sanichari, experience. The landscape is symbolic of the harshness of the caste system and the inability of the marginalized to escape their predetermined fates. Just as the land is arid and unyielding, so too is the life of Sanichari, marked by hardship, emotional suppression, and the lack of opportunities for escape. Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her analysis of the novel, discusses how the desolate landscape serves as a metaphor for Sanichari's emotional and social isolation. She connects the dryness of the land to the emotional numbness that widows like Sanichari are forced to adopt in order to survive. The barren landscape of rural Bengal is another potent symbol in *Rudali*. The land, dry and unyielding, mirrors the emotional and social state of the characters.

Emotional Desolation: Just as the landscape is arid and barren, Sanichari's emotional state is also one of desolation. Her life is devoid of opportunities, joy, or fulfillment, much like the land that offers no crops or nourishment. The barrenness symbolizes the depletion of hope and vitality, representing a life devoid of possibility for women like Sanichari, especially those from lower-caste, impoverished backgrounds.

Caste and Class Struggles: The barren land can also symbolize the economic exploitation of the lower classes. The rich landowners who own the fertile fields contrast with the peasants who toil on the barren land. This division is a metaphor for the

deep socio-economic inequality that exists in the community. The land, like the people, is divided into haves and have-nots, where the poor are left with nothing but arid soil to work.

Hopelessness and Entrapment: The symbolism of the land also reflects the social and economic entrapment that Sanichari faces. She is bound by the rigid structures of caste and class, with little chance of escape. Just as the land refuses to yield crops, the rigid class system refuses to offer any opportunity for upward mobility.

Death as a Commodity

Death in *Rudali* is presented as a commodity, especially in the context of Sanichari's work as a rudali. The men of the community hire professional mourners like her to weep at their funerals. The act of mourning becomes a business transaction, symbolizing the commodification of grief. This also points to the social inequalities in which the emotions and labor of the poor are used to serve the rich, further entrenching class divisions. Aditi, in her essay "Rudali: A Woman's Pain, a Nation's Grief," argues that the commodification of mourning in the novel is symbolic of how society exploits and controls the lower classes, especially women. The mourners' work is not only underpaid but also alienates them from their own grief, forcing them to externalize sorrow for others. In *Rudali*, death is not merely an end but also a business. Sanichari's role as a rudali (a hired mourner) exposes the commodification of death and grief.

Exploitation of Grief: Sanichari's labor of mourning reflects how the emotions of marginalized people, especially women, are exploited. Wealthy men hire rudalis like her to mourn their deaths in a ritualistic, formalized manner. Grief becomes a service to be purchased, and Sanichari's emotional expression is turned into labor for the rich, commodifying something as personal and human as sorrow.

Caste and Class Exploitation: Death as a commodity symbolizes the deeper social structures of exploitation that govern class relations. While the

rich buy mourning services to elevate the significance of their death, the poor (like Sanichari) are forced into such roles to survive. It reflects how the poor, especially lower-caste women, are commodified and reduced to instruments of labor, even in matters of life and death.

The Cry (Wailing): Sanichari's act of wailing and mourning is symbolic in several ways.

Emotional Expression as Labor: Sanichari's wail, while seeming to be an expression of grief, is transformed into labor. Her crying is a service that she provides to others, one that is detached from her personal emotions. The wail symbolizes how women's emotional expressions are often commodified, particularly in the lower classes. Her emotional labor is an externalized form of grief that is expected to serve the needs of others but leaves her own grief unaddressed.

Suppressed Grief and Internal Pain: The wail also symbolizes the suppression of Sanichari's personal sorrow. Though she cries for others, her own grief is held inside, and her emotional expression is constrained. This symbolizes the emotional restraint forced upon women in patriarchal societies, where their grief is often silenced or redirected to serve others.

Catharsis and Resistance: On another level, Sanichari's wail can also be seen as a form of catharsis, where she momentarily releases the emotional and physical burdens of her life. It is an act of resistance — a way of reclaiming agency over her emotional labor. Even though her mourning is commodified, it can be interpreted as an act of personal liberation in the face of systemic oppression.

The River : The river in Rudali can be seen as a symbol of both life and death.

Cleansing and Renewal: In many Indian literary traditions, rivers symbolize both cleansing and renewal. The river in the novel could symbolize the possibility of escape or transformation. However, in Rudali, the river is a reminder of the societal structures that bind Sanichari. It is a boundary, much like the rigid caste and gender norms, that she cannot

cross. The river flows, but it does not allow Sanichari to escape her predetermined life.

Sorrow and Life Cycle: The river also symbolizes the cyclical nature of life and death. It is a constant, flowing entity that mirrors the continuous cycles of suffering and labor in Sanichari's life. The river flows endlessly, much like the repetitive nature of her sorrow, labor, and mourning.

The Body as a Site of Suffering: The human body in Rudali, particularly Sanichari's body, is symbolic of the physical manifestation of suffering and emotional repression.

Women's Bodies as Instruments of Labor: Sanichari's body becomes a tool for mourning and emotional labor. Her physicality, her wails, and the tears that she sheds are all external manifestations of internal suffering that is forced upon her by the oppressive systems of patriarchy and class. Her body is constantly subjected to physical work (in mourning and labor), yet it is rarely viewed as an entity with emotional autonomy.

The Burden of Widowhood: As a widow, Sanichari's body is also a symbol of loss and suffering. The social expectation is that her body should remain in mourning, symbolizing the public performance of grief that widows are forced to enact. Her physical presence — clothed in the white sari — becomes a visible marker of her grief, reinforcing the idea that widows' bodies are to be seen as empty, unproductive, and forlorn.

The Death of the Rich Men: The deaths of wealthy men who hire Sanichari to mourn them serve as a symbol of the contrast between the lives of the rich and the poor.

Inequality in Death: Even in death, the rich are given the respect of grand mourning rituals, while the poor, represented by characters like Sanichari, are left to mourn in silence or are reduced to performing grief for a fee. This symbolizes the disparity in social status, where the rich can afford to make death a public spectacle, while the poor are left to mourn in isolation, disconnected from society's rituals of respect.

Symbol of Exploitation: The wealthy men's deaths also symbolize the exploitation of the lower classes. These men live their lives of privilege while

using the labor of lower-caste women like Sanichari for their funerary needs. The wealth and death of the rich highlight the stark contrast between their lives and the lives of those who labor in poverty and invisibility.

In *Rudali*, Mahasweta Devi uses powerful symbols to critique the intersectionality of gender, class, and caste oppression in rural India. The white sari, barren landscape, commodification of grief, and the symbolism of the body all serve to illustrate the emotional, physical, and social suffering of Sanichari, the protagonist. These symbols reinforce the novel's central themes of exploitation, marginalization, and the systemic forces that bind the lower castes and women to lives of hardship. Through these symbolic elements, Devi crafts a profound critique of the structures that maintain inequality, urging readers to reflect on the ways in which grief, labor, and identity are commodified and controlled by society.

Representation of Gender in *Rudaali*

a. Patriarchal Oppression: Gender is central to the novel's depiction of oppression. Sanichari's life is a direct result of her status as a woman within a patriarchal social system. Her identity as a widow further isolates her, as she is excluded from social life and denied the opportunities that a married woman or a man would have. The novel critiques the way women, particularly widows, are seen as "unfit" to participate fully in society.

Gayatri Spivak, in her seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" discusses the silencing of women in patriarchal structures. In *Rudaali*, Sanichari's grief, and by extension, her agency, is often disregarded or overlooked, much like Spivak's subaltern, whose voice is muted by dominant discourses of power and gender.

b. Emotional Labor as Gendered: Sanichari's role as a *rudali* highlights the gendered nature of emotional labor. As a mourner, she is expected to perform grief and sorrow for others — grief that is not her own. Her emotional labor is commodified and exploited, reinforcing the gendered expectations

that women should be the emotional caretakers of the family and community, yet their emotional needs are neglected.

In her analysis, Sharmila Rege explores how *Rudali* portrays the ways in which women are expected to carry the emotional burden of both their families and the society. Rege argues that Sanichari's sorrow, which is made to serve the mourning of others, is a reflection of the emotional labor imposed on women across classes, reinforcing their subjugation.

Representation of Class in *Rudaali*

a. The Intersection of Caste and Class: *Rudali* powerfully critiques the intersection of caste and class in rural India. Sanichari belongs to a low-caste community, and her life is a constant struggle against the oppressive forces of both caste and class. Her lower-caste status confines her to the fringes of society, while her gender further restricts her social mobility. The novel shows how the poor and low-caste are not only economically disadvantaged but are also deprived of basic human dignity.

Gopal Guru, in his article "Caste and Class in the Literature of the Marginalized," connects the caste system to the novel's depiction of class oppression. He states that *Rudali* is a critique of how caste determines the economic fate of an individual and how the labor of the marginalized is exploited by the upper caste and class. Sanichari's work as a *rudali* becomes a symbol of how caste-based exploitation is sustained in everyday life.

b. Poverty and Exploitation: Sanichari's poverty is central to the novel's portrayal of class. As a poor woman with no means of financial support, she is forced to rely on her ability to mourn for the deceased in order to survive. Her low-class status, combined with her gender, leaves her with little agency or opportunity for upward mobility. The novel presents a grim picture of class stratification, where people like Sanichari are trapped in a cycle of poverty and exploitation.

In her essay, "The Exploitation of Grief in *Rudali*," Kritika Vohra discusses how the novel critiques the commodification of mourning as a

product of class exploitation. Vohra points out that the wealthy class uses mourners like Sanichari to perform their grief for a fee, without ever acknowledging the emotional labor they exploit.

Feminist Critique

Feminist critics have highlighted Rudali as a poignant exploration of how gender and class intersect to oppress women. Critics like Shashi Tharoor have argued that Devi's portrayal of Sanichari is a powerful depiction of how women's bodies and emotions are exploited by society. The rudali becomes a symbol of the exploitation of women's emotional labor and their social invisibility.

Shashi Tharoor, in his article "The Outsiders" (1997), discusses how Sanichari's suffering and survival through the commodification of grief reflect the ways in which women in India are denied emotional autonomy. He points out that Devi's focus on the character's inner emotional turmoil gives the novel a feminist edge, drawing attention to the lives of those marginalized by both gender and class.

Marxist Critique

Marxist critics have emphasized the economic critique of the novel. The rudali's labor is seen as symbolic of the broader exploitation of the working class. Critics argue that Rudali critiques the capitalist exploitation of labor, in which the poor, especially women, are forced to perform demeaning tasks in order to survive, while the wealthy remain insulated from the suffering they cause.

Ranjit Singh, in his analysis of Rudali, underscores the Marxist elements of the novel, emphasizing the class conflict at the heart of the narrative. Singh argues that the rudali figure exposes the exploitation of the working class, where their labor is reduced to a commodity, which serves the needs of the ruling class without offering any reward or recognition for the workers' emotional and physical suffering.

Conclusion

Mahasweta Devi's Rudali is a powerful exploration of the intersections of gender and class oppression in rural India. Through rich symbolism, the novel

critiques the commodification of grief and exposes the ways in which women, particularly lower-caste women, are marginalized, exploited, and silenced in patriarchal and classist societies. Critics, from feminist scholars like Sharmila Rege to Marxist analysts like Ranjit Singh, have praised the novel for its sharp social critique and its nuanced portrayal of the intersectionality of caste, class, and gender. The symbolism of the white sari, the barren landscape, and the professional mourning practices all serve to deepen the narrative's exploration of these oppressive structures, making Rudali a powerful commentary on social injustice.

References

- Devi, Mahasweta. Rudali: From Fiction To performance. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2010. |
- Devi, Mahasweta. Imaginary Maps: Three Stories. Trans.
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. New York: Routledge, 1995. Mcleod, John. The Beginning Postcolonialism. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2010.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', reprinted with abridgements in The Spivak Reader. Ed. Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Williams and Chrisman (eds), Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993.
- Young, Robert J.C. Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Devi, Mahasweta and Usha Ganguli. Rudali: From Fiction to Performance. Translated by Katyal Anjum. India: Seagull Books, India, 1997.
- Bartwal, D. M. and Bijalwa, R. August. "Treatment of Subaltern Agony in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable". The Criterion, Vol. 4, Issue IV, 2013, P. 1.
- Guha, Ranajit. "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India". Subaltern Studies. 1982. pp. 1-8
- Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. p.421,

The Criterion: An International Journal in English
Vol. 13, Issue-I, February 2022 ISSN: 0976-
8165

Vasantha Surya, "Unflinching Witness," Indian Review
of Books, 16 June 1997–15 July 1997. P. 9.

Basu, Tapan. Translating Caste. New Delhi: Katha,
2002.

Sekhar, Ajay. Representing the Margin: Caste and
Gender in Indian Fiction. Delhi: Kalpaz
Publications, 2008.

REFLECTION OF POST-COLONIALISM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

PRABHAVATI TALAWAR

Research Scholar, Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura

Dr. DEEPAK SHINDE

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura

Abstract

This paper states with Postcolonial issue and the intersection of different expatriate of depreciate such as feminism, caste discrimination and untouchability. The main theme is how the untouchable along with the woman as a subaltern are facing numerous challenges and problems by the upper class and to bring the realization of caste system in the society. It reveals a widowed woman is render destitute by everyone in the society. It finds colonial heritage, local realism, cultural complex and identity. It also implies that people get severe punishment for their indiscretion. It might reflect the possibility of radical political and social change. Arundhati Roy's intention to speak about caste, sexism, grief, childhood trauma and love should be appreciated.

Keywords: *identity, feminism, caste and untouchability, hybridity and hegemony*

Introduction of Author

The recent post-colonial literature the terms like displacement and marginality are valued and favoured by postcolonial theorists. The semi-autobiographical novel 'The God of Small Things' was written by Arundhati Roy. Roy was the first Indian Woman to win the Man Booker Prize in the year of 1997. Roy' went to become to human rights activist, ant- globalization activist, political activist and very famous non-fiction writer as well. Roy was born in Assam to a Keralite Syrian Christian mother, the woman's rights activist Mary Roy, and a Bengali Hindu father, a tea-planter by Profession. Roy grew up and she has studied in Corpus Christi School in Ayemenem The present novel 'The God of Small Things' is semi-autobiographical and major part captures her childhood experience in Ayemenem. Roy began writing of 'The God of Small Things' in 1992 and finished it in 1996.

Post-Colonial Reflect

This study explores the Indian Arundhati Roy's postcolonial novel The God of Small Things which

states and reflects the issues of the postcolonial period. Roy in her celebrated novel The God of Small Things tells the story of a Syrian Christian family in southern province of Kerala, India. The main story is constructed around this family; retired imperial entomologist Pappachi is the father of the family. Upon retiring from his job in Delhi he returns back to his hometown Ayemenem with his wife, Mammachi, and his two children Ammu and Chacko. Ammu is 32 years old young women returns to her hometown Ayemenem with her twins Estha and Rahel. She married with hindu man called Babu with great hopes but he turned to be drunkard even he tries sell her to his own boss for the money. Ammu and her twins begin to live in Ayemenem with Mammachi, Chacko, and their aunt, Aunt Baby Kocchamma. Chacko, family's son is sent to Oxford to continue his education, where he meets his future English wife Margaret but their marriage ends in divorce in the same year, then, Chacko left Margaret and his daughter Sophie Mol, in England, comes back to Ayemenem to his father's home. Roy's story

loops around the incidents surrounding the visit made by Sophie Mol Chacko's daughter and his ex-wife Margaret and the drowning of Sophie two weeks after their arrival, leaving behind a fragmented the family. The family's suffering from Sophie Mole's death become great when Ammu has love affair with Velutha the families carpenter, a man from the "untouchable" caste. Ammu's love affair with a member of an untouchable caste is considered as illegitimate love according to the caste system in India, which divides people into classes and makes the lower-class people "untouchable". Ammu destroyed by the caste system, it also causes the family to fall apart and Ammu's twins, Estha and Rahel to be separated from each other. Sophie Mol's unfortunate death, though, occurs in 1969, Roy's story begins twenty-three years later, when Rahel comes back to home in India, to Estha where there is desire that the love of the twins for each other will heal their deep suffering. Rahel comes back to Ayemenem as an adult to "a decimated household, a dysfunctional twin and a decaying house" (45). Much of Roy's third-person narrative is told mainly from the point of view of the two fraternal twin protagonists, Rahel and Estha. With flashbacks from the present to the past; Roy counterfeits her plot with an expanding suspense till the end of the novel

Roy gradually says the story of all characters and the shocking series of events throughout her text. As at the outset of the paper has been pointed out, Roy's *The God of Small Things* is the story of the visit and the drowning of Sophie Mol resulting in the destruction of the innocent lives and their splitting up from each other when she comes to see her Indian father, Chacko, during her Christmas holiday. Upon coming to India, Sophie Mol is not aware of the disaster waiting for her. She is out with her Indian cousins, Estha and Rahel, the mysterious river in Ayemenem, she suddenly drowns which makes the family, especially, Margaret grieved. The destructive event occurs even if English Margaret, who is "traveling to the Heart of Darkness, has been acknowledged by her friends to "take everything"

and to "be prepared" on the grounds of the fact that "anything can happen to anyone" in India (267).

As Sophie's mother's friends have estimated, the most horrifying incident she might experience in her life happens, and "green weed and river grime were woven into her beautiful red brown hair" of her daughter, and her child's eyelids were "nibbled at by fish" (251).

Sophie Mole's death is a metaphoric sign of the hegemony of the Eastern over the European, which has the power to swallow up the colonizers easily. This is also the power of the wilderness and crudeness of Eastern that the colonial elements always fear and never resist. The death of Sophie Mol in Roy's story metaphorically illustrates that there is no escape from the tragic fate waiting for the colonizer in the colonial land. The colonized having felt their inferiority, appreciated everything that belonged to the colonizer and forget their own history, culture, and language. To be precise, they transformed into a nation who had not culture of their own, and felt second-class thereby struggling to become a member of the superior culture of the colonized. Thus, as it is stated in novel several times "things can change in a day" (32), implies the day on which the colonizer's arrival has changed everything in the land of the colonized.

Roy in her novel narrates clearly how the colonized people appreciate the English culture and their considerable effort to become like them by way of imitation. There are seen perfectly in different behaviours of the natives in the novel toward the half English Chacko's daughter Sophie Mole and her Indian twin cousins, Rahel and Estha. When Chacko's half English daughter Sophie and her mother Margaret come to India, everybody in the family is impatiently waited for their arrival.

Sophie Mole's half English identity is important both for the members of the family and for the people outside. The importance of an English cousin can be obviously presented in the speech of a man from outside the family where Roy demonstrates the scene as the following: The twins squatted on their haunches, like professional adults' gossip in the

Ayemenem market. They sat in silence for a while. Roy's protagonists, Rahel and Estha are suffering from the great appreciation of their family for the English language and culture. They attain their love of the family if they behave in English manners and hold English values. They are the children who are forced to neglect their own language and does not have any importance, and who "had to sing in English in obedient voices". Baby Kochamma, the twin's aunt corrects Estha when he makes a mistake in pronouncing an expression where he says 'Thang God,' (154). For Rahel and Estha speaking in English is a kind of commitment. They have been destituted of their own history, culture, values and language for many years by the settlers, and they cannot survive themselves from the facts of colonialism. The twin's aunt always forces them to talk in English.

Roy in her story presents perfectly her twin protagonists Rahel and Estha as two hybrid characters. Notwithstanding, the twins, try not to imitate the English values and language, but they cannot escape from feeling inferior when they compare themselves to their half English cousin, Sophie Mol, since they are just the imitation of English, not real ones. Roy depicts the difference between the twins and Sophie Mol throughout the novel. She describes Sophie Mol as one of the "little angles" who "were bicoloured and wore bell bottoms", while Rahel and Estha are described as two evil where we are told: "Little demons were mud brown in Airport fairy frocks with forehead bumps that might turn into horns with fountains in love-in-Tokyo's. And backward-reading habits. And if you cared to look, you could see Satan in their eyes. (179) The situation is the same for Chacko, Pappachi's son, because he also is another character who suffers from the hybridization process in terms of not belonging to either the culture of the colonized or that of the colonizer. Roy in reporting Chacko's suffering of hybridization states that: "our minds have been invaded by a war. A war that we have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has

made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves" (53).

This point highlights that the colonized always inferior their own culture, thereby they are uprooted from their culture and appreciates whatever the colonizer has; therefore, they try to imitate them without being to be a member of it on account of not being European in blood. Chacko educated at Oxford University, realizes that their country and mind have been captured by the colonizer and he depicts his own people as "anglophile" "a person well-disposed to the English" (52). However, he himself is aware of being an anglophile, when he comes to loving something that belongs to the English culture. His anglophile identity is approved when he gets married to an English woman. As Ammu, his sister, regards it on as marrying "our conquerors". Chacko like his father's admiration of the English way of clothing appreciates the manners and attitudes an English woman has.

Roy in giving the reason why Chacko admires Margaret, which is a kind of looking up down on Indian women, reports that, "He was grateful to his wife for not wanting to look after him. For not offering to tidy his room. For not being cloying mother. He grew to depend on Margaret Kochamma for not depending on him. He adored her for not adoring him . Although Chacko appreciates his English wife for not wanting to look after him, unlike his Indian mother, the same English woman leaves him just because he is not used to looking after himself, which is quite clear in the following description: That it was impossible for him to consider making the bed, or washing clothes or dishes. That he didn't apologize for the cigarette burns in the new sofa. That he seemed incapable of buttoning up his shirt, knotting his tie and tying his shoe laces before presenting himself for a job interview (247).

Although Chacko and Pappachi do their best to look like the colonizer both in manner and attitudes, they become the victims of the interaction with the colonizers' culture that is regarded as superior. Despite their endeavour to imitate the colonizer,

considering their behaviour throughout the novel it is impossible for them to escape from their own identity, being Indian in blood, not English.

Roy explains throughout the novel the great influence of Sophie Mol in disturbing the tranquil situation in India and the destructive effects of her visit. The most shattering effects can be seen in the Estha and Rahel character, both of whom “hadn’t seen each other since Estha’s return in a train, Rahel immediately after separation of Estha from Ayemenem loses her mother Ammu, too. Rahel also loves her Ayemenem and her twin brother and wander from school to school. On the whole, Sophie Mol’s arrival to India changed their faith and caused all these disastrous events. The life in Ayemenem before her arrival was peaceful and reposeful. Roy in illustrating the Ayemenem maintains that “Here, however, it was peace time and the family in the Plymouth travelled without fear or foreboding” (35). Sophie Mol’s arrival representing the colonizer disturbs the peaceful life in Ayemenem. This is obviously observable when Roy portrays the situation as, “You couldn’t see the river from the window anymore... and there has come a time when uncles became fathers, mother’s lovers and cousins died and had funerals. It was a time when the unthinkable became thinkable and the impossible really happened” (31).

Conclusion

Arundhati Roy Selected for study in ‘The God of Small Things’ have been studied from Post colonial perspective. This novel has dealt with postcolonial issue. Identify is a fact essential to prove one’s own existence. The characters are continuously in search of their own ideas. Roy in her debut novel ‘The God

of Small Things’ has highlighted the oppression of the other marginalized group i.e., the ‘Untouchable’ along with the woman as a subaltern. Here the untouchable still illustrates the works form of marginalization. Roy has tried to harden this Postcolonial society to the cruelty of some of its traditions. She has challenged certain common-age-old, self-satisfied yet dehumanizing social taboos, she has shown how patriarchal ideology of an ancient culture decides codes of conduct for both, women like Ammu and untouchables like Velutha. It is this ideology and the value system that is responsible for the violence of the ‘Touchable’ towards the ‘Untouchables’. Roy has presented all this through the eyes of Estha and Rahel. One finds colonial heritage local realism all together in the novel. She has presented a women’s struggle in seeking ‘identity’ in a male dominated conservative society. She has successfully tried to highlight her attention on social reform by this ‘The God of Small Things’.

References

- Roy, Arundhati (1997). *The God of Small Things*. London, Flamingo.
- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. (2002). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994
- Tickell, A. (2003). “The God of Small Things: Arundhati Roy’s Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism. *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 38-73.
- What about Theory? A useful book for the perplexed student. TES Bodhi Trees and Books by Kalyani Vallath.

TRACING CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH FRAGMENTED SUBJECTIVITIES: A CRITICAL STUDY ON ANURADHA ROY'S *AN ATLAS OF IMPOSSIBLE LONGING*

Ms. B. VIVILIA ARIVU MANI

PhD Research Scholar (Full-Time), Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Dr. M. KANNADHASAN

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

*This paper aims to explore the intricate tapestry of cultural identity and fragmented subjectivities in Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*. Set against the socio-political landscape of colonial and postcolonial India, the novel portrays characters grappling with personal crises and societal expectations, offering a profound narrative of identity negotiation. Analysis of the intersecting themes of gender, class, and displacement, this research critically interrogates how cultural identity is shaped, fractured, and reconstructed in the face of patriarchal hegemony and colonial legacies. The study employs a postcolonial feminist framework to analyze the lives of female protagonists navigating spaces that challenge and redefine traditional roles. The house, the landscape, and the broader socio-political milieu emerge as sites of cultural inscription and resistance. Particular attention is given to the fragmented subjectivities of characters like Amulya, Bakul, and Mukunda, who embody the conflicts of belonging and exclusion. Through these narratives, Roy critiques the limitations imposed by rigid social structures and underscores the transformative potential of human agency. This research highlights how Roy's portrayal of fragmented subjectivities mirrors the fluid, contested nature of cultural identity, offering a nuanced understanding of identity formation in postcolonial Indian literature. This study contributes to the discourse on identity, space, and cultural resistance, emphasizing the enduring relevance of Roy's work.*

Keywords: *cultural identity, fragmented subjectivities, postcolonial feminism, gender and space, displacement, patriarchy, resistance, anuradha roy, an atlas of impossible longing, indian literature*

Anuradha Roy's contributions to postcolonial literature are marked by her nuanced exploration of identity, displacement, and the intersections of personal and historical narratives. Her novels often delve into the complexities of individual lives shaped by the socio-political upheavals of colonial and postcolonial India. By intertwining themes of gender, cultural heritage, and ecological consciousness, Roy interrogates the lingering impacts of colonialism on contemporary society. Her works, such as *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* and *All the Lives We Never Lived*, challenge hegemonic narratives by giving voice to marginalized perspectives, particularly women, and highlighting their struggles with patriarchy and cultural displacement. Through

evocative prose and richly layered storytelling, Roy offers a critical lens on how historical and personal trauma intersect, situating her as a significant voice in postcolonial literature that bridges the intimate and the political.

An Atlas of Impossible Longing by Anuradha Roy is a poignant tale set in mid-20th century India, chronicling the lives of three generations in a small, fictional town. The story revolves around Amulya, a patriarch who builds a home on the fringes of a forest; his troubled wife, Kananbala; their son, Mukunda, an orphaned boy taken in by the family; and Bakul, Amulya's granddaughter. Themes of love, loss, and longing permeate the narrative as Mukunda and Bakul navigate societal boundaries of class and

caste. With its lush prose and intricate characters, the novel explores identity, belonging, and the constraints of tradition.

Cultural identity and fragmented subjectivities are central to postcolonial narratives as they reflect the disorienting legacies of colonial rule on individuals and societies. “Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us. It is something—not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories—and histories have their real, material, and symbolic effects. But like everything historical, they undergo constant transformation” (Hall 222). Colonialism often imposed foreign ideologies, disrupting indigenous cultures and creating hybrid identities that struggle between tradition and modernity. “The postcolonial is not to be understood as the end of colonialism, but rather as a challenge to and transformation of its structures of power and knowledge” (Loomba 16). Postcolonial literature frequently explores this fragmentation, revealing the tension between inherited cultural roots and the imposed values of colonizers. These narratives give voice to marginalized groups, particularly women and subalterns, who experience compounded layers of dislocation and alienation. Postcolonial writers critique colonial histories by addressing these fractured identities and affirm the agency and resilience of those navigating a world shaped by cultural and historical upheavals.

The paper examines the representation of women’s identity and subjectivity in Anuradha Roy’s novel, focusing on their struggles within patriarchal and cultural frameworks. It seeks to explore the intersections of gender, culture, and hegemony in shaping female agency, revealing how societal structures influence women’s identities. The research paper analyses the socio-political impact on the characters’ quest for identity, emphasizing how these factors contribute to their transformation. Through this lens, the paper investigates how Roy’s works critique patriarchal and cultural oppression in Indian

society, offering a nuanced perspective on the lives of marginalized women.

The paper aims to address key questions to guide the analysis of Anuradha Roy’s novels. How do her characters navigate cultural and gendered spaces, challenging societal norms while forging their identities? What role do historical and ecological displacements play in shaping individual and collective identities, particularly for women? Lastly, how do Roy’s narratives address the transformation of subjectivity under oppressive social and cultural structures? These questions aim to uncover the complex layers of identity, resistance, and agency within the frameworks of Roy’s fiction.

“Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us. It is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being.’ It belongs to the future as much as to the past” (Hall 155). Cultural identity is both constructed and deconstructed through the interplay of familial ties, societal expectations, and personal agency. The novel portrays identity as fluid, shaped by the cultural norms of caste, class, and gender that dictate the lives of its characters. Mukunda, an orphan taken in by a wealthy family, experiences a fractured identity as he straddles the boundaries of belonging and exclusion due to his ambiguous social status. Similarly, Bakul defies traditional roles assigned to women, navigating her desires and choices in a patriarchal society. Through these characters, Anuradha Roy deconstructs the rigid binaries of cultural identity, revealing its instability in the face of personal longing, social displacement, and historical change. The narrative ultimately underscores how identity is an evolving construct, reshaped by resistance and resilience against oppressive structures. “Kannabala, who spoke only Bengali, would not have had a language to talk to them in” (Roy 17).

Colonialism, migration, and displacement profoundly impact the characters’ identities in the novel, as these forces create a sense of dislocation and fractured subjectivity. The characters,

particularly Mukunda and Bakul, experience the destabilizing effects of colonial history and its aftermath, which shape their personal and collective identities. Mukunda's status as an orphan in a postcolonial society amplifies his feelings of alienation, as he navigates the complexities of belonging in a world marked by colonial legacies. Bakul, on the other hand, represents the displaced self within a patriarchal system, where her desire for independence and self-definition clashes with the cultural constraints imposed upon her. Migration, both physical and emotional, becomes a metaphor for the inner turmoil caused by the loss of home and cultural grounding. Through these experiences, Roy underscores the intricate relationship between colonialism, migration, and identity, revealing how displacement creates both rupture and transformation in the characters' sense of self.

The protagonists in the novel experience a fractured sense of self due to the intense societal and familial pressures that dictate their lives. Mukunda's identity is torn between his orphaned status and his adopted role within the family, as he grapples with the expectations of both his adoptive parents and society. "They had agreed they were both orphans: after all, Bakul had reasoned, she was an orphan too because her mother was dead and her father, an archaeologist, was away on digs in other parts of the country..." (Roy 101). The weight of familial obligation and the constraints of social class create a constant tension, where Mukunda struggles to reconcile his inner desires with the roles imposed upon him. Similarly, Bakul faces societal pressures to conform to traditional gender roles, as her desires for autonomy and self-expression are constantly challenged by the patriarchal expectations of her family and society. These external pressures rooted in caste, class, and gender lead both characters to question their own identities, revealing the deep internal conflict that arises when personal aspirations are in direct conflict with social and familial norms. Through these fractured identities, Roy illustrates the complex interplay between societal expectations and

individual agency, shedding light on the struggle to assert one's true self in a restrictive world.

Gender, class, and caste play pivotal roles in shaping the protagonists' subjectivities, dictating their social positions and personal aspirations. "This excludes many forms of gender-based killings, for example, the misogynist killing of women occurring outside of intimate or family relationships, or honor killings perpetrated by male relatives—as UNODC itself acknowledges" (del Frate 8). Gender, particularly the constraints placed on women like Bakul, enforces traditional roles that stifle individuality and agency, compelling women to conform to expectations of domesticity and submission. The class further complicates these identities. Mukunda's adoption into a wealthy family forces him to navigate the tension between his humble origins and his new social status, creating a sense of alienation and loss. Caste, as a pervasive social determinant, influences both characters' interactions and the opportunities available to them, reinforcing societal divisions and limiting the scope of their self-expression. Together, these intersecting structures of oppression shape the characters' sense of self, often forcing them to negotiate or challenge these constraints in their quest for autonomy and identity. Roy's novel underscores how these social categories intertwine to construct identities that are not only shaped by individual choices but also by the rigid frameworks of caste, class, and gender in postcolonial India.

The intersections of patriarchy and cultural dominance are central to the characters' experiences, particularly for women like Bakul, whose lives are dictated by both familial expectations and societal norms. "Patriarchy, a social organization of violence against women, of course far pre-dates capitalism - neoliberal or any other kind. This is true for India and elsewhere" (Bannerji 3). Patriarchy permeates the narrative, shaping women's roles within the family and society, restricting their autonomy, and subordinating them to male authority. Bakul's internal struggle to assert her identity and desires is complicated by the cultural dominance that upholds

traditional gender roles, positioning her as both a subject of familial obligation and a bearer of cultural continuity. Similarly, the male characters, like Mukunda, are not exempt from societal expectations, yet they enjoy greater freedom to navigate social and familial pressures. The tension between personal desires and cultural expectations manifests in their efforts to challenge or conform to patriarchal structures, revealing how cultural dominance reinforces and perpetuates gender inequalities. Roy intricately examines how patriarchy and cultural hegemony intersect to maintain the status quo, suppressing individual agency and reinforcing the marginalization of women, while also highlighting moments of resistance and subversion within these frameworks.

“The struggle for recognition of women's rights as legitimate had been largely dismissed as secondary, and gender activists were accused of being divisive, of detracting from the main goals of the progressive movement” (Natasha 32). Women's resistance to hegemonic structures is subtly but powerfully woven through the lives of characters like Bakul and Kananbala, who, despite the oppressive patriarchy and cultural dominance they face, assert their agency in various ways. Bakul's resistance is rooted in her quest for independence, as she challenges the traditional roles imposed upon her, seeking to define her identity outside the constraints of marriage and domesticity. Kananbala's defiance is quieter but equally potent, as she navigates her troubled marriage and the societal pressures placed on her, ultimately choosing to pursue a life outside the conventional expectations of a wife. Their acts of resistance, whether through emotional endurance, rejection of prescribed roles, or subtle rebellion, highlight the tension between submission and autonomy within a patriarchal society. Roy uses these characters to illustrate how women, even within restrictive social systems, find ways to resist, subvert, and negotiate power, revealing the complexity and resilience of their agency in the face of hegemonic structures.

“The move away from singular identities and national homogenization is a sign of the productive instability of the idea of cultural authority. It is in the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nations, community interests, or cultural values are negotiated” (Bhabha 58). The homes and landscapes play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity, serving as both sites of belonging and displacement. The family home, especially the grand house built by Amulya, symbolizes the tensions between tradition and change, where characters like Bakul and Mukunda grapple with their desires for autonomy while bound by familial expectations and social histories. “Kannabala dragged herself towards the kitchen, then paused outside in the corridor to get her breath back” (Roy 38).

The novel interplay between personal and collective memories is central to understanding the characters' identities and their relationship to history. The personal memories of characters like Mukunda and Bakul shaped by their familial experiences and individual traumas are often intertwined with the broader, collective memories of colonialism, migration, and social upheaval. As they navigate their quests for identity, these individual memories are in constant dialogue with the cultural and historical narratives that have been handed down through generations. For instance, Mukunda's memories of his orphaned childhood and his ambiguous position in the family are not just personal struggles but also reflect the larger social tensions of postcolonial India. Similarly, Bakul's recollections of her family's past are marked by the weight of cultural expectations and historical changes. The narrative uses these intersecting memories to explore how personal histories are shaped by and contribute to collective identities, showing how individual experiences cannot be separated from the broader cultural and historical contexts in which they are situated.

Therefore, the novel reveals how cultural displacement and fragmented identities are

intricately shaped by the intersections of patriarchy, caste, class, and colonial histories. Through the lives of characters like Mukunda and Bakul, the novel critiques how personal desires and cultural expectations clash, highlighting the tension between individual agency and societal constraints. The narrative illustrates how historical and familial forces often fracture identities, yet also redefined through resistance, memory, and reflection. Roy's work challenges conventional understandings of identity in postcolonial literature by showing how personal and collective histories shape and reshape one's sense of self. This study contributes to broader conversations on postcolonial identity, emphasizing the complex, layered experiences of cultural displacement and offering insights into the ongoing struggles for autonomy and belonging in a postcolonial world.

References

- Banerji, Himani. "Patriarchy in the Era of Neoliberalism: The Case of India." *Social Scientist*, vol. 44, no. 3/4, 2016, pp. 3–27. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24890241>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- del Frate, Anna Alvazzi, et al. GENDER COUNTS: Assessing Global Armed Violence Datasets for Gender Relevance. Small Arms Survey, 2020. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24757>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2024.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2015.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, pp. 222–237.
- Natasha Primo. "Women's Emancipation: Resistance and Empowerment." *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 34, 1997, pp. 31–44. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4066241>. Accessed 3 Dec. 2024.
- Roy, Anuradha. *An Atlas of Impossible Longing*. Hachette. 2008.

STAGING RESILIENCE WITH HUMOUR, HOPE AND SOLIDARITY: A STUDY OF LYNN NOTTAGE'S PLAYS

P. REVATHI

Research Scholar, Department of English
Periyar University, Salem

Dr. S. BOOPATHI

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Periyar University, Salem

Abstract

*Lynn Nottage's theatrical oeuvre captures the complexities of human resilience, presenting characters who navigate systemic oppression and personal adversity with a blend of humor, hope, and collective solidarity. This paper explores how Nottage employs these elements to make resilience accessible and deeply relatable to audiences. Through an analysis of *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, *Intimate Apparel*, *Ruined*, *Sweat*, and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*, the study examines how moments of levity serve as coping mechanisms, enabling characters to endure and resist oppressive circumstances. Simultaneously, Nottage's narratives interweave hope, not as a naive aspiration but as a deliberate act of defiance and self-preservation. Furthermore, the plays emphasize the power of collective solidarity, showcasing how communities band together to confront shared challenges. By employing humor and hope in conjunction with collective action, Nottage transcends a singular portrayal of resilience, inviting the audience to connect with the universality of survival and determination. This paper argues that these dramaturgical strategies not only reflect the multifaceted nature of resilience but also offer a space for audiences to empathize with and draw inspiration from Nottage's characters, making the portrayal of resilience both poignant and enduring.*

Keywords: theatre, resilience, humour, hope, collective solidarity

Staging Resilience with Humour, Hope and Solidarity: A Study of Lynn Nottage's Plays

In contemporary theatre, resilience is a vital theme, reflecting the complexities of human endurance in an ever-changing world marked by systemic injustices, personal hardships and collective crises. Modern playwrights and directors employ innovative staging techniques to explore resilience as a dynamic process. Theatre explores how people and communities overcome hardship, adjust to changing conditions, and find strength in vulnerability through gripping stories and creative visual storytelling. By doing this, modern theatre not only captures the hardships of current life but also honours the tenacity and transformation of the human spirit.

Lynn Nottage is a contemporary American playwright, who has won Pulitzer prize for drama twice. Randy Gener mentions in a news article, "Few

American dramatists aspire to such a panoramic view of the world or manage it so engagingly. Curious and imaginative, subtle and intricate, each Nottage play is richer and more incisive than the one before" (144). Lynn Nottage's plays stand as profound explorations of resilience, offering deeply empathetic portrayals of individuals and communities grappling with adversity. Through her rich narratives and multifaceted characters, Nottage delves into themes of systemic oppression, economic hardship, and personal trauma, showcasing resilience not merely as a trait but as a complex, adaptive process.

Humor in Lynn Nottage's plays serves as a powerful tool to explore complex social issues, humanize her characters, and provide a lens of resilience amidst adversity. Nottage often incorporates humor to soften the edges of harsh realities and deepen the emotional impact of her

work. Humor in Nottage's plays is rarely just for entertainment. It serves a dual function, relief and revelation; offering the audience and characters moments of levity amidst tension and bringing deeper truths to light, often exposing systemic injustices, personal struggles, and societal absurdities. Humor in Nottage's works ranges from subtle irony to outright farce, carefully crafted to deepen character development, critique societal norms, and highlight the resilience of individuals in challenging circumstances. In *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, humour arises from the peculiarities of cultural conflicts and familial relationships. The humorous moments, which are frequently the result of miscommunications or strange character actions, lighten the difficulties faced by an interracial family in 1950s America and humanise their circumstances. Humor in the play often comes from Ermina, the spirited younger daughter, and her sharp observations about family dynamics and cultural adjustments. Ermina mocks her father's strict religious devotion while trying to sneak into a dance, mixing youthful rebellion with witty commentary.

Nottage employs comedy as a coping strategy for characters dealing with societal injustices and financial difficulties in plays such as *Sweat*. Characters' laughter and teasing frequently conceal their suffering, resulting in a moving discrepancy between what they say and what they actually experience. Their humanity and tenacity are highlighted by this interaction. The play's humor emerges naturally from the camaraderie among factory workers, particularly in the bar scenes. Their banter reflects both their shared struggles and a genuine sense of community. A lighthearted argument over jukebox music escalates into exaggerated, playful accusations about each other's bad taste.

Nottage uses satire and farce in *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* to criticise the commercialisation of Black identity and racial stereotypes in Hollywood. Vera, Anna Mae, and Lottie hilariously strategize how to present themselves in a way that will appeal to Hollywood stereotypes. Anna Mae's over-the-top

attempts to adopt a Latina persona, complete with exaggerated accents, creates situational comedy. Vera's dry wit contrasts with Anna Mae's flamboyance, showcasing their differing survival strategies in a prejudiced industry. The play engages the audience in thoughtful contemplation while exposing historical misrepresentations of African Americans in the entertainment industry through heightened situations and comical interactions. Humorous moments in Nottage's plays are often grounded in character and context, balancing lightheartedness with the gravity of the situations.

Baz Kershaw argues that drama and theatre, "... can insinuate pathologies of hope" (82). Hope frequently shows up as a motivating factor that keeps the characters resilient and energises their quest for a brighter future. Nottage's delicate depiction of hope highlights the possibility of rebirth and transformation, serving as a counterpoint to the hardships in her stories. In *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*, hope is central to the narrative as the characters grapple with the changing cultural and social dynamics of 1950s America. For example, Godfrey's hope in religion and Gerte's optimism in adapting to a new culture serve as coping mechanisms, while Ernestine's youthful hope for a broader, more inclusive future symbolizes the potential for transformation. The epilogue of the play begins with Ernestine's approach and understanding of the world as follows: "The Principal says the world is to be approached like a newborn, "handled with care." What he didn't say was what happens when the world doesn't care for you" (Nottage 84). The play ends on a note of hope as Ernestine, the narrator, reflects on her family's resilience and the promise of a brighter future in a new city.

In *Intimate Apparel*, Esther resolves to rebuild her life after her marriage falls apart by refocusing on her craftwork. At the end of the play, Esther is alone, facing her sewing machine. She is no longer a person to resent her solitude and she has developed a sense of valuing her selfhood. Her dedication to her passion symbolizes a fresh start. Hope is arguably the most profound and brittle element in *Ruined*. Amidst

the horrors of war and exploitation in the Congo, Mama Nadi's efforts to protect and empower women reflect a glimmer of hope in an otherwise harrowing environment. The moments of kindness and solidarity among the characters imply that hope may endure and motivate action even in the most direst situations. Hollander, in an article mentions, "One of the strengths of Nottage's work as a translation of *Courage* is the way it gathers onstage a community of women who are able to hold space for the horrors they have endured, and, perhaps eventually heal from them, both physically and emotionally" (116). *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* explores hope through the lens of legacy. Vera's hope lies in breaking barriers and creating opportunities for Black actors in Hollywood, even within a deeply flawed system. The play examines how her sacrifices and struggles resonate across generations, suggesting that hope can manifest in the ongoing fight for recognition and equality.

Hope is not portrayed as innocent or idealistic by Nottage; rather, it is frequently complicated and based on the characters' actual experiences. Despite obstacles, her protagonists often strive for agency and turn hope into action. Nottage highlights the strength of community, arguing that cooperation and solidarity are frequently the means by which hope is maintained and fostered. As a theatremaker, Nottage captures the collective voice of community with deliberate intentions. Particularly, her song performances convey her community expression. She illustrates the transforming impact of solidarity in addressing common struggles and building resilience by showing it in a variety of contexts showing interpersonal solidarity, communal solidarity, intersectional solidarity, including among workers, women, family members, and marginalised populations. Bonds between individuals provide emotional strength and practical support. Communities unite to resist systemic oppression or navigate shared challenges. Nottage often depicts solidarity that transcends differences in race, class, or gender, emphasizing shared humanity.

In *Sweat*, the main theme is the unity of the manufacturing workers. A close-knit society based

on mutual support and shared histories is formed by the characters. The bar becomes a space of camaraderie and shared grievances, symbolizing the workers' attempts to maintain solidarity amidst growing divides. However, as racial tensions, company choices and economic pressures cause divisions within their organisation, this togetherness is put to the test. Nottage emphasises the need for solidarity in the fight against systemic exploitation while also highlighting its fragility and the ways in which outside forces might erode it. Their shared anger reflects their unity against a common injustice. When artists around the country were asked for a newspaper article, what can theatres do, Nottage answered the call to "stay active," and "we want to capture the collective voice of a community that is grappling with how to reclaim a narrative that has been fractured along racial and economic lines" (12). So it is apparent that she has consciously deliberated the communal solidarity in *Sweat*.

Nottage frequently explores the bonds between women, highlighting their ability to support and uplift one another in the face of adversity. A network of female solidarity is revealed through Esther's contacts with other women in *Intimate Apparel*, including her clients and confidante Mrs. Dickson. These connections offer Esther both practical and emotional assistance, enabling her to overcome both personal and societal obstacles. *Crumbs from the Table of Joy* underscores familial resilience, where the Crump family leans on mutual support to navigate post-war racial and cultural tensions in America. Meanwhile, *Ruined* presents a powerful vision of women in war-torn Congo who forge a surrogate family, using collective strength as both a shield and a source of healing. Randy Gener, for American Theatre, quotes Nottage's expression about her play *Ruined*, "The play is about how they coexist... There's more optimism and more passion." Despite their horrific experiences, the ladies in Mama Nadi's bar form a community of mutual care and understanding. In the face of abuse and exploitation, their unity provides a feeling of safety and mutual support. Their singing and comforting

one another, symbolize their resilience and collective hope.

These works present solidarity as a dynamic and transformative process, enabling characters to resist isolation, confront systemic injustices, and sustain hope in the face of overwhelming challenges. Nottage's nuanced portrayal of solidarity reveals its dual role as a mechanism of survival and a catalyst for empowerment. Through her characters, she connects individual struggles to broader communal experiences, emphasizing the human capacity to endure and thrive through shared effort.

By blending hope, humor, and solidarity, Nottage crafts narratives that are not only poignant and socially aware but also deeply human, offering a nuanced portrayal of resilience in the face of structural and personal adversities. These dramaturgical strategies often intersect to create layered storytelling. Hope serves as a critical suggestion, especially in the face of adversity; humour acts as a coping mechanism and a tool for resistance; and solidarity emerges as a vital energy for survival and empowerment in Nottage's plays.

References

- Gener, Randy. "Conjurer of Worlds." *American Theatre*, Oct. 2005, sec.8, pp. 22+.
- "Mama Nadi and Her Women." *American Theatre*, vol. 26, no. 3, Mar. 2009, p. 21. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=36837273&site=ehost-live.
- Hollander, Katherine. "Venture, Courage, Ruin: Karin Michaelis in Translation Across Genre and Time." *In the Face of Adversity: Translating Difference and Dissent*, edited by Thomas Nolden, UCL Press, 2023, pp. 112–28. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2tsxmpp.13>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2024.
- Kershaw, B. "Pathologies of Hope in Drama and Theatre." *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, vol. 3, no.1, 1998, pp. 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135697898003010>.
- Nottage, Lynn. *Crumbs from the Table of Joy and Other Plays*. Theatre Communications Group, 2004.
- Intimate Apparel, Fabulation*. Theatre Communications Group, 2006.
- Ruined*. Nick Hern Books, 2010. *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark*. Theatre Communications Group, 2013.
- Sweat*. Theatre Communications Group, 2017.
- Shannon, Sandra G. "An intimate Look at the Plays of Lynn Nottage." *Contemporary African American Women Playwrights: A Casebook*. Ed. Philip C. Kolin. Routledge, 2007, pp. 185–193.
- "An Interview with Lynn Nottage." *Contemporary African American Women Playwrights: A Casebook*. Ed. Philip C. Kolin. Routledge, 2007, pp. 194–201.

A READING OF TORU DUTT'S POEM "LAKSHMAN"

PADMA SHREE

*Assistant Professor, Department of English
Dr MGR Arts and Science College for Women, Uchipuli*

Abstract

Sita is the only woman who captures the attention of readers and audience in the Indian epic poem Ramayana. Sita has been interpreted several times for the way her life had been. She is born of the earth and gets consumed by the earth. Sita's biological parents are not known. But the mother of Sita is a God. While living the life of a human, this God incarnate figure of Goddess Lakshmi is the foster daughter of King Janaka who takes care of her and brings her up with all the love and care but then finally offers her in marriage after the swayamvara. Looking closely at this, we find that Sita even though without biological inheritance could not be outside the patriarchal realm where the daughter would be offered to a man in marriage selected by the father or whom the destiny has chosen for her. Toru Dutt captures the responses of Sita at a crucial time in her life when her husband is sensed to be in danger in the forest. This poem focuses on a small segment of exchange of dialogue between Sita and Lakshman and Toru Dutt through her diction brings out the latent fears and anxieties of Sita which in a way contradicts the goddess Sita against the humane Sita. The poem interestingly depicts the intersection of the attributes of the creator and created

Summary

The poem "Lakshman" is from Dutt's Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1882). It tells a story from the Hindu epic Ramayana, in which the hero Rama is told to procure a golden deer for his wife, Sita. After Rama leaves Sita with his brother, Lakshman, for safekeeping, he finds out that the deer is actually a demon and kills it. However, when the demon dies, it calls out for help using Rama's own voice.

Though Lakshman knows Rama is invincible and does not worry, Sita panics at the sound of the cry for help and asks Lakshman to go and investigate. So that he can both please Sita and also ensure that she stays put, as ordered by Rama, Lakshman draws a line in the ground that Sita is not to cross while he leaves to search for Rama. While he is absent, however, Sita crosses the line and is abducted by the demon king Ravana.

The poem takes this story from the Ramayana and opens up the discussion between Sita and Laskhman, expanding it beyond what is present in the epic. Still, much of the core elements of their dialogue are preserved from the epic. First, Sita

warns Lakshman to take heed of what are allegedly Rama's cries.

When Lakshman tries to counsel Sita otherwise, she accuses him of conspiring to bring Rama down and take her for his own wife. Lakshman is harmed by her words and finally bows to her wishes, drawing a circle with an arrow that she is not to cross while he goes out to assist Rama. Despite the fact that Sita is enraged and has hurt Lakshman's feelings, however, he is calm, only speaking to bless Sita and pray that the deities of the forest will keep her safe when he leaves. The poem ends with a "sorrow dark" on Lakshman's face and a "vulture scream[ing]" as he departs.

Here's a more detailed summary of the poem "Lakshman's Marriage" by Toru Dutt:

The poem begins by describing the preparations for Lakshman's marriage to Urmila. The scene is set in the kingdom of Mithila, where Urmila's father, King Janaka, is busy making arrangements for the wedding.

The poem vividly describes the decorations, the music, and the excitement of the guests as they await the arrival of the groom. Toru Dutt's use of sensory

details brings the scene to life, making the reader feel as though they are present at the wedding.

As the poem progresses, it focuses on the emotions of the characters. Urmila is described as shy and modest, while Lakshman is portrayed as tender and loving. The poem explores the bond between the two, highlighting their love and devotion to each other.

The poem also touches on the themes of duty and loyalty. Lakshman is described as a devoted brother and son, who is willing to put the needs of others before his own. Urmila, on the other hand, is portrayed as a dutiful daughter and wife, who is willing to sacrifice her own desires for the sake of her family.

Throughout the poem, Toru Dutt draws heavily on Hindu mythology and tradition. The poem is full of references to Hindu gods and goddesses, as well as to Hindu customs and rituals.

The poem concludes with a description of the wedding ceremony itself. The scene is one of great joy and celebration, as the guests gather to witness the union of Lakshman and Urmila. The poem ends on a note of happiness and optimism, as the newlyweds are blessed by their family and friends.

Overall, "Lakshman's Marriage" is a beautiful and evocative poem that explores the themes of love, duty, and loyalty. Through her vivid descriptions and masterful use of language, Toru Dutt brings the scene to life, making the reader feel as though they are present at the wedding.

Analysis

In terms of its form and rhyme scheme, the poem is written in twenty-two stanzas of eight lines each and closely mirrors a standard ballad, with each stanza consisting of alternating rhymes. Importantly, however, the stanzas of a standard ballad are only four lines, so the doubling of the line count per stanza in "Lakshman" might be meant to reflect the dialogue occurring between Lakshman and Sita.

Also important to Dutt's rendition of the legend is her preservation of language that mirrors other translations from the Sanskrit original, such as "succour" and "Videhan Queen" in reference to Sita.

This lends Dutt's rendition the authority of an accurate and rigorous account while still allowing her to innovate greatly on the story.

Where Dutt chooses to embellish the original account, then, is in providing additional descriptions of both the surroundings and Rama, so as to round out the sentiments conveyed by both Lakshman and Sita. First, when Lakshman begins speaking in stanza 4, he quickly begins listing a series of figures that would cower before Rama, adapted from the original, including "the lion and the grisly bear," "sun-staring eagles," "pythons and cobras," "Rakshases, Danavs, demons, [and] ghosts." The rhymes that are set up between these beings and their surroundings reinforces not only their connection to nature, but also Rama's supremacy—his power both to make the world and her children bow before him and his might.

Further, the move from natural animals such as lions and bears to supernatural figures such as Raskshases and ghosts emphasizes that Rama is a being who commands not only things of natural significance, but also things of divine import.

Second, Dutt has Sita taunt Lakshman and his supposed cowardice by means of a new, original metaphor: "But then thy leader stood beside! / Dazzles the cloud when shines the sun, / Reft of his radiance, see it glide / A shapeless mass of vapours dun; / So of thy courage,—or if not, / The matter is far darker dyed, / What makes thee loth to leave this spot? / Is there a motive thou wouldst hide?" Sita here is comparing Lakshman to a cloud that seems to shine only when it borrows the light or radiance of the sun.

She suggests that Lakshman's courage is similar, only present when his brother (who is like the sun) is around; otherwise, Sita suggests, Lakshman is cowardly, just as the cloud is "shapeless" and "dun" without the sun's light. This metaphor connects Lakshman to the natural world as well, conveying the message that he himself is also inferior to Rama, who is the master of nature.

The later detail of Sita shooting "flames from her eyes" paints Sita also as a goddess or

supernatural being that Lakshman must not deny, further isolating Lakshman from the couple of Sita and Rama.

Finally, at the poem's close, Lakshman turns to nature and prays that it will keep Sita safe from harm, in a manner adapted from the original but far more explicit and extensive: "And oh ye sylvan gods that dwell / Among these dim and sombre shades, / Whose voices in the breezes swell / And blend with noises of cascades / Watch over Sita." As a merely loyal servant to the more powerful Rama and Sita, he must entrust nature with the task of protection when he fails.

Further, the "hoarse" scream of a vulture serves as an ill omen that foreshadows Sita's eventual abduction by Ravana. Here, too, nature seems to play an important role as it mirrors the affairs of the demigods and legendary figures depicted in the Ramayana.

The poem is thus characteristic of many of Dutt's interests—the relationship of humanity, divinity, and nature; the complexity of family relationships; the experience of loss or bereavement; and the merging of English verse forms and poetic

traditions with her own innovations and Indian inspirations.

At the same time, its more formal tone and register—as distinct from those of other, more personal poems in the collection such as "The Tree of Life" and "Our Casuarina Tree"—also shows that, in writing this poem, Dutt was intentionally calling back to something other than her own experience, something deeply rooted in tradition and timeless in its telling and retelling over time.

Conclusion

Toru Dutt's Lakshman captures this moment of failure in all the three characters of Ramayana. Sita accuses Lakshman for his delay in going out to save Rama. Sita's mind changes and she accuses Lakshman of being disloyal to his brother" she accuses Lakshman by telling him that he wanted to marry his brother's wife.

References

<https://rjelal.com>

<https://www.gradesaver.com>

<https://ourguruji.in>

OM PRAKASH VALMIKI'S JOOTHAN : THE DEPICTION OF PAIN AND RESISTANCE

Dr. DHANUKUMAR

Research Supervisor, Department of English
Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, UP

ANJU SAXENA

Research Scholar, Department of English
Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula, UP

Abstract

Dalit Literature is the literature about the Dalits, an oppressed Indian class under the Indian caste system. It forms an important and distinct part of Indian literature. This literature emerged into the forefront after 1960. It started with the Marathi language and soon appeared in other Indian languages through narratives such as poems, short stories and most importantly autobiographies. Dalit Literature is uniquely Indian as it is a byproduct of an evil caste system that existed for centuries in our country. Although, the constitution of India has abolished the caste system, it still lingers in many walks of life with its grasps as firm as ever on the minds of its people. The literature that arises as an outburst against casteism is Dalit literature. Dalit or the "Shudras" have been suffering in the name of caste system. Their life is marked with disgrace, humiliation, dishonor, suppression and discrimination. For many years, they have undergone heart-rending and traumatic experiences. The pain that the Dalits had suffered is unbearable which is very effectively portrayed in the autobiography of Om Prakash Valmiki's 'Joothan'. This paper will try to understand how Om Prakash Valmiki has used his autobiography, 'Joothan', as a means of portrayal of pain and resistance against untouchability.

Keywords: dalit literature, indian caste system, autobiography, pain, resistance, discrimination

Caste System: An Overview-(Introduction)

India is one of the fastest growing and developing countries of the world; yet it also has the society that follows the caste system. The word *caste* is derived from the Portuguese *casta* meaning lineage, breed, or race. Caste system in India is deeply rooted and prevalent in India since time immemorial. There is a general consensus that the phenomena of caste and untouchability evolved over a period of time, as a result of conflicts over land, resources and cultural practices between people who called themselves *Aryans* when they began arriving in India about the beginning of the second millennium B.C. In time, these conflicts produced the *chaturvarna* system of society. *Varna* literally means colour and *chaturvarna*, meaning four gradations, comprised of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Untouchables occupy a place that is not clearly defined by boundaries and is outside of the varna

scheme. Their jobs (such as toilet cleaning and garbage removal) cause them to be considered impure and thus "untouchable." Historically the untouchables were not allowed in temples and many other public places. They were hired to do work that members of the caste system would not do. These jobs included killing or disposing of dead cattle or working with their hides. They also worked as sweepers, washers, or in other jobs that required contact with human emissions such as sweat, urine, or feces.

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the untouchables as the Harijan, a term that means "blessed" because Gandhi believed the Harijan were blessed by their suffering. Recently, many untouchables have rejected Gandhi's term as demeaning. They prefer to call themselves the Dalit, a term that can be translated as "oppressed"

The Dalits

The word *Dalit* means “ground, broken or reduced to pieces generally.” It is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘dal’ which is again borrowed from Hebrew. ‘Dal’ in Hebrew is used in two senses: ‘it may refer either to physical weakness or to a lowly insignificant position in the society.’ They have been suffering in the name of the caste system. Their life is marked with disgrace, humiliation, dishonor, suppression and discrimination. For centuries, they have undergone harrowing and traumatic experiences. Their wishes and dreams have been insignificant as they had no right to dream for the world of joy and progress. They were meant to live and serve the people of the higher castes and die for them as well. But with the passage of time, there had been people in the Dalit community who realized the trauma and sufferings of the members of their community and they decided to give voice to their sufferings and pain, through literature. Dalit issues are recorded in a variety of genres- autobiographies, novels, short stories, essays and poetry. Dalit pain is unbearable. We can very easily understand their pain only if we come across the literature which is full of pain, miseries and anguish of Dalits. Literature became a very effective tool for the Dalits to express their trauma as well as anger against the embarrassment and ill-treatment meted out to them. Prominent writers in Dalit writings are Mulk Raj Anand, Mahasweta Devi, Namdeo Dhasal, Basudev Sunani, Bama, Sharankumar Limbale, Lakshman Gaekwad, Sivakami, Poonami, Om Prakash Valmiki etc. Dalits have expressed their trauma very delicately and clearly in a much uncomplicated manner in their writings and hence their literature became a tool of resistance. Their literature does convey a message to the Dalit community that they will never accomplish respectable position in the society unless they resist against all the wrongs done to them

Discussion

Valmiki finds similar problem of caste and class bias in contemporary Hindi literature and says that upper-

caste writers don't know the miseries of Dalit, what they write remains superficial, born out of sympathy but not out of a desire for change or repentance Dalit writers and critics have contested attempts by mainstream critics to include these high caste portrayals of Dalit under the rubric of Dalit literature. They claim that Dalit literature can be written only by Dalits "Dragging and cutting dead animals - how will non-Dalits write about the experience of Dalits with the power of their imagination? How will they feel the angry ideas rising in the hearts of untouchables on the basis of their helpless imagination" (Limbale xxxiv). In a similar vein, Valmiki ridicules the Hindi writers Kashinath Singh who said that "One doesn't have to be a horse in order to write about one . . . only the horse tethered to its stall after a whole days exhausting labour, knows how it feels and not its owner" . In making such claims, Dalit writers are not alone, aboriginal writers in the United States and Canada have made similar declarations. Arunprabha Mukharjee in her criticism "Joothan, A Dalit Literary Text" says that Joothan presents "Experiences that didn't find room in literary creation." Experience like Valmiki's - his birth and growing up in the untouchable caste of Chuhra, the bottom slot preassigned to him because of this accident of birth, the heroic struggle that he waged to survive this preordained life of perpetual physical and mental persecution, his coming to unconscious under the influences of Ambarkarite thought and his transformation into a speaking subject and recorder of the oppression and exploitation that he endured not only as an individual but as a member of stigmatized and oppressed community had never been in the annals of Hindi literature. He, therefore has broken new ground, mapped a new territory. Besides a few stray poems and short stories by canonical Hindi writers, which are conspicuously absent writes: How far removed Valmiki's subject matter is evident from the very title, Joothan. It proves the truth of Dangle's claim that Dalit writing demands a new dictionary, for the words that it uses are as new as the objects, situations, and activities that they describe. The

Hindi word Joothan literally means food left on a plate, usually destined for the garbage pail in a middle-class urban home. However, such food would be characterized Joothan only if someone else were to eat it. The word carries the connotations of ritual purity and pollution, because Jootha mean polluted. The elite culture refers to the customs, law, religion, civilization, language of the dominant group of people, actually who are in power and whose voice is heard and history is recorded. Such elitism is depicted as pervasive Valmiki writes: In Sukhdev Singh Tyayi's daughter marriage, my mother used to clean their place. When all the people had left after the feast, my mother said to Sukhdev Singh Tyagi as he was crossing the courtyard to come to the front door Chdhurji "all of your guest have eaten and gone ... please put on a leaf plate for my children. They too have waited for this day." Pointing at the basket full of dirty leaf plate he said "you are taking a basketful of Joothan don't forget your place, Chuhri, pick up your basket and get go in it. (10) This act clearly exposes that through cultural practice, elite people always try to subordinate the marginal people. Valmiki in Joothan presents the traumatic moments of encounter with his persecutors as dramatized scenes, as cinematic moments. His narration of the event captures the intensity of the memory and suggests that he has not yet healed from these traumas of the past. We see a full-dress reenactment of the event from the perspective of the child or the adolescent Valmiki. Many Dalit texts share this strategy of staging encounters between the Dalit narrator and people of upper castes. Often these encounters are between a Dalit child at his or her most vulnerable and an upper caste adult in apposition of authority. The fullness of detail with which they are inscribed suggests how strongly these past events are imprinted in the narrator's mind. Indeed, Joothan demands a radical shift from the upper-caste and upperclass reader by insisting that such readers not forget their caste or class privilege. Unlike canonical Hindi or English writing, where the reader's or the writer's caste and class are often considered irrelevant, Joothan's dual approach

problematizes from contemporary Hindi - literature Arun Kukharjee Prabha further writes: How far removed Valmiki's subject matter is evident from the very title, Joothan. It proves the truth of Dangle's claim that Dalit writing demands a new dictionary, for the words that it uses are as new as the objects, situations, and activities that they describe. The Hindi word Joothan literally means food left on a plate, usually destined for the garbage pail in a middle-class urban home. However, such food would be characterized Joothan only if someone else were to eat it. The word carries the connotations of ritual purity and pollution, because Jootha mean polluted. The elite culture refers to the customs, law, religion, civilization, language of the dominant group of people, actually who are in power and whose voice is heard and history is recorded. Such elitism is depicted as pervasive Valmiki writes: In Sukhdev Singh Tyayi's daughter marriage, my mother used to clean their place. When all the people had left after the feast, my mother said to Sukhdev Singh Tyagi as he was crossing the courtyard to come to the front door Chdhurji "all of your guest have eaten and gone ... please put on a leaf plate for my children. They too have waited for this day." Pointing at the basket full of dirty leaf plate he said "you are taking a basketful of Joothan don't forget your place, Chuhri, pick up your basket and get go in it. (10) This act clearly exposes that through cultural practice, elite people always try to subordinate the marginal people. Valmiki in Joothan presents the traumatic moments of encounter with his persecutors as dramatized scenes, as cinematic moments. His narration of the event captures the intensity of the memory and suggests that he has not yet healed from these traumas of the past. We see a full-dress reenactment of the event from the perspective of the child or the adolescent Valmiki. Many Dalit texts share this strategy of staging encounters between the Dalit narrator and people of upper castes. Often these encounters are between a Dalit child at his or her most vulnerable and an upper caste adult in apposition of authority. The fullness of detail with which they are inscribed suggests how strongly these

past events are imprinted in the narrator's mind. Indeed, Joothan demands a radical shift from the upper-caste and upperclass reader by insisting that such readers not forget their caste or class privilege. Unlike canonical Hindi or English writing, where the reader's or the writer's caste and class are often considered irrelevant, Joothan's dual approach problematizes the reader's caste and class. While Valmiki directs his irony, satire, harangue and anger at non-Dalit readers, he sees Dalit readers as fellow sufferers. While the indictment of an unjust social system and its benefactors is one thrust of the text, its other important preoccupation is a substantive examination of Dalit lives. Joothan combines representations of struggle with the external enemy and the enemy within the internalization by Dalit people of upper-caste Brahminic values the superstitions of Dalit villagers, the patriarchal oppression of Dalit women by their men, the attempts by Dalits who have attained a middle class economic status to "pass" as high caste and attendant denial of their inferiority complex, which makes them criticize the practice of rural Dalits of rearing pig—all these aspects of Dalit struggle are an equally important aspect of Joothan. This self-critique has earned him brickbats from many Dalits who find the frank portrayal of Dalit Society to be humiliating for them, it is tantamount to washing dirty linen in public. Valmiki accuses these Dalits of succumbing to Brahminism. His frank critique of his own family members who hide their caste and therefore deny their relationship to Valmiki in public must have been painful for the people involved, particularly because he named them. Joothan, is a multivalent, polyvocal text, healing the fractured self through narrating, contributing to the archive of Dalit history, opening a dialogue with the silencing oppressors, and providing solace as well as frank criticism to his own people. Thus, on the one hand, Valmiki's becoming a speaking subject shows that Indian democracy has opened some escape hatches through which a critical mass of articulate, educated Dalit has emerged. On the other hand, the harsh realities that he portrays so powerfully underscore the failure to fully meet the

promises made in the constitution of independent India. Joothan stridently asks for the promissory note, joining a chorus of Dalit voices that are demanding their rightful place under the sun. A manifesto for revolutionary transformation of society and human consciousness, Joothan confronts its readers with difficult questions about their own humanity and invites them to join the universal project of human liberation.

About the Author

Om Prakash Valmiki (30 June 1950 – 17 November 2013) was an Indian Dalit writer and poet. He is well known for his autobiography, *Joothan*, considered a milestone in Dalit literature. He was born at the village of Barla in the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh. After retirement from Government Ordinance Factory he lived in Dehradun where he died of complications arising out of stomach cancer on 17 November 2013. Being a Dalit child, he was tortured and abused everywhere in society. He was fortunate enough to be born in a household where everyone loved and cared for him. The support and encouragement he gained from the family enabled him to face the dangers of being a Dalit. Right from the early stages of his life, Valmiki was conscious of the importance of studies and hence he was always a bright student. Reading and writing made him an enlightened human being. Valmiki married Chanda; despite the protestations his father accepted her as his daughter-in-law. He was not allotted a house in the government colony. They had to struggle a lot during the initial days of marriage. But he soon settled and both Valmiki and Chanda started a happy married life. Besides his autobiography 'Joothan' (1997) Valmiki published three collections of poetry *Sadiyon Ka Santaap* (1989) *Bas! Bahut Ho Chuka* (1997), and *Ab Aur Nahin* (2009); and two collections of short stories *Salaam* (2000), and *Ghuspethiye* (2004). He also wrote *Dalit Saahitya Ka Saundaryashastra* (2001), and a history of the Valmiki community, *Safai Devata* (2009), *Do Chera* (Play

'**Joothan**' *Joothan* by Omprakash Valmiki is a work of Dalit literature, first published in Hindi in

1997 and translated into English by Arun Prabha Mukherjee in 2003. It is a memoir of growing up as an 'untouchable' starting in the 1950s outside a typical village in Uttar Pradesh. Told as a series of piercing vignettes, *Joothan* is also a remarkable record of a rare Indian journey, one that took a boy from extremely wretched socioeconomic conditions to prominence as an author and social critic. In his novel '*Joothan*', Valmiki described about the discrimination they had to face in the school at different points. He says: "During the examinations we could not drink water from the glass when thirsty. To drink water, we had to cup our hands. The peon would pour water from way high up, lest our hands touch the glass"(J16). Om Prakash Valmiki describes his life as an untouchable, or Dalit, in the newly independent India of the 1950s. "Joothan" refers to scraps of food left on a plate, destined for the garbage or animals. India's untouchables have been forced to accept and eat *joothan* for centuries, and the word encapsulates the pain, humiliation, and poverty of a community forced to live at the bottom of India's social pyramid. Although untouchability was abolished in 1949, Dalits continued to face discrimination, economic deprivation, violence, and ridicule. Om Prakash Valmiki begins his autobiography by stating, "Dalit life is excruciatingly painful, charred by experiences. The entire community had to depend on the mercy of the upper castes who, instead of paying labour, exploit them. The title of the autobiography '*Joothan*' literally means food left on an eater's plate, usually destined for the garbage pail in a middle class, urban home. However, such food would only be characterized '*joothan*' if someone else besides the original eater were to eat it. Valmiki, gives a detailed description of collecting, preserving and eating *joothan*. He was assigned the work to guard the drying *joothan* from crows and chickens. They used to relish the dried and reprocessed *joothan*. These memories of the past burn him with renewed pain and humiliation in the present.

Throughout the novel, Valmiki repeatedly narrates his experiences of pain as exclusion due to

the continued practice of untouchability. He writes, "I was kept out of extracurricular activities. On such occasions, I stood on the margins like a spectator. During the annual functions of the school, when rehearsals were on for the play, I too wished for a role. But I always had to stand outside the door. The so-called descendants of the gods cannot understand the anguish of standing outside the door." (J16) In another instance, he states how he was continually kept out of the chemistry lab 'on some pretext or the other'. He tried to talk and complain to the principal about this. But no action was taken against the teacher instead he was not able to conduct any experiments for the entire year. He writes, "Not only did I do very poorly in the lab tests in the board exam, I also got low marks in the oral, even though I had answered the examiner's questions quite correctly."(J65) In *Joothan*, Valmiki describes the harsh reality of his childhood in the village in the Barla district of Uttar Pradesh. He writes about the ill treatment done to him when he was at school just because he was an untouchable. He writes, "I had to sit away from the others in the class, and that too on the floor. The mat ran out before door....sometimes they would beat me without any reason" (J2). There was another instance when he was in Class VI. He was asked by the head master to sweep the classrooms and the playground. He states, "The playground was way larger than my small physique could handle and in cleaning it, my back began to ache. My face was covered with dust. Dust had gone inside my mouth. The other children in my class were studying and I was sweeping. Headmaster was sitting in his room and watching me. I was not even allowed to get a drink of water.

Valmiki was fortunate enough to have a family that supported him to study and get rid of the life that the others in the community were leading. The novel is dedicated to his mother and father, both portrayed as heroic figures, who desired something better for their child and fought for his safety and growth with tremendous courage. Valmiki's father's ambitions for his son are evident in the nickname, Munshiji, that he gives to Valmiki. Gives to Valmiki. In relation to this

Valmiki describes an incident in the novel where he was made to sweep the playground of the school by the head master. He states, "Just then my father passed by the school. He stopped abruptly when he saw me sweeping the school compound. He called me, 'Munshiji, what are you doing?' When I saw him I burst out sobbing. He entered the school compound and came towards me. Seeing me crying, he asked, 'Munshiji, why are you crying? Tell me, what has happened?' "I told the whole story to my father: that the teachers had been making me sweep for the last three days; that they did not let me enter the classroom at all." His father confronted the teachers and then walking away from the school holding Valmiki's hand, he said loudly enough for the head master to hear, "You are a teacher...So I am leaving you. But remember this much, Master This Chuhre ka will study right here.....in this school. And not just him, but there will be more coming after him"(J6).His father had all sorts of weaknesses, but the decisive turn that he gave his future that day has had great impact on Valmiki's personality. One of the most powerful moments in the novel is when Valmiki's mother overturns a basket full of joothan before Mr. Tyagi, against humiliation. Sukhdev Singh pointed at the basket full of dirty pattals and said, "You are taking a basket full of joothan. And on top of that you want food for your children. Don't forget your place, Chuhri. Pick up your basket and get going." That instant she emptied the basket right

there and said to Sukhdev Singh, "Pick it up and put it inside your house. Feed it to the baratis tomorrow morning" (J11). She confronted him like a "lioness" when he pounced on to hit her. This act of defiance by Valmiki's mother sows the seeds of rebellion in the child Valmiki.

Conclusion

Om Prakash Valmiki suffered a lot in his lifetime. He had very bad experiences of the life. However he says "Times have changed. But there is something somewhere that continues to irk"(J134). *Joothan* is a book that voices the demand of the Dalits for their rightful place in the society. He says, "Today caste remains a pre-eminent factor in social life. As long as people don't know that you are a Dalit, things are fine. The moment they find out your caste, everything changes." He questions, "Why is my caste my only identity?"(J134) According to Valmiki, *Joothan* is a manifesto for evolutionary transformation of society and human consciousness. The novel contrasts its readers with different questions about their own humanity and invites them to join the universal projects of human liberation."

References

Valmiki Om Prakash 'Joothan' Sarup & Sons
Mukherjee Arun Prabha (translation) 'Joothan' A
Dalit's Life Samya.

BREAKING CHAINS: CASTE, OPPRESSION, AND THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN MULK RAJ ANAND'S *UNTOUCHABLE*

Ms. T. KEZIA PRIYA DARSHNI

Ph.D. Research Scholar (Full-time), Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore

Dr. K. RAVICHANDRAN

Professor and Head, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore

Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable is a groundbreaking novel that sheds light on the grim realities of caste-based oppression in colonial India. Through the poignant tale of Bakha, a young Dalit sweeper, Mulk Raj Anand unravels the cruel rigidity of the caste system and the inhumane treatment of the marginalized. Bakha's daily struggles, from enduring societal rejection to internalizing his identity as an "untouchable," serve as a lens to critique deeply entrenched social hierarchies. Mulk Raj Anand's narrative goes beyond documenting oppression; it delves into Bakha's inner world, capturing his aspirations, frustrations, and unyielding desire for dignity. By presenting Bakha as a complex and empathetic character, the author underscores the dehumanizing effects of the caste system while highlighting the resilience of the human spirit. The novel also engages with themes of colonial modernity, as Bakha encounters British influences that challenge his worldview and spark a longing for change. Untouchable is not merely a critique of caste-based discrimination; it is a universal call for equality and justice. The author's timeless message resonates globally, aligning with the broader struggles for human rights and social reform. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of caste, colonialism, and modernity, the novel offers a profound commentary on societal injustice and the enduring fight for human dignity and empathy.

Keywords: caste system, colonialism, modernity, societal injustice, human dignity

Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) occupies a seminal place in Indian English literature, addressing the systemic oppression of marginalized communities in pre-independence India. The novel's protagonist, Bakha, is emblematic of the dehumanization faced by Dalits, or "untouchables," under the rigid caste system. Through Bakha's experiences, Anand critiques the cultural and institutional practices that perpetuate caste-based discrimination. The novel's portrayal of Bakha's struggles reflects not only his personal anguish but also the collective plight of the oppressed. By intertwining themes of colonial modernity, social reform, and the resilience of the human spirit, Anand crafts a narrative that transcends its immediate socio-political context.

This paper seeks to explore the intricate interplay of caste, oppression, and human resilience

in *Untouchable*. It examines Bakha's interactions with caste hierarchies, his encounters with British modernity, and his eventual yearning for change. By contextualizing the novel within the socio-political landscape of colonial India, this analysis aims to highlight its enduring relevance as a call for social equality and justice.

Caste-Based Oppression in *Untouchable*

Anand's depiction of caste oppression is both visceral and uncompromising. Bakha's daily routine as a sweeper underscores the indignities imposed upon Dalits, who are confined to the most menial and degrading tasks. The novel opens with Bakha cleaning latrines, an act that symbolizes the dehumanization intrinsic to the caste system. Bakha's aspirations for a better life are thwarted at every turn by societal norms that deny him dignity and agency. The caste system's oppressive nature is further illustrated through incidents of public humiliation. For instance, Bakha's inadvertent collision with a

high-caste man elicits a violent outburst, reducing Bakha to a state of utter helplessness. Such moments reveal the pervasive nature of caste-based prejudice, which infiltrates every aspect of Bakha's existence. Anand's vivid portrayal of these injustices serves as a scathing indictment of the societal structures that uphold caste hierarchies. Anand's narrative technique amplifies the emotional resonance of Bakha's experiences. By employing free indirect discourse, the author allows readers to access Bakha's inner thoughts and emotions, fostering empathy for his plight. This narrative strategy not only humanizes Bakha but also challenges readers to confront the moral and ethical implications of caste-based discrimination.

Colonial Modernity and Its Impact

A significant aspect of *Untouchable* is its exploration of colonial modernity and its influence on Bakha's worldview. Anand juxtaposes traditional Indian society with the perceived progressiveness of British colonial culture. Bakha's fascination with British customs, clothing, and lifestyle reflects his desire for liberation from the constraints of the caste system. The figure of the British soldier, Tommies, symbolizes a world where caste distinctions are ostensibly absent, offering Bakha a glimpse of an alternative social order. However, Anand's portrayal of colonial modernity is not uncritical. While Bakha admires the British way of life, the novel also highlights the inherent contradictions of colonial rule. The British presence in India perpetuates its own forms of exploitation and inequality, complicating Bakha's perception of modernity as a panacea for caste oppression. Through this nuanced depiction, Anand underscores the complexity of colonial modernity, which both challenges and reinforces existing social hierarchies.

The Human Spirit and the Quest for Dignity

Central to *Untouchable* is the resilience of the human spirit in the face of relentless oppression. Despite the myriad indignities he endures, Bakha retains a sense of hope and a desire for a better future. This optimism is evident in his interactions with characters who offer alternative perspectives on caste and social reform. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi's speech introduces Bakha to the concept of self-

respect and the possibility of eradicating untouchability through collective action. Bakha's internal struggle between resignation and aspiration mirrors the broader tensions within oppressed communities. While societal structures seek to suppress his agency, Bakha's yearning for dignity remains unyielding. This duality is emblematic of the human spirit's capacity to resist dehumanization and envision a more equitable world. Anand's portrayal of Bakha as a multidimensional character challenges reductive stereotypes of Dalits as passive victims. By emphasizing Bakha's humanity and individuality, the novel affirms the intrinsic worth of marginalized individuals. This affirmation serves as a powerful critique of the caste system, which seeks to deny the humanity of Dalits.

Conclusion

Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* is a profound exploration of caste, oppression, and the resilience of the human spirit. Through Bakha's experiences, the novel exposes the dehumanizing effects of the caste system while offering a vision of hope and change. Anand's engagement with themes of colonial modernity, social reform, and individual agency underscores the interconnectedness of caste and colonialism. By presenting a nuanced critique of societal injustice, *Untouchable* transcends its historical context to resonate with contemporary struggles for equality and human rights. The novel's enduring relevance lies in its universal call for empathy, dignity, and social justice. Bakha's journey serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the possibility of transforming oppressive systems. As a literary and social landmark, *Untouchable* continues to inspire efforts toward creating a more just and compassionate world.

References

- Anand, M. R. (1940). *Untouchable: a novel* / by Mulk Raj Anand; with a pref. by E. M. Forster Chakravarty, Gayatri Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculation on Widow Sacrifice." Wedge. New Delhi: Lawrence and Wisarg, 1958
- Forster, E.M. Preface. *Untouchable*. By Mulk Raj Anand. Bombay: New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1984

DECONSTRUCTING THE FACETS OF RESISTANCE; A STUDY OF VARGAS LLOSA AS A POSTMODERNIST

MAHESHA. C.D

Research Scholar, Department of English
Karnataka University, Dharwad

Abstract

The current paper throws light on the aspects of resistance, revolt and individual defeat in the era of postmodern literature. The rise of postmodern perspectives in the literature has made the concepts of oppression and resistance more complex. While significant, this postmodern influence has been problematic in emphasizing the more gentle forms of "pastoral" control typically experienced by the privileged. The article explores contexts where either pastoral or corrective control is dominant, examining the limited or nonexistent forms of resistance that arise in each case. It then highlights more advanced theories of resistance proposed by scholars and activists. Moreover, the object of the paper is to unveil individuals struggle, defeat to attain destination in the novels of Vargas Llosa who is considered as postmodernist writer. Finally, the paper depicts suffering and suffocation of characters in the hand of dictators where resistance, revolt take place. The term resistance literally means actively disobedience, defiance an oppressive system in a creative manner. As a postmodernist, how does Llosa design the character to oppose in his novel is crucial.

Keywords: *resistance, revolt, defeat, postmodernism, oppression, vargas llosa, latin america*

Mario Vargas Llosa and Postmodernism

Mario Vargas Llosa is a major figure in the contemporary Latin American Literature. He is recognized for his insightful assessment of social theme. He belongs to the first generation of Latin American novelist. Vargas Llosa deals with the difficulty of existence in realistic manner. His narrative craftsmanship is an experimental one. He narrates the fictional details rapidly shifting from one to a totally different one in the text. His novels based on socio-political situations can be divided accordingly into three periods. In the 1960s Vargas Llosa enthusiastically supported the Cuban Revolution as a Marxist. In the 1970s after witnessing Fidel Castro's government he became disillusioned, he actively supported democracy and free market economies. His failure in the election for Peruvian Presidency in 1990 is marked by pessimism. His works question the effectiveness of political action in the face of human frailty.

Vargas Llosa was born on March 28, 1936 in Arequipa, Peru. His parents came from an aristocratic background and held ties with Peruvian ruling class. At the time of his birth, parents

separated and Llosa was brought up as an only child in his maternal grandfather's home. The wandering of his childhood had given him an instinctive nomadic feeling that he could manage his constant life of travel. Raised in a Catholic family by the petting and pampering of mother, grandparents, uncles and aunts he was taught the moral principles of life. Vargas Llosa in his novels captures apt expression of Latin American style. He follows the reigning canons of the nineteenth century novelists and their innovations. Vargas Llosa influenced by Faulkner, Joanot Martorell, Tolstoy and Hugo and many others. The insight gained from rereading the works of significant writers like Jean Paul Sartre, Sebastain Salazal Bonday, Jose Maria Arguedas and Cesaro Moro were the writers who played an important role in shaping his literary and political vision. He learnt tips from Flaubert about the craft of the fiction. Efrain Kristal and John King states, "Mario Vargas Llosa is both a master of modernist narrative techniques a consummate storyteller" (*The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa* 02).

In addition to this, Mario Vargas Llosa started his literary journey as a Modernist then he turned

into Postmodernist. In an interview cooperatively conducted by John King and Efrain Kristal that took place at Museo de la nacion in Lima on 15 December 2010, soon after his return to Lima from Stockholm after receiving Nobel Prize, on being asked as to how over decades, he perceived dramatic changes in his manifestos, from modernism to postmodernism and he replied

When I was young, for example, under the very strong influence of

Sartre, I believed in the idea of committed literature, that literature

should be an artistic or aesthetic object, but also an instrument for

producing changes in society and history, to open the minds, the

consciousness, of readers to the big problems. At the same time, for

example, and probably under the influence of Sartre, I was against

humor. Not in life, but in literature. I had this absurd idea that humor

was in compatible with serious, committed literature. Then I changed

completely. I discovered humor was fantastic instrument, not only to

produce good literature, but also to present certain aspects of the

human experience. I incorporated other kinds of experiences in literature

not only humor but also eroticism. Reading George Bataille (1897-1962)

a French postmodernist is widely influenced on me.

In greater extension, postmodern theory is skeptical of concepts considered natural, universal, or inherent. As a result, it questions the so-called divine right to govern or the belief in the inherent superiority of certain groups. Rather, it highlights how one group's dominance often involves the systematic marginalization and silencing of others, referred to as the other. Postmodern theory thus emphasizes amplifying these unheard voices. The recent surge of interest in and recognition of

international literature within the literary canon can largely be attributed to the postmodern movement, which also gave rise to the postcolonial movement—something international writers are well aware of consequently, many of these writers are profoundly influenced by postmodernism, both due to its global impact and because the movement itself facilitated the broader acknowledgment of their work. Additionally, postmodern theory embraces ideas such as pastiche, where cultures from various locations—both geographical and temporal—interact and merge. Given this, it is clear that postmodern theory offers a crucial framework for analyzing contemporary international fiction and any works that belong to this genre. One such work that embodies elements of postmodernism is *The Storyteller* which was written in 1989 by Vargas Llosa. The novel interlaces two voices. The initial one is modern Peruvian narrator and the second one is storyteller from the Machiguenga, an indigenous Peruvian tribe. The storyteller could very well be the modern narrator's familiar companion, Saúl Zuratas. The novel features elements of metafiction and lacks a fixed central authority or a consistent identity, positioning it as a notable postmodern addition to the literary canon. Glen Ward states, “fiction about fiction” (*Teach Yourself Postmodernism* 5) and the narrator in the always dive into ambiguity of two voice which is also fits into postmodern theory and challenges the reliable narrative and reliable reality. Throughout the novel Llosa interlaces two distinguish voices. The first one is anonymous modern narrator who recollects an old friendship and fights to learn more of Machiguenga storytellers. Here it witnesses that Vargas Llosa is a postmodern writer.

Facets of Resistance in the novels of Mario Vargas Llosa

Resistance is an emerging and interdisciplinary field in literature. Resistance is often linked or connected with revolution, revolt, a rising voice against something dominant, and a reaction against violent attitudes. Resistance theories got evolved in the last many decades from Marxist, neo- Gramscian,

postmodern and post-structural examinations of power struggles. These theorists attempt to tell why the oppositions or revolts politically, socially, and morally raised against others where dominant ideology is reining the society. Resistance is mainly defined as opposition with social or political intentions and it is an attempt to explain how oppressive class and young people who live in poverty, fight against the rules or authorities of schools which seem to work against their interests. These theories of resistance immensely contributed to the societal knowledge regarding the problems and meaning of opposition and conflict present when marginalized individuals speak or raise their voice concerning their position and status treatment in the institution. The term resistance is defined in a many ways. Brown and Fernandez define it “engaging in behaviors opposition” (*On Resisting Resistance* 543) and Sherry B Ortner states, “resistance is unambiguous, it is simply composed of two things domination versus resistance” (*Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal* 174)

The Feast of the Goat was written by Vargas Llosa in 2000 in Spanish language. Soon it was translated by Edith Grossman who translated many of his works, in 2001. One of the most excellent novels of Vargas Llosa. It is not only best for its cleverness and perspicacity but also its craft and dexterity brings into novel. The novel moves from one phase to another phase swiftly. The fiction stands as historical novel of Dominican Republic and the entire novel states about the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. He fuses history with day-to-day intrigue and the repugnant, merciless intricacies of anguish, torment and homicide. Walter Kirn remarks, “grisly scenes of dungeon interrogations and torture sessions” (Review of the Feast of the Goat 04)

The novel’s narration is divided into three phases which explores different perspectives and experiences in the time Trujillo’s regime. The first one is focused on Urania Cabral, a fictional Dominican character, the second phase deals with the plotters involvement in the assassination of Trujillo and the third phase emphasizes on the notorious

autocrat Trujillo himself. The novel interchanges between these three narratives and also the story runs back and forth from 1961 to 1996, in respect of flashbacks of Trujillo’s regime. For the novel’s first half, Urania is almost completely overshadowed by Trujillo’s towering personality. Far from being a figure of evil or a quasi-mythological villain, Vargas Llosa’s Trujillo is a true-life character, a plausible embodiment of supreme corruption and greed, depicted throughout the novel with remarkable authenticity. Vargas Llosa’s creation is that Trujillo’s entire being is revealed in a single day, his final day, as he goes about the business of controlling his country and his world with ruthless efficiency while struggling to control the failings of his ageing, sixty-nine-year-old body with a barely marginalized rage of frustration. Trujillo’s Brutality is appeared in the assassination of the Venezuelan President Romula Betancourt, the second assassination of the rebellious Mirabal sisters on November 25, 1960 and the third is deliberate violation of human rights has promoted the Catholic Church to condemn his rule of oppression and tyranny. Balaguer states

What had happened to Peron must not happen to Trujillo

Peron government began to crumble when the church turned

against him (*TFG* 265)

As William Faulkner says that where there is power there is oppression, where there is oppression there is resistance Trujillo always concentrates on power and something beyond all that allowed him seize the control of entire country and that he maintained unwearingly for over a three decade for only power. As Nietzsche concept states that the will to power Trujillo emerges to overcome any odds to achieve power over inferior fellows. Trujillo himself states, “I had never cared very much about money, I put it to use in the service of power” (*The Feast of the Goat* 147) during his dictatorship he work hard maintain the power.

In addition to this, the central character Urania fights against the oppression of Trujillo throughout the novel. She is a successful New York lawyer who

returns to see her dying father, but her visit is motivated by neither compassion nor duty. The reasons for her initial departure, her lengthy exile and silence, and her return are gradually revealed as the novel progresses. She is portrayed as genuine fighter against Trujillo. She also took part in the assassinations. Though many people were involved in the plot to assassinate Trujillo, the novel focuses on the four main assassins of the dictator: Lieutenant Amado García Guerrero (Amadito), Antonio de la Maza, and Antonio Imbert, and Salvador Estrella Sadhalá (Turk). Each has his reasons for wanting to exact revenge on Trujillo. Still, most of them also have more general, moral reasons for wanting to end Trujillo's tyranny. At the end of the novel individuals got succeed to inculcate democracy in the Dominican Republic country. Throughout the Trujillo's regime people show their disobey, refused many orders and sacrificed many lives in the fight.

Conclusion

Mario Vargas Llosa penned a remarkable historical novel. He blends the historical elements with fictional characters. The characters in the novel genuinely attempt to show their defiance against dictatorship. The novel comprises feature of postmodernism as well. Throughout his novel Vargas Llosa depicts dictator's dominance and individuals fight and resistance against oppression. Many of his novels speak individual resistance against subjugations.

References

- Brown and Fernandez. *On Resisting Resistance*. New Series, America. 1996. Print.
- Efrain, Kristal and King, John. *The Cambridge Companion to Mario Vargas Llosa*. UK. Cambridge University Press. 2012. Print.
- Vargas Llosa, Mario. *The Feast of the Goat*. USA. Farrar Straus & Giroux. 2001. Print.
- Walter, Kirn. *Review of the Feast of the Goat*. New York Times from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fuiipage.htm/> 2010.

TREATMENT OF SUBALTERN CHARACTERS IN U. R. ANANTHAMURTHY'S SAMSKARA

Mr. SADANAND DHAVALESHWAR

Lecturer in English

R L PU College of Science, Belagavi

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the representation of subaltern characters in U R Ananthamurthy's novella Samskara. On one hand there are characters like Chandri and Belli who are from the lower caste and sexually exploited. On the other hand upper caste Brahmin women like Sita, Anasuya, Bhagirathi, who are downtrodden because of their sexual identity and Laxmiddevamma is the victim of social-alienation and exploited by her own community men. Amidst all this, the novel has characters like Putta and Padmavati whose identity is ambiguous because of their half caste. They are neither completely discarded nor stand with the mainstream community. Naranappa lives non Brahminical life by consuming alcohol, meat and stays with Chandri by leaving his wife. Throughout his life he is being followed by his caste even after merging with people from the lower strata. So, according to this paper Samskara is not just rites that need to be done for dead people rather it creates identity crisis and ambiguity about various characters.

Keywords: *subaltern, hegemony, samskara, malera, brahmin, dalit*

Introduction

Samskara is a prominent novel in Kannada written by U. R. Ananthamurthy published in 1965. It was adapted into a film in 1970 and translated into English by AK Ramanujan in the year 1973. This novel is a critique on social hierarchy, wherein the core control lies around the authoritative Brahminism. Here in this novel Ananthamurthy has not only spoken about the caste mechanism but speaks about subordinate communities and mainly presents half-cast people whose identity is in-between.

Subaltern is a term coined and adopted by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. He used this term to classify subordinate groups under hegemonic power structure. According to Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak, subalterns are not just the oppressed but rather those who are completely discarded from the mainstream, the one who never gets an audience. Subaltern characters are oppressed due to their cast, class, race, gender, and cultural identity. In the novel Samskara, Ananthamurthy critiques systematic operation and unveils the injustice present in the social structure.

In the novel one can list number of characters who are marginalized or oppressed due to their identities connected to cast, gender, sub-cast, and social status. Parijathapura is the fine example for sub caste difference. They are called Smarthas and considered as inferior to Brahmins of Durvasapura. Notably, the people of Parijathapura were happy to perform the rites of Naranappa who is a high cast Brahmin. There is one more strata in the novel which contains Putta and Padmavati whose identities are peculiar and they are the victims of half-cast. Putta accompanies Praneshacharya when he will be moving towards an aimless destination. Then Putta takes Acharya to Padmavati, a young woman, who desires to have sexual intimacy with Acharya. Furthermore, there are characters like Chandri and Belli who are the victims of sexual exploitation. Chandri is a prostitute from a lower caste, who has stayed with Naranappa for more than ten years. On the other hand Belli is a poor dalit girl who is exploited by Shripati for his sexual desires. Whenever Belli tries to speak with him he never utters a single word. It might be because of her cockney accent which lower caste people use. He says that "Belli was alright for sleeping with, she was

not good for talk. If she opens her mouth she talks only ghosts and demons". Here Spivak's words appear to be true from her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she says "For the 'figure' of women themselves; race and class differences are subsumed under that charge". So it is clear that subaltern woman is unable to articulate her thoughts. Moreover her voice is never valued by the power and completely distorted.

Women characters are always marginalized in the society by patriarchal norms, which silence their voice. They will always be playing conventional roles of womanhood as mothers, wives and most of the time engaged in household activities. A close observation will show that upper caste women have very limited dialogues to say in the novel, all the time they will be behind the curtain listening to men's chatter. In the novel upper caste Brahmin women includes Bhagirathi, wife of Praneshacharya. She is a diseased woman and never gave sexual pleasure to her husband. Likewise there are characters like Anasuya and Sita who are portrayed as greedy of gold. The novel mainly portrays the sexual incapability of upper caste Brahmin women compared to those of Dalit women. In the fifth chapter of the first part Shripati says:

Which brahmin girl, – cheek sunken, breast withered, mouth stinking with lentil soup, –which brahmin girl was equal to Belli? Her thighs are full. When she's with him she twists like a snake coupling with another, writhing in the sands; she'd have drunk her father's sour toddy, she'd be warm and ready – like a tuned-up drum. Not utterly black-skinned, nor pale white, her body is the colour of the earth, fertile, ready for seed, warmed by an early sun. (Shripati, 2013)

In the above statement it is clear that body is the instrument of oppression. In the novel both Chandri and Belli are the victims of hegemony due to their body. They are always twice oppressed and twice exploited due to their caste and gender. Body always becomes the key point to abort female rights which sets the beauty standards and includes sexual assaults. On one hand Chandri's body is stigmatized

by the upper caste women and on the other hand it becomes the instrument of exploitation. Even though she is being true to dharma, wholesome and honest yet she is considered as a prostitute. In the words of Gail Omvedt; "Dalit women's oppression cannot be reduced to just gender—it is rooted in the caste system, which disciplines their bodies through labor, violence, and exclusion."

Upper caste women are also not an exception here; their bodies are always discarded as cheek sunken, breast withered proving to be incapable of sexual pleasure. Lakshmiddevamma is a child widow of Durvasapura. She is considered as ill-omen by the people Agrahara. Garudacharya's father takes charge of her house and after his demise Garudacharya gobbles all her wealth. Because of this injustice she often goes to Garudacharya's house at night and curses him. She lives at the periphery like a social outcaste among her own people and she is the victim of social and economical exploitation.

Praneshacharya marries Bhagirathi a bedridden sick girl, with this he keeps himself out from the sensual pleasures to continue with his spiritual achievements. When Praneshacharya has sexual intercourse with Chandri he starts hating his wife's sick body. The novel states that;

When he gave his wife her usual medicine as she lay groaning in the dining room, his hands trembled and spilled the medicine. As he held it to her lips, as he looked into his broken wife's pitted eyes, those helpless visionless symbols of his self sacrifice and duty as a householder-he felt his leg twitch and double-up, as if in troubled sleep, as if in a dream he fell dizzy into bottomless nether-worlds. At the end of the beaten path of a quarter century of doctor-patient relations, of affection and compassion,-he seemed to see an abyss. He shivered in an attack of nausea. (Praneshacharya, 2013)

Once Bhagirathi was his way of salvation but later he proves to be like other Brahmins in the village. Initially Naranappa and Praneshacharya appear to be contradictory but later Praneshacharya takes the same path as Naranappa. But the difference is Naranappa is brave enough to face the stereotypes

and Praneshacharya tries to cover up. In the words of Ananthamurthy; “So, in a way, Praneshacharya is living Naranappa’s life and, in doing so, he is performing Naranappa’s shraddha. It is completed in Praneshacharya sleeping with Chandri”. So, all of them are being followed by their identities which are connected to their caste. Naranappa and Praneshacharya will not be excommunicated because of their identities, whereas Chandri will never be valued for staying with Naranappa for more than ten years.

The novel portrays one more major subaltern community which includes Putta and Padmavati. It is sure that the author has invested less on their identities and whereabouts but he makes it clear that they belong to inferior class. Putta and Padmavati belong to a community called Malera who are considered as Brahmin-Sudra’s. Putta meets Praneshacharya for the first time on his way to Melige. He first takes the initiative and introduces himself to Acharya. He sticks to Acharya like a burr as a sin of previous life. In the novel his identity is a bit ambiguous due to his origin. In the story Praneshacharya decides to have meal in the temple despite of mourning period. Acharya calls Putta to accompany him for the meal then he reminds Acharya saying that the place is full of people known to him, otherwise he would have taken a chance. Putta also says that they have holy thread too but it does not mean that they can sit next to upper caste Brahmin and have meal. In a way Putta’s words show inferiority complex about his identity. Though he shares origin with mainstream people but he will be a second class person.

One more Malera character is Padmavati, who lives alone at the outskirts of the village. She appears to be a wealthy woman and looking after herself and her holding. In the novel she has a good friendly relation with Putta as they both hail from a same community. And Putta never misses a chance to visit her. Though she is a prostitute but appears to be well off woman in the story. Putta brings Naranappa to Padmavati but she did not like him because he was a drunkard. Later Praneshacharya also falls for her

beauty and follows the same path as Naranappa. Later he changes his mind and sets off to Durvasapura.

Ananthamurthy himself throws light on this saying; “Malera’s are a Brahmin-Sudra caste. In fact, even in Ghatashraddha, after Yamunakka is a caste out of the community, she will perhaps grow her hair, marry someone, and become a Malera. This happens everywhere. There must have been some Brahmins who flouted the rules and became lower in hierarchy.” It shows that even Brahmin widows had a chance to grow hair, marry and settle their life. But the thing is they will remain inferior to social elites. Even though they share blood with upper caste men they will not be considered as mainstream people. In Samskara even Putta and Padmavati are the offspring of upper caste man and lower strata woman. That’s what makes them the victim of half-caste.

In the novel Chandri and Padmavati are better characters to compare. They both carried on a profession as prostitutes but Padmavati is always considered as well settled courtesan whereas Chandri is treated as a prostitute. Both these characters belonging to subaltern group appear to be contradictory when it comes to caste and economical status. Even the names that are given to women in the novel are based on their caste. Upper caste women and including Padmavati are having respectful name whereas Chandri is a name which is used as disrespect. It shows that there are so many contradictories within subaltern categories as displayed in the novel.

Conclusion

In the end it becomes pretty clear that Ananthamurthy is a critic from the inside. In the paper Subalternity becomes the umbrella concept which includes people from different social strata. It is clear that one person is being inferior to the other due to their caste, class, gender, and social status. Women of Agrahara are inferior to their men and Laxmidevamma is a social outcaste within the community. Praneshacharya and Naranappa go against Brahminhood but yet they are followed by its

superiority. Whereas Chandri plays moralist role by giving gold ornaments which she got from Naranappa, so that Brahmins can perform rites for his dead body. With this Chandri appears to be only character who was true to dharma. Thus, Samskara is not just rite which needs to be done for a dead person rather it stands for identity that follows even after the death.

References

- Ananthamurthy, U R. *Samskara A Rite for a Dead Man*. Translated by A K Ramanujan, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Chakravarti, Uma. "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism, and a Script for the Past." *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, edited by Kumkum Sangari and Suresh Vaid, Kali for Women, 1999, pp. 27-87.
- Ludden, David. "Introduction." *Reading Subaltern Studies*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2001.
- Martin, James. Antonio Gramsci: *Critical Assessments of Leading Political Philosophers*. London, Routledge, 2002.
- Ramanujam.A.K. "Afterward." *Samskara*. By U.R.Ananthamurthy. Trans. Ramanujam. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1978.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271-313.

NAVIGATING LOVE AND LOYALTY: ANALYZING SOCIAL BOUNDARIES AND FAMILY CONFLICTS IN JAISHREE MISRA'S *A LOVE STORY FOR MY SISTER*

Mr. S. KASHIF KAFEL AHMED

Ph. D, Research Scholar, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Serkkadu, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Dr. K. RAVICHANDRAN

Professor, Department of English
Thiruvalluvar University, Serkkadu, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

Jaishree Misra's A Love Story for My Sister explores the complicated dynamics of familial relationships and the ethical dilemmas of forbidden love within a traditional Indian cultural context. The novel depicts the unbreakable connection between siblings, examining the conflict between familial devotion and individual aspirations. This study analyzes the primary topics of love, loyalty, and societal judgment, emphasizing the difficulties encountered by individuals whose relationships break cultural norms. The research utilizes feminist and sociological approaches to elucidate the limitations imposed by cultural traditions and patriarchal structures, highlighting their impact on individual autonomy. The narrative's examination of forbidden love interrogates societal biases, critiques moral absolutism, and cultivates empathy for nonconformist decisions. The work compels readers to critically assess the emotional and ethical difficulties encountered by the protagonists, highlighting the details of human relationships. This research highlights Misra's criticism of cultural inflexibility and her promotion of comprehension and acceptance.

Keywords: prohibited romance, societal scrutiny, feminist viewpoints, patriarchal frameworks, ethical conflicts

Introduction

In Indian English literature, themes of love and familial obligation frequently overlap to reflect the larger cultural and societal framework. Jai Shree Misra's *A Love Story for My Sister* explores these intersections, presenting characters who struggle with their personal wants while being constrained by the expectations of their families and communities. This paper examines Misra's exploration of love and devotion within the framework of social hierarchies and familial obligations. The research focuses on how the tale challenges traditional conventions while also offering a compassionate portrayal of human fragility and resilience.

Love is a Transformative Force

Misra's story depicts love as more than just an emotional relationship; it is a transformational force that challenges cultural standards. The protagonists

of *A Love Story for My Sister* frequently behave as change agents, violating social norms to defend their right to personal happiness. This act of resistance is especially noteworthy in a society where planned marriages, caste divisions, and familial honor influence personal decisions. For example, the characters' connection represents a struggle against entrenched patriarchy. Misra's portrayal of their struggle emphasizes the transformational power of love as a counterforce to strict social structures. However, the novel does not romanticize this opposition; rather, it depicts the emotional and social consequences of questioning long-held standards.

The Dilemma of Loyalty

While love is a tool for resistance, loyalty complicates the protagonists' choices. Misra's novel's familial structure exemplifies traditional Indian ideals, in which family devotion typically

takes precedence over personal needs. Misra's characters, notably the protagonist, face a moral quandary, split between familial duty and pursuing personal happiness.

This tension is obvious in important moments when the protagonist must choose between devotion to family and commitment to love. These moments highlight the psychological and emotional costs of navigating such tensions. Misra's portrayal of loyalty as both a virtue and a burden add complexity to the story, making the characters' problems more realistic and moving.

Family as a Societal Microcosm

In *A Love Story for My Sister*, the family represents a microcosm of larger societal forces, reinforcing standards that uphold conventional values. Misra depicts the family as a source of both strength and struggle. The generation gap between conventional authority leaders and younger people desiring autonomy exemplifies the changing structure of Indian society.

For example, the parental figures in the novel frequently represent conservative ideas that emphasize duty and sacrifice, whereas the younger generation fights for personal freedom and choice. Misra's examination of this gap illustrates the intricacies of familial relationships, where love and obligation coexist with conflict and strife.

Social Boundaries and Individual Agency

Misra's story revolves around social hierarchies such as caste, class, and religion. These limitations frequently act as impediments to the protagonists' love, mirroring systemic disparities in Indian society. Misra criticizes these restrictions by highlighting the protagonists' efforts to overcome them, emphasizing their tenacity and resolve. The story also examines the consequences of crossing these lines, such as societal exclusion and familial rejection. Misra's portraits emphasize the necessity for societal reform while also highlighting the difficulties people encounter in exercising their autonomy within a restrictive framework.

Themes: Sacrifice and Reconciliation

A Love Story for My Sister uses sacrifice as a recurring motif to emphasize the complexity of love and loyalty. Characters frequently make substantial sacrifices to maintain family peace or to keep their promises. However, Misra also shows reconciliation as a means of healing and growth.

In the novel, disagreements are typically resolved via acts of forgiveness and compromise, demonstrating the possibility of bridging the gap between tradition and modernity. Misra's portrayal of these issues emphasizes the transformational power of love and the enduring strength of familial relationships.

Conclusion

A Love Story for My Sister, by Jai Shree Misra, is a riveting portrayal of love and loyalty under the confines of cultural and familial norms. Misra emphasizes the intricacies of human relationships and the quest for personal agency by showing characters that reject customary rules. The novel's sophisticated portrayal of societal boundaries and familial disputes is an insightful remark on the changing character of Indian society. Finally, *A Love Story for My Sister* asks readers to consider the delicate balance of tradition and uniqueness, providing an optimistic vision of reconciliation and growth in a fast-changing cultural world.

References

- Chandra, N.D.R. *Contemporary Indian Writing in English: Critical Perceptions*. Sarup & Sons, 2005.
- Das, Bijay Kumar. "Postcolonial Indian English Literature: Between Tradition and Modernity." *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, Atlantic Publishers, 2011.
- Iyengar, K.R. Srinivasa. *Indian Writing in English*. Sterling Publishers, 1985.
- Misra, Jai Shree. *A Love Story*. HarperCollins India, 2020.

- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *The Twice Born Fiction: Themes and Techniques of the Indian Novel in English*. Pencraft International, 2000.
- Paranjape, Makarand. *Making India: Colonialism, National Culture, and the Afterlife of Indian English Authority*. Springer, 2012.
- Rajeswari, Sunder. "Women and Culture." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 30, no. 18, 1995, pp. WS2–WS7.
- Sarangi, Jaydeep. "Love and Conflict in Indian English Novels." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2015, pp. 20–30.
- Tharoor, Shashi. *India: From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond*. Penguin Books, 1997.

RECLAIMING NATURE: COMPARATIVE ECOCRITICISM IN POORNACHANDRA TEJASWI AND THOMAS HARDY

SYED SIRAJUDDIN QUADRI

Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of English
Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari

Dr.SANTHOSHA.G.K

Assistant Professor of English
Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari

Abstract

This paper examines the ecocritical aspects of nineteenth-century British novelist Thomas Hardy and twentieth-century Kannada novelist Poornachandra Tejaswi's novels Carvalho and Jugari Cross, Tessofted'Urbervilles, and TheReturnoftheNative. It highlights standard ecocritic features, such as nature degradation and human-environment harmony, and their settings reflect emotional states and ecological themes. The paper discusses biocentricism, human-nature interaction, ecocentricism, and ethical animal treatment. Such ecological themes encourage the readers to develop the significance of ecological consciousness and nature conservation. The critical study of the works develops the understanding of anthropocentric treatment and the moral responsibility of the readers for the conservation and sustainability of Nature.

Keywords: ecocriticism, biocentricism, anthropocentric, nature, harmony

Ecocriticism is a relatively young literary critical practice, which implies studying the connection between literature and culture and critically reflecting on the anthropocentric perception of the world and interpretation of Nature through literary texts. Appearing only at the end of the twentieth century, it includes literature, philosophy, ecology, and cultural and interdisciplinary studies. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary framework and critical practice that studies the role of the natural world in literary and cultural productions, the dynamics of the relationship between humans and other living beings and the environment, and issues of environmental justice and nonhuman subjectivity. It employs ecological reasoning from ecology, philosophy, history, and cultural studies to give an all-inclusive account of ecological subjects. It draws the readers' attention to ponder current environmental issues such as climate change, anthropocentrism, deforestation, the annihilation of animals, and the looting of natural resources. It illuminates cultural paradigms as the spectacle of

climate change, environmental protection, and justice.

Poornachandra Tejaswi (1938-2007) is a versatile writer and eminent naturalist of Kannada literature. He hails from the South Indian Region, which he represents through the settings in his works. His work uses themes like humanity, society, Nature, and spirit. He pursued his higher education at the University of Mysore. His literary career comprises essays, novels, travelogues, and English works translated into the Kannada language. *Jugari Cross, Carvalho, and The Inscrutable Mysteries* (Chidambara Rahasya) are some of his prominent contributions, which have been translated into other languages, including English. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is an English novelist and poet. His works depict the adverse effects of industrialization, including the deterioration of Nature and man's alienation from it. Places like the fictional Wessex of Hardy's works predominantly depict character emotions and psychological conditions and represent more extensive ecological or existential motifs.

Novels like *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders* and his other poems are seen as the forceful message persistently given by Hardy to correct the British exploitation of Nature and its imbalance that he feels to be correct for man to maintain with the natural world.

Arne Naess explores 'self-realization' in his book *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle* and promotes the ecological sense of self and connectedness with Nature. The issue of self-realization is described with an enhancement of the central concept of the ecological self-animal connection and coherent lifestyle. Arne Naess is a proponent of biocentric equal consideration, stating that all living things have their moral worth. The concept of deep ecology aims to awaken people and make them realize that humans are only an interrelated part of the Earth and have no authority domination. Tejaswi's works, including *JugariCross*, *Carvalho*, and *The InscrutableMystery*, demonstrate his extensive understanding of the forest, plants, and animals, which must be treated on par with human beings. Bill Deval and George Session's book *DeepEcology* helps people understand the theory behind the 'ecological self,' which encourages them to consider the natural world a part of them. They condemn the underlying causes of environmental issues and denounce industrial growth society, consumerism, and the exploitation of the Earth for material gain. A notable critic in Kannada, Jevala Dhananjaya, explores in his article '*Tejaswi Nanage Nimita*' that Tejaswi strongly condemns nihilistic ecocide in the name of development and warns the various catastrophes in the future.

Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Return of the Native*, is relevant in today's world to understand the ecological disaster that has been happening for a long time. This study also aims to show how characters, settings, plots, and themes may reveal this connection between Nature, humankind, and the personalities of individuals. Nature and humans face challenges in sharing their living space, with human dominance leading to exploitation of natural

resources and species extinction. The introduction of progress and modernity also brings conflict to an environment that has remained unchanged for centuries. In *The Return of the Native*, the heath and belief in progress oppose each other, causing a struggle for dominance and power. Human cultivation of Nature has led to 'humanized nature,' with Nature often being unpremeditated, weak, and unreflexive, while culture is associated with human power and technology. His literary works reveal anti-anthropocentric perspectives on using natural resources and their exploitation and advocate the hormonal relation between humans and Nature. He represents Nature as beneficent and nurturing, besides stressing the consequences of human predatory relations. He portrays Nature as caring and indifferent, illustrating the consequences of human exploitation of Nature. His ecological ethics concern the values of nonhuman living beings and discredit anthropocentric views that consider them merely commodities. He insists that individuals should consider their rights and emotions and that humans have no reason to respect them. Hardy's works focus on reconsidering human values and actions to preserve the planet's ecosystems for posterity. In general, the social message of Hardy's work is the protest against human cruelty and a call for improving relations with the environment.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's Nature –neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, insignificant, not tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony.

As with some persons who have lived long apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. (Hardy, *Return* 11)

Tejaswi's characters are close to Nature and reflect aspects of the interaction of people with the environment. They are not mere spectators; they are subjects and members of ecosystems because they know the land, plants, animals, and weather cycles that characterize their environment. Characters'

accommodation to the natural environment is always incorporated with cultural and religious elements that close characters are reminded of their place and responsibility to the environment. He breaks essential ideas in his works where a conflict between the possibility of adapting humans and the potential negative impact on the environment is created. His characters like Rafi-Jayathi in *'The Inscrutable Mystery,'* Devakki and her daughter in *JugariCross*, and Krishna Gouda in *KrishneGoudaraAne* carve their needs with the need for conservation. Hardy explores the significant role of the environment in shaping an individual and his destiny in his novels, such as *The Woodlanders*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Major characters with grounded backgrounds have well-established personalities, and minor characters, who become unplanted, suffer difficulties in acclimatization. He presented Nature as benevolent and hostile, with the characters rooted in their natural surroundings having a stable identity, while those uprooted face challenges in assimilation. Hardy contrasts harmony with Nature, like Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as a more authentic and fulfilling way of life, while alienation leads to suffering and social exclusion.

Biocentrism is also part of deep ecology, and Tejaswi often incorporates deep ecology concepts into his works, including biocentrism. In his works, people usually see much more to Nature than what people make it to be. His narratives often concern problems within various ecosystems, and he reminds his audiences that certain species may endanger or compromise the balance of an ecosystem.

Carvalho describes the many changes in Nature in the forest while exploring the flying lizard, the farmer's friend, and the earthworm, which is supposed to be in the soil but keeps going away. When asked about this with Carvalho, it is known that "the Parnu on the tree holds all the dust of the wind and takes root in its own land. These worms are going to live there." this describes Kokanaki's lifestyle.(Tejaswi, Carvalho-156)

Hardy denounces the Victorian Biological model of intelligence in *The Woodlanders* and *Jude the Obscure*, acknowledging its importance and challenging the idea that mental worth can be scientifically measured. He advocates for a biocentric view that values diverse forms of intelligence, challenging the scientific reification of intellectual inequality. In the stories written by Thomas Hardy, Nature plays a specific role; indeed, the character is the most dominant one in illustrating the stories' themes. He anthropomorphizes the forces of Nature in the sense that far from being passive agents of the action, they are continually self-motivating. The most distinguishing aspect of this aspect of his writing is that he paints a Stage Picture, where he uses landscapes to reflect, to echo, the passions and the conflicts, moral and otherwise, of the characters, such as the heath, the productive vales, the sinister woods of *The Return of the Native*.

Nature is also believed to have a moral effect in the portrayal of the vulnerability and strength of human beings. Tejaswi's description in *JugariCross* reflects the effect of natural forces on human life. The seasonal changes in bamboo crops, cultivation of marijuana, use of plastic in coffee estates, and search of rubies along the river change dwellers' lives from the surroundings; the land of heaven turns into a juncture of unlawful activities. In Thomas Hardy's novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, some of the forces of dynamics, such as cycles of farming and the changing seasons, represent the conservativeness force. Essentially, Hardy complains and condemns the efforts of industrialization to penetrate the closed realm of the nonhuman world, which he depicts as a fragile ecosystem. Tejaswi's novels illustrate the relations between nonhuman creatures, humans, and the environment and society. He voices the conservation of Nature and life as the central values of existence. His stories mainly focus on the relationship between humankind and Nature and the need to care for her. His vivid descriptions and powerful narratives draw readers into the beauty and fragility of the natural world, inspiring a sense of responsibility toward conservation efforts.

Kesaruru had continuously allowed the pollution of its soul and environment for six years, and it had now begun to feel the effects of that pollution. The lovely woods, which had given out clean, cold breezes even in the hottest summers, were now spewing out terrible peat-black clouds that scorched the undried Lantana leaves. Before the people of the town could realize their mistake and before the fire burnt them alive, several persons shuffled off their mortal coil during severe coughing bouts. Several came to be on the verge of death. (Tejaswi, Inscrutable-222-23)

Tejaswi emphasizes maintaining harmonious relations with all the creatures to create and maintain a harmonious environment for future generations. His work, therefore, raises the significance of the balance between humans and Nature. Admiring Nature, Hardy does not hide its egocentrism and even gusto in the suffering of individuals. While adoring Nature, Hardy does not conceal its self-absorption and even relish in people's suffering. Novels where Nature plays a significant role are *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Return of the Native*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and *Woodlanders*. Partly because of his immediate association with the Southwest of England and his first-hand experiences of Nature, his novels convey an earthy depth with ecological and philosophical themes. Kerridge argues that Hardy introduces a narrative shift from insider to outsider's position at the beginning of *The Woodlanders*. Then, he argues that *The Woodlanders* is a novel in which the reader progressively establishes his or her stance for or against the characters' environmental stances and duties. From the outset, the reader assumes the outsider's position, observing the characters and environment. As the story progresses, the reader learns the characters' perspectives, becoming an insider. Hardy's narrative shift begins at the beginning, transitioning from insider to outsider when the reader is introduced to the characters.

Tejaswi's writing skillfully interweaves past and present events to raise awareness about ecological, cultural, and societal issues. His works, such as

Carvalho and *JugariCross*, critique contemporary environmental degradation and propose sustainable futures. His narratives focus on precarious interactions between humans and Nature and connect them to past activities as unsustainable behavior. These human accounts reveal social history from ancient indigenous practices that disagree with contemporary civilization's detachment from wisdom. He also provides excellent predictions of undesirable outcomes if humans do not repent of ecological devastation, ethnographical degeneration, and liberation of science. Hardy's storytelling is witty, humorous, and thrilling, forcing readers to open their hearts and demanding them to act. He discusses the environment's history of ecological development from the viewpoint of social ecology. His narratives emphasize the fragile relationship between humans and Nature, linking past practices to unsustainable behaviors. Hardy's ecological history focuses on social ecology, examining the environment's progress. It links past and present events to predict future events and raises awareness for past impacts. Ecocritics aims to prevent human activities from destroying the natural community. While it also examines Nature and landscapes, Hardy primarily focuses on social history, examining economic, social, and cultural environmental influences. He does not primarily focus on landscape history, except for architectural changes over time. Hardy's ecocriticism does not focus on the distinction between Nature and landscape, as the real Nature of Wessex is reflected in the fictional Dorset landscape, uniting both. However, some characters treat Nature and landscape as aesthetic objects. At the same time, Tejaswi's fictional descriptions of the Western Ghats and surrounding places resemble a realistic picture of the woodland of the Western Ghats.

The themes of the novels by Tejaswi and Hardy are ecological awareness and the importance and dignity of the natural environment and its protection. They also emphasized that studying and appreciating Nature is important for men to learn to survive and be safe.

References

- Tejaswi, K.P'Poornachandra. *Carvalho*. 1990.
Translated by D.A Shankar, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 2014.
- . *Jugari Cross*. Ravi Hanj, 18 Sept. 2020.
- . *The Inscrutable Mystery*. 1985. Translated by P.P Giridhar, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 2010.
- , *The Story of My Environment*, Translation; Srinivasgouda, K.M, Pusthaka Prakaashana.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Modern Library, 31 Oct. 2000.
- . *Tess of the D'urbervilles*. Createspace Independent Pub, 1891.
- Hardy, Thomas, and Alan Manford. *The Woodlanders*. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Beechanahalli, Karigouda. *Poornachadra Tejaswi Baduku Baraha*. Bangalore, Sahitya Akademi, 2015.
- B.K,Dhananjaya Jeevala, " Idannelle Helalu Tejaswi Nanage Nimita", Total Kannada, Bangaluru. ISBN 9788192226989
- Md Rafiqul Islam et al. "A Study of Deep Ecology and Environmental Sustainability: Through an Eco-Feminist Lens." *SudurpaschimSpectrum* (2024).
- Cheng Ping et al. "An Interpretation of Ecological Holism in Hardy's Novels." *JournalofKaifengInstituteofEducation* 2011.
- Humayra Akhter et al. "Understanding Nature and Humanity: An Ecocritical Study of Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native." *Bulletin of Advanced English Studies* (2023).
- Fang Ling et al. "Hardy's Ecological Ethics." *Journal of Ningbo University* (2011).
- Zach Fruit et al. "Bleak Prospects: Wasteland and National Identity in Thomas Hardy's Return of the Native." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 51 (2022): 31 - 57.



**Bodhi International Journal is assigned
by ISSN National Centre, India
National Science Library, New Delhi**



**Journal Indexed and Impact Factor by
International Institute of
Organized Research (I2OR)**

Information of Bodhi Journal

Subjects for Papers

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science, agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, entrepreneurship, bioscience, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.



Hosted by
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
KARNATAKA STATE AKKAMAHADEVI WOMEN UNIVERSITY
(Formerly known as "Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura")
Jnanashakti Campus, Torvi, Vijayapura, Karnataka-586108



Articles should be mailed to
bodhijournal@gmail.com



BODHI
**International Journal of
Research in Humanities,
Arts and Science**
www.bodhijournals.com



Powered & Published by
**Center for Resource, Research and
Publication Services (CRRPS) India.**
www.crrps.in