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Editorial Note

It is a great pleasure to publish the 8th annual issue of *Exposure: The Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (Vol-VIII, No.I, June 2022) with the hope to deal with high-quality and original research papers. After the successful publication and well responses of the last seven issues of the journal (from June 2015 to June 2021) from different corners of academia, we are more inspired to carry forward new ideas and original research works in a transparent way. Overwhelming responses from different corners of the country as well as abroad, we have to enlarge the space for the present issue this time. There are total eighteen critical and erudite articles from different fields of social sciences and humanities and these articles touch different areas of studies.

We would like to express our heartfelt thankfulness to our Editorial Advisory Committee Members and the board of Referees/ Review Editors for guiding us in every aspect of our journey. We are thankful to the contributors for investing their energy and time in quality writing. We are also heartily grateful to the blind-peer-review members who spent their valuable hours in reviewing the articles and helped us to discard the poorer ones. And we also thank Readers Service Press unit for their assistance. The collective efforts everybody rendered make it possible to publish the journal successfully.

We solicit the cooperation, guidance, and any wise suggestion for the future issues of the journal to make it more successful in future.

With warm regards,
Dr. Tanim Dutta
Editor-in-Chief

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Raping with Impunity: Understanding the Socio-legal Implications of Marital Rape Exemption in India

Ahana Sinha

ABSTRACT:

In India marital rape, like domestic violence, is a deeply entrenched social problem. It is prone to underreporting due to its legal and cultural tolerance. Despite having progressive laws to address gender based crimes against women, the legislature and the judiciary have repeatedly shown reluctance in recognising marital rape as a form of gender based crime. Their arguments range from protecting the institution of family and marriage, to the availability of alternative laws to deal with the issue, the nature of marriage in India and the mindset of the Indian society, to protecting men from the potential misuse of domestic violence laws by vindictive wives. Over the last several years, especially after the *Nirbhaya* case of 2012, the country has witnessed an uproar surrounding the issue of marital rape exemption clause of Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). In India the offence of rape has been criminalised by IPC Section 375. However the exception clause maintains that forced sexual intercourse with wife is not rape if the wife is above eighteen years of age. Therefore, it violates fundamental rights of women under the Indian constitution. Marital rape is not only an attack on the individual, it is also a tool to humiliate and disempower women.

KEYWORDS: rape, marital rape, section 375, violence against women, restitution of conjugal rights, human rights

INTRODUCTION:

In India, marital rape (MR), like domestic violence, is a deeply entrenched social problem that is prone to systematic underreporting due to socio-cultural acceptance and legal sanctity. Despite having progressive laws to combat gender based crimes against women, the legislature and the judiciary have repeatedly shown reluctance in recognising MR as a form of gender based crime. The pervasiveness of MR is downplayed based on false assumptions about wifely duties, privacy of the domestic sphere, a husband's conjugal rights, a wife's socio-legal status, comparisons to "real" or stranger rape and most importantly the ideas surrounding marriage in the Indian society. Over the last several years especially after the *Nirbhaya* case of 2012 the country has witnessed an uproar surrounding the issue of marital rape exemption (MRE) clause of Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Four recent petitions challenging the legitimacy of Section 375 have refocused attention on the socio-legal implications of this culturally sanctioned crime. Apart from the petitioners, the two-judge Bench of Justices Rajiv Shakder and C. Hari Shanker of the Delhi High Court are also hearing the views of two amicus curiae, senior advocates Raajshekhar Rao and Rebecca John. The petitioners along with the larger feminist movement argue that MRE is a violation of a range of fundamental rights of women.

MR can be defined as an involuntary act of sexual intercourse between spouses where actual or threat of the use of force has been used to acquire the wives' consent (Kumar 1). It can be categorised as- battering rapes, which occur when women who are already subjected to physical abuse are raped during or after the physical assault; force- only rapes which involve use of necessary degree of force by the husbands to rape their wives and sadistic or obsessive rapes which occur due to the husband's inclination to engage in perverse sexual acts (Finkelhor and Yllö 37). MR results in long term consequences on women's physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health.

The objective of the following work is to make sense of the socio-legal debates surrounding MR in India and how it violates women's constitutional and social rights. The purpose of this is to understand how gendered ideologies of marriage and sexuality deprive women of their bodily integrity, sexual autonomy and subjectivity and constantly remind them of their powerlessness in the face of a misogynistic culture that validates male dominance and control over them. MR is not only an attack on an individual person. It is a tool to humiliate, demean and disempower women. The first part of the article discusses its conceptual roots; the second and third part deals specifi-

cally with the issue of MR in India. The concluding section makes a case for legal and social reform to stop this heinous crime.

MR AND ITS CONCEPTUAL ORIGIN:

The concept of MRE has its origins in the *History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1736) written by Sir Matthew Hale, former Chief Justice of England. Here he contended that the husband could not have raped his wife because the wife had given herself and her consent to him by their matrimonial contract and that consent was irrevocable. The wife or rather her virginity was a chattel or property of the husband so by definition damaging one's own property was impossible. Similarly Sir William Blackstone, another notable English jurist propounded the unities theory based on the Common Law Doctrine of Coverture. He stated that the wife's legal status remained suspended during marriage. Her identity merged with that of her husband making them a single legal entity whereby she was once again viewed as her husband's property. Apart from these justifications the theory of separate spheres promoted the dichotomy of the public and private, affirming men's claims to the public space while relegating and confining women to the private space (Small and Tetreault 143). This reinforced the belief that private conducts within the family were beyond the jurisdiction of the state and the legal system. In the absence of laws within the domestic sphere coupled with women's identity as their husband's property, spousal sexual violence remained free from penalization (Bennice and Resick 229).

Feminist efforts challenging a man's right to forced sex in marriage gained traction for the first time in the 19th century. They not only advocated the right of women to sexual self-possession in marriage but even argued that economic and political equality was meaningless if women did not have the right to bodily autonomy in marital relationship (Hasday 3). However the issue of MR did not resurface until the last quarter of the 20th century, in the light of changing socio-legal standing of women and formulation of international legislation to address multiple forms of gendered human rights violations. The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women recognized MR as a pervasive gender based violence constituting a violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of women. The UN Women's data shows that globally one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence once in their lives, mainly committed by their intimate partners, current or former husbands ("Facts and Figures"). At present 36 countries including India are yet to criminalize this heinous crime of rape within marriage (Singh).

SOCIO-LEGAL DEBATES SURROUNDING MR IN INDIA:

In India the offence of rape including intercourse and other forms of sexual penetration has been criminalized by IPC Section 375. It describes seven forms of consent, which if violated, shall amount to rape. It defines consent as an unequivocal agreement made by a woman who expresses her willingness to engage in a sexual act either through verbal or non-verbal communication (Kanoujia). Furthermore a woman who does not resist physically to the act should not be deemed as consenting to the activity simply because of that fact. However the second exception to the Section which is being challenged as unconstitutional says that when a man engages in sexual activity with his wife who is over fifteen years of age, it is not rape. Subsequently the Supreme Court of India increased the age of consent to sexual intercourse in marriage to eighteen in a 2017 case. The case dealt, not with MR, but with protection of the married girl child from sexual offences. On the other hand IPC Section 375B criminalizes non-consensual sexual intercourse if the wife and her husband are living apart due to judicial separation. Therefore, it is assumed that a woman's consent to get into a matrimonial relationship and to be in the same household entails her lifelong implied consent to sexual intercourse with her husband. The current law legally sanctions the husband to exercise this right ignoring a range of fundamental human rights that a woman and/as wife is entitled to. A husband's expectation of sexual and often non-consensual torturous submission of his wife transgresses the wife's expectation of trust and sanctity of a marital relationship.

The provision of MRE is further strengthened by Section 9 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1956 which presents to us the concept of restitution of conjugal rights (RCR). According to this the court after being satisfied of the truth of the statements, can issue a decree of RCR, compelling the spouses to live together. In *T. Sareetha v. Venkata Subbaiah* (1983) the Andhra Pradesh High Court struck down the constitutionality of RCR and recognized that an individual could not be compelled to sexually cohabit with her spouse. The court also took a progressive stance by recognizing the right to privacy and sexual autonomy of a woman. Unfortunately in the same year the Delhi High Court in *Harvinder Kaur v. Harmander Singh* upheld the constitutionality of RCR. It held that RCR aimed at "preserving" matrimonial amity by bringing about cohabitation between the estranged parties and did not coerce an unwilling wife to have sexual intercourse with her husband (Delhi, High Court). Cohabitation does not necessarily depend on sexual relations but that a husband and wife live together- both rendering their respective duties and services to each other (Delhi, High Court). However given the fact that MR

is not a crime and women have a subordinate status in the society, a husband can sexually assault his wife with impunity. Thus compelling a woman to return to her husband who is potentially a habitual rapist puts her at risk of MR without any recourse to law.

Although India lacks comprehensive research database on MR victims, the latest report of the National Family Health Survey (2015-16) reveals that the average Indian woman is 17 times more likely to endure sexual violence from her husband than anyone else (Singh). According to the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (2011) one in five men have forced their wives to have sex (Dhawan). The UN Population Fund reveals that more than two-thirds of married women in India between the ages 15 and 49 have been beaten or forced to have sex (Dhawan).

The government has often expressed its unwillingness to recognize MR as a crime. Its arguments range from protecting the institution of family and marriage, to the availability of alternative laws to deal with the issue, the nature of marriage in India and the mindset of the Indian society to protecting men from the potential misuse of domestic violence laws by vindictive wives. For instance in 2012 the Parliamentary Standing Committee while reviewing the Criminal Law Amendment Bill refused to remove the MRE clause citing the “stress” that the family system will undergo due to it (Kallakuru and Soni 7). It also pointed to the existence of alternative remedies to deal with matters of cruelty within the family. In 2015 the Minister of State for Home Affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhury argued that the Indian society unlike the West treats marriage as a sacrament and not a contract (Dhawan). Furthermore any consideration of criminalizing MR must take into account Indian factors like poverty, illiteracy, religious diversity and prevalent social customs. In 2017 the Centre while submitting an affidavit in response to pleas seeking criminalization of MR reiterated that it could destabilize the institution of marriage and would become an easy tool for harassing the husbands (PTI).

Family and familial interactions have long been considered as private matters having its own set of dispute resolution processes. The sanctity of the private space has frequently been invoked to support state and judicial non-intervention, as the latter characterizes the complex public space. This offers both legitimacy and immunity to private acts denying the fact that most private acts involving the powerless and the marginalized have public consequences (Olsen 319). According to Olsen, the private realm is a place of insecurity and uncertainty for the powerless (Olsen 325). Moreover by designating the sphere and thus the act as private, the domestic realm is once again denigrated as an insignificant space- in comparison to the public sphere-

that does not require immediate judicial action. It is argued that alternative civil and criminal remedies already exist for protecting women in the domestic sphere. This is also responsible for the consequent non-applicability of constitutional rights therein. *Harvinder Kaur* is a case in point where the court held that fundamental rights namely Articles 14 and 21 do not apply in the marital sphere (Nigam 6). Moreover one of the chief components of culture that is religion considers providing sex a wifely obligation to be performed when demanded. Legally and culturally MR is thus perceived as a less serious form of crime, often not a crime at all, unlike “real” rape which is perpetrated by a stranger outside the home (Bennice and Resick 230-231).

MR AS A VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS:

MRE explicitly violates fundamental rights including right to equality and equal protection of laws, life, personal liberty and dignity, freedom of self expression, privacy and sexual autonomy all of which is guaranteed by the Constitution under Articles 14, 19 and 21. Article 14 ensures equality of all persons before law and equal protection of laws. It also provides for reasonable and non-arbitrary classification based upon intelligible differentia. Following the *Harvinder Kaur* verdict marriage is taken to be a reasonable classification since the objective of the act is to bring about matrimonial amity. Therefore although rape is a violation of Article 21, MR is not because the word “marital” exempts it from violating Article 14 (Kallakuru and Soni 14). However in the case of MR the differential does not have a rational relation with the objective of protecting women. In an obvious sense it is arbitrary and unjust since it provides protection to one group of women (unmarried) while denying the same, even allowing the other (married women) to get raped. The focus on marriage is diverting attention away from the problem of non-consensual sex in marriage. Rape is rape whether committed by the husband or a stranger.

It also becomes pertinent to argue that while MR is a form of cruelty within marriage it must be viewed as sexual expression of power and is not distinct from stranger rape. Both are intended to humiliate the very being and subjectivity of women both as individuals and as a group. Rape or the fear of it serves to remind women (and other marginalized sexualities) of their powerlessness in the face of a misogynistic culture that values male dominance, violence and power. It is a tool to humiliate and disempower women and cause social indignity. The liberal association of rape as a personal injury to an individual has been critiqued by radical feminists. The latter argue that rape is a form of social terrorism. It is a deeply entrenched social practice which operates to intimidate and dehumanize women as a group. Radical

feminists like Andrea Dworkin argue that all women live in constant jeopardy due to the threat of rape (“Feminist Perspectives”). Therefore, the symbolic message that the threat of rape communicates is necessary to understand the overarching ideology of sexuality and chastity in patriarchal cultures within which MR prevails.

Time and again the Supreme Court in a slew of landmark judgments has upheld the right to life including the right to live with dignity (*Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, 1978), right to lead a healthy life (*Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India*, 1984), right to personal liberty and privacy (*Kharak Singh v. State of U.P.*, 1963; *Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, 2018), right to equality and freedom of self expression (*Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*, 2018) and gendered non-discrimination (*Joseph Shine v. Union of India*, 2018; *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala*, 2018). The legislature and judiciary has penetrated the private sphere on many occasions in order to remove gender discriminatory practices. In the light of the above judgments and persistent calls to criminalize MR the time is now ripe for both legal and social reforms on the matter of MR in India.

CONCLUSION:

The MRE of Section 375 of the IPC explicitly violates the constitutional rights of women. MR is a gender based crime which must be viewed in terms of the larger socio-cultural implications that rape and violence against women entail. Hence it must be immediately criminalized in India. There are many other issues involved with respect to it, for instance matters of evidence, procedure of prosecuting husbands, creation of new offences and jurisdiction of the legislature and judiciary etc., which has not been touched upon in this article. The overarching argument that the article makes is that procedural matters must be accompanied by social reform so that socio-cultural norms are not used to legitimize MR. Most importantly women are not objects of sexual control but are rights-bearing citizens in a democratic country like India which is also part of numerous international agreements that criminalize MR. Therefore the MRE must be immediately diluted.

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Negotiating Order, Madness and Existence: Macbeth's Motivation and Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015)

Sougata Chakraborty

ABSTRACT:

Shakespeare's plays have been and continue to be recreated, reproduced, and adapted frequently across all mediums of visual representation. At a first glance, Justin Kurzel's 2015 film adaptation of *Macbeth*, from the point of cinematic representation, retains many aspects of the original- the setting, the linguistic nuances, and the basic storyline. But an in-depth look at this new *Macbeth*, especially from the standpoint of the representation of the titular character and events, might help us to get to a text that stands apart, if at all, from the original, generally studied as a tragedy of ambition. This article will try to study the character of Macbeth as portrayed in the film in the context of violence, mental health, sanity and the realization of the absurdity of existence and investigate the impact this might have on the larger scheme of things (*Macbeth* as a story). All of this will be done keeping the visual representation in the film in focus. This will, inadvertently, lead to the understanding or rather the question regarding the nature of the tragic hero Macbeth can be read as and the many possibilities of interpretations that this legendary tale offers.

KEY WORDS: Macbeth, adaptation, mental health, absurd, existence, tragic hero

Shakespeare's plays have had the privilege of being probably the most reproduced and most frequently adapted literary work throughout history. Justin Kurzel's 2015 cinematic adaptation of *Macbeth* is one of the latest additions to that long list. The adaptation of the screenplay for this film is done by Todd Louiso, Jacob Koskoff and Michael Lesslie. The process of studying this new *Macbeth* inevitably reinitiates the discussions regarding – a) its similarity and difference with the original text, b) the extent of experimentation and remodeling done with the story, the characters and their motivation and c) whether it stands out as an adaptation and tap into some uncharted possibilities regarding the characters and their world. All these questions would be addressed keeping in mind the overwhelming idea of order and the cinematic representation of the very psyche of the characters involved. Shakespeare's tragedies seem to follow the classical beginning-end-middle structure quite religiously. Apart from having this physical order in terms of crafting of a play, the plays also include or rather are built upon an interplay between 'order' and 'chaos', at the end of which 'order' invariably wins. That is to say, it begins with a way of life that is deemed just; then the just way is challenged and chaos takes its place; at the end the right/ the just is again restored. It can also be seen as a tripartite pattern of 'Order-Chaos-Order'. This adaptation takes its liberties at tweaking the original play here and there. It follows the classical structure of narrative but also keeps it open at places for the audience to interpret. Set in the actual high and rough lands of Scotland with original Shakespeare verses as dialogues, this cinematic adaptation of the play calls for a good critical look in order to decipher how this film works and what does it bring to the contemporary audience of Shakespeare.

THE POINTS OF DEPARTURE FROM THE ORIGINAL:

The film, in terms of the general storyline, language, characters and setting, can be termed more or less a faithful adaptation of the original text. But, it is the screenplay and the extensive and intimate character study that bring out the potentially untrodden areas for study. The film opens with a funeral scene. Here we see Macbeth and Lady Macbeth performing the last rites for their dead baby in the exact same fashion as the screenplay reads –

Lady Macbeth walks forward with a sprig of RED BERRIES.
Places them reverently on her young son's dead chest,
fighting back tears.
After her, Macbeth carefully lays oyster shells over the
boy's eyes. Then he scoops up a handful of black Scottish
soil and pours it over his son's chest. Over his folded
hands. Sending him to rest.

This first point of departure from the original text, accomplished by explicitly putting the dead Junior Macbeth in the scene, sets the tone and the mood of the film and brings right to the centre of discussion the element of 'psyche' that could be having major effects in the coming events in the lives of these two major characters and help us have a fresh look at the story as we know it.

Then there are the witches. Here we see three women – one old, another is middle aged and the third is a teenage girl. Apart from these three there is a little girl and a newborn babe. None of them look anything but "inhabitants of the earth". What is intriguing is that all the five of them belong to separate generations.

Unlike the original text or previous adaptations, this film takes up the issue of war very seriously. The film invests a good amount of screen time to the war sequence that includes preparations for the battle and graphically violent scenes. And it is during the killings that Macbeth sees the witches for the first time.

As the story moves on Macbeth's dwindling mental health is hinted at as he is seen talking at a dead body of a young soldier regarding the prophecy of the witches. This is the same soldier who reappears at the dagger scene as the embodiment of Macbeth's "dagger of the mind" with the dagger in his hand and appears once again as one of the apparitions reassuring "...for none of women born shall harm Macbeth." In this version of *Macbeth*, Macbeth himself kills Lady Macduff and her children by burning them. At the very end, as Macbeth is dead and Malcolm enters the throne room, little Fleance is seen taking up Macbeth's sword and running through the smoke and fog until he vanishes.

CHARACTER STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH:

So who is this Macbeth and what drives him? Is it only power? What is his tragic flaw? Or was he already flawed in some way?

From the first thirty minutes of the film what we can make of this Macbeth are as follows-

- i. He is a father who has suffered the loss of his son.
- ii. He is "valiant cousin" to the existing king Duncun.
- iii. He is a weary war hero.

In Kurzel's *Macbeth*, from the very onset we get to see a fragile protagonist who has experienced more than his fair share of loss, grief and violence. As Kurzel's *Macbeth* explores the possibilities of studying the characters in their most human and vulnerable conditions, his Macbeth becomes the dramatic/cinematic embodiment of the psychologically devastated,

traumatized individual (a war veteran). It is the director's vision and the actor's choice in terms of portraying this character that provides a whole new insight into Macbeth's world visually. The idea that the film is going to study (look at) the character on a very intimate level; that this man is broken down internally and probably has reached a point of realization of the meaninglessness of human existence comes across visually in the prolific use of close up and extreme close up shots; in the vacant look in the eyes of the actor; in the visual contrast of a hundred men killing each other in the battle field against the recurring visuals of the indifferent and bleak natural setting. On the conference panel of *Macbeth* in the *Cannes Film Festival 2015*, Michael Fassbender, the actor who played the character of Macbeth said,

...but never did it occur to me that this character is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. It was Justin who had said that to me in one of our first conversations and that changed everything to me." (Cannes Film Festival 2015)

If the psyche is taken as a key to unlock this Macbeth, there can be no doubt that this kind of a mental state is potent enough to dictate the course of action that is going to take place in the story. So "the dagger of the mind" gets a more substantial connotation in the sense that he is actually suffering from some kind of a psychological problem. The fact that all the years of war and the death of his own child has taken its toll on Macbeth is substantiated very early on in the film through Macbeth's withered appearance, his having some sort of a fit of terror in the battlefield as he sees the three women standing nearby, the scene of him blurting out his thought over the prophecies to a dead body and the dagger scene in the film which heavily proposes his delusional, schizophrenic condition. Most interestingly, although it's all Shakespeare's language, the soliloquies, owing to the cinematic way in which they have been presented here, begin to sound more like the babbling of a person who has lost his grip on reality.

Before killing Duncan, both in the original text and the film, Macbeth is seen in a struggle with his conscience; weighing the ethics, morality and pragmatics of the act. But, he does it. In the film the disturbing act of killing his king who happened to be a kin seems to bother him, for the final time, while he is being anointed (as we see him having flashbacks). After that there is no suggestion of any kind of dilemma in him. So there is a journey from being a weary, broken down, psychotic man to a cold blooded, powerful, mad killer. And this transition has been captured in the scene following the anointment ceremony. Here Macbeth looks quite unnerving with his crazy smirks as he utters, "O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife! Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives." (*Macbeth* ActIII SceneII). The power

structure between the two protagonists also changes quite visibly, at this very moment, as he makes sudden sexual advances on Lady Macbeth and we see fear in the eyes of Lady Macbeth for the first time in the film. Previously he had emerged as a man of action (the murderer) after his interaction with Lady Macbeth in the chapel in a scene that looks like an awkward sex scene where Lady Macbeth was the one who seemed to be in control.

In the original text of *Macbeth*, Macbeth's moral conundrum is laid wide open in public for the first time in the Banquet Scene, when he sees the ghost of Banquo. The film presents us with the same scene, but it is no more a surprise reveal. The film has actually been building up to this public reveal of Macbeth's fit. The film has already shown his unstable mental condition, his delusional tendencies. The film makes use of the 'again' in "then comes my fit again" (Macbeth's speech Act III Scene IV) to justify the recurring fits and to further substantiate the condition of Macbeth. The screenplay, then, exercises its freedom by burning off Lady Macduff and her children in the hands of Macbeth himself and thus furthers the theory of an insane king. Sanity runs its course with Lady Macbeth and she is seen gradually losing it. Her condition begins to emulate that of her husband as she is seen hallucinating.

REALISATION AND ACTION-MACBETH'S PREDICAMENT:

A very important thing happens in terms of visual presentation in the scene where Macbeth delivers his speech "tomorrow and tomorrow and..." after Lady Macbeth's death. Unlike the text, Macbeth comes to the chamber and comes to know about his wife's death from the Doctor. He approaches the dead body and speaks his lines at her. The lines contain in them the philosophy of the meaninglessness of existence as Sir Ian McKellen in his *Acting Shakespeare* series puts it, "*there is no more pessimistic view of human life than Macbeth has reached at that point in the play*" (McKellen). So this speech, in the play, becomes the high point where Macbeth ultimately faces the 'absurd' in a way; understands life as nothing but "a walking shadow"; with no signification at all. Quite interestingly, in the film Macbeth is not seen breaking down to make the scene look more dramatic. The character is caught in the most intimate and vulnerable situation as he is seen speaking the lines to dead Lady Macbeth almost in a whispering voice. It looks like, as if, he is telling her something that he had the knowledge of already. So in this case, the death of the Lady does not make him burst out into sudden understanding of life's futility. His previous experiences with death (death of his child, death of the young soldiers, killing enemies by hand) have already made him aware enough of life's predicament. While talking about his character at a conference Michael Fassbender said:

It's not only the killing of many people or you have a soldier that's engaged in battle month in month out, day after day, but the fact that his battle takes place with his bare hands. I mean the sword is the weapon of choice and what it takes to pierce someone's skin, drive the sword through somebody's muscle, break through their bone and then take the sword out again and if the sword fails, pick up a rock and smash someone's skull- those kinds of images definitely I try to dig up and explore to try and find that fractured character right at the beginning. (Festival de Cannes 2015)

The character of Macbeth and his actions in the film problematises the theory of *Macbeth* as a tragedy of ambition. Ambition is definitely there, but his actions may be seen, as having roots in his desire to prove his existence in the world. Possibly it is all about taking control of one's own life. So much of death and despair might have led this man to realize the utter futility of existence. Michael Fassbender in the same conference said:

I think the story is about loss. People always talk about it as being a sort of a story of ambition. Yes, that's true and you know where your ambition can lead you and what you hope for and what the reality of that hope is. But I think it's a story of loss you know - the loss of a relationship between a couple, the loss of their child and the loss of their sanity. That's how I see it. (Festival de Cannes 2015)

Throughout the film Michael's eyes, to the artists' credit, carry a sort of sadness and depth of understanding that complements Macbeth's condition aptly. The vacant and weary look in his face gives the impression that this man has nothing more to lose. All his experiences might have pushed him to the extent where he has come to realize that there is no intrinsic meaning to this existence. There is nothing that defines life and nothing is in his control. This crisis and the realization of a kind of vacuum is the moment when he decides to act accordingly. Up till the moment of killing Duncan he is seen struggling with his conscience. Once he is convinced of the non-existence of a divine justice, a divine order, he becomes the master of his life, a man of action. Morality, ethics and sanity lose their grip on him as a byproduct. Up until he murdered Duncan, whatever he was doing he was either doing it for the country and king or according to the social norms and demands and he could see the tremendous failure in that. The ethically and morally just way of life had only tormented him. The king Duncan, the complementing Scottish half of the "English epicures", enjoyed royal privileges while Macbeth could not even mourn the death of his children because he had to fight for him. He could see little justice in this order of the world. He could see the gap between his actions and his will. From killing Duncan onwards the course of actions becomes in his power to control. When he becomes king it becomes

more so. Now he is at the top of the power structure. The film uses the post anointment scene to indicate at the emergence of a new Macbeth. This Macbeth cannot be controlled or tamed even by Lady Macbeth. The shift of power dynamics between the Macbeth couple suggested by the change in sexual dynamics comparing the two intimate scenes is indicative of Macbeth's future actions being devoid of further influence (Lady Macbeth). Now he can act more freely and he does. What we don't get to see is his affairs related to the other aspects of the state. We only see his continuous struggle to keep the position that he has acquired through regicide. He becomes the mad king. As the story progresses, we see Macbeth completely devoid of a conscience as he carries on the rampage. He kills his close friends, burns their families even children. The old witch speaks the key line of the play "fair is foul, and foul is fair" at the very beginning when the funeral of the dead Macbeth baby is taking place. The next thing we see is the battle scene, where Macbeth brutally kills off his enemies. He is rewarded for his valour in the battlefield by his king afterwards. This state sponsored killing of hundreds of young boys is met with the gilded and decorated tabard pronouncing Macbeth 'Thane of Cawdor'. Here Macbeth is just a soldier who becomes the king and he is a king who does not judge foul from fair.

CONCLUSION:

The film plays with all these possibilities and thus adds another potential dimension to the character of Macbeth. As an adaptation it constantly builds up on the original and definitely adds to the critical understanding of Macbeth as a character and *Macbeth* as a story. So we see this Macbeth gradually distancing itself, in a way, from the Aristotelian concept of a tragic hero (reading his actions as having a substantial and just position of asserting his own existence against the wheel of fate) and moving on to become more of a Hegelian tragic hero.

What Kurzel and the screenplay writers do in the film is that they do not end the story. The film ends with a shot of Fleance taking up Macbeth's sword and vanishing in the smoky plain. This shot takes the audience back to the prophecy of the women (witches) directed towards Banquo that ran "Thou shalt get kings though thou be none". Fleance is alive but he is in no way the rightful heir to the throne. Malcolm is the new king after Macbeth's demise. This hints at a possible recurrence of the events that took place in the film all over again. So a possible future is hinted at. A look at the witches makes it a greater puzzle. The fact that each of them belongs to a different age group might suggest their presence and influence on generations past, present and future. It also helps extend the aforementioned concept of the tripartite thematic structure prevalent in Shakespeare by making order and

chaos parts of a circle. So, instead of having a resolution or an end, it becomes more of a process. And our Macbeth becomes the archetypal war hero caught up in this circle to suffer, oppress and ultimately meet his end only to give birth to another 'Macbeth'. This might indicate at the story of *Macbeth* (the struggle with power and existence) being the only sort of story (at least the crux of the story) that had been, is being and shall be repeated. So, the story of Macbeth becomes history, in a way, a history that is a cycle that in turn complements and adds to the discourse of why Shakespeare is "not of an age, but for all time."

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Representing Resistance in Patriarchy: The Feminist Cops in *Unbelievable*

Arijit Saha

ABSTRACT:

Second wave feminists theorised that rape and sexual abuse are integral in understanding the subjugation of women in patriarchy. Consequently they called out rape and its representation as symptomatic of inherent misogyny in society. The emergence of post-feminist discourses marked a shift towards popular modes of representations that embraced sexual freedom and championed the image of the liberated woman as an ideal that feminism had strived for. The emergence of the female avenger figure in popular culture could be seen as a post-feminist response to the issue of rape. These representations have led to a popular understanding of feminism that undermined its original goals of creating awareness about the pervasive nature of patriarchy. However, a new trend seems to be emerging in the form of web shows which represent fresh narratives of resistance. *Unbelievable* is one such instance where the representation of feminist female police officers offers an alternative to vigilantism as a means for justice against rape. My contention in this paper is that the representation of the female police officer is a new step in shaping a more sensible understanding of feminism in popular culture.

KEYWORDS: Patriarchy, Feminism, Popular Culture, Web Series, Rape

Radical feminists identified rape and sexual abuse of women as central in understanding the inequality between the two sexes. For them rape and

violence against women constituted a distinct category that intersects with extrinsic realities in a patriarchal society. Kate Millett in her influential book *Sexual Politics* (1970) exposed the inherent misogyny of canonical male writers, especially in their depictions of sexual encounters and rape. Feminist critics like Susan Brownmiller have pointed out that contrary to patriarchal notions, rape is less of a crime of passion and is analogous to other violent crimes. Analysing the relationship between rape and power she states that – “All rape is an exercise in power, but some rapists have an edge that is more than physical. They operate within an institutionalized setting that works to their advantage and in which a victim has little chance to redress her grievance...But rapists may also operate within an emotional setting or within a dependent relationship that provides a hierarchical, authoritarian structure of its own that weakens a victim’s resistance, distorts her perspective and confounds her will” (Brownmiller 256). Notably legal systems of investigation and prosecution which are almost invariably dominated by men in positions of authority tend to view rape as form of crime of lust. The absence of resistance or refusal is often misinterpreted as instances of consent. Consequently, investigations of rape cases are driven by patriarchal assumptions regarding the socio-cultural position of women and these naturally tend to devalue women as reliable narrators. This leads to a tendency to disregard or call into question ‘the story of rape’ as narrated by the victim which in turn results in suspicion and incredulity towards the victim’s version. Legal scholar and feminist Susan Estrich argued that treatment of rape in legal system was largely contingent on the woman’s social, racial status. These sexist assumptions derive from the imagined fear of the confused vengeful woman who can wrongly accuse a man of rape. The inherent distrust of women as reliable narrators spawns a flurry of objectionable questions targeted to disprove her claims of rape. The victim must physically resist, the assailant’s use of physical power are perceived to be necessary conditions in proving rape. Even so, violence and aggression against women, especially in sexual relationships is seen as natural. Susan Griffin claimed that rape is considered an understandable and natural behaviour by society:

Whatever the motivation, male sexuality and violence in our culture seem to be inseparable. James Bond alternately whips out his revolver and his cock, and though there is no known connection between the skills of gun-fighting and love-making, pacifism seems suspiciously effeminate. (Griffin 27)

The advent of post-feminism in the late 1980s and early 1990s occasioned with a boom in media culture marked a shift in feminism- a shift from political activism towards popular representation. Susan Faludi in her influential book

Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women (1991) argued that post feminism emerged as a devastating backlash against the feminist movement and it mainly sought to devalue the strides made by feminism in achieving equality between the sexes. In its conception post-feminism embraced a neoconservative approach towards women's issues all the way expounding on the sexual and political freedom of women. Angela McRobbie called this "double entanglement". Embracing the notions of sexual freedom the populism of post-feminism categorically brushed aside the achievements of radical feminist movements and projected the figure of the liberated individual woman as the ideal that feminism had strived for many years. Consequently post-feminism concentrated on representing sexual equality through its proliferation of the image of the liberated woman. In this context the post-feminist responses to rape spawned the emergence of the figure of the vigilante avenger in popular fiction. Post-feminist discourses championed violent retribution as an appropriate response to rape and this has been popularly construed as a standard and staple of feminist representation. Consequently, female avenger figures like Lisbeth Salander from the *Millennium* trilogy, Aomame from Murakami's *1Q84* or Katniss Everdene from *The Hunger Games* trilogy have been praised by mass media as feminist icons. The sensationalism and spectacles of violent revenge as represented in fiction and films caters mostly to popular fantasies of female empowerment and in actuality fails to properly address the larger issues of rape and sexual abuse against women. The visual representation of rape in films like *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* aligned the post-feminist notions of justice with vigilantism and violent revenge. The fantastical nature of vigilantism of these avenger figures has led to a popular understanding of feminism but their representation fails to provide any viable means of feminist resistance.

In recent years the emergence and popularity of online viewing platforms has seen many fresh representations of authentic narratives of legal resistance to sexual violence. In this paper I suggest that the issue of framing the rape victim as an unreliable narrator is linked to the presence of insensitive men in positions of power and authority within the legal system. In this context the presence of women as police officers or lawyers offer a more viable alternative for justice. There are many web shows which represent strong female police officers and their resistance to violence against women from within the purview of law. A few examples are web shows like *Bitter Daisies*, *The Fall*, *Happy Valley*, *Broadchurch* etc. I am particularly looking at the popular American web mini-series *Unbelievable*, precisely because the narrative of the show stresses on the importance of believing the victim of rape and how women of law play a crucial part in the road to justice. The issue of framing the rape victim as an unreliable narrator is linked to larger

patriarchal assumptions that have marginalised women on different grounds. The constant harassment and disbelief aimed at victims of rape by legal institutions is one such form. In this context the presence of women as sincere and sensitive police officers offer a more viable alternative for justice. *Unbelievable* is truly remarkable in the sense that it refrains from representing any form of sensationalist or populist tropes that are often plague the representation of rape investigations in other web shows.

Unbelievable (2019) a Netflix production, is based on the Pulitzer Prize winning article named “An Unbelievable Story of Rape” (2015) written by T. Christian Miller and Ken Armstrong and was published in the investigative site ProPublica. The article follows the real account of a series of rapes in Washington state and Colorado. The series is a faithful adaptation of the real case as it refrains from any sensationalist representation of the crime or its subsequent investigation. As the show strives to represent the real procedures of crime investigations, it delves deeper into the details and intricacies of an actual investigation. By choosing to present the narrative from the perspective of the victim and not opting for any dramatic effect, the series seems to have a profound quality, seldom seen in television or films. David Fincher’s cinematic adaptation of Lisbeth Salander transformed her into a sexualised avenger figure engaging in graphic scenes of violence. Lisbeth’s on-screen rape much like other popular representations of on screen rape like those in *Spartacus*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Private Practice*, *The Sopranos* or even in *Orange is the New Black*, tend to border on what Laura Mulvey called as the male gaze. *Unbelievable* refrains from showing any graphic visuals of rape and shows on snippets of Marie’s harrowing experience, but even the visual representation of those sketchy flashbacks are does not satisfy what Mulvey argues as masculine scopophilia. (Mulvey) Feminist critics have argued that an important factor in representation of rape on screen is that it serves to satisfy male sexual fantasies. Catherine A Mckinnon likened the representation of rape and the act of rape as similar in nature. Rape in this regard serves the same function as pornography. In refusing to represent the spectacle of rape the series makes an important feminist intervention that aligns with second wave feminist notions of representation. The show could be categorised as truly radical in its intent. As a crime drama dealing with rape and sexual abuse, *Unbelievable* moves away from representing the standard tropes of the genre. Instead of representing the spectacle of rape or the reactionary violent revenge the series focuses on the victim and investigation itself. The show is more in line with feminist crime fictions. Adrienne E. Gavin in her essay “Feminist Crime Fiction and Female Sleuths” observes:

In emphasizing violence against women, feminist detective fiction makes a gendered protest. It also implies a gendered question: if even the detective figure is violated and attacked, is justice possible? Some critics argue that, in portraying such shocking scenes, violence against women is condoned or capitalized upon by authors. (Gavin 260)

This is especially true for web shows like *Unbelievable*. The coming together of Grace and Karen is almost incidental, but it is a conscious decision on their part to work together to nab the culprit. In working together these two female officers subvert the traditional notions of detective fiction in popular media representations. Avenging is often a solo act committed by the avenger. But these female officers are not avengers, rather they seek justice. The two female detectives take it upon themselves to bring the perpetrator to justice and their investigation is in sharp contrast to how male investigating officers handle the case. This representation seems to suggest that the traditionally masculine roles of the detective or cop often completely bypass or ignore the emotional trauma that a sexual attack entails, and this is something that the women officers like Karen and Grace are better suited to handle. These women show compassion in engaging with rape victims something that male officers completely ignore. It is the investigation of Marie's rape that kick starts the series. Marie is raped in the middle of the night and the rapist leaves absolutely no trace or evidence and this proves frustrating for the authorities to identify the culprit. The male police officer who comes first to investigate the crime informs Marie that he is there to help and asks her to narrate the incident of her rape. This is immediately followed by two more male detectives arriving and stoically asking her the same questions. Afterward, she is taken to a hospital for medical examination but she is not told exactly what her examination will entail. The examining doctor asks Marie to narrate the incident again and throughout the whole medical process Marie is visibly uncomfortable and disturbed. As Marie narrates her traumatic experience in bits and pieces again and again, every time the investigating officers and police keep asking her "And after that?" The insensitivity of the investigators towards the victim is really unbelievable. Throughout the investigation, the male officers focus on the redundant details of the incident and completely ignore Marie's traumatic state. Due to lack of physical evidence and witnesses the police are quick to conclude that Marie's narrative does not add up and that she might be making up the story. Marie is forced to retract her statement. What is stunning in the investigation is that this is happening in the United States of America, a so-called developed nation which supposedly has better professionals who are supposed to be comparatively more sensitised when it comes to sexual violence.

In contrast, when Detective Karen Duvall approaches a rape victim named

Amber, she is polite and compassionate to the latter. Karen politely informs her that paramedics are there for her and if she changes her mind she should let her know. The gentleness with which Karen talks to Amber makes her feel more relaxed, unlike Marie who feels expendable. The gesture of asking for consent for even little things reinforces the idea that the rape did not take away control of her life. When Amber says that she hasn't told anyone except the police about her rape, Karen is quick to point out that it is entirely her decision whether she wishes to inform anybody and that she doesn't need to explain the reasons for her decisions. Karen also accompanies Amber when she is taken for her medical examination. Even before entering the medical examination room, Karen first asks one of the attending nurses to ask her whether she will like her to come in and also adds that if she doesn't then it's absolutely fine. She also drops Amber to her friend's house. This is in sharp contrast to how Marie is treated by the emotionally indifferent male officers who show no sense of compassion towards Marie. Both Karen and Grace are deeply sympathetic towards raped women and this makes their quest to seek justice for the women all the more poignant. This web series is also about how women help each other as colleagues and partners.

The representation of a female police officer investigating crimes like rape and sexual abuse poses a series of important questions. Does this completely shift perspective and change the nature of the investigation? Does the presence of the female police officer make her vulnerable to the threat of violence? In analysing the symbolic meaning of rape in detective narratives Linda Mizejewski in her book *Hardboiled and High Heeled* (2004) points out that while male detectives, in their involvement with femme fatales face the fear of Freudian symbolic castration, the female detective's involvement with a potential rapist and abuser poses the actual threat of violence, even rape. While this threat remains in the narrative of these web shows, it is countered through the fact these female police officers are not only intelligent but are also efficient in physical fighting. This is not always shown visually but the implication is there that these women can indeed overpower men in physical fights. The representation of rape investigation in *Unbelievable* does not veer off from the main theme and does not present any dramatic sensationalist spectacle of the police women physically fighting it out against rapists, but the implication that these two women can fight is self-evident from their portrayal. This could be seen as symptomatic of a paradigm shift in representing narratives of resistance.

Jen Chaney argues in the article named "Unbelievable Is the Most Feminist Crime Show I've Ever Seen"- "The rape victims in *Unbelievable* are not like the standard victims on most crime shows, especially on network television, where the women targeted by criminals are mostly beautiful, attractive

and stylish women. The rapist targets different kinds of women- young, old, white, black, thin, fat, blonde, brunette.” This suggests that the sexist notion of a standard victim is a myth. Therefore such representation of women as sensitive police officers indicate a positive change in how crimes like rape represented on screen. The change is not only because of the moral position that Karen and Grace take, but also due to the fact that they are police officers fighting against patriarchal assumptions within the institutions of law. Karen and Grace believe the ‘unbelievable’ narratives of rape, that most men discard. They visit numerous victims, some ready to chat and some unwelcoming, and they keep on looking for their suspect. The manner of their tedious police work, like going through all the details, interviewing and revisiting numerous witnesses, all point to the fact that sincere and honest investigation offers the only real means of addressing rape. The show suggests that it is only because of the intervention and active work of the two female detectives that women like Marie and Amber get their justice. This is not the justice borne out of vigilantism, this is justice based on actual police work. The question of feminist intent is grounded in the practicality of the solution. The popularity of the show is suggestive of a gradual shift in the representation of narratives of violence in popular culture- from the avenging female figure towards a more practical and viable option- the feminist female cop.

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Tagore's Predilection for Altruism over Solipsism: An Uncharted Realm in His Symbolic Play *Muktadhara*

Rimpa Pal

ABSTRACT:

The paper would like to explore Tagore's attempt to champion the cause for humanity and eye at how the play, *Muktadhara*, at its centennial year of publication, is pertinent to the recent phenomenon due to pandemic for which we have entered into a new phase of human history, the relentless annihilation of Nature by denizens of the world. The play reverberates the tension between primordial nature and technological modernity, an offshoot of the insatiable craving of capitalist industrialization in the aftermath of World War I and socio-political tumult of colonial India. In terms of specificity, the paper would look forward an analytical study of the representation of self-immolation on the part of Prince Abhijit. Prince Abhijit makes a pledge to liberate human beings from the perverted reality; that commitment has taken a heavy toll on him. The earlier title of the play *Path*, itself suggests, Abhijit is the pioneer of a better tomorrow replete with compassion and humanness. The paper would make an attempt at how Prince Abhijit's act of self-sacrifice not only rescues the people of Shivtarai from the imminent danger caused by the despotic rulers of Uttarakut but also in a way emancipates divinity from confinement and offerings from bursarship.

KEYWORDS: Altruism, Solipsism, Self-immolation, Compassion, Humanness.

Rabindranath Tagore is one of the renowned authors of the world of all the time. His plays are the much-explored part of his oeuvre. Amiya Chakraborty is of the view that “Tagore’s play is the play of feeling, not of action” (123). Thompson considers Tagore’s plays as the vehicle of ideas, rather than the expression of action (Thompson 51). Written in 1922, his original Bengali play, *Muktadhara*, falls under the category of symbolic play. Two renowned critics like Niharranjan Ray and Satyendranath Ghosal acclaim the dramatic composition of Tagore. Satyendranath Ghosal opines that Tagore’s every symbolical or allegorical play is a magnificent dramatic work (Ghosal 45). To Niharranjan Ray, Rabindranath Tagore is matchless in his symbolic plays (Ray 56).

Before going to the detailed analysis of the play, it is better to know the historical background of the then society. When Tagore wrote this play in 1922, Gandhiji’s Non-cooperation Movement has its impact all over India. In order to protest against the atrocities of police against the revolutionaries, the mad crowd set fire on the police station at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh. At this violent event, Gandhiji becomes despondent and stopped this movement. The direct influence of this event disturbed Tagore. Though he has immense faith on Gandhiji but at that time he cannot accept his decision to quit the movement. As a humanist, Tagore believes that the inner manifestation of people’s own self and good intention is primarily needed. This symbolic play is the blueprint of his agitated mind.

The play has constantly been under the radar of scholars in terms of its man-machine relationship, especially at a time when machines are simply seen from a utilitarian perspective. Scholars are also involved in exploring the age-old tension between an agrarian past and technological modernity, an offshoot of the insatiable craving of capitalist industrialization and imperialism. After First World War, the whole world saw the harmful impact of imperialism and capitalism and industrialization. Krishna Kripalini observes that “the play *Muktadhara* dealt with the diabolical use of technological knowledge (symbolised by the machine) for colonial exploitation” (181). Scholars also interpret the play as a means of modern ecological consciousness. Tagore in his prophetic vision saw the environmental dilapidations due to construction of dam. Scholars consider the play as Tagore’s clarion call for the spectators and readers to save the earth from impending danger.

King Ranajit is the ruler of the place called Uttarakut. He is also the ruler of the nearby country Shivtari. Muktadhara is a waterfall whose water flows down Uttarakut and Shivtarai rely on the waterfall for irrigation. The financial success of Uttarakut depends on Shivtarai. King Ranajit is willing to deprive the people of Shivtarai from the water, which is a natural resource, the gift of God. The King’s royal engineer, Bibhuti has succeeded in building

up an embankment across the waterfall called Muktadhara. He has accomplished this vicious mission with the help of modern technology and machine but at the cost of several lives. The play chronicles the atrocities between the inhabitants of Uttarakut and Shivtarai. The people of Shivtarai start a rebellion under the leadership of Dhananjay and have stopped paying the taxes to the King. They refuse to pay the tax due to famine. Prince Abhijit is totally different from the totalitarian king Ranajit. Prince Abhijit opens out the road along the Nandi Pass and there by saves the people of Shivtarai from perpetual famine. By doing this, Abhijit has set Uttarakut free from remaining for all time a parasite of Shivtarai. Prince Abhijit feels disgusted with the king for his cruel move towards Shivtaraians. He protests against the construction of dam and always stands beside the people of Shivtarai, thereby goes against the wishes of the king. When the prince Abhijit discovers that he is not a prince by birth but a foundling found beside the bank of Muktadhara, he develops an emotional attachment to the waterfall. Finally he is able to destroy the dam and saves the people of Shivtarai. Then Muktadhara, like a mother, takes up his stricken body into her arms and carries him away.

The royal engineer Bibhuti has successfully erected a great dam to prevent the waters of Muktadhara from reaching the plains below by utilising modern science and technology and through with considerable loss of life. The poor bereaved mother Amba from Janai village always searches for her dead son Suman who has lost his life for this construction of dam. Apart from that, two of Batu's grandsons have to sacrifice their lives for this purpose. Batu comments, "If the offer of life does not bring life in return, if with death you gain death itself, then Bhairava will never allow such an utter loss!" (Tagore) When a dam is built as a means of stifling life and enforcing death and servility, it is harmful for the humanity. The royal engineer Bibhuti's callous attitude and hard-heartedness are evident from his cruel words "I had not the time to trouble my mind about what would happen to some wretched maize fields of some wretched cultivator in some place or other" (Tagore). He is too arrogant to say that "God has given them water; but He has given me the power to bind that water"(Tagore). Bibhuti is heedless either to the recurring wail of the poor bereaved mother Amba "Suman, my son is the light of my eyes, the breath of my life, my Suman!" (Tagore), or to the warnings of the simple God-fearing folk.

Prince Abhijit is endearing to the people of Shivtarai. The inhabitants of Shivtarai have placed Prince Abhijit in their hearts. He has achieved that dignity and respect not by evil means of power and force but by his unconditional humanitarian love and good wishes for them. Prince Abhijit understands the mystery of his birth and perceives the truth of his own life, the aim of his journey and the significance of all human life. This insight comes

clear to him when he learns that he is not a member of royal family and he is not a prince by birth but a foundling picked up by King Ranajit from near the source of the waterfall. This is evident from Prince Abhijit's own answer to the minister of the King "he had come into the world to open out road: this was the inner meanings of his life, which he must fulfil". (Tagore) He is also heard to say to King Ranajit, "I find my mother's tongue in the murmurs of this water". (Tagore) To prince Sanjay, he informs the secret of his own life has its symbol in that waterfall of Muktheadhara. The throne of Uttarakut is an embankment built up across his own life's current and he has come out into the road to set free its course. In order to fulfil his promise he is prepared to leave all royal happiness and privileges and wages a war against the unjust behaviour and blood thirstiness of the despotic rulers.

From the beginning of civilization, sacrifice is common in the history of humanity. The origins of sacrifice dates back to the mythical reference of ancient Greek. The great philosopher Plato considers sacrifice as a gift to the gods. Similarly, a British anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor states that sacrifice is a gift to the gods to minimize hostility among people and/or groups. "inasi Gündüz is of the view that "the basic purpose of sacrifice which is given a place in all belief systems as a religious exercise is to communicate with the divine [...]" (65). Sacrifice is also defined "as the communication of the individual's inner spiritual state to God by means of material symbols" (Gibson 748). René Girard has point out the relation between violence and sacrifice :

[...] if left unappeased, violence will accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area. The role of sacrifice is to stem this rising tide of indiscriminate substitutions and redirect violence into 'proper channels'. (10)

Heesterman opines:

Sacrifice... cannot be valid by immolating just any victim that presents itself. The person, animal, or substance that is immolated must be that part of the sacrificer that defines him as such, namely the goods of life he has acquired by risking his own life. (105)

As regards the tradition of sacrifice, Smith and Doniger state:

Sacrifice has even been identified as the origin of civilization itself in classical works of modern sociology and psychology by Emile Durkheim and Sigmund Freud, and there is a certain sense in which all life-human and nonhuman, cultural and natural-might be regarded as a series of deaths and rebirths, that is, as a continuous process of sacrifice. (189)

Prince Abhijit knows that the life is dynamic, flowlessness is death. When

the dam is erected over the Muktadhara Abhijit feels that the flow of his life is imprisoned. As he is a lover of life, that's why it is impossible for him to stay away from the sound of Mukodhara, he has to break the prison. Leaving the king's palace, he sets out a journey outside the narrow boundary of the palace. The materialistic happiness of King's palace is not enough to hold a person who has discovered a new way to the outer world. This view is evident in the inner words of prince Abhijit :

Every man has the mystery of his inner life somewhere written in the outer world. The secret of my own life has its symbol in that waterfall of Muktadhara. When I saw its movements shackled I received a shock at the very root of my being; I discovered that this throne of Uttarakut is an embankment built up across my own life's current. And I have come out into the road to set free its course. (Tagore)

Viswajit perceives this truth much before anyone else. He remarks:

Then came that boy Abhijit into my heart. He came like a flash to light; and those whom I had struck, blinded by the darkness of my heart could see them for the first time in their full humanity. (Tagore)

After twenty-five years of strenuous effort, the royal engineer Bibhuti has succeeded in building up an embankment across the waterfall of Muktadhara. A festival is now being held in the honour of the occasion. The inhabitants of Uttarakut are very eager to celebrate the achievement of the royal engineer, Bibhuti. For this great success even the King Ranajit is also visiting the same temple. The irony of the situation is that the God who has created Muktadhara for human beings and Bibhuti has crossed His provision. Being joyful in rejecting God's provision, they arrange the festival in order to worship God. Viswajit informs King of Uttarakut that "the God Bhairava will reject the worship you bring to him to-night".(Tagore) Viswajit also declares that " the worship you offer to Him is no worship at all, but merely wages".(Tagore) Through the character of Viswajit, Dhananjay and Prince Abhijit Tagore demonstrates how the God has become a servant as well as offering has transformed into mere wages. By breaking the dam, Prince Abhijit not only liberates the water from Muktadhara but also emancipates divinity from servitude and offerings from bursarship.

Muktadhara denigrates the materialistic outlook of the capitalistic society of pre-independent India. King of Uttarakut and royal engineer Bibhuti are representatives of bloodsucker and despotic rulers and the people of Shivtarai stands for the exploited. Prince Abhijit voices his protest against the deleterious activities of these desensitized rulers. He represents the revolutionary force which replenishes the society as has been explicated by Ahab Hassan in *The Pattern of Fictional Experience*:

Rebel or victim, the hero is at odds with his environment. He is at odds with himself. His energy is the energy of the opposition and his aggressions are either directed against himself (the victim) or against the world (the rebel). In either case, he remains an alien to society, a misfit (329).

The protagonist of the play, Prince Abhijit is a traveller from the time of his birth. He was born near the bank of Mukdhodhara, and he died at the same place in his attempt to break the bondage of the Muktheadhara. Muktheadhara and life have the same flow. The flow is the symbolic of life. Where the flow is stopped, life is there perverted. To save the people from this perversion is the motto of Prince Abhijit's life. The blocked water of Muktheadhara is symbolic of the enslavement of life's current, the halting way of Nandi Pass is representative of imprisonment of life. Prince Abhijit has lost his life in order to give back the flow in the way of life. In this play Prince Abhijit's spirited attempt comes close to the self-effacing act of Peter in Phoebe Cary's poem "A Leak in the Dike". In this poem a young Dutch boy saves his community by pushing a finger into a leaking levee. Prince Abhijit's act of self-immolation also reminds us of the protagonist Eman's sacrifice for the sake of communal benefit in Wole Soyinka's one of the best known play *The Strong Breed*. Like Prometheus who is a champion for humankind, Prince Abhijit here appears as a saviour.

To escape from the perverted reality, the devotee of humanism Tagore suggests two ways - one is to find out the way of the freedom of the human-soul which is attached to the chains of materialistic world and the second is the aspiration of manifestation of the human soul. To illuminate a human soul, the assimilation of work, knowledge and love is needed. The union of prince Abhijit and Dhananjay serves the same purpose in this symbolic play. From the revelation of inner truth, self-immolation is necessary. One derives intuition from another's self-immolation. That kind of self-sacrifice destroys the system created by royal engineer Bibhuti. Prince Abhijit's death is not just a death, it arises the liveliness of the society. This symbolic play highlights Tagore's condemnation of man's inhumanity to man as existed in the then India operating through the relationship between an oppressor and the oppressed which is a universal phenomenon. It is oppressor's self-centred and insensitive approach that sucks the oppressed. Prince Abhijit possesses the courage to kill all social injustice prevalent in those times and is determined to bring a new lease of life into society plagued by powerful rulers.

We live in a civilization which is surrounded by corruption, selfishness, inhumanity, injustice and exploitation by the rulers. Prince Abhijit is a man of better tomorrow, appears as saviour of oppressed people, and retaliate against the domineering attitude of authority. Prince Abhijit suffers within and musters up prowess and bravery in order to castigate against repressive and

brutal scheme of the dictators. In his attempt to renovate the society and replenish it with empathy and clemency, Prince Abhijit appears as a Christ-like figure who had to suffer for the sins of humanity.

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Reflections on Eugene A. Nida's Concept of Equivalence with Reference to the Select Texts of Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay

Biswajit Mukherjee

ABSTRACT:

The concept of equivalence can be said to occupy a central position in the art of translation. Even then there have been several theories provided by the translators that have reflected upon the idea of equivalence and the ways by which this equivalence both linguistically as well as thematically can be maintained between the source text and the target text. The aim of this paper is to analyze Eugene A. Nida's concept of equivalence and at the same time the paper seeks to analyze its practical application in Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's *Pather Panchali* translated as *Pather Panchali: Song of the Road* by T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji.

KEYWORDS: Equivalence, Translation, Source text and Target text.

TRANSLATION STUDIES:

The art of translation can be defined as the process of transference as well as substitution of meaning from source language (SL) text to target language (TL) text. The primary aim of the act of translation can be said to be the preservation of meaning across different languages and cultures. Translation according to Johnson is the process "of change into another language retaining the meaning" (Smith 8). On the other hand, J.C. Catford in *Linguistic Theory of Translation* defines translation from the linguistic

point of view – “Translation may be defined as follows: the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language” (20). But this replacement or transmigration of meaning from one linguistic domain to another is not without impediments and this actually raises the issue of ‘translation problems’ a term popularized by Eugene. A. Nida in *Towards a Science of Translation* (1964) referring to the difficulties that a translator might experience during the act of translation. However, Enani in *Modern Translation Theory: An Approach to Translation Studies* goes on to distinguish between translation problem and translation difficulties. He believes, “that the difficulty in translation is personal, it differs from one translator to another, but the problem of translating is an obstacle which hinders achieving a good translation” (309). Regarding the problems associated with act of translation J. C. Catford mentions in *Linguistic Theory of Translation* that “the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and condition of translation equivalence” (21). The present paper seeks to analyse the concept of equivalence as proposed by Eugene Nida and at the same time the paper seeks to study a few instances of the practical exemplification of Nida's theory in Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's *Pather Panchali* translated into English language by T.W.Clark and Tarapada Mukherji as *Pather Panchali: Song of the Road*.

WHAT IS EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION?:

The idea and the concept of equivalence have been an indispensable feature in the domain of translation studies. The concept of equivalence has always been a concern for the translation scholars as it has been directly connected with both the practical as well as theoretical aspects of translation. Equivalence suggests a kind of sameness between the source text and the target text. The different approaches to the concept of equivalence is the direct result of the debate regarding the extent of sameness that the two texts can have or the nature of equivalence that both the source text and the target text can share between themselves. Theorization on the concept of equivalence in translation studies have been multifarious and there are several translation theorists who have specifically focused on the very notion of equivalence. Susan Bassnett in *Translation Studies* describes equivalence as “much used and abused term in translation” (25). In *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Mary Snell-Hornby considered equivalence as a controversial concept. It can be farther asserted that even after such a long period of time, the pertinence of the concept of equivalence in the field of translation has not been adequately delineated. Though its relevance has not been defined in satisfactory terms, equivalence does hold one of the promi-

nent positions in the field of translation studies as well as in the art of translation itself. Thus Anthony Pym in *Translation and Text Transfer* rightly remarks, “equivalence is supposed to define translation, and translation in turn defines equivalence” (37).

THEORIES OF EQUIVALENCE:

Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet in *Comparative Stylistics of French and English* proposed seven different strategies of translation and among these seven strategies the concept of equivalence is one of them. They suggested that equivalence in translation is achieved when a particular situation in the source language is actually replicated in the target language. They also say that the stylistic impact of the source language can be followed in the target language and by this process translation equivalence is somewhat maintained from the linguistic point of view. Roman Jakobson while dealing with idea of equivalence in his essay “On Linguistic Aspect of Translation” opines that it is almost impossible to find an exact equivalent word of the source language in the target language as no words in two different language can mean the same. House in *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment* opines that equivalence in both the source and the target text is achieved when the target text is functionally similar to the source text. According to Mona Baker Baker there are four kinds of equivalents. They are as follows:

- i. Equivalence at the level of word, when translating from one language into another.
- ii. Grammatical equivalence suggests the presence of different grammatical categories across languages and the problem of finding an equivalent term in the target language.
- iii. Textual equivalence suggests the maintenance of equivalence between a SL text and a TL text regarding information and cohesion.
- iv. Pragmatic equivalence refers to implicature, which suggests that the interest of the translator is not on the explicit statement of the source text rather he or she is more concerned with the implied idea or meaning.

Peter Newmark in his analysis of equivalence makes a distinction between semantic translation and communicative translation. Semantic is more focused on meaning whereas in communicative translation the effect of translation on the target language readers is looked upon. The former tries to form a close resemblance with the source text and the latter is more interested on the message and the basic idea of the message of the source text. Lastly, Pym suggests that there cannot be anything that can be termed as perfect equivalence between two languages and hence it is always an

assumed equivalence. He goes on to distinguish between natural equivalence and directional equivalence. Natural equivalence, Pym suggests, exists before the act of translation itself and directional equivalence provides the translator the freedom to choose between several translations strategies which are not guided by the source text. All these theoretical approaches that defines the concept of equivalence suggest that majority of the theorists in the field of translation studies have gone on to voice their ideas about the concept of equivalence but a deeper analysis of Nida's approach to equivalence would show that his theory of equivalence has been formulated almost on the same tradition but with a slight difference.

NIDA'S CONCEPT OF EQUIVALENCE:

Before the arrival of Eugene Nida in the scene, the art of translation and translation theories mostly emphasized on the elements of technicalities and accuracy which seemed to have a negative influence on the translation of the Bible. It is so because, The Bible which is a religious book is supposed to be read by the larger mass but complete adherence to the form and technique during translation made the reading of the Bible a difficult disposition altogether in the sixteenth century. This probably is one of the major reasons why Nida formulated his concept of dynamic equivalence. The idea of dynamic equivalence was first mentioned by Nida in his article "Principles of Translation as Exemplified in Bible Translating" (1959). In *Towards a Science of Translating* (1964), Nida claims that:

in [dynamic translation] one is not so concerned with matching the receptor language message with the source language message, but with the dynamic relationship that the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message. (159)

He further states that the relationship between the receptor and the message in the target text should be same that probably existed between the original receptor and the message. Nida again clarifies his definition of dynamic equivalence in *The Theory and Practice of Translation* where he says that the response of the target language readers to the message of the target language text should be equal in degree to the response of the original text written in source language. To quote Nida, "in terms of degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language, respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language" (Nida 24). But he also mentions that this response will never be identical as the "cultural and historical settings are too different" (24). But for the process of translation to be successful "there should be a high degree of equivalence

of response, or the translation would have failed to accomplish its purpose” (24).

From *One Language to Another* (1986), Nida goes on to propose the idea of functional equivalence. But a deeper analysis would prove that there is not much of a difference between both the ‘dynamic’ and ‘functional’ equivalence. The word function here does not only mean the effect of the translated text on the receptors of the target language but the word function has a dual role. Functional equivalence is further subdivided into ‘minimal functional level’ and ‘maximal functional level’. The minimal level of functional equivalence suggests that the readers of the receptor language should be able to comprehend and conceive the meaning of a translated text to that point where the original readers of the source text have apprehended and appreciated it. On the other hand, the “maximal level’ of equivalence is conceived to be that variety of equivalence where a translated text is comprehended by the readers of the target language in entirely the same order as the readers of the source language text did. A comparative analysis of the two definitions of minimal and maximal equivalence in translation would reveal that the formal tends to be a more realistic approach from the part of the translator whereas the later seems to be particularly ideational in its nature. A proper translation would perhaps follow both the concepts of equivalence.

Nida’s approach to translation studies seems to have a close affinity with the reader response theory. It is because, Nida is more concerned with the response of the receptor of the target language rather than the form of the message of the translated text. The fidelity of the translated text towards the source text or the original text should not be evaluated depending upon the coequality of the formal structures of the source text and the translated text. But the comparison should be made on the basis of the response of the receptors of both the source text and the target language text. A translation as Nida suggests, can only be considered as a dynamic equivalent translation when the readers of the target language or the receptor language accepts or apprehends the translated text in exactly the same manner as the readers of the source language did. Nida argues “regardless of how theoretically good a product might be or how seemingly well it is displayed, if people do not respond favorably to it, then it is not going to be accepted (Nida and Taber 169). A translated text is also a product, according to Nida, and the viability of the translation and the text as well are absolutely dependent on how far the readers have accepted and appreciated the text.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF NIDA'S THEORY IN SONG OF THE ROAD:

Set in the backdrop of a poor Bengali village Nischindipur, Bibhutibhusan Banerjee's *Pather Panchali* is a classic "portrayal of village people and their day to day life" (Clark xi). It was published in the year 1929 and before that it appeared serially in a Bengali periodical. Apart from being a literary classic, the novel is also famous as it was adapted into an iconic Bengali feature film by Satyajit Ray under the same title and it also marks the directorial debut of Ray. The novel narrates the story of Horihar Ray and his family. Horihar is a poor Bengali priest who has a meagre income but he has a dream to become a poet and a playwright. The main plot of the novel revolves around the Opu and Durga, the two children of Horihar and Sarbojaya and the daily normal life of the family and finally when they left the village after with sweet and bitter memories after the death of Durga. But the present discussion is concerned with the art of translation and its technicalities and hence it will not analyze thematic issues much.

At the very beginning of the novel it can be seen that the translators T.W. Clark and Tarapada Mukherji faced several difficulties in finding some of the exact equivalent words in the English language. The novel begins with Bandopadhyay narrating the economic situation of Horihar and his family. The English text says : All he had to live on was the meagre rent from a tiny plot of land he had inherited from his father and some fees paid to him by a few households" (Song 3). If we compare this English rendering with the Bengali text we will see that there is apparently no problem of equivalence in the translation. The Bengali text says: Horihar sadharon obosthar grihosto, poitrik amoler samanno jomijomar aai o du-char ghar shishya seboke barshiki pronamir bondobodto hoite sada-sidha bhabe songsar chalaiya thake (Bandopadhyay 3). But a careful dissection of the two words 'fees' used in the English version in place of pronami would probably project a different idea altogether. The word pronami in Bengali carries with it an idea of reverence. It comes from the Bengali word pronam which means prostration or salutation in the form of respect or reverence. But the word 'fees' used in the English text do not function in the same manner as the word pronam does. The word fees associates with it an element of professionalism and it means paying money to someone as a charge for a specific service. The readers of the English text can apprehend that certain amount of money is paid to Horihar by the members of the household where he served as a priest but the sense of reverence that a priest is treated with in almost all the Bengali households is wanting here. This can be seen as an example where the translators Tarapada Mukherji and T.W Clark have adopted the strategy of minimal level of functional equivalence.

Again the reference to the fasting of Indir Thakrun who is an old widowed woman with no one to look after her except Horihor, stays with the Ray family with whom she is distantly related, deserves careful attention. The Bengali text says: “*purbodin chilo ekadoshi. Horihor-er dursamporkia didi Indir Thakrun sokalbelai ghorer dawai bosia chalbhaja gura jolkhabar khaiteche*” (3). The English text goes like this: “Indir Thakrun, a distant relative of Horihor’s was a sitting on the verandah. It was the day after her fast – this was the fast all widows are required to observe on the eleventh day of each fortnight – and she was eating her morning meal of baked rice” (Clark and Mukherji 3). When a comparative analysis of the source text and the target text is made, it is evident that the translators have adopted the technique of addition in translation. The Bengali text only mentions ‘*ekadoshi*’ which is obvious because the text will probably have readers belonging from the Bengali culture. But the translated text has a wider target readership belonging from variegated cultures and consequently it goes on to explain the term *ekadoshi* as the “eleventh day of each fortnight” (3). Apart from this the English text also informs the readers of the receptor language that on the eleventh day of each fortnight all the widows are required to observe ostensible fast for the entire day. Addition of of information in the target text gets a different dimension altogether when it is examined from Nida’s perspective of equivalence in translation. At this point the translators have definitely shifted their focus from the form of the message to the response of the receptor in target language. Elaboration the concept of *ekadoshi* where widows are supposed to fast ritualistically aid the readers of the receptor language to understand and appreciate the cultural ethos of the source text and they are probably on the same line regarding their understanding of the translated text with the readers of the original Bengali text. Hence this can be seen as an example where the translators have made an attempt to achieve maximal level of equivalence. The two instances become a conclusive proof of the fact that even during the process of translation of a single text it is probably not possible for a translator to take a mono-dimensional stance regarding his or her attempt to attain translation equivalence. It absolutely dependent on the decision of the translator to what extent he would go to create an element of thematic or linguistic equivalence between the two texts.

In conclusion it can be said that Nida’s theory of equivalence has been criticized severely by scholars like Peter Newmark or Gentzler. Newmark opines that equivalence is an important part of translation but it cannot be the sole aim of translation. Gentzler on the other hand criticised Nida on the ground that the reception of the translated text cannot always be same as reception of the original text in the source culture. Gentzler’s apprehension

is also somewhat right because for example it is difficult for a reader of a different culture to appreciate and apprehend the rambling life of a poor Bengali village like Nischindapur that is pictured in *Pather Panchali*. He or she can appreciate the literary merit of the text but to comprehend it in the same manner like that of a Bengali reader is difficult.

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Public Cheekhti Hai (The Public Screams):
Popular Reception and Subversion in
Ramsay Brothers' Films

Ankita Rathour

ABSTRACT:

Ramsay Brothers are some of the most popular horror filmmakers in Bollywood history although they have been continuously mocked by serious Indian film audiences. Critics have called their films sleazy and without merit, however, to ignore their films would be a mistake. Films like *Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche*, *Purani Haveli*, *Veerana* build heavily on India's colonial past and its aftermath. Because the brothers' methodology differed from the normative standard, critics lambasted them as substandard filmmakers. This essay argues the contrary. Ramsays' films in their apparent crudity present a strong critique of orthodox gendered roles, the colonial residual effects in India, most importantly, the rise of the upper caste Hindu landlords, who replaced the power of former colonial rulers. To arrive at my argument, I am looking at the major conversation around the Ramsays' monster horror films to call attention to a certain working-class aesthetic their films exuded. Ranajit Guha in his essay "Chandra's Death" makes a case for revisiting the colonial narratives of colonial India and reclaiming it. With the same inclination, I am looking at the historical reaction and reception of the horror films made by the Ramsay Brothers and making a case for a more nuanced reading.

KEYWORDS: Ramsay brothers, Bollywood, Horror, Gender, Film-Noir

Though Hollywood remains the world's oldest film industry, Indian cinema (including Bollywood) is considered the "largest national film industry in terms of the number of films produced and the number of tickets sold— 3.5 billion tickets are sold worldwide... [in comparison] to Hollywood's 2.6 billion tickets sold annually" (Matusitz and Payano). However, in this vast cinematic space, big-budget Bollywood films made in the Hindi language unfairly capture global imagination and recognition. Regional language films, independent cinema, or so-called art movies continue to remain undervalued in a fast-paced visual market that mostly aims to reinstate bourgeoisie modes of cultural production and reception. Conditions look the worst for horror films of the Ramsay Brothers—a group of seven siblings who started the Bollywood horror legacy from the 1970s to the early 90s. Made within the budget of fifteen lakhs (approximately twenty-two thousand US dollars), shot within a month on a 16-millimeter screen, and not following the restrictions of mainstream Bollywood production, Ramsays' films were heavily ridiculed, mocked, and rendered incompetent by critics. Similar to the B-grade Noir films of Hollywood, these films defied Bollywood's elitist production rules and came up with their unique technique and style much to the chagrin of the Hindi film traditionalists.

The scathing remarks of film critics like Anthony Henriques, *Pritish Nandy* swarmed the mainstream film magazine "Filmfare" in India. Henriques, a reader of the Indian cinema magazine *Filmfare* complained in the "Readers' letters" section of the 1988 edition about the laughable attempts of the Indian film industry to produce horror movies, concluding that "the Ramsay Brothers and the others who produce horror movies would be better advised to tap the rich vein of Indian ghost stories instead of relying on second-hand imitations of third-grade foreign horror movies" (Valanèiûnas). Such remarks set a clear tone for the average Indian cinephile—the Ramsays' films are cheap in value and engaging with them should not be the aim of serious film enthusiasts. I suggest that in the alleged tasteless cinema of the Ramsays, in the so-called imitations of West-inspired narratives lies the subtle subversion of feudal India and orthodox bourgeoisie Hindu values. The Ramsays amalgamate Western cultural tropes to centralize representations of sexual agency and modern Indian women in a largely traditional Hindu socio-cultural setup. The display of erotic relationships defines Ramsays' legacy. Moreover, communal alliances irrespective of class distinction form to fight the demons and monsters in these films. The upper-caste Hindu feudal landlords claim a vulnerable state and they depend on associations beyond their caste and class segregating ideologies to survive the aftermath of their *monstrous* feudal past.

No matter how progressive or subversive the claims may sound, one

cannot determine if such were the brothers' intentions all along. Looking into several of their interviews online and in print, one can easily find that for the Ramsays, filmmaking was purely for profit. They were trying to break into a largely discriminatory Bollywood culture through their cinema. In one of such interviews, Shyam Ramsay asserts, "We know what the market wants, and we solely deliver that." This essay is not trying to go against Shyam Ramsay's words. Instead, it advocates for a complex close reading of films that targeted working-class sensibilities—much like earlier postcolonial Hindi films of Raj Kapoor. The Ramsays make way for gazes from the margins, disrupting the ruling class conditioning of privileged filmmakers and viewers.

THE PAKISTANI EMIGRANT:

What do Billy Wilder, Otto Ludwig Preminger, Robert Siodmak, and Ramsays have in common? A wild question for many but has a simple answer. They are all emigres. These men left their native country for political reasons, introduced a unique film style to the country they migrated to, and captured the political, cultural, and social anxiety of their culture on screen. Being survivors of a war-torn culture, including the India-Pakistan partition influenced these filmmakers' style. Global human experience was made accessible to a wider audience, and they all defied the strict codes of film production laid out by a handful of privileged nationalist men.

F.U. Ramsay with his seven sons—Shyam, Tulsi, Kiran, Gangu, Keshu, Arjun, and Kumar moved to India in the year of 1947 from Pakistan after the two countries split. Given the horrendous bloodshed and the rise of extreme hatred between Hindus and Muslims, that seemed to be a wise choice for the Hindus living in Pakistan. F.U. Ramsay set up an electronic shop at Lamington Road in Mumbai and "from there they went on launching an impressive career in the lower reaches of Bollywood industry" (Nair 123). The family suffered tremendous loss initially. Smitten by Hindi films, F.U. Ramsay got into show business with his drama films such as *Shaheed Bhagat Singh* (Martyr Bhagat Singh) (1954), *Rustam Sohrab* (1963), and *Ek Nanhi Munhi Ladki Thi* (There Was A Little Girl) (1970). All three films bombed at the box office and huge debt came along. F.U. Ramsay was desperate to find the reason behind his failure. One evening, Tulsi Ramsay along with his brothers went to catch a show of *Ek Nanhi Munhi Ladki Thi* in a nearby theater. In one of the scenes, veteran actor Prithvi Raj Kapoor is shown robbing a bank in a monster suit. The brothers noticed the audience's reactions to that scene. They came back and told their father, "*public cheekhti hai*" (The public screams!). And hence came the inspiration for making complete monster films. The Ramsays are singlehandedly responsible for the profitable industry of horror in the times when India was in midst of political,

social, and economic insecurity. How the Ramsays came to be making their monster films is quite an interesting story. "The filmmaking process was a family picnic for us", Shyam Ramsay says. The family would rent an old colonial palace on the outskirts of Mumbai, actors will join together on a bus ride and the films were shot within a month with a crew of fifteen. The films were copied on a 16-millimeter making it perfect for the small towns and rural markets where the old projection was still in use. Their films "articulate the specific fears of a nation/ community and reveal the socio-cultural, political, and ideological failures and instabilities that shape a nation/culture's historical zeitgeist" (Wee, 8) and provide a sense of escape or relief to the laboring minds. Furthermore, Deimantas Valančiūnas has rightly argued that:

Indian horror films of the 1980s functioned in the terrains of political turbulences and instability, marked by the Indian army's attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the assassination of the Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, and the subsequent communal violence and the growth of extreme Hindu nationalism. (48)

Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche (Beneath Two Yards of Earth), Ramsays' first horror film released in the year 1972. Its grand success encouraged the brothers to pursue making full-fledged horror films. Two other successful films of the 1980s join the analysis here: *Purana Mandir* (Ancient Temple) and *Purani Haveli* (Ancient Palace).

SUBVERTING THE NORM:

The 1972 release *Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche* tells the story of a rich scientist Rajvansh who is a widower. He rescues a young, modern Indian woman Anjili from local goons. After a night of passion, he agrees to marry her as that is the right and moral thing to do for a man of royal blood. Anjili, who lives with her maternal uncle and is in constant need to fit into the rapidly growing modern Indian culture is always in need of money. One soon discovers that she hatched the plot to marry Rajvansh only for his wealth and is in love with another man. Rajvansh rescues another woman, Meena, a stark comparison to Anjili who shuns her modern life and accepts Rajvansh as her master. Rajvansh is later killed by Anjili and her boyfriend. They are about to flee when Rajvansh returns as a zombie to avenge his death. However, Rajvansh was never dead. Meena knew about Anjili's planning and helped save his life.

The film on its surface carries clear western tropes. Women in western attire are represented as seductive and hence, villainous—like any femme fatale in a film noir. Steamy scenes for a traditional Hindu ethos meant an aesthetic transported from western culture. The women who run contrary to

Hindu values and traditions need to learn a lesson for their deceit and immorality. Hence, Anjili dies, and the moral upper-caste patriarch lives. But Anjili also centralizes a working-class female voice in a culture geared toward capitalism. Her uncle reminds her, “These are not the times for love. Money is important for *people like us*” (emphasis mine). Anjili redirects our focus on the replacement of colonial rulers by the upper-caste Hindu landlords in postcolonial India and its effects on the non-royal/poor/ people seemingly belonging to the lower strata, especially women. Though one cannot ignore Anjili’s appetite for planning and executing a murder, her economic position calls for a complex reading of her character. She uses her sexuality for her benefit dismantling the notions of purity that generally cascaded over Indian feminine identity. In the 70s Bollywood was busy creating stereotypical female characters like Radha of the 1975 blockbuster *Sholay*. Radha belongs to a zamindar family, has her entire family killed by dacoits, falls in love with a man during her widowhood but never crosses the moral boundaries set by upper-caste and upper-class Hindu patriarchy. In such times, Anjili exists as a misnomer, an exception, and very much a subversion.

Though she dies in the end, a climax that the Ramsays perhaps needed to appease the bourgeoisie Hindu mindset at the time, characters like Anjili also ask one to critically engage with the local founding of Hindu feudal power replacing colonialism. In another scene, Anjili’s boyfriend Anand reacts, “Love is not possible in the land of the rich.” He suggests she divorces Rajvansh indicating the futility of marriage as an institution. Referring to her rich husband, Anjili says, “These are very traditional people. They will kill their women but won’t let her get a divorce.” Anjili’s predicament as a woman striving hard to attain a luxurious life and a life on her own terms echoes with an Indian woman of today. She criticizes bourgeoisie morality and marital restrictions set by men in power. She is aware of the hypocrisies of the privileged class.

In the same way, *Purana Mandir* and *Purani Haveli* further this conversation about women and also men on the fringes of Indian society in the 1980s. Both films represent two struggling male artists in love with women of royal Hindu families. Sunil and Sanjay are in love with Anita and Suman respectively. The fathers of the women are descendants of a royal family, with stacks of treasures, and many *havelis* (palaces) in their names. The Hindu patriarchs, the industrialist landlords denounce the union of their daughters with a photographer, and a student belonging to the lower ranks of the society. But the past soon catches up. The ghosts, the monsters of their feudal atrocities are back for vengeance, to reclaim their stolen land. Though

represented as evil by the bourgeoisie, these monsters call for an anti-colonial analysis.

The backstories in their full entirety are majorly unknown because the monsters hardly do the talking. They only growl—othered and demonized. Like any aborigine or tribal population in a postcolonial, neo-global nation, these identities are stereotyped in their marginalized positions by the feudal epistemic powers as wild and monstrous. Hence, when facing these monsters whose language remains incomprehensible to these feudal fathers, no other option exists but to seek help from as many various sections of society as possible. The rich must step down from their powerful position. Sunil, Sanjay, local villagers, and tribesmen form a formidable alliance to defeat these monsters and save the women. In classic screaming sequences in the films, Anita and Suman, daughters of rich feudal masters, run to whomever they think can help them. The women do not function through a feudal, elitist vantage point. Feudalism doesn't work for Anita and Suman's benefit. Though these women are yet bound by traditional gender roles, they do defy the royal honor by valiantly choosing a partner they like and embarking on a journey of adventure and self-actualization by any means they deem fit.

Yes, the women in Ramsays' films are scantily dressed. These films do capitalize on sleazy portrayals of women and satisfy the archetypal male gaze. Women come across as someone to be saved by a male protagonist and in regressive cinematic ways, yet they resist many sexist tropes. With limited screen time and fewer dialogues, these women claim their own space, their agency in an otherwise masculine narrative. They make choices and stick with them. Are the choices good? Does everything turn out well for them? It is difficult to say. But Ramsays indeed portrayed the new gender order in the 1980s.

The tribal women are portrayed problematically. They are infantilized, used for comic relief, or function merely as baits for the rich villains. But as seen in the case of films like *Veerana* and *Purana Mandir*, Sapna, the wife of a tribal young man Hemant, and Vishakha, a tribal woman, play supportive roles and help the lead characters put an end to the monsters. Sapna and Vishakha act as bridges between the modern young Indian generation and the traditional royals. They are ingenious, street-smart, and mobile. A holy trinity of indigenous tradition, communal solidarity, and modernity is visible in almost all of Ramsays' films. This unique alliance indicates a successful disruption of the class and feudal stratification of a postcolonial Indian social structure. Though these partnerships are represented in mocking ways, there is indeed meaning. Seeking help from the local villagers, frolicking around in the same social space as the local tribe is a much-needed socio-cultural stretch that the non-serious horror films of the Ramsays attempt and succeed

at. In an interview, talking about his latest horror venture, Shyam Ramsay talks about his earlier influences including Western horror films and British Hammer horror. But he also says that through his films, he tries to “Indianize the Hollywood themes.” This alleged mimicry of Western influences by representing scantily dressed modern women acts as a crucial vehicle to transport ideas of sex and pleasure to conservative bourgeoisie Indian viewers. “I want my audience to relax”, Shyam Ramsay asserts during his conversation. Sometimes, films do make use of the Western trope to get certain points across. Since the Indian economy liberalized in the 90s, the Ramsays’ were precursors of the rise of global cinephilic consciousness. Whether it was intended this way or not, the Ramsays utilize the distance between East and West well. One sees free, liberated Indian youth engaging in a relaxed gender space. Here women can wear whatever they want, men can show as much skin as women without any fear of emasculation. Laughter, drinking, and having fun are possible without any religious, casteist, classicist hiccups. To witness such a fluid gender representation on screen at that time was not only fresh but also very encouraging. It was a strong indication of the urbanized gender roles that solidified post-liberalization.

The royalty in a Ramsay world is a prude at the beginning but steps down its social class ladder when met with challenges beyond its control. It becomes kinder, has a change of heart, and welcomes diverse bonds irrespective of class or ethnicity. The artists, the outsiders show the royal family that being flexible with traditional codes can lead to a much better, and perhaps smoother life. The local tribes and villagers prove that if they are driven out of the mainstream social space, the landlords, the rich industrialists are bound to make grand mistakes. No business can flourish if the locals, the natives are not included in the process. Monsters, demons are out of the realm of the rich. Instead of acting with feudal power, such hidden, dark forces untouched by feudal greed can only be usurped by the help of the locals, the natives—who know the lands well than an aristocrat. The horror films of the Ramsay brothers are not free of problems. These films are open to many interpretations. But there stays a possibility for the marginalized to assert themselves.

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Representation of Environmental Issues in Anita Desai's *The Village by the Sea*: An Ecocritical Interpretation

Arun Kumar Biswas

ABSTRACT:

Consideration of environmental crisis and its representation in literary and non-literary discourse has been the focus arena of recent theoretical approach known as ecocriticism or the “earth centred critical approach to literary studies” (Garrard 3). Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary study that investigates the relationship between literature and environment with a view of spreading consciousness of man-made environmental exploitation and damage for the greater sake of humanity. Ecocritics explore human attitudes toward the environment as expressed in text or writing on the natural world. Like the ecocritics and ecologists, Anita Desai (1937-) was greatly concerned with Nature as well as ecological destruction. An ‘eco-conscious’ writer, Desai deals with the environmental issues and crises in her novel *The Village by the Sea* (1982). The novel is set in a small fishing village, Thul in India, caught up in the process of industrial urbanization in the form of fertilizer factory causing havoc for the natural world and the human. The present paper attempts to examine Desai's *The Village by the Sea* from the ecocritical perspectives to project how the novelist represents within the fictional canvas the environmental issues and threats at the man-nature interface, and also intends to explore the author's attitude towards the environmental crisis on account of industrial technological advancement and practices in modern India.

KEY WORDS: Ecocriticism, Nature, environmental crisis, impact, bond, industrialization.

INTRODUCTION:

Environmental consciousness and consideration in view of the massive ecological crises and its representation in literary and non-literary discourse have been the focus arena of recent theoretical approach known as ecocriticism or the “earth centred critical approach to literary studies” (Garrard 3). Ecocriticism, a distinctive domain of literary criticism started developing in the 1990s. However, the term ‘ecocriticism’, which is now widely accepted literary theory, made its first appearance in William Rueckert’s essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” in 1978. His purpose was to focus on “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.” (Glotfelty & Fromm, 107) A new branch of literary criticism, it aims to explore the relationship between literature and environment from the view point of human commitment to environment. Cherill Burgess Glotfelty defines in *The Ecocriticism Reader* that “Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii). It closely analyses a literary and cultural work with ecological concerns and contexts, with a view to see how nature is represented in literature, and its impact on the human life portrayed in the text. At the same time, it makes people aware about the harm human civilization causes to the environment in different ways. They question the anthropocentric attitude towards the environment and they argue for equal importance of nature, ‘biotic justice’ with the human world.

It is impossible for human life to live without nature. A harmonious man-nature bond is essential. But man’s reckless and greedy activities as well as the continuous misuse of environment in course of time, especially in the modern world have brought about the ecological destruction which has, in turn, posed formidable threats on the entire humanity, notably at the face of global warming. It is well known that the increasing industrialization and urbanization, large-scale pollution and deforestation for various social and economic reasons along with the growing trend of consumerism and population rise have resulted in the environmental crisis. These man-assisted environmental hazards in the process constitute some risks or dangers to the environment threatening the air, water resources, forests, green fields and the ecological equilibrium. Human beings should realize this deadly truth relating to natural world. Glotfelty opines that man requires: “To understand and critique the root cause of environmental degradation and formulate an alternative view of existence that will provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relations with the earth.” (Glotfelty, xxi)

OBJECTIVE:

This paper attempts to examine from the 'ecocritical' perspectives Anita Desai's *The Village by the Sea* with a view to explore the representation of environmental issues and challenges at the wake of industrial urbanization and mechanical human practices. It also intends to uncover Desai's profound ecological concern for the environmental degradation.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN DESAI'S *THE VILLAGE BY THE SEA*:

The concern for the environmental crisis has drawn the attention of so many writers, equally like the environmentalists all over the world. These writers depict the devastation of nature and question the anthropocentric concept that the nonhuman world is created for the welfare of the human beings. They cry for the preservation of natural world. Like many writers and ecologists, Anita Desai (1937-) is preoccupied with such ecological issues and concerns which are echoed in her novel *The Village by the Sea* (1982). In this novel Desai is concerned with rural life and natural environment at the changing background of post-Independence India. Though regarded as a book for children, it is a multilayered novel, "a purposive novel" (Mishra 3) underlying the different facets of socio-economic tensions as well as environmental issues. In brief, the novel deals at the backdrop of rural transformation with the survival story of poor children Hari and Lila who confront the family economic crisis in absence of parental responsibilities. Lila and her brother, Hari takes up the burden of the family when her alcoholic father neglects his family duties and when her mother is bed-ridden. In the acute plight Hari searches for work and ultimately leaves the village Thul for Bombay where he works in a restaurant. Later, being homesick he returns to the village and he surprisingly finds the 'irreversible sweeping changes' with the advent of industrial complex when the government decides to set up a fertilizer factory in the village, despite people's dissatisfaction and resistance. Desai's novel mirrors effectively the cruel impact of the process of industrial modernization which generates social tensions and environmental crisis in the post- independence India.

The novel is set in a 'real' small fishing village, Thul on the Western coast of India, immediately before being caught up in the process of industrial urbanization. The villagers' occupation is primarily fishing and they are largely dependent on the sea for livelihood. Men are engaged with fishing while women collect molluscs on the sea beaches in shallow water. The village with coconut trees and paddy crops has the verdant green surrounding of the coastal landscape. The village landscape gets "washed clean by the tide" (1) and the coast is visited by the birds- "gulls, curlews and sand pipers" (1). The village house gardens are replete with fragrance of various flowers-

“scarlet hibiscus blooms, sweet-smelling spider lilies and bright butter-yellow allamanda flowers” (1). The rural setting shows the harmonious bond the villagers have with beautiful natural world. The novelist describes in detail this natural beauty to capture the pre-industrialized bonding between human and nature. The natural landscape of the village Thul is enriched with pristine bucolic beauty of the sea-beach and its surrounding natural vegetation and chirping:

The morning light was still soft as it filtered through the web of palm leaves [...] Butterflies flew up out of the tussocks and bushes of wild flowers [...] Then there were all the birds flying out of the shadowy soft-needled casurina trees and the thick jungle of pandanus, singing and calling and whistling louder [...] Flute voiced drongoes swooped...glinted blue black, and pert little magpie robins frisked. Pairs of crested bulbuls sang from the branches [...] and a pigeon's voice cooed and gurgled on and on. It was the voice of the village Thul. (4)

Lila, a villager, feels pleased with the natural setting of the sea village ‘enjoying their warmth’ (2). This implies a close nexus between the villagers and the nature. Even they worship nature, offering flowers to rock on the beach which is sacred to them. Through Lila's diverse feelings the novelist focuses on this aspect:

When Lila went out on the beach it was so early in the morning that there was no one else there. [...] When she came to the edge of the sea, [she] then waded out into the waves that came rushing up over her feet and swirling about her ankles in creamy foam. She waded in it till she came to a cluster of three rocks. [...] It was a sacred rock, a kind of temple in the sea. Lila took the flowers from the basket and scattered them about the rock, then folded her hands and bowed. (1-2)

This natural setting and landscape of the coastal village is now under threat from the installation of the industrial hub in the form of fertilizer factories and large complexes. The encroachment of the factories will soon destroy the man-nature bond as well as the green and pristine atmosphere of the village. The novel under the guise of family story of Hari unveils the coming of fertilizer factories in the village and its consequent impact on the typical serene rural environment. In the novel Ramu, Hari's friend informs him about the advent of factories and machines in the native village Thul: “The government is going to build a great factory here. Many factories. Hundreds of them [...] Soon they will be sending bulldozers and earthmovers and steamrollers” (11-12). Hari's curiosity is satisfied in his conversation with the factory guard who explains the purposes and the prospects of the factories. The man informs him that the government is going to establish “a whole city of factories. Factories, housing colonies, shopping centres, bus

depots, railway heads, engineers and workers- a whole city is going to be built here” (61) along the highway to the coastal village of Rewas. It will replace soon, as the villagers apprehend, the scenic bucolic ambience of coastline having its belt of coconut estates with the belt of new industrial estates fraught with factories, super quality complexes.

The arrival of the factories in the silent and sleepy village Thul, like the industrial tannery in Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*, is likely to affect the rural environment. Industrial factories have been settled in Thul for its location near the sea into which the waste could be easily pumped. Desai gently focuses on the fact that the rural environment is gradually being destroyed due to the emergence of chemical factories in the name of urbanized progress. Like Markandaya, she notices though in a different way how the village environment and ecosystem get polluted and threatened by the industrial intrusion. She looks at the village through the eyes of a rustic boy Hari and makes us anticipate through his apprehension the probable atmospheric changes. While returning home from Bombay after nine months Hari is surprised and touched to see the urban pollution and environmental hazards alongside the road leading to the village Thul: “As he left the city behind him – the slums, the peeling grey houses, the open foul-smelling gutters [...] the factory belt of Thana, pouring out evil-smelling smoke and chemicals into the discoloured sky [...]” (220). On his way to his village Hari also notices the gradual loss of typical verdant greenness: “[...] and the few remaining trees coated with suffocating dust. Hari wondered if this could be possibly by the way that the green coastline from Rewas to Alibagh would look like one day” (220). The author suggests here that Hari's projection about environmental changes is going to be a crude reality in his village. When Hari nears the village he notices the sign of setting in such transformation in the village. The government has recently started the industrial works immediately after winning the case in the court defeating the anti-factory petition. In the process, the fresh village atmosphere will be soon choked by the ‘evil-smelling smoke’, pollution, dust and deforestation. In fact, the modern industrial progress is being made at the huge cost of merciless cutting of trees. We see in the novel how many of valuable trees like *sal* and banyan trees along the road have been cut down for the construction of the highway in order to make easy communication between factories and the proposed city markets. The way the so-called modern development is being run into the coastal Indian villages at the cost of massive falling of the natural greenery and environment, surely it is, in the long run, an indication to the hard reality of deforestation causing threat to biological diversity. While approaching to the village Hari senses the pulse of changes that has already set in the adjacent villages: “There were a few signs of the beginnings of such transformation: the

highway was being widened, a railway bridge under construction, old large trees cut down and bulldozers and steamrollers at work [...]" (220).

The author tries to purport that environmental damage is inevitable for industrial growth. In other words, the artificial advancement is immediately followed by some sorts of ecological imbalances and loss. The novelist also exposes her concern for the ecological crises through the voice of Adarkar, an environment activist, who explains to the villagers how the factories will cause havoc on the environment. He warns thus:

In return they [industrialists] will cut down our tall green coconut trees, destroy our paddy crops, kill the fish in the sea, and then we will be driven away because we will be no use to them. Can we let this happen to us? (96)

Villagers having a close contact with the land and natural world can hardly accept this economical as well as ecological crisis. They roar "[...] they can't take our land, they can't take our sea from us— the land is ours, the sea is ours!" (97). They are largely dependent on natural world. They feel threatened equally like the city people Adarkar who reminds them about the environmental threat in his inspiring speech delivered to the angry villagers. He anxiously argues how the industrial wastage will pollute the sea endangering the life and the ecosystem:

Every one of us is threatened. Our land is going to be taken away.... Our crops will be destroyed so that their factories can come up instead. All the filth of their factories – for when we produce fertilizers, a lot of effluents are created which have to be disposed of – these will be dumped in the sea and will kill the fish for miles around. How will we live without our land, without the sea? (95)

His utterance brings out not only the economic-ecological hazards but also of threats to the man-nature interconnectedness, which the novelist seems to suggest, should not be destroyed in any cause. If lost, it affects the environment and ecological balance largely. This threatens the crops, vegetation and the fish— which are the essential parts of the natural ecosystem. Even the birds— another important species in nature will be endangered resulting in severe environmental damage and imbalance. This is clear from the words and concern of Mr. Sayyed Ali, a bird lover who comes to Thul for studying tiny 'baya' bird. An ecologist, he values the traditional 'earth centered' way of life and says of preservation of the non-humans: "Our trees, our fish, our cattle and birds have to be protected" (120). The reduction and reshaping of coastal land area, the massive deforestation and least production of crops and fish are severe challenges for both the environment and the human world. It will create food and water crisis for the humans and the nonhuman world. It will also jeopardize the other species like the birds. Consequently, the birds

like baya will be at stake for the loss of natural habitat in the process of industrial urbanization. He suspects the permanent departure of his favourite bird from the village area because of the absent of the paddy crops which are its ideal home for habitation where they build beautiful nests with the paddy leaves. Their existence is in crisis for deficiency of water, food and shelter at the loss of paddy crops and wilderness. It would force them to depart the village surrounding. So with the making of factory in the village, the birdwatcher breaks down in despair. Through his disappointment the author perhaps implies man's indifference to preserve the natural world. Like Rukmani who regrets the disappearance of the birds from the village, the birdwatcher laments:

Thul is lost. [...] Everything is doomed. The fish in the sea will die from the effluents that will be pumped into the water. The paddy fields will be built over by factories and houses and streets. My little baya birds will find no more paddy leaves for their nests. Or grain or food for their young. They will have to fly away. I may not see them another year (254).

It is very significant that the birds' migration and departure from a place is surely a suggestive of ecological instability. The ornithologists explain this as a damage of biodiversity. The humans and the birds are interconnected and the birds plays major role in ecosystem. The human beings as species should understand this truth. Towards the end of the novel the innocent Hari, unlike the money minded industrialists and politicians, realizes "the connection now, and how birds and men were united in this great turning of the wheel, and how the birds, if we understood them, could show us and teach us many important things" (258). Thus the novelist implies that there is close connection between the human and the nonhuman world.

Through the ecological vision of the birdwatcher, Desai makes us warn about the ill impact of industrial and technological forces that damage the village atmosphere as well as this interconnectedness. While delivering his lecture to the villagers on the dangerous side effect of the factories on life and Nature the birdwatcher explains: "These factories that are to come up in Thul-Vashiet will pump deadly chemicals into the air—fertilizer cannot be manufactured without polluting the air for miles around. Sulphur dioxide, ammonia and dust will be scattered far and wide" (*Village* 121). Industrialization for economic achievement results "in global environmental degradation" (Park 1998) contributing to many global environmental hazards such as pollution. The birdwatcher refers to this situation of Bombay which "is heavily industrialized, crowded and polluted. How much more pollution can we stand?" (121). He goes on to state how the environment is polluted with reference to Japan where "organic mercury was pumped into the sea, it poisoned the fish and fish poisoned the people who were unlucky enough to eat them" (121). What Desai means to say is that the industrialists and politicians hardly

think about the environment. They only think of their financial and political interests and necessities. Simon Dalby says: "The realm of necessity is not the realm of freedom and political choice" (297). Through the voice of Sayyid Ali, Desai makes the people conscious about the ecocritical creed that the humans as mere part of ecosphere have no right in polluting the atmosphere and at the same time, they have the responsibility to preserve natural world and environment for sustainable development. Ian Mcharg in *Design with Nature* says: "Each individual has a responsibility for the entire biosphere and is required to engage in creative and cooperative activities" (Ruckert 114).

But the humans hardly remember and practice this basic natural principle. Apart from industrialists and politicians, even some villagers fail to do so. In spite of absolutely dependant on the sea for livelihood, they catch almost all the fishes irrespective of size and season causing scarcity of fishes in the coastal zone of around fifty miles. Excessive desire of fishing with modern technology has resulted in this situation. This suggests of the greedy human's exploitation of the sea beyond its natural capacity damaging the aquatic ecosystem. Simon Dalby is of the view: "Human disruptions [...] [in] direct destruction through hunting and fishing, and indirect damage through pollution, as a byproduct of many activities— either cause stress on ecosystems or, in many cases, destroy them" (298). This is hinted in the words of the factory guard who speaks to Biju in connection with Biju's fishing boat run in diesel engine: "Fifty miles it will go? Well it will have to— if it is to catch any fish. There is hardly any fish left here. [...] Not enough for even you villagers" (90). It points out to the man made unproductive condition of the sea gradually forcing the fishermen to drive deep into the ocean for better fishing. This is also indicative of the environmental hazards which disturb the suitable condition for their breeding and growth thus resulting in fish of small size or almost fishless condition in the shoreline area. When the guard wants to buy a big 'pomfret' he 'got only one small miserable one' and 'prawns' is replaced by 'little shrimps' (90). That too is in small quantity.

This human 'disruption' and irresponsibility is also found in the man's trend of using chemical fertilizer, instead of traditional cow dung or compost. This tendency is described by the cart driver as "new disease" (110). Despite knowing the fact that the cow dung is free, ecofriendly and rich natural nourishment, they hardly utilize it in the land. Gandhi considered compost as important manure for land. A follower of Gandhi, the author tries to issue here that the administration of chemicals on agricultural fields can certainly fertilize the land and increase the rate of production quickly and profusely. But in the long run the continuous application of such chemicals will not only hamper the fertilizing quality of the lands but also cause environmental pol-

lution around. It will pollute water, soil and crops. It will thus hamper the human and aquatic life and their interconnectedness.

CONCLUSION:

In the novel *The Village by the Sea* Desai sincerely deals with environmental issues and problems and also records her profound concern for the loss of ecological beauty and balance in the rural India during the modern technological advancement and practices which affect seriously rural life and environment. An eco-conscious writer, she is not against the constructive development and change. She only raises the question in the very process of industrial technological transformation and mechanical human activities that threaten the traditional rural life and the serene natural environment. Here the author, like a true environmentalist and an ecocritic, only makes us aware about the environmental danger that disturbs the inherent connection between the humans and the nonhuman world. At the same time, she reminds us about the human role in preservation of the natural world and eco system for the sake of humanity. Thus, in this novel Desai appears as a nature lover, “environmentalist, and eco-friend” (Mishra 5) and a silent crusader against the environmental degradation that threatens the link between the human and the natural world.

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Motherhood in Bondage: Comparison of the Presentation of Indian Mothers in the Writings of Ashapoorna Devi and Mahasweta Devi

Sonasri Choudhury

ABSTRACT:

Motherhood is so simple but a vexed complex concept. Motherhood is a social reality which is to be visualized, conceptualized and analysed from different perspectives of social paradigm. The study of motherhood needs to be contextualised. The contextualisation of study of motherhood needs the approach of methodological pluralism and various issues therein. Methodological pluralism or epistemological pluralism refers to different ways of knowing things, different methodologies i.e. multi methodologies for attaining a full description of a particular field. It expresses the view that no social phenomenon can be explained by a single theory. So, theorizing sociology of motherhood and conceptualizing different concepts of motherhood necessitates multi-methodological approach to know what motherhood is and motherhood's multi-ramifications in different societal and cultural contexts. In this paper, the various shades of motherhood through the writings of two famous Bengali female writers; Ashapurna Devi and Mahasweta Devi, is compared.

KEYWORDS: Motherhood, Mahasweta Devi, Ashapoorna Devi, writings, crisis, sacrifice

The particularistic approach to study motherhood requires specific historical contexts within which mothering takes place and is influenced by different social locations. On the other hand, the universalist approach to “motherhood study” aims at identifying what mothers do, rather than how they feel. It emphasizes on maternal practices. So, studying and theorizing sociology of motherhood demands methodological pluralism. The two Bengali women writer Ashapoorna Devi and Mahasweta Devi portrays many mother figures and their emotional and psychological crises. Mothers are bearing the burnt of social and political oppression and they have to endure all. There are some taboos regarding mothers in the society and they had to follow that. They didn't have any right to take decision for their children. The mothers began to recognise her own aloneness as a mother and as a woman. Ashapoorna Devi's major works are: *Satyabati Trilogy* (*Pratham Pratisruti*, *Subarnalata*, *Bakul Katha*), “Nibaran Chandra's Last Rites”, “The Twilight Moment”, “The Georgette Saree”, and so on. Along with the normal Chores of domestic life Ashapoorna Devi has written 242 novels and novelettes, 37 collections of short stories, and 62 books for children and over 3000 short stories. Mahasweta Devi's literary works include 100 novels and over 20 collections of short stories primarily written in Bengali but often translated to other languages. Mahasweta Devi is not only a famous writer but also she was a self recognised communist and worked for the rights and empowerment of the tribal people (Lodha and Shabar) of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. Both the writers were awarded by several prizes and awards. Both of them won Jnanpith Award. Mahasweta Devi won Ramon Magsaysay Award and also the civilian awards Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan.

One of the themes in which this becomes all the more apparent is in Mahasweta Devi's discussion on motherhood. It is her role as a mother that gives her a unique position that no one can replicate. The fact that the cause of the dispossessed and the travails of the marginalised have gained central focus in Mahasweta Devi's writings has often tended to blur out other important aspects like, for instance, motherhood. Radha Chakravarty writes:

From Jashoda in ‘The Breast Giver’ to the unnamed mother in Jamunaboti's Mother, her fiction offers an array of maternal figures as well as diverse figurative constructions of the maternal idea. By underlying a distinction between motherhood and the idea of motherhood, Mahasweta Devi therefore seeks to juxtapose emotions of motherhood with the constructed notion of motherhood: These works demonstrate how the traditional deification of motherhood can often conceal a collective attempt to circumscribe women within socially prescribed roles while denying them the right to articulate their individual needs and desires.

Writings on motherhood, especially in the Indian context, have tended to associate the mother, not just with divinity but also with the Nation. In fact, in the nationalist agenda, “the figure of the woman which had the most emotional potency was that of the mother (1). There always existed a dichotomy between the traditional, loyal wife and the ‘*veerangana*’, but the image of the mother cut across all boundaries and permeated all sections of society. Three different discourses worked in tandem: the discourse of the family (the biological mother), the discourse of religion (*devi* or the goddess) and the discourse of the nation (the motherland). The image of women in the nineteenth century at times attained a mythical stature - “taking real power from women and creating a myth about her strength and power,” especially when it came to constructing the image of the mother. Radha Chakravarty comments:

The narrative of nationalism sought to create an abstract, homogenised figure of woman as mother, to serve a particular political agenda, without any concern for the needs of actual women in different sectors of society. Motherhood was taken as a figure for the spiritual essence of national selfhood, as distinct from the material sphere of progress ... in the definition of motherhood that has evolved in the decades following Independence, the elision of femininity and maternity has becoming a determining feature. Motherhood is deified, ∴ paradoxically, the myth of the mother’s quasi... divine status is premised upon her capacity for voluntary self-sacrifice. (10)

A number of critics and theorists have written about the constructions of motherhood and the maternal idea. a critical analysis of her trilogy *Pratham Pratisruti* (The First Promise) (1964), *Subarnalata* (1967) and *Bakulkatha* (The Story of Bakul) (1974) would enable us to experience this struggle against a gradually unfolding backdrop where India moves on from being a British colony to an independent country. The trilogy traces the life of three generations in a family — Satyabati, Subarna and finally Bakul, and establishes Ashapurna Devi as a pathbreaking champion of women’s emancipation in an era when such endeavours were few and far between. As Indira Chowdhury writes in *Rethinking Motherhood, Reclaiming a Politics*: “It is significant that Ashapoorna in telling the story of three generations of women sees the 19th century as the original moment for the formation of women as subjects of their own discourses.” But it is also important to remember that it is precisely her location in the 20th century and in the post-independent Indian state that compels her to frame the problem in ways that challenge colonial, reformist and nationalist notions of maternity. There are some critical approaches belonging to both of the writers. Few research

works have also done on them. Therefore, certain themes came regarding their presentation of motherhood.

1) Mahasweta Devi's presentation of motherhood (what did she actually want to express)

- a) The rebellious mother
- b) Womens' presentation as having some supernatural power and becoming universal mother
- c) A mother who is too strong to take the sacrifice of her son's life for country

2) Ashapurna Devi's presentation of motherhood

- a) At that time mothers are too strong to bend

This study shows social backdrops at that time, position of women in the then society. Both of the writers are renowned for their presentation of women in their writings. Ashapurna Devi's writings give us a nice portrait of the then Bengali culture, their rituals and all that. Both of them give us a picture of colonised India through their writings. Their writings portray various genres connecting to each other. In comparison of writing style, Mahasweta Devi's writings are a bit tougher to understand than Ashapurna Devi's. Ashapurna Devi herself was very much involved in her family life. She was so potent in her writing that her engagement in family had never become hindrance in the path of her writings. Hence her writings portray women and mothers in very realistic way. They are all very protesting, rebellious, raised voice for women's emancipation but not leaving their family. Most of them are homely and seeking a respectful position in their own house at least. Mahasweta Devi was a social activist also. Hence, she had gone through many travels, interacting with many cultures specially with tribals. Hence we can see the glimpse of that kind of lives and women and various sides and kinds of motherhood in her writing. Those mothers are not only biological mother but also spiritual mother, breast giving mother, mother of dawn and dusk and many more.

Before these two pathbreaking writers no one had presented motherhood in so multiple way.--- The trilogy traces the life of three generations in a family — Satyabati, Subarna and finally Bakul and establishes Ashapurna Devi as a pathbreaking champion of women's emancipation in an era when such endeavours were few and far between. As Indira Chowdhury writes in *Rethinking Motherhood, Reclaiming a Politics*:

It is significant that Ashapurna in telling the story of three generations of women sees the 19th century as the original moment for the formation of women as subjects of their own discourses. But it is also important to remember that it is precisely her location in the 20th century and in the post-independent Indian state that compels her to frame the problem in

ways that challenge colonial, reformist and nationalist notions of maternity.

To refer to Indira Chowdhury's interpretation of Ashapurna Devi's agenda:

The first two parts of Ashapurna's trilogy focuses on what it means to become a mother in colonial Bengal — what are the responsibilities and what, if any, are the choices — and through this problematic focuses on the issue of female subjectivity. By offering through her 19th century characters alternative accounts of motherhood Ashapurna qualifies the idealising and naturalising accounts of motherhood and attempts to mediate the complexities and often, the impossibility of mother — daughter relationships within patriarchal parameters. The act of becoming a mother within patriarchy signifies the loss of one's own mother — the fulfillment of a girl's social destiny condemns her to the state of this.

Ashapurna Devi herself has commented on the circumstances under which she composed her trilogy. The first volume was set almost two hundred years back against the backdrop of a rich household in rural Bengal. It traces the childhood days of child bride Satyabati, the protagonist and her initiation into her in-laws' house. First published in 1964, the book got her the Rabindra Puroshkar (a prestigious literary award in memory of Rabindranath Tagore) the next year. The second volume of the trilogy *Subarnalata* was named after Satyabati's daughter, the protagonist of this volume and is set in a middle class family based in Kolkata. This is a family which is desperately hanging on to the remnants of arrogance even after losing all their wealth. According to Ashapurna Devi, *Subarnalata* is an emissary from the world she herself had dwelt in as a child. She epitomizes an age which has witnessed the helplessness of women locked within four walls in the city. It explores the disdain and neglect that women faced even in cities in those days. Ashapurna Devi has tried to portray some of this pain and trauma that she had seen women witnessing, in the second volume of her trilogy. The third volume, *Bakulkatha*, traces the life of Bakul, the youngest daughter of *Subarnalata*. But Bakul is more of an observer, reporter and analyst than a protagonist herself. She views her society objectively and comments on it from a distance. Bakul looks at and tries to capture through her pen, a society which is being tossed by waves, changing its hues every second minute continuously undergoing changes in its shape and consistency and wonders how she can possibly hope to capture it in its totality — whether it is a plausible attempt at all.

In *Pratham Pratisruti* and in *Subarnalata*, Ashapurna Devi has highlighted the mother's fight for emancipation, and a mother's struggle to make her daughter an empowered woman. In the two novels, the mothers are very brave which was quite unimaginable at that time period. They were so

desperate to make their daughters educated that they ultimately convince their husbands to obey their suggestion about their daughter's future which was also very uncommon at that period. Though ultimately they failed to fulfil their wish and bound to obey heartless rules of society, and become so heartbroken that they lost their previous spirit and become completely silent. In these novels, modern feminism or woman's emancipation comes in the veil of motherhood. The novels are all about a mother's struggle to save her daughter from the sufferings that she suffered.

In some of the writings of Mahasweta Devi, we can see a woman as a mother that gives her a unique position that no one can replicate. The fact that the cause of the dispossessed and the travails of the marginalised have gained central focus in her writings has often tended to blur out other important aspects – for instance – motherhood. Minakshi Mukherjee says, "Writings on motherhood, specially in the Indian context, have tended to associate the mother, not just with divinity but also with the nation. In fact, in the nationalist agenda the figure of the woman which had the most emotional potency was that of the mother." In the novel *The Mother Of Thousand Eighty Four*, the character of Sujata can be defined as the universal mother who accepted the sacrifice of her son for the motherland: "Motherhood was taken as a figure for the spiritual essence of national selfhood, as distinct from the material sphere of progress ... in the definition of motherhood that has evolved in the decades following Independence, the elision of femininity and maternity has becoming a determining feature. Motherhood is deified, but paradoxically, the myth of the mother's quasi-divine status is premised upon her capacity for voluntary self-sacrifice" (3).

For Mahasweta Devi, the truth lies in between the "hypocrisy so latent in discourses of maternity" and the values of love, care and responsibility ... traditionally associated with the maternal role" (4). In fact motherhood/mothering often forms the central experience through which her women are awakened to a greater understanding of society and its evils, and it provides them with the strength to sustain themselves and fight for justice even against the toughest odds. She portrays a wide variety of mothers - from the poor yet caring mother - the stereotype of ideal motherhood - the spiritual mother, the exploitative mother and even the professional mother. The relationship that each mother shares with her child is also unique. Some are willing to sacrifice everything for their children, as in "Jamunaboti's Maa" and "Chinta" while for others, motherhood is like any other business or profession - where emotions are measured in quantities and motherhood is seen in terms of a business proposition. For example, in "Saanjhshokaaler Maa", the success of the 'divine' mother during the day is premised on her denial of affection to her son during those hours:

‘Don’t call me Ma, son, my own dear son.’

‘Never?’

Late at night, before sunrise, call me Ma. After sundown too you can call me Ma.’

‘Only at dawn and dusk, right?’

‘Yes, son.’

‘At dusk and dawn you’re Ma. And in the daytime you’re Thakurni?’ ‘Yes, son. I’m your dusk to dawn mother, your Shaanjshokaaler Ma.’ (3)

In “Stanadayini” or “The Breast Giver” motherhood takes on a totally different dimension - of the professional mother - whose only means of survival lies in her ability to produce children and be in a process of continuous lactation. In fact, ‘motherhood’ and ‘mothering’ here merge into one another. It is only through the biological action of ‘motherhood’ that enables Jashoda to indulge in ‘mothering.’

Motherhood here includes in its purview all the children - own and fostered — that I have suckled at her breasts. Yet another mother-child relationship is portrayed in *Hajaar Churashir Maa*. Mahasweta Devi describes this story as “the awakening of an apolitical mother.” Sujata, the mother, comes to really know and recognise her son, as she pieces together his life on his second death anniversary. The mother-son bond in this novella is stronger in death than in life, and in the process 1084 becomes a metaphor- not just Brati’s corpse number, but also a random figure for the thousands of nameless young men and women killed by police due to alleged extremist activities during the Naxal movement. Sujata is just not the mother of Brati, in her understanding; she becomes the mother of all these young men and women. And in Bayen, similarly, Chandi feels for all the dead children that she has buried as a part of her profession, after she has a child of her own. Because of her own child, she now felt a deep pain for every dead child. Yet, her sudden ostracisation from the village community means that she cannot share the normal mother-son relationship with Bhagirath. He is forbidden from acknowledging her as his mother, and by the time he is finally able to do so, it is too late. In most stories, what is striking is the woman’s consciousness of her role as mother - both as an individual and as a part of the larger community. And in the process, there takes place an internalisation between the processes of ‘motherhood’ and ‘motherland’, in which the three categories that stated by Meenakshi Mukherjee merge together. At the same time, one notices a critique of this kind of an attitude towards motherhood in Mahasweta’s writings. It is ironic that the very people who deify the Indian mother and put her on a pedestal are also the same parasites who exploit it and suck its blood. A case in point is Douloti. What links all these women together is their suffering of political, economic and social oppression, which

in turn is reflected in their relationship with their children. As part of the community in which they live, the women are in a position of continual subservience. And if they happen to belong to the lower castes this subservience is multiplied many times over.

In comparison of the presentation of motherhood, both the writers present various aspects of motherhood where mothers are not only mother-figures, they became universal figures and the flag bearers of woman's emancipation.

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“Our principle requires that we should boldly
review our case”¹: From Physical Disability
to a Universally Beneficial Discourse—
Harriet Martineau’s deafness

Anwesha Sengupta

ABSTRACT:

The first woman sociologist and the Victorian thinker Harriet Martineau, in her autobiography published in 1877, recalls the experience of having a mild physical discomfort when she was twelve years old. The physical disability and the consequential loneliness were so overwhelmingly painful that her heart cried out to vent her feelings yet the emotions were so intensely personal that she felt that those around, with their audist outlook, could never empathize with her sufferings. In her autobiography she pours out her pain of being considered as nuisance by her mother. Her brother James Martineau’s letter exonerates their mother, asserting that their sister was an over-sensitive and attention-seeking girl. The treatment that she got from a family that was ignorant of the requirements of a child with special needs played a significant role in bringing change to Harriet Martineau’s observation of the collective needs of the deaf people. Later, she felt the necessity of writing a letter addressed to the deaf community, addressing each problem that the hearing impaired faced and the guidelines to deal with them with perfect prudence and sensibility. This paper would attempt to examine whether Martineau’s discourse on deafness was actually the rant of an ostracized woman expressing her grievance against a society that was essentially audist as or it indeed

projects the contemplations of a social reformer who considered the need to alleviate the afflictions of her fellow deaf individuals.

KEYWORDS: autobiography, deaf community, disability, Martineau, discourse, audist

In the freshness of her sensitive suffering Harriet shrank from the Norwich evening parties. Her mother, however, insisted upon her taking her full share of visiting. The case was made worse by the customary errors in the treatment of deaf persons; namely, the endeavoring to keep up the illusion that she was not deaf, the occasional assurances that she could hear as well as ever if it were not for her habits of abstraction, and so forth, and the imploring her to always ask when she did not hear what was said, followed by scoldings (kindly meant, but none the less irritating to the object) when it was found that she had been silently losing the larger part of a conversation. (Miller 35)

The above extract from Florence Fenwick Miller's biography titled *Harriet Martineau* (2011) projects the predicament of the nineteenth-century abolitionist, socio-political reformer, economist, author and traveller Harriet Martineau (1802-1876) in a stringent Victorian family and society. Martineau's autobiography was written in 1855 and posthumously published by her friend Maria Weston Chapman in 1877, along with Martineau's memorials written by the latter. While one delineates from the autobiography the multifarious activities Martineau was involved in as a social reformer, the initial part of the text bears a poignant testament to the physical ailments that she had been subject to, and her mixed emotions of guilt, frustration, dejection and anger out of the feeling that she was a nuisance to her mother for her constant illnesses. She recalls in the earliest phase of her autobiography that "[her] deafness" "was always ascribed by her mother" to her chronic "diarrhoea" (Martineau, *Autobiography* 8). Even during her infancy, she had weak gustatory and olfactory sensations, which, she affirms, was mitigated by stronger and more active visual, auditory and tactile functions— "Sight, hearing and touch were perfectly good in early childhood; but I never had the sense of smell; and that of taste was therefore exceedingly imperfect" (Martineau, *Autobiography* 10).

The sense of hearing loss, in its nascent stage, was discovered when she was twelve. The autobiography manifests the unexplainable pain of an individual, with once-perfect auditory sense, gradually progressing towards deafness. The isolation at school started when she had to sit away from the rest of the pupils and close to the teacher, although it was required for optimum

audibility; but it is from this stage when her exclusion started. Colins Barnes in *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A Case for Anti-Discrimination Legislation* (1991) argues that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, “the members of [the] group” called “defectives” included “people with sensory impairments such as blindness, deafness, and the lack of speech” (Barnes 18). After 1903 this group incorporated epileptic and mentally-ill people in its corpus, although these people had the access to the same institutions which were attended by their abled counterparts, they “were frequently singled out for special attention by Victorian philanthropists and charities” (Barnes 18). This “special attention” was paradoxical; on the one hand it gave them a privileged status, as in the case of Martineau, she was allowed to sit closest to the teacher on a regular basis, while on the other, it paved the way towards further social exclusion which was generally self-imposed because the “defectives”, in fear of being embarrassed, secluded themselves. Harriet Martineau recalls in her autobiography:

The first distinct recognition of my being deaf, more or less, was when I was at Mr. Perry’s, — when I was about twelve years old. It was a very slight, scarcely-perceptible hardness of hearing at that time; and the recognition was merely this; — that in that great vaulted school-room. [...] I was excused from taking places in class, and desired to sit always at the top, because it was somewhat nearer the master, whom I could not always hear further off. [...] But before I was sixteen, it had become very noticeable, very inconvenient, and excessively painful to myself. (Martineau, *Autobiography* 55)

The pain was overwhelmingly personal, and one can read the suddenness of ostracism, mockery, social isolation and dejection that the deaf community in the Victorian society was subject to. The deafness increased, and Martineau either avoided social gatherings or preferred to stay in corners in the family-parties. The “excessive pain” that she mentions in the autobiography was more psychological than physical—because of the shame of being different from others, which in the anatomical and cultural vocabulary was “defective”, as Barnes mentions. John Cranstoun Nevill in *Harriet Martineau* (1973) contemplates that the girl was “curiously reticent” “concerning the details” of her progressive deafness, which “became in a short while so heavy a burden that she shrank away from visitors and parties, because people had to shout and gesticulate and strain their throats to make her hear” (Nevill 21). By eighteen, she was completely deaf. Her autobiography bears the impression of her embarrassment in a society that was uninformed about the cause of the deaf people:

My deafness was terribly in the way, both because it made me shy, and because underbred people, like the card-players and dancers of a provincial town, are awkward in such a case. Very few people spoke to me; and I dare say I looked as if I did not wish to be spoken to. From the time when I went to London, all that was changed. People began with me as with a deaf person; and there was little more awkwardness about hearing, when they had once reconciled themselves to my trumpet. (Martineau, *Autobiography* 140-141)

Such a society looked at deafness from a simplistic point of view and presumed that it could be cured with the use of ear-trumpets. Imposing the usage of such devices, the society neither considered to find out if the deaf people were comfortable wearing them nor did they care to read their psychological needs because they dismissed it as a defect in a particular sense-organ. In the recent discipline of disability studies, the society would have been deciphered as particularly audistic. H. Dirksen and L. Bauman in *Encyclopedia of Disability Studies* observe:

As Humphries defines it, *audism* is a set of beliefs held by individuals (either hearing or deaf) that stem from the common assumption of the superiority of hearing over deafness. [...] Since the beginnings of deaf education and the science of audiology...educational and medical institutions have assumed authority over deaf persons, claiming to act in their best interests while not allowing them to have a say in the matters that concern them the most. [...] Deaf people have been physically and pedagogically coerced into adopting hearing norms, whether they wanted to or not. (Dirksen and Bauman 141)

The society was not insensitive or unempathetic; it lacked the fundamental information of deafness and its nuances. This unfamiliarity with deafness made the medical fraternity impose ear-trumpet to facilitate Martineau's hearing; it hardly understood that an adolescent with worsening hearing loss had deprivation, trauma and other paraphernalia of psychosocial odds to deal with. Even they did not care to know if she wanted to wear the hearing-aid devices, and this ignorance made the deaf community suffer from an unnecessary shame, with the misconception that their deafness was a cause of concern and trouble to those around them:

In 1820, my deafness was suddenly increased by what might be called an accident, which I do not wish to describe. I ought undoubtedly to have begun at that time to use a trumpet ; but no one pressed it upon me; and I do not know that, if urged, I should have yielded ; for I had abundance of that false shame which hinders nine deaf people out of ten from doing their duty in that particular. (Martineau, *Autobiography* 95)

It is this exposure to the ignorance of the nineteenth-century society that prompted Martineau to talk about deafness at length—not upholding it as a personal disability but as a discipline that needs rigorous research. In the times when there was no prospect of disability studies, her *Letter to the Deaf* (1834) became a well-researched discourse on the cause of the deaf, from the first-person point of view who had the lived experience.

Born in a Victorian family which believed that a child must be subject to strictest parenting, Martineau was reprimanded rudely each time she did not respond to her parent’s commands or a visitor’s questions. Considering her as a disobedient, stubborn, brazen-faced girl who pretended not to hear, Mrs. Elizabeth Rankin Martineau took her daughter’s behaviour as a marker of ill-bred manners. This assumption of the mother was not unusual in a family which was not accustomed to the special needs of a hearing-impaired child. Fenwick Miller, who has been quoted at the beginning of this essay, is right when she points out that Mrs. Martineau’s rebukes of her daughter’s complete taciturnity in social gatherings were “the customary errors in the treatment of deaf persons” (Miller 35). It was her attempt to negate the fact to others and to herself that her daughter was deaf; this further aggravated Harriet’s problems, and made her withdraw into a shell. She had a particularly good ear for music and played piano with élan; the coy, introvert girl passionately sang Handel’s music in closed rooms away from the ears of the listeners. Therefore, it was frustrating when her ear did not respond to her favourite melodies. Things became worse when she was obliged to give up on her dreams of being a teacher, and most of the times, was confined within her room while her siblings went on pursuing their dreams. Theodora Bosanquet in *Harriet Martineau: An Essay in Comprehension* (1974) commented:

Her deafness prevented her from seeking a situation as a governess—the only respectable position open to young ladies so unfortunate as to lose their money through the mismanagement of their male relatives. The clever and competent Rachel went away to teach, but Harriet stayed at home to do fancy-work by daylight and to write by night. (Bosanquet 32)

Martineau often censured herself for having “pathetic self-pity” (Martineau, *Autobiography* 119) and was tagged as an attention-seeker by her family-members—“mere affectations inspired by an unworthy desire to focus public-attention on herself” (Nevill 10); yet it is impressive to see her composure and self-control when she restrains her desire to write her personal rigmarole of deafness and instead puts in an epistolary address to the deaf community, meticulously and in a controlled way. Harriet Martineau’s brother James Martineau in a letter titled “The Early Days of Harriet Martineau”, published

in the *Daily News*, dated December 30th, 1884, vindicates their mother and other siblings from the accusations that Florence Miller has inflicted her with. In the words of James Martineau:

As she was not a conscious or recognised invalid, the same things are naturally expected of her as it had been treated in themselves at her age, and would be permitted to do so; while all that compensated it and was ultimately to transcend and eclipse their superior tact or riper judgement was still latent in her—its time had not yet come. In my childhood, whatever was unhappy was due, so far as I remember it, not to my mother, but to myself, or to the well-meant teasings of older brothers, or to the tyranny of a large public school. (Martineau, *The Early Days*... 222)

Citing Miller's allegation of parental unkindness, James Martineau says that it was "a general description of the prevailing habit of the time." (222) Undoubtedly, this austerity was the convention that was unquestioningly followed, and the Victorian parents, unaware of the individual psycho-emotional differences of each child, stuck to a uniform blueprint of child-rearing. Martineau's deafness did not bear any marker of external physical infirmity; hence to her brother who lacked knowledge about the deaf, their struggles and solutions, she was "not conscious or recognised invalid".

From a deaf living in a cocoon, she becomes empathetic for her deaf comrades; her *Letter to the Deaf* published in Volume I of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1834) treats deafness from a new perspective. It no longer remains a defect or disability for which the sufferers would enjoy privilege or elicit sympathy, nor a reason to be patronized or ashamed; she suggests a complete overhaul, slowly but systematically, of the do-s and don't-s of the deaf community—"our principle requires that we should boldly review our case" (*Letter to the Deaf* 175). Deafness becomes a discourse to be talked about publicly instead of being discussed in private talk with the sufferers. Martineau's realization that the "redeeming quality of personal infirmity is that it brings its special duty" of "sparing other people as much fatigue as possible" (Martineau, *Autobiography* 95) makes her transcend into a socially and morally responsible reformer. The obstacles that she felt in personal life become her driving force to struggle for the betterment of the plight of her deaf friends:

I have felt myself qualified to say more in the way of exhortation and remonstrance to deaf people than could be said by anyone who had not only never been deaf, but had never shared the selfish and morbid feelings which are the ordinary attendant curses of suffering so absolutely peculiar as that of personal infirmity. (*Autobiography* 95)

Letter to the Deaf is not a long diatribe on personal deprivations; it is “a major formal writing on the sociology of being deaf” observed with “analytical skills” (Deegan 49) by a woman whose deafness is an experience making her “qualified” to speak at length on it. Mary Jo Deegan in the essay “Making Lemonade: Harriet Martineau on Being Deaf” rightly compares Martineau’s full-fledged resolution to equip people with knowledge about deafness and empower the deaf community through her epistolary address to the idiom “when life hands you a lemon, learn to make lemonade”:

Life hands a woman a great big lemon when she has a disability, and making lemonade is more than a saccharine cliché in this context. [...] Making lemonade as a disabled woman is a tough and life-affirming decision. I prefer the concept of “making lemonade” to either “coping” or “adjusting” because these latter terms suggest ceding aspects of human joy and affirmation. [...] Harriet Martineau made world-class lemonade as a nineteenth-century woman with a severe hearing impairment. (Deegan 41)

The sheer jollity and easiness, acceptance and resilience that is perceptible in *Letter to the Deaf* indeed drives home that Martineau was enjoying preparing lemonade out of the lemon called deafness that life threw at her. Jennifer Esmail in the Introduction to *Reading Victorian Deafness: Signs and Sounds in Victorian Literature and Culture* (2013) comments:

Nonetheless, deaf Victorians certainly faced societal barriers including difficulties finding employment, struggles with an educational system that was increasingly eliminating the use of signs, and daily existence in a culture of hearing and speaking people that sought to assimilate rather than accommodate them. But this, of course, was only one element of being deaf in Victorian England. While fighting for access to employment or education, deaf people also created opportunities within their own deaf communities. (Esmail 12)

The “societal barriers” mentioned in the above extract were faced by Martineau, and after years of suffering, pent-up in her room, she knew that deafness was to be “assimilated” and not “accommodated”.

Letter to the Deaf categorically brings out a set of guidelines for the deaf community; Harriet Martineau has become a counselor/advisor for the novices, because she has used deafness as a discourse “to communicate with her fellow-sufferers, in the hope of benefitting, by [her] experience, some to whom the experience is newer than to [herself]” (Martineau 174). Her level-headedness and poise do not falter, and she postulates the methodology to deal with deafness:

We must ascertain the probability for the future, if we can find physicians humane enough to tell us the truth: and where it cannot be ascertained, we must not delay making provision for the present. [...] Advice must go for nothing with us in a case where nobody is qualified to advise. We must cross-question the physician, and hold him to it till he has told us all. We must destroy the sacredness of the subject, by speaking of it ourselves; not perpetually and sentimentally but when occasion arises, boldly, cheerfully and as a plain matter of fact. (Martineau, *Letter to the Deaf* 175)

The stages of deafness are more emotional and moral than physical in case of Martineau. Her deafness proceeds from a state of shock, to a feeling of deserving special attention, then moving towards frustration and dejection to shame, embarrassment and seclusion and finally to altruistic and philanthropic responsibility to turn it to a discourse. Instead of presenting it as a disability suffered by the deaf people alone, Martineau takes deafness to a level of discipline to know about and research upon, so that the deaf people are equipped with a set of recommendations and regulations passed on by a veteran in the field of deafness. The lemonade she brews and passes on is sensitization to issues of deafness to the poorly informed or ignorant Victorian readers.

NOTE

1. The excerpt is from Harriet Martineau's "Letter to the Deaf", published in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* (1834), p. 174.

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“Our principle requires that we should boldly review our case”: From 85
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Race, Gender and Ethnicity: Interrogating the Concept of Body in Walt Disney's *Moana*

Sreelakshmi Renjith

ABSTRACT:

The 'Disney princesses' brought forth by Walt Disney productions after the mid 90's introduced heroines of colour who are representatives of various ethnic communities around the world. However, these heroines who apparently appear to be a part of an indigenous community were mere extensions of the predominant white heroines. The aim of this paper is to identify the somatic construction of the ethnic heroine portrayed in the movie *Moana* and to explore its visualization and conception from a multicultural perspective. It also aims to examine the effect of such stereotypical constructions on child schema, when body is identified from the lens of the dominant western group. *Moana* was created during the epoch of 'Post-Disney Renaissance', the period in which Disney claims to correct their princesses created on Anglo-centric standards and introduced heroines from various indigenous communities around the world. However, the bodily representation of the central character, when subjected to close scrutiny, reveals it as a pre-existing white body that underwent peripheral changes to cater to the needs of a larger audience. Instead of presenting a holistic worldview on ethnic heroines, Disney promotes an essentialist approach, doing nothing more than providing unnecessary emphasis on physical beauty and glamour. Furthermore, the paper also sought to identify the notion of bodily alienation that arises when femininity is viewed in the light of commercialism.

KEYWORDS: Ethnicity, representation, femininity, performativity, alienation

Every major society has its own ways of beauty and bodily aesthetics that seeks its expression through rituals and performances. A community's understanding of body is determined by its moral, cultural and psychological factors and at times, the marks of identity can be grotesque or otherworldly in the eyes of others. These incredible kinds of bodily traditions exist in two distinct parallel worlds, one of indigenous or ethnic traditions and the other as modern or contemporary corporeality. The representation of body forms a significant part of our story in terms of world view, ritual culture and even understanding of time and space (Statesman). While one culture values a full bodied woman, other might emphasis lean figures. Furthermore, the conceptions of a sexually arousing body may also differ from one culture to another.

Moana released in 2016 by Walt Disney Animation Studios features a Polynesian princess who 'stands out from the crowd' by showing unusual strength and valour. The movie presents Moana as a young, free willed girl determined to cross the vast depths of ocean. Ever since a child, Moana was fascinated by the sea and years later, the ocean itself chose Moana to accomplish a daring mission of returning the heart to goddess Tefiti who has now become a terrible fire monster without her heart. Despite her parents' disapproval, Moana began her journey of self-revelation, with the ocean endorsing her to reach the destination. The ocean plays an integral role in Moana's life and right from her young age she shares a unique bond with the ocean that makes her a chosen child of nature. *Moana* belongs to one among the post-renaissance movies of Disney that aimed to create alternate female portrayals headed towards representing a valiant woman in place of an oppressed one (Alblas 1). The movie is worth appreciating for its portrayal of Polynesian culture and their wayfinding traditions. However, it can be argued that the bodily representation of the central character is problematic for it does not fit precisely to the bodily standards of Polynesian culture.

Human bodies and their differences in shapes, are intimately tied to social customs and they often reflect a society's ingrained notions and beliefs. Hence they construct identities which are either affiliated to or estranged from a cultural group. Taking into account, the size and shape of our bodies, various researches suggest a huge difference in perception and norms on body in different cultures, varying from eulogising to reprimanding of bigger bodies (Schrimpf 27). It is intriguing that Moana's physique stands as a stark contrast to Polynesian cult who are traditionally known to value bigger bodies. Though her slender yet muscular build sets her apart from the previous Disney heroines, her cunningly streamlined waist and deep big eyes implies

the intrusion of western beauty standards that destabilise putative notions of ethnicity. The plumpness of a female body, as observed by the Pacific islanders, relates to fertility and physical attractiveness (Schrimpf 27). Tattoo art is yet another significant ritual that is intimately tied to Polynesian culture. It is one of the fascinating art forms of Polynesia where people are naturally drawn into it. On most Pacific islands, both men and women were frequently tattooed. Girls around the age of 12 would get tattoos on their chin, thighs or hands (Cipriani). The character of Moana is a stark conquest to the earlier heroines of Disney whose identity was defined by a sense of powerlessness. These heroines had no path of their own till a male counterpart comes to their rescue. Moana's skills in outwitting Maui, her male counterpart, and restoring the heart makes her a true princess who saves her land and people from the wrath of goddess Tefiti. In spite of all the revolutionary changes made, Moana's body still reflects the indifference of the west in accepting an indigenous body of its own accord. In the vent of global beauty standards, the soft, delicate quality of the skin is widely recognised as feminine and even Moana seems to be trapped in this notion. Her flawless body underscores the inability of the west to recognise a body adorned with tattoo art as an acclaimed beauty standard. Disney's refusal to accept the diverse kinds of bodily aesthetics is clearly evident through the portrayal of a 16 year old Samoan girl with a tattooless body. While the secondary female characters in the movie [e.g. Moana's mother and grandmother] adhere to the tattooed and obese bodies of Polynesia, the protagonist's body is, as usual, idealized by the spotless and slender body of west. On the other hand, Maui who features alongside Moana as her male counterpart has a body filled with tattoos. Be it a deliberate intent or careless indifference, Maui's tattooed body corroborates the double standards opted for male and female bodies: the notion that female bodies should remain essentially Anglo centric while male bodies can be freely experimented with endemic intricacies.

Sandra Bem in her 1981 article "Gender Schema Theory: A Cognitive Account of Sex Typing" proposes that all societies allocate adult roles on the basis of sex and expect their individuals to acquire gender specific skills, to be masculine or feminine, as defined by a particular culture (354). Clearly, the developing child who learns content specific behaviour and attitudes imbibes not only those features related to gender personas, such as anatomy or reproductive ability, but also those elements which are vaguely or allegorically related to sex such as the roundedness or angularity of body shape (Ibid). Bem developed this theory to explain the repercussions of sex typing in children and how they acquire sex defined behaviours and concepts from their social environment. In doing so, children develop cognitive structures that help them to organise information and form perceptions (Canavello).

Bem was an eminent scholar in the field of psychology and her findings had a far reaching impact in the field of gender studies and studies on intersectionality (Starr 2). Her theories were widely used for the analysis of children's literature, specifically in children's picture books where gender stereotypes are more likely to creep in. The theory put forward the notion that gender schematic people have more chances of discriminating people, whereas gender aschematic people are least concerned on gender differences (Canavello). Further research in this field, shows that gender stereotyping follows a specific developmental pattern which can be divided into three distinct phases. The first phase occurs mainly during the infant and preschool age where children begin to learn about gender related traits. In the second phase, the acquired gender knowledge is cemented either by rigidity or fashion. Thirdly, a phase of relative flexibility comes along with the acquired rigidity (Martin and Ruble 68). Hence one can perceive gender as an emergent idea of social structures, both as a method and result of legitimising the social divisions of society (West and Zimmerman 127).

Disney's representation of female corporeality when observed in the light of this theory, leads to the hypothesis that such depictions leads to pejorative sex stereotypes that distort perceptions of reality. The heroines of Disney persistently faced the accusation that they gave children an unrealistic view of feminine beauty that worked to evolve gender stereotypes, making children gender schematic. This is problematic because a girl child will begin to formulate a sense of herself as a sexual object as what she understands about her body is framed through the notions of what it means to be female (James 98). Various researches has shown that children are not aware of the personality traits associated with sex until 10 or 11 years of age (qtd. in Martin and Halverson 1120). Once they learn the stereotypical roles for men and women, their perceptions and attitudes are confined to sex defined course of operating (Ibid).

A 2018 study of children's animated movies revealed that the films released between 2004 and 2016 showed a high degree of appearance related themes (Rodgers). It testifies that media creates gendered body ideals leading to bodily dissatisfaction and loss of subjective identity over time (Ibid). The importance ascribed to the 'cult of thinness' in contemporary western society has long been a topic of public debates and academic research (Bienkowska 40). The popularity of the size zero models and the images of lean bodies promoted through popular culture testifies the western world's growing preoccupation with body size (Ibid). While teen girls are often urged to embrace 'slim body' as a standard of feminine beauty, infants and toddlers are many a time, illustrated as plump figures. In *Moana*, baby Moana is portrayed as a fat baby and as she grew up, her chubby cheeks and jiggling

belly gave way to the idealized slim body. Reminiscent of this wider trend, it is evident that age often acts as powerful element in shaping female corporeality. The different beauty standards ascribed on to a female body at different stages of their lives not only represents how aging determines the definitions of gender but also negotiates how women's bodies were controlled and transformed over their lives (Lamb 181). The pejorative social conceptions on body, often determined by age and gender, impinge on the emotional and psychological constitution of a child, who is not only building their intellectual abilities but also busily assimilating sex roles and concepts (T. Yawkey and Yawkey 545). Most heroines represented in Disney movies have thin and toned bodies, created with utmost perfection. Moreover, these body images are technical creations which make their appearances even more unattainable (Rodgers). Here art is used as a deceptive tool to conceal the natural state of the body that contains its own flaws and imperfections (Scholes 73). The form and shape of bodies presented in children's media are extremely narrow with disproportionate focus on global images (Rodgers). This is one of the major reasons for sexualisation of women figures which renders body as an object for gaze and pleasure. Such picturisation leads to the phenomenon of homogenization of bodies that calls for a strict seizure over body horizons and behaviour (Scholes 138).

Disney movies inadvertently presume that femininity of ethnic cultures are more or less inferior, and thus be replaced with stronger, western models (Scholz 133). The female body is continuously reconstructed in accordance with the needs of a market oriented society where women are rendered as objects of desire and gaze (Scholz 62). The transformation that the female body undergoes points to a range of meanings centred on identity, inclusivity and sociality (qtd. in James 143). Perfection and completeness are qualities ascribed on to a female body which jeopardises the notion of subjective identity and eventually destroys it (Scholz 107). Here the cultural systems are often determined by the patterns and ideas of west where the female body stands as its representational matrix (Scholz 140). While the acquired forms of bodily behaviour corresponds to culture specific attitudes and description, the implicit demeanour is clearly western. Judith Butler emphasises gender as an unstable entity constructed through "stylized repetition of acts." It thrives on a series of conventions that structure the body which is culturally recognized (Butler 524). In other words, gender is what is constructed to broaden the cultural field through various kinds of bodily performances. Certain attributes are bestowed onto a female body that counts them as yardsticks of femininity. For instance, the sweet and friendly voice along with a pleasing countenance has long been a significant trait of femininity. The beauty in a smile and the grace in bodily maneuver are necessary for a female body to

be identified as an epitome of ideal beauty. This in turn supports the notion that “women can be women only if they act in an appropriate way” (Warnke, 32).

To conclude, stereotypical representations culminate in a feeling of aversion toward our bodies which arises from the negative perceptions on bodily functions. John Donne in of his poems writes, “Bodies are ours though they are not wee” (qtd. in Scholz 1). Though we claim to possess our bodies we are alienated from it. In a patriarchal society, women are often tamed to be ashamed of their body and by oppressing their bodies, men claim their right over women's bodies (Bose 196). The performative aspects of a woman's body are decided by their male counterparts where women have to wait for an appropriation from the world in order to govern their private domains. As a result, girls and women feel alienated from their bodies or in other words they consider their bodies as foreign and not as their own.

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Wordsworth, Clare and the Poetics of Perception

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ABSTRACT:

This essay is divided into two sections. In the first, I analyse William Wordsworth's *Nutting* (composed 1798-99, published 1800), delineating the poetics of concept/precept hierarchies, and their resultants. I shall exhibit briefly, why Wordsworthian poetics forms the crux of English Romantic thought. In the final section of the essay, I shall illustrate the subversion of Wordsworthian poetics in John Clare's *Nutting* in *Poems of the Helpston Period (1812-1831)*, and the literary and philosophical significance of such subversion, leading to an expansion, as well as decentralization of the canon of Romantic poetics vis-à-vis Wordsworth, followed by a conclusion on its parodic potential.

KEYWORDS: Wordsworth, Clare, Poetics, Conception, Perception

Sensibility – which, the more exquisite it is, the wider will be the range of a poet's perceptions; and the more will he be incited to observe objects, both as they exist in themselves and as re-acted upon by his own mind...By judgment, also, is determined what are the *laws* and appropriate graces of every species of composition (*Preface to the Edition of 1815*, pp. 26-27, emphasis mine)¹

In December 1798 or January 1799, William and Dorothy Wordsworth wrote a relatively lengthy letter from Goslar, Germany, in Dorothy's hand, to Samuel Taylor Coleridge which, amongst other things (such as the earliest versions of the *Lucy* poems, *Nutting*, and the now-famous 'Boat-Stealing

episode' from Book One of *The Prelude*), contained an interesting suggestion/recommendation on the problematic *beziehung* between perception and imagination:

You speak in raptures of the pleasures of skating (sic) – it must be a delightful exercise, and in the North of England amongst the mountains whither we wish to decoy you, you might enjoy it with every possible advantage. A race with William upon his native lakes would leave to the heart and the imagination something more dear and valuable than the gay sight of ladies and countesses whirling along the lakes of Ratzeburg. (Ernest de Selincourt ed., pp. 208)

Consider the second part of the quotation where Dorothy offers both substitution and solace in an alternate activity for Coleridge; she begins by fancying a “race”, a competitive enterprise between the two poets (one ought not to miss Dorothy’s possessiveness towards Wordsworth; she manages to disguise it barely in her reference to “his (Wordsworth’s) native lakes”, an imagery where she objectifies herself into an aquatic metaphor so that she can adequately possess, as well as limit her brother, and remain possessed, strictly by the poet-subject), and its aftereffects which, both from the pleasure derived and the fatigue of spirits sustained through their actions, is a “more dear and valuable” experience in comparison. While the simple perceptive superiority of masculine competition (unconsciously) subdues feminine harmony in Dorothy’s prose, there is a complex one at work – does the act of racing leave to the heart, and the imagination something dearer, or does the pre-vision of the race, or the imagination of an action precede both the action, its consequences, as well as the objective perceptive value of the experience? In other words, if subjective perceptual value precedes the objective, can it be referred to as conceptually un-objectified perception that shapes, rather designs the experience of perception *a-priori*? The factual uncertainty of imagination’s value (“something more dear”) emphasizes Dorothy distancing herself, and her brother, from the facticity of imagination, forcing the idea to operate in a domain of factual fluidity which is essential in so far as they stress the authenticity of emotional imagination, or does not misrepresent its conceptual foundation with false inferences. The fundamental question I pose here is: Does Wordsworth conceptualize upon perception? Or, does Wordsworth perceptualize with the limited *intent* of objectively determining the *objectifiable* inferences of his subjectively conceived imagination?

Wordsworth (the Wordsworths, to be more precise) is, I think, tilted towards the former, albeit uncomfortably; it is uncomfortable for the hierarchical pre-supposition on the part of Dorothy, and her tacit dismissal of fact-

trajectories by sounding the alarm of uncertainty. In another letter jointly authored by them to Coleridge from Nordhausen in February, 1799,² superiority of civilization, and of morality far surpasses, even transcends its immediate British equivalent, as her judgment borders the limits of pure idealism:

We had often seen in Goslar women inhabitants of the hills, but we did not *imagine* them to be so rude and barbarous a race as we found them. They carry enormous burthens in square baskets hung over their shoulders, their petticoats reach very little below their knees, and their stockings are dangling about their ankles without garters. Swellings in the throat are very common amongst them which may perhaps be attributed to the straining of the neck in dragging those monstrous loads. (217, italics mine)

What is remarkable in Dorothy's observation is the precedence of the imaginative over the perceptive, or the experiential; as demonstrated in the epigraph from Wordsworth's 1815 *Preface*, judgment, being the absolute motive behind theorizing perception, can function *nur* when boundaries – or stable, yet flexible frontiers or thresholds might be created for the *free play* of objective potencies *within* the universal range of *one* human mind. The conceptual then, is not standardized *a posteriori*; it seems as if an *a-priori* category with adequate perceptive range is unfurled, allowing the discriminative faculty to expand and approve its capacity for drawing inferences from objective phenomenon, engaging eligible opposites. When Dorothy uses the accusative “rude” and “barbarous”, the employability of imagined connotations of both adjectives within the above-mentioned contextual necessity, and their realistic deference from ideality is examined, not the other way round. The findings about “Goslar women inhabitants” – a perceptive category, creates a conception about their “race”, but does it create, or confirm the already created? The Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid, would vouchsafe for the creative category of conception post-perception, as elucidated in *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785):

[T]he words conceive, imagine, apprehend have two meanings...sometimes they express simple apprehension, which implies no judgment at all; sometimes they express judgment or opinion...[C]onception enters as an ingredient in every operation of the mind. Our senses cannot give us the belief of any object, without giving some conception of it at the same time (quoted in Ryan Nichols ed., pp.42, 44)

The “simple apprehension” expressed by Reid borders upon perception; apprehension is triggered at the point of contact between the subject and object. In the former, no judgments are implied because redundancy of objective interaction relies for interpretation on an *a-priori* concept. Dorothy's

point, *a la* Reid, is based on her perception of the Goslar women; it is her understanding, upon simple perception, that enforces her doxastic stand. But the apprehension of her object of sight does not enforce her conclusion, but reinforces it. Her judgmental self is a testimony of perception that applies imagination to the task of conceptualization as per her intuitive remonstrance of their demeanour. Conception is grounded in her imagination, or in the inadequate application of it when unapprehended by vision. Therefore, the judgment expressed is moderate, and reiterated through descriptive emphasis. This amalgam between the mind and object, between conception and perception, I argue, is harmonious, not in a companionate but hierarchical manner, although one remains ambivalent of the nature of the hierarchy till this point. Wordsworth's effusion on the complex relationship between mind and body in Book Three of *The Excursion* heightens the tension hereafter:

Amongst these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
 To lonely nature's casual work: they bear
 A semblance strange of power intelligent,
 And of design not wholly worn away...
 Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
 That in these shows a chronicle survives
 Of purposes akin to those of Man,
 But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails. (Till ed. 80-91, emphasis mine)

Wordsworth does not think (about) what he sees; he sees what he *thinks*, or has *thought* what he *should* see, and recognize that he has seen it, following a particular line of thought – meaning that his vision is a product of an intellection which has already, to a favourable extent, categorized the outcome of perception prior perception. That is how the visual surplus, an aggregate of mind-body interaction, can be construed to exist.³ The “More than” in “lonely nature's casual work” is the amalgamation of mind and body in a hierarchical relation, mind occupying the superior *stellung*. The semblance of “power intelligent” is strange, rather ambivalent, echoing the uncertainty of Dorothy's descriptive epistle to Coleridge. Strangeness bears the transcendental morality of intellection on one hand and the reifying gothic on the other (“some shadowy intimations haunt me here”), fulfilling the function of dialectic synthesis (of aesthetic purposiveness) in a limited sense (“And of design/Of purposes...akin to those of Man”). It is *auch* where Wordsworth departs decisively from the “mind-independent” (Nichols ed., 113) philosophy of Reid with regards to perception, arguing in favour of an amalgamation with perception firmly in the conceptual chamber of imagination. How does the Poet incorporate this poetics of hierarchy in his poetry? Who exploits the

limitations, the drawbacks of Wordsworthian poetics, and how? Is the exploitation of Poetic limitations parodic in a subversive sense?

This essay is divided into two sections. In the first, I analyse William Wordsworth's *Nutting* (composed 1798-99, published 1800), delineating the poetics of concept/precept hierarchies, and their resultants. I shall exhibit briefly, why Wordsworthian poetics forms the crux of English Romantic thought. In the final section of the essay, I shall illustrate the subversion of Wordsworthian poetics in John Clare's *Nutting* in *Poems of the Helpston Period (1812-1831)*, and the literary and philosophical significance of such subversion, leading to an expansion, as well as decentralization of the canon of Romantic poetics vis-à-vis Wordsworth, followed by a conclusion on its parodic potential.⁴

The published version of *Nutting*, in the 1800 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* begins with four monosyllabic words, and an incomplete line preceded by parenthesis:

It seems a day,
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die; (de Selincourt ed., 211, ll. 1-3)

Wordsworth's ambiguous "seems" in the first published line of the poems succeeds the ambiguous semantics of the parenthesis, which should have housed six syllables in order to fulfil the blank verse, Miltonic structure of the verse lines. Thus, the premonition of linguistic unfulfilment through parenthetical evasion leaves more to the imaginative potential of absent words, and one could argue that "seems" proceeds "seems", i.e. the subjective potential for linguistic clarity precedes the objective shape/ambivalence that the written "seems" provides to the verse line. The perceived line is preceded by the imagined, conceptual potential of the incomplete line, followed by the guttural, almost aside-que value of the second line in brackets, leading to the speculation, whether the statement, the written word should be read as an objectively expressed/perceived line, or the peroration to another parenthetical, subjective/conceptual revelation. This complication progresses to the enjambment in the third line where the repetition of "day" in "heavenly days",⁵ "one", egotistic implications of "I speak" over the pluralist implications of "many" (followed immediately by "singled out") and the litotic "cannot die" instead of live, symbolizes the immortality of the poetry-subject yet unintroduced by the poet, giving priority to speculative imagination over the experiential. Wordsworth has already prioritized the conceptual immortality of anecdotal

experience *prior* experience, before proceeding towards objectively manifesting himself in the parenthetical deprivation prevalent in the poem:

and turned my steps
Toward some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been *husbanded*,
By exhortation of my frugal *dame* – (7-11, italics mine)

As he “turns” (I use it in the Hertzian sense, witnessed again towards the end of the Poem where “I turned/exulting”, physical movement transposed for the empirical) towards the uncertainty of discourse (“some far-distant”), he consciously isolates himself from civilizational framework(s) by retiring into the “wood”, which in *Old English* was synonymous with madness.⁶ The disguise is proud, not because of the peculiarity of his attire, but because it is in the primal constitution of his “cast-off weeds” that the poet can activate the discriminative, as well as the assimilative tool of his being which has entered its unconscious. It is in the *sicherheit* of madness that one can Individuate, so to speak, as Wordsworth *seems* to assert. The enjambment in the first line, followed by the enjambment in the third maintains the uncertainty of imaginative produce, but solidifies the idea that progress is made in terms of experience. The poet-subject can figuratively gender his own state of being, and in this process, it *seems* like he *figures* himself antagonistically to his ‘Other’, the poet’s “my frugal dame” (here Wordsworth’s mother figure, Ann Tyson), who husbands him into his current state through her exhortations. As soon as the poet can feminize his ‘Other’, he attempts to conceptualize his own ‘Self’ as masculine, a few lines before the virgin scene in the poem would come into light, and on which the gendered disquisitions of the poem are generally based.⁷ It can be witnessed by the trisyllabic “husbanded” in the fourth line preceding the trisyllabic “frugal dame” in the fifth, the subtle difference being that despite the masculine and the dame sharing similar line positions, the former has the positional prerogative of being one word in comparison with the latter which requires two. Added to this is the enigma of parenthesis, the uncanny repetition of the repressed imagination/perception conflict from the beginning of the poem – is Wordsworth unsure whether his conceptualization of himself, in this current scenario, is led by the “dame”, or is it identified with the dame for the sake of an immediate, objective reference? I argue that the “dame” is comprehensive perception; that which is shaped initially by perception and later in opposition to it, albeit ambiguously, is both extra-perceptual because it simultaneously posits itself as figured by (“by exhortation of”), and yet superior to it in the universal scheme of things. Before the Poet individuates, nature has been

gendered; the poet discriminates between the ambivalent, masculine ‘Self’ and the feminine ‘Other’; moreover, the ‘Self’ had always possessed his ‘Other’ (“my frugal dame”), which can be re-configured into Wordsworth’s poetical statement that perception is feminine, while the extra-perceptual is *contra* feminine, representing what Harold Bloom referred to as “the glance of potential possession” (125). The *contra* feminine possesses the female, as perception is possessed by the extra-perceptual – the Self apparently possessing his Other.

So far, the poem has managed to evade one question: assuming that its structure encourages its hieratic genders, or my original point of departure that the extra-perceptual concept has hierarchized precept(s), how does it interact with perception *per se*? Having witnessed the “virgin scene”, a roundabout manner of conceptualizing an un-conceptualized perception is initiated:

-A little while I stood
Breathing with such *suppression* of the heart
As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet; (21-25, italics mine)

Parenthetical ambiguity continues to haunt the poem; the poet’s Freudian slip is noticeable as “suppression” makes its appearance in the second line, and multiple enjambments barely suppress the intermingling – rather, the entanglement of Wordsworthian consciousness with its unconscious. The occasional caesurae attempts at psychological demarcation, but to little effect, because, as the poet confesses amidst multiple poetical effects (signifying poetic license – enjambments, caesuras, alliterations, assonances, etc.) that he is under negligible Oedipal surveillance. The fearlessness from “a rival” situates Wordsworth’s poem at a juncture where the superego’s absence upon virginal perception is his clearance for creating, exercising and experimenting his imaginative potential for conceptualization without prevailing judgments. This is also where Individuation begins, as eyeing “the banquet” is paronomasiac – marking it symbolizes possession as well as ‘I’-ing it, appropriating the perceived its proper, psychic space. Wordsworth prepares his conquest vis-à-vis Imagination, a combination of “wise restraint” (co-operation between imagination and perception, leading to concepts) and fearlessness (where imagination coerces perception into submission, concepts emerging from an act of violence). It is also an exhibition where this ambiguity is laid to rest, as the Poet prepares himself for his final retreat from madness into civilization. Co-operation is practiced when:

Beneath the trees I sate

Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
 A temper known to those who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blest
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope. (25-29)

Nature's acceptance of (accession to?) Wordsworth's childlike surrender places him "beneath"; it is the doubling of positional accuracy and satisfaction, represented by the connotations of "sate". Co-operative arrangement between imaginative innocence and perceptive joy induces this conceptual "play" conducted harmlessly, since the tree (which is a Freudian metaphor for pubic hairs) wilfully parts with its surplus.⁸ Imagination precedes virginal satisfaction, emphasized by the primal ambiguity of two phrases, "those who" and "after long/and weary expectation", suggesting the *déjà vu* hieratic order between concepts and precepts; the poet's conceptualization of his perceptive experience is the recollection of a conceptual probability *a priori*, and the absoluteness of its *plotzlich* resurrection ("sudden happiness beyond all hope"). In its cooperative state, both mature and immature conceptions precede perception(s) by abstracting experience, individuating ("I played") it epistemologically ("a temper known") from its virginally conceptual state, meaning conceptual inexperience. This completes one half of the Wordsworthian poetics in *Nutting*, involving the aforementioned amalgam, the second half (epistemologically speaking, the better half) being manufactured through coercive action ("Forcing my way"):

Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage: and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being: (44-49)

"Beneath" is substituted by "up", and "I sate" by "I rose", steeply reversing Wordsworth's egotistical affirmation, as opposed to the passivity in the previous passage. The harmonious alliteration amongst "both", "branch" and "bough" suggests ubiquitous relinquishment by nature to the disharmony of "merciless ravage", compounded by the supererogatory syndeton "and", yoking the perceptive *under* the conceptual inferences of Wordsworthian violence, imaged through the heavy stress on "dragged". I propose that this coercion is committed with the objective of creating perceptual relics, (instead of perceptual excess) that suit the Subjective, noumenal universe of the poet-subject. The shadowy, Jungian underside of the poet's conceptual framework is dramatized through the transferred epithet in the "shady nook/Of hazels" as the verse structure arrives at a "quaint" harmony/reconfiguration between enjambments and caesuras. The ontological assurance that Nature had pos-

sessed previously is *introjected* by the Poet-subject, leaving it “Deformed and sullied”, but subordinate to the Poet’s afore-mentioned conceptual dogmas (“patiently gave up/Their quiet being”). What is the anecdotal significance of such narrative poetics? As Wordsworth concludes by saying:

Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch – for there is a spirit in the woods. (54-56)

The anecdote is identified as the subjective drama thaws, and the introduction of the object (“dearest Maiden”, perhaps a reference to Dorothy or Lucy, introduced in his earlier versions) renders the poem pedagogical. “Move” can be read as a conflictive *auswahl* between the imperative and instructive, relocating the action from the madness of “far-distant wood” to the epistemological approximations of civilization (“there is a spirit in the woods”). As Geoffrey Hartman rightly asserts, the subject of this psychological drama “is not the life in nature, or its secret manifestation, but how the child’s wilful consciousness matures into the sympathetic imagination” (75). The child’s will matures when his masculine categorical imperative is employed to subjugate amoral, feminine nature through apocalyptic sympathy, synonymous with Coercive cooperation.

What name can be given to the amalgam between conception and perception in the poetics of “Nutting”, as we conclude our analysis? I recommend the portmanteau word, *Conperception*, a neologism that might be utilized to define the suzerainty of the conceptual over the perceptual through cooperation and coercion, resulting in an introjective transfer which delivers the anecdotal significance of psychological action. How John Clare subverts Wordsworthian poetics, and to what end, shall form the final section of my essay.

Clare’s reception of Wordsworth, and of Wordsworthian poetics is nothing short of enthusiastic equivocalness.⁹ This is on full display from the introductory lines of his ‘Nutting’:

The sun had stooped his westward clouds to win
Like weary traveller seeking for an Inn
When from the hazelly wood we glad *descried*
The ivied gateway by the pasture side (Robinson and Powell ed., 131, ll. 1-4, italics mine)

Notice that none of the lines are end stopped or punctuated; it is an act of direct disagreement against Wordsworth’s carefully punctuated lines, where pauses indicate alternating stasis and motion. Clare, on the other hand, indulges in automatic writing, neutralizing the probability of that *in-between*

introspection, or speculation halting the perceptual authenticity and clarity of his sonnet. Moreover, Wordsworth's Miltonic blank verse (*Nutting* was originally intended for *The Prelude*) narrates the conceptualization of a boy growing into his masculinity; Clare perceptualizes his poem, maintaining gender indislosures and pluralizing presences ("we", "our" hence communitarian) instead of Wordsworthian individuation. What is the source – rather, what stimulates the "gladness" of the poet, apart from what he *actually* claims as his source of pleasure? I argue, that Clare is not glad at having perceived the "ivied gateway"; instead, he is glad, simply because he is capable of descrying, since the Sun (one could claim, Clare's Sun) had "stooped", or betrayed the Poet's trust, failing to facilitate him, repressing his enthusiasm to descry. Fearing Absolute repression, Clare is "glad" that he has, as the Poet-subject, reduced it to partial repression, in defiance/defence of/against the betrayal of his absolute light-source that has set. Clare can barely suppress his discontent from being prevented the pleasure(s) of absolute perception by metaphorizing (that is, exploiting the linguistic equivocalness of the hyperobject) the Sun – personifying it as an act of psychological solace, since it would deny the celestial object its dynamic agency, its absoluteness. Retrieving partial perception can also be posited as an argument in favour of Clare's cognizance of perception as the Center of his own introjected version of the Solar system, where the Sun, here perception, cannot set. This hybridity can be witnessed in Clare's choice of words: the adjective "hazel" hybridizes into its adverbial form "hazelly", "wood" has been chosen to convey the restoration of the Poet's madness at the Sun's demeanour, not to mention the projection of a relative adverb clause at the beginning of the third line. It is followed by the absence of a verb in the fourth line, where description functions as a *distraction* from the poet's psychological response to the ambiguity. Metaphors are concretized descriptively, almost *as if* it symbolizes a defence mechanism against fading, or turbid visual potency, a counter-reaction, broadly speaking, if not an overcompensation to the unfolding event, represented by the setting Sun/Sun-less-ness. What follows next is a *de facto* narrative-descriptive conquest by Perception, without any immediate consequences:

We left the wood and on the velvet bank
Of short sward pasture ground we sat us down
To shell our nutts[sic] before we reached the town
The near hand stubble field with mellow glower
Showed the dimmed blaze of poppys still in flower (8-12)

The threshold of perception is woven into the structure of Clare's sonnet; as the poet, with his cohorts, leaves the wood, they have, conceptually speaking, created an ammunition of nuts which could be harnessed, and materialized through the act of "shelling" (a military metaphor, symbolizing perceptual

conquest by invading nature's territory) pre-consumption. This transfer of agency from nature to the poet and his com-patriots (I continue to tinker with the military metaphor) is recorded in the implicit assertion present in "our nuts" instead of "nature's/their nuts"; Clare is undoubtedly Wordsworthian when sanctioning the transfer of power as well as possession, although there seems to be no conspicuous reference to coercion as a tool – an impossibility in Clare's poem, since perception is non-aligned with conceptual ends. The departure from anxious, density of perception ("We left the wood") to perceptual light-headedness ("short sward pasture") permits Clare's much required change of guard, identified through the paronomasiac "sat/sate", signifying satisfaction. This materialization of partial, or transient perception is short-lived, for "left the wood" is promptly followed by "reached the town" in the tenth line. A succession of activities ensure an a-conceptual, perceptive itinerary, something that Timothy Morton would rightly assert as Clare's "depthless ecology" (180).¹⁰ The afore-mentioned threshold narrows with references to the "mellow glower" and the "dimmed blaze"; uncannily enough, this is a return of the repressed – the *déjà vu* of perception's enthusiastic equivocality. To what extent is this unfamiliar counter-invasion natural? I argue that it is not natural, but human along two axes – first, the conceptual sustenance against cosmic resentment, i.e. resentment against cosmic determinism can only be transient, and human, as Clare cannot help but demonstrate in his lines. The "stooping" of the Sun cannot be counter-conceptualized by offering counter-perception. Secondly, Perceptual resistance, aimed at either conceptual annihilation or recession in its bid to democratize perceptual autonomy (read hierarchy) can, once again, be human ideology, with the potential for "human success" pitted against a dehumanizing cosmos. As the poem ends, departures return:

And sweet the mole hills smelt we sat upon
And now the thymes in bloom but where is pleasure gone (13-14)

One could substitute the word "pleasure" with perception, without causing any damage to Clare's meaning-making. Olfactory sweetness is contrasted with the non-olfactory present, the "now" of perceptive failure, which was beyond Clare's anticipation (Hence no end-stopped line, as the poet cannot navigate the direction(s) of his own perceptual trajectory. Also notice the uncanny return of "sat/sate", implying loss of satisfaction). It would not be a mistake to proffer that Clare had placed the cart before the horse, and "now" regrets its lack of movement. Even for the Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, perception is always finite, and always limited, irrespective of outcomes.¹¹ The open-ended vacancy of perceptive lack is succeeded by blindness, but its vacuum is theoretically marked by conceptual re-invasion, where the consciously jettisoned unconsciously un-jettisons itself, as an indispens-

able tail-ender of Clarean perception, or Clarean poetics – the antinomian *per-conception*, as I name it for my current purposes.

As I conclude the essay, I revert back to my explication of Wordsworthian poetics, and its Clarean (sub)version: if Clare's 'Nutting' challenges, parodies and subverts Wordsworth's central argument in his poem, would it be unfair to claim that *perconception* too, challenges the implications and consequences of *conperception*, at the anecdotal level, by parodying, subverting, revising and rewriting it? I would think so, and it is to be appraised as mutually deconstructive, where canonical Romantic poetics, and its central tenets are de-thematized, de-centered, and as I end by arguing, de-colonized. Clare undoes Wordsworth successfully.

Reference

1. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (V. 3), edited by W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser for OUP, 1974.
2. This letter is an important landmark in Wordsworth scholarship, as it carries his confession on his ignorance of the German language. To quote the Poet himself, "My hope was that I should be able to learn German as I learned French, in this I have been woefully deceived...in short sorry I am to say it I do not consider myself as knowing *any* thing of the German language" (221). Citations at the end of the essay.
3. For a worthwhile discussion on secondary vision, see "Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Illusion", by Reginald A. Foakes, published in *Reflecting Senses: Perception and Appearance in Literature, Culture and the Arts*, and edited by Walter Pape and Frederick Burwick for De Gruyter, 1995: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110889444>, especially pp.146, 148, 149 and 154.
4. A study of both poems vis-à-vis affect theory is available in Lisa Ottum's essay, "On (Not) Hugging Trees: Affect, Emotion, and Ecology in Wordsworth's Nutting", published in *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2016, pp. 257-281, especially the first paragraph on pp. 269. <https://doi.org/10.5325/intelitestud.18.2.0257>.
5. As James W. Pipkin has rightly argued, it is but a ruse for Wordsworth actual objective (subjective?), which is the "recognition of his own divinity" (17). See "Wordsworth's 'Nutting' and Rites of Initiation", published in *Interpretations*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1978, pp. 11-19. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23240439>
6. See this link: https://www.etymonline.com/word/wood#etymonline_v_10834
7. "Wordsworth needs the hierarchy of gender (male over female, masculine locution determining feminine location); he needs a female listener...and one who can be a central figure in the landscape once he attempts to vacate (by transcending) it" (395). *Conperception* would be the evolved, ideological version of Wordsworthian individuation from gender hierarchies. See "Naturalizing Gender: Woman's Place in Wordsworth's Ideological Landscape" by Marlon B. Ross, published in *ELH*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 1986, pp. 391-410. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2873262>

8. I have wilfully digressed from this discussion; see M.W. Rowe's "The Underthought in Wordsworth's 'Nutting'", published in *English: Journal of the English Association*, Vol. 44, No. 178, 1995, pp. 17-23, for a comprehensive, Freudian interpretation: <https://doi.org/10.1093/english/44.178.17>
9. A brief, but semi-comprehensive view of their complex inter-relationship has been arranged for by Adam White; see the section on 'Clare's view of Wordsworth' in "John Clare, William Wordsworth, and the Poetry of Childhood", published in *English*, Vol. 64, no. 247, pp. 312-334. OUP archives, doi: 10.1093/English/efvo30.
10. Morton terminology circumvents my methodology in this essay by arguing for Clare's "depthless ecology". If we assume that depthless denotes infinite, perceptual width assisted, even accompanied by the *terra nullius* of Conception, Morton himself has "birthed" "depthful ecology", if the reader would excuse my neologism – a condition anti-Clarean, and applicable to the *Conperceptive* Wordsworth. "Depthless ecology" could operate as a parody of (and parody as a tool of subversion against) "Depthful ecology", although the conditions for the parodic is built within my prodigal use of the paronomasiac "full".
11. "Perception, therefore, prepares the self to describe the world, but neither constructs nor constitutes that world. One consequence of this is that 'I cannot assimilate perception to syntheses that belong to the order of judgment, acts, or predication' (*Phenomenology* lxxiii)" (182). See Cassandra Falke's "Thinking with Birds: John Clare and the Phenomenology of Perception", published in *Romanticism*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2020, pp. 180-190. *Academia.edu*, <https://doi.org/10.3366/rom.2020.0463>. Accessed 2 April, 2022.

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Alienation, (Un)belongingness & Identity Crisis of the Kashmiri Pandits: A Close Reading of *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*

Munmun Pervin

ABSTRACT:

When we think of our roots, our nation, unconsciously we relate to the place where we were born, and sustained for generations, consequently we develop a sense of belongingness with the surroundings wherein we reside. But for some communities this sense of 'belongingness' has altered into the sense of 'unbelongingness' due to certain political upheavals and extreme racial prejudices of the dominant class compelling them to leave behind their hometown and settle somewhere outside their home. One such community is the Kashmiri Pandits who were forced to flee their homeland, the Kashmir valley. This led to a subsequent identity crisis, alienation among the Pandits and they lost the sense of nationhood. In 1989, the Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave the Kashmir valley in masses which they called the Exodus day. There were uprisings, and unrest in Kashmir, the Pandits were victimized. This paper attempts to analyse the mass exodus and the sufferings and alienation the Pandits underwent through a close reading of Rahul Pandita's *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, who himself is a Kashmiri Pandit and a victim of this insurgency. Rahul in his memoir narrates how his family was forced to leave the valley and lost connection with their home. These people faced a National identity threat. This paper focuses on circumstances that resulted in the mass exodus, the sense of unbelongingness among the Kashmiri Hindus, their Identity crisis and alienation. Also I would attempt a study of

Kashmir post-1990 and the present situation of the Pandits along with the measures that could be adopted to achieve a unified India.

KEYWORDS: Kashmiri Pandits, belongingness, identity crisis, Nation, mass exodus

Kashmir is an excellently beautiful valley that faced the trauma of communal tension since the independence of India. Speaking broadly, during 1990s an insurgency shattered Kashmir affecting the geography of India. There was a rise of communal upheaval in Kashmir in 1989 which compelled a community, namely the Kashmiri Pandits, to migrate from their native land. They lost the sense of belongingness, nationhood. In Post-colonial perspective this migration is often referred as extermination of certain ethnic groups.

I intend to analyse such identity crisis, the sense of unbelongingness by a close reading of Rahul Pandita's *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, which reveal the pain of exile in the minds of this displaced community. This lack of belongingness was a consequence of a mass event, 19th January 1990, the Kashmiri Hindus named the day as "exodus day" since they were compelled to flee from Kashmir forcefully. In order to escape the affliction the Kashmiri Hindu Pandits migrated in mass. In this paper, I shall try to focus on the socio-political background resulting this insurgency along with the identity crisis, lost nationhood and sufferings of the Kashmiri Pandits through the memoir *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, written by Rahul Pandita who happens to be a Kashmiri Pandit and a living witness of the atrocities that fretted his family during the exodus. We would also consider the solutions and steps that could be taken to cope communal upheavals in our country and strive towards democratic India by promoting fraternity among the diverse ethnic groups in India including the Hindus and Muslims.

A SHORT HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE KASHMIRI PANDITS:

Before taking into account the socio-political background we take a glimpse at the history of Kashmiri Pandits which dates back to Aryan Saraswat Brahmins who actually settled in the Kashmir valley, eventually they came to be known as the Kashmiri Pandits. The first belongingness crisis they faced was when the Muslim invaders tried to establish their rule over the territory and these people couldn't comply with Muslim regime.

During the 11th century Muslims were in an attempt to consolidate their supremacy over the dominion. During Sikandar Sultan's tenure, several mosques were built in Kashmir and Islam was gradually gaining its influence in the Kashmir valley. When the Mughals came to power, during Emperor Akbar's

tenure the Hindus enjoyed religious freedom as it was a secular state. But with the accession of Aurangzeb, secularism was not followed. After the Mughals, the Afghans ruled the territory of Kashmir, and the Pandit community couldn't comply to their rules also. Lastly came the Dogra dynasty who were tolerant to the Kashmiri Pandits but they remained hostile to the Muslim community. The last Dogra ruler Hari Sing joined hands with India, and Kashmir kept on falling in the hands of different rulers time to time, but the people inhabiting this region couldn't achieve a peaceful life, and the tension of nationhood and sense of unbelongingness continued in the hearts of the Kashmiri people residing this valley for the later decades to come.

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITION PRIOR TO THE INSURGENCY:

A careful study of *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* shows that the text throws light on the history and socio-political circumstances that led to the rise of the insurgency in Kashmir during the nineties. Rahul Pandita narrates his sufferings as a Kashmiri Pandit in his memoir *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, which tells about the painful story of homelessness of the Kashmiri Pandits. The author was exiled at the age of fourteen along with his family. The agony of exile is witnessed in Pandita's book where he writes: "At fourteen we knew we were refugees, but we had no idea what family meant. And I don't think we realized then that we would never have a home again" (12).

Kashmir was incorporated into India by Maharaja Hari Singh during the 1947 who signed the Instrument of Accession to save Kashmir from the British colonialists. After this event a lot of incidents happened in the valley of Kashmir which will be considered shortly. Sheikh Abdullah agreed to the conditions, the central government of Jammu and Kashmir set, and gave nod to include the state of Jammu and Kashmir within the map of India. Sociologists like Farooq Faheem opined that the insurgency was a consequence of the clash among the Kashmiri natives. The policy was abruptly opposed by the Jamaat-e-Islami Kashmir, Peoples League in Indian Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front.

The rage of Kashmiris against Indian government was triggered and there were terrorist upsurges in Kashmir in the early 80s. The young people of Kashmir protested and demonstrated against India, but the state forces suppressed them strong-handedly.

Abdullah was on the verge of losing his power and many allegations were thrust upon him, one being, he invited the Khalistanis in Jammu. Eventually Abdullah died in a political "coup" and G.M. Shah acquired the position of chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir. But slowly Gul Shah's government tried to impose Islamisation which the Pandits couldn't accept. This ulti-

mately leads to Hindu Muslim tension and Jammu people started protesting. Again, Gul Shah shouted the slogan “Islam khatrey me hai” (Islam is in danger) henceforth, Kashmiri Muslims became hostile to Kashmiri Hindus and this way the Hindu Muslim relation remained bitter. However, Gul Shah’s tenure came to an end, and the dismissal was enforced by the governor Jagmohan who later continued to rule Jammu and Kashmir independently. Hence, a political clash took birth among the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir.

Again, the Muslim United Front was formed and the Islamists gathered under this organization whose first and foremost objective was to unify the Muslims against the government and to contest election. But in 1987 they couldn’t win the election and Congress won the election which brought a new unrest ultimately leading to Kashmir insurgency. Kashmiri Hindus, in particular, were decimated recklessly as they were perceived as representative of India and its culture, I quote here: “With the eruption of Pakistan-sponsored armed insurgency in Kashmir in 1989, Pandits became soft targets for the militant outfits who wanted to wipe out the ‘Indian element’ and liberate Kashmir from India” (Gigoo, Sharma,1).

Subsequently, there were groups like the JKLF tried to establish their rule, they prompted to enforce equality for all but as their model had Islamic tone, it propounded Islamic democracy rather than popular democracy, so it failed somehow to convince public minds. Whatever be the socio-political scenario, whether miscalculated steps or poor political strategies we are left with a community whose National identity was under threat due to the political instability of Kashmir. These people were forced to be displaced and leave behind their roots, cultures and sacrifice all the emotional attachment and belongingness with their native land due to continuous political turmoils.

THE PANDITS AND THEIR LOST BELONGINGNESS, THEIR IDENTITY:

When we ask someone about their nationality and native place, it sounds like a simple question though sometimes it becomes difficult to answer for certain ethnic groups who no longer reside and relate to their native homes. They had to leave behind not only their homes but also cut all the relations with their homeland. The Kashmiri Pandits are one such community as discussed above who faced identity crisis and remained refugees in their own country, where they were victims of certain socio-political circumstances. They took shelter in refugee camps and fled to different parts of India like Jammu, U.P, Delhi etc. The dismay and dread of the autocracy, the Pandits were subject to could be witnessed in the memoir *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*. Rahul Pandita is a journalist and author whose book carries a vivid

portrayal of the memories of the insurgency and the difficulties they underwent. Rahul being a Kashmiri Pandit pours out in his book how they were forced to become refugees in their own lands, the drudgery, sufferings, afflictions of the exodus. He writes: "I knew I was in permanent exile. I could won a house in the city, or any other part of the world, but not in Kashmir valley where my family came from" (Pandita, 13-14).

Rahul in his bestseller narrates an incident where his family got the tinge of lack of nationhood, a milk supplier to their household would ask why do you invest money on building large house as you may not own this property time ahead, this remark of the milkman agitated young Rahul quite often. *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* shows the torment, the sufferings and difficulties of these refugees who were internally displaced and lost belongingness to their homeland during the Kashmir insurgency:

Who knew then that the decades letter a terror will come to Srinagar?
and I will be unable to see my home where I was born
Where we had played cowries on many new snows.
The terrorists want us to bury our past.
forget the deeds of our ancestors. (Shaheem, 232)

This small extract of the poem *Snow in Srinagar* by Subhas Kak, clearly mirrors the twinge of the migrant poet who had to abscond his deep-rooted home to escape the fury of Kashmir insurgency. Rahul Pandita too in his memoir pens down parallel mental agony. During my research, I came across an interview where Pandita recounts that the 'idea of home' is keen to them and recalls how they were wiped off. He quoted slogans came like "We want our territory without the Pandits." He asserts those were dark days, they underwent. Rahul's family became victim of the communalism as Rahul's brother Ravi was shot to death by terrorists. But these Kashmiri Pandits reckon that no other people can sense their trouble, dilemma and despondency. No one can empathize the hardships they have been through as Rahul remembers that his friend merely consoled him by naming Ravi's death as destiny. *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* echoes the unheard grief of the refugees who mourn their past lives that was vehemently destroyed by the mass upheaval.

KASHMIRIS POST-1990S AND STEPS TOWARDS FRATERNITY:

Not the entire community of Kashmiri Pandits fled the valley. According to news reports around 1000 Pandits continued to live in two major villages of Kashmir, Uri and Laigama. Currently the number of Pandits residing the valley is almost 1860, another statistics suggests nearly 3400 Pandit are left in Kashmir. However in the course of my research, I found the fact that

divided opinions arise regarding the number of deaths and the number of people who escaped the valley. Nonetheless in my viewpoint whatever the recorded/unrecorded number maybe we must not overlook even a single death. Post-insurgency the health conditions of the Pandits and their children deteriorated. There was a drastic change in their social strata and some were victims to mental ailments. These Pandits never imagined that they wouldn't visit their homes again while fleeing the valley as they were assured of their return within three months, which unfortunately didn't happen even after thirty years of the exodus. Women living in the refugee camps were in terrible conditions, their mental and physical torture reached such a peak that they had their 'menopause' even before the age of forty. Their economic conditions also declined heavily. Most of them sold their home at a very low price or just relinquished them.

Although the governments that came to power within the span of this period hold to have taken adequate measures for these displaced Pandits and ensured proper justice to this community. The government of India, in 2008, launched various schemes to extend financial assistance, to fortify educational facilities and jobs to the Kashmiri Pandits. The government dissolved the Article 370 and 35A in 2019 to ensure equal opportunity, integrity among the Kashmiri people and a unified democracy throughout India. Sadly those are far from corroborating solidity and ensure homeland to this internally displaced group. They are still discontented and disappointed with the government and sue for their homes as Sander outlines: "The Brahmins' outmigration from the valley is perceived by the community as an attempt to protect its religious identity" (Chowdhari, 18).

CONCLUSION:

Examining the mass event while keeping a simultaneous reading of Pandita's memoir, I can opine that the Identity crisis of Kashmiri Pandits persists even today, they face utter difficulty in sustaining their culture and ethnicity since many of them settled in different parts of India. We find the older generations ardently desire for their homeland while the younger generations don't want to return to their old homes, hence aren't over-attached. Again, the practice of inter-cultural marriage has also contributed to the endangering of their 'root' Kashmiri Pandit identity. Therefore it can be opined, even after thirty years of the mass migration, the desire for home is unfulfilled and goes hazy with time. The longing for home just remains a memory as Rahul Pandita concludes his memoir: "I will return permanently. I don't write it. That I say to him in my mind" (451).

Hence, it may be said, unified Democracy and Sovereignty would be

realized if we all bind in Fraternity keeping aside our cultural differences, which would ultimately strengthen the sense of belongingness and nationhood among us.

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Locating Identity in the Mundane: The Case of Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

Shubham Dey

ABSTRACT:

The politics of conceiving identity has predominantly been premised upon sentiments akin to the sensational and the hyperbolic. The trope of visibility and ostentation attached to the process of identity formation asserts a regime of representation which refuses to acknowledge the mundane and the quotidian dimensions of everyday life as the viable ground for identity politics. The present paper will devote itself to showing how the impulse to agency and subjecthood can also derive its relevance from the most ordinary and non-spectacular social practices and thereby present itself as an alternative to the received modes and procedures of forging an identity. The text that has been chosen here as the object of analysis is Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

KEYWORDS: Identity, Hegemony, Ordinary, Patriarchy, Selfhood

The cultural practice of conceiving identity in the grandiose and the extraordinary has been traditionally viewed as the necessary and viable mode available in the assertion of one's self and subjectivity. It appears that in order to be visible, to make oneself heard, it is impossible for one to do without invoking a certain degree of the rituals of performance and dramatization. In this sense, the practice of fashioning an identity is intrinsically related to those tropes of culture which constitute the epic and the spectacular. This is best understood if we closely follow the dynamics of relationship

in a play-performance between the protagonist and the audience: the terms of the play dictate that the hero be a man capable of performing extraordinary deeds, that he surpasses a layman in eloquence, that his disposition remains harmonious with the prevailing notion of virtue of the day. The expected pedagogic response of the audience to all this is invariably one of admiration and adulation. This theatrical intervention makes a good deal of sense by hinting at the necessary relation that exists between the theatrics of identity-formation and the response towards it in the form of admiration, or more precisely, sympathetic recognition. The semblance of a mission or a project awaiting its accomplishment implies the effect of grandeur and magnificence that the process of identity-formation necessarily entails. Dazzling events of May Day parades, pride marches, and performances of such kinds derive their relevance from elaborate rhetoric, extravagant gestures and privileging of the event in history. It appears that *admiration* (emphasis mine), or more precisely, political legitimacy is not gained as long as identity is not imagined in the heightened effects of the visual and the graphic. This hegemonic mode of doing identity is, therefore, inseparable from what Michel Foucault calls “regime of truth” (*Government* 94). In Foucauldian terms, the truth of identity resides in its identification with and ceaseless sacralization of the socially-sanctioned statements that circulate as discourses in a society. This gives us the necessary cue to think that identity is not grounded on a fixed, primordial essence, but that it is mediated and is precisely the effect of regulatory regimes. If all manifestations of identity are nothing but mere strategies of performing certain socially-sanctioned ideal, then any alteration in the existing set of arrangements must also bring about a plethora of strategic possibilities to perform and fashion alternative identities.

The present paper attempts to question and contest the hyperbolic impulse attached to the normative mode of imagining identity and try to demonstrate how an entirely new poetics of identity is possible by resuscitating meaning in the lived experience of the mundane and the ordinary. The text, that I choose here as the object of my study, is Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. In the course of the paper, it will be revealed how Celie’s search for self eschews the grand and gaudy narratives of Black identity-politics, evident in the likes of the Black arts and Black Power Movement. Because those movements were dominantly male-based protests against white suppression and black liberation, their ethic was defined by the cult of the extraordinary and the spectacular. No wonder then whatever bespeaks of the ordinary and the everyday was dismissed by them as disempowering and ineffectual in the fight against Black oppression. In Walker’s novel, Celie’s journey towards self-consciousness coincides with a new scene of identity-formation which draws its strength from the most non-seductive and non-spectacular dimen-

sions of human experience. That the ordinary and the mundane can also serve as the horizon of one's identity can best be viewed in the process in which Celie's disavowal of the stable markers of identity leads her towards a reconstruction of the self—at once black and feminist.

With her work, Walker has created a text that manifests itself as an artistic production in which the choice of epistolary form is essential to the shaping of an identity. Despite being bereft of the aura of mainstream creative platforms like novels, poetry and music, the practice of interlocution by means of letters is effective in creating new horizons for expressing and recreating black women's consciousness. Josephine Donovan identifies the earthiness of the genre by pointing to its use "exclusively by women because of their inferior education and because of the fact that such writings were not expected to be published. Less used by males, who were exposed to a classical education and whose writing style was patterned after classical models, letter writing was a means of describing domestic life, and was more informal, artless." ('Silence' 212-13). The letters which Celie writes to God and Nettie serve as the contexts against which questions concerning the legitimacy of a particular form of identity are revisited and subsequently critiqued. In a space which interweaves more than one woman's voice, the letters function not merely as terrain of struggle and contestation but also as robust strategy to counter the political orthodoxies of a black male world. A victim of sexual torture on countless occasions, Celie has only her letters to God as a means of articulating her pain. Her choice to confide her intimate secrets to God is a decision that proceeds from her bitter experience of isolation among men (Pa and Albert) whose deeds have tormented and traumatized her. The forceful silencing of a woman involved in the act of rape not only implies physical overpowering or suppression, but also suggests the disappearance of the standard modes and structures of expression through which women can relate such experiences.

A great deal of historical, anthropological and linguistic research have shown that women in different societies have taken recourse to inventing procedures of expression aimed at resisting the silence imposed upon them in public life. In different societies, women have created new myths and rituals of communication which draw profusely from their emotional and instinctual lives and which reject the codes of patriarchal speech infested with euphemism and circumlocution. In her essay 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', Elaine Showalter observes that in certain feminist criticism "the essence of women's language is its secrecy (191)." She speaks of ethnographic evidence in certain cultures which tell us that "women have evolved a private form of communication..." (192) and which is radically uncompromising and irreducible to the patriarchal paradigms of understanding women

and their experiences. The spontaneity of feminine speech spills over the rational boundaries of male speech, giving rise to a new space which can only be claimed by women. As a matter of example, we can cite the peculiar case of George Bernard Shaw's heroine in his eponymous play *Saint Joan*. In the play, Joan has her own ways of establishing link with divinity; she relies upon her instinct to perceive the signs that God use to communicate with her. The tremendous emotional force of her prayers and intuition becomes a language in its own right which her contemporaries ignore or, at worst, consider as madness. However, the traits of "secrecy" (191) and obscurity which characterize women's language (drawing on from Showalter's observation) can be viewed as having bearing with the reality of the *ordinary* and the *banal* (emphasis mine) because such traits do not become the subjects of epics and legends. In her choice of the epistolary form of communication, Celie, therefore, is not only announcing a deviation from the more popular and mainstream literary genres, but also from the attitudes and significations attached with them. The letters find meaning in the context of the ordinary as Celie has no obligation to be aesthetically or politically self-conscious while writing them, especially because the letters are addressed to God. Besides, the absence of craft in the letters or, to be more precise, editorial interventions suggest that the letters eschew the trope of the rhetorical and hence not bound by any imperative to enchant the readers.

Besides letters, Walker incorporates into her narrative another art form which, because of its ordinairiness, does not fit comfortably within the dominant coordinates of identity-formation. "Spinning, sewing and weaving", as Lindsey Tucker observes, "have long been seen as mundane occupations of women, but less with art" ('Emergent' 87). In recent times, however, Walker has pointed out that a number of so-called decorative arts are held to be trifling and insignificant, much like letter writing, because of their impotence to capture the attention of the public. Quilting operates as a significant metaphor for Walker because it involves transforming materials which are generally regarded as worthless into a useful object. According to Tucker, the beauty of quilting "...comes from the fact that the scraps are pieces of clothing which once belonged to individuals, and hence carry stories with them" (88). Such an artwork brings together all these stories of women into a common and shared space of experience. In many ways, therefore, quilting signifies feminine bonding, a gesture which offers a window to the many unheard stories of women. It functions as a launch pad for the identity politics of black women.

For Celie, sewing began as a lifeless and constraining practice which was, as it were, driving her to the moribund end of enervation; but gradually it acquires fresh significance as it goes further to symbolize newer and vital

relationships in her life and her bonding with women. When Celie stitches the name of her girl child, Olivia into her diapers, she not only succeeds in preserving her pre-Oedipal connection with her girl child, but also acquires the freedom to name her. It is not hard to see how a mundane preoccupation like sewing has, in this case, the potential to vouch a woman her much-needed agency to make choices and decisions in her life. Quilting, therefore, acts as a kind of “.....defence or, rather, a kind of affirmation” (‘Emergent’ 89) of a relationship rooted not in the grand myths of men, but in the amazingly prosaic continuity of routine activities.

It is interesting to note that before taking up the task of quilting, Celie was unable to address her husband with his real name. In her eyes, Albert appears as a subject of reverence—the utterance of whose name would amount, as it were, to committing blasphemy. Until Shug arrives, Albert, therefore, remains for Celie, Mr... This indicates that for Celie all men are threatening symbols or forces that exercise power over her. When Shug utters Albert’s name for the first time in the novel, Celie, for some time, struggles to figure out the identity behind the name—until finally, with the progress of the conversation, she recognizes that it was her husband, “Mr. __” (*Color* 6).

While Celie writes her letters keeping in view God as the sole audience, she seems to be ignorant of the cultural significations, the meanings and implications that the idea of divinity bears in popular imagination. In the initial stages of the novel, Celie’s intimacy with God might appear as the direct outcome of the absence of a reliable and trustworthy companion capable of allaying her fears and anxieties; some might find traces in it of a peculiar kind of mysticism that is born out of a reaction against a somewhat throttling existential crisis. Whatever be the explanation, it stands obvious that if Celie turns to God to redeem her situation, it is also true that she will redefine, if not reject, the same God to accommodate His presence with her gradually evolving consciousness. With all her eccentric yet logical speeches, a thunderous Shug Avery sets up the context for this transformation in Celie. God’s gleaming outlines in Celie’s imagination start to give themselves away as soon as Shug underlines the racist subtext entrenched in the representations of the white Bible in which, as Shug notes, white folks do “one thing and another, and all the colored folks doing is gitting cursed?” (*Color* 202). Shug helps Celie understand that the white man’s God with his grey beard and blue eyes is a close approximation of the Mayor of the city who does not listen to anything the colored say, “and if they do, they only listen long enough to be able to tell you what to do” (202). Celie also learns that God is attention-seeking just like men are, wanting people to go to church, sing in the choir and feed the preacher. The customary indifference with which men treat women explains why God could not give Celie anything more than a “lynched

daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa..." (199) and a sister whom she would probably never meet. Seeing through the racist and masculinist trappings of the idea of God, Celie rightly recognises the inadequacy of those glamorous narratives that claim to dispense justice and mercy to all.

Although God's hair is conked in the black Bible to suit the expectations of the black man, it does not persuade Celie into accepting Him as her savior. Celie's progression in consciousness is also associated with unraveling questions that takes into account the gender of God and the subsequent attitudes and prejudices that proceed from such status. At one point, Celie recognizes that God is "trifling, forgetful and lowdown" (199) because He is, above everything else, a man. With the examples of Pa and Albert at hand, she seems to consider that the link between patriarchy and violence is natural, unavoidable and it is the same link which also limits God to a definitive course of action. Celie is opposed to this God as He shares the same aura that surrounds the ideology of racism and patriarchy. Shug's amazing insights confirm that there is more (surplus) to God than hollow ostentation and pageantry and this surplus binds Him to whatever is simple and ordinary. Her observations make it amply clear that God:

..... ain't a picture show. It ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is everything.....And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found It. (202-3)

Here Shug brings God's status down from the importance of a *He* to the insignificance of an *It* (emphasis mine), thereby connecting the idea of divinity to anything and everything. This fluidity of the idea of God resists its representation in the seductive effects of the visual and the graphic. There is more to God besides just being a rhetorical bubble or a "picture show". With the exhaustion of the mythic dimension, God becomes *ordinary* (emphasis mine) just as trees are and like them He does "everything" to "git attention" from the humans (204). Shug rightly observes: "I think it pisses God off if you walk by the color purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it" (203).

In Walker's text, Celie's gaze becomes more authentic and consequently more complex as her efforts to discover herself take a route completely different from the established tropes of *Bildung* where emphasis is laid on the continuous upward movement or progression of the hero /heroine from the state of nature to his eventual acquisition of culture. Celie's journey towards a self-assertive, independent woman comes closer to a process where identity becomes an act of gathering, of connecting and tailoring the various bits and scraps of experience. There is none of the stylization and performance

that seems to inform invariably almost all sorts of identity politics. Such gestures inaugurate and foreground a fresh symbolic space where identity can be performed beyond the available tropes of self and selfhood. Such ways of reimagining identity in terms that are marginal and, to a large extent, anonymous offers ample scope to reflect on and redraw the borders that have previously dictated the fundamental rules of identity formation as well as the methods and procedures associated with it. It is, thus, justified to say that what Celie acquires as identity at the end of the novel is the effect of a strategy that relies for its nourishment on the demure silence of the everyday and the obvious. Perhaps this is because in spite of having a new home, a new career and a new self at the end of the novel, Celie refuses to change her speech patterns unlike Nettie who wears her language much like she wears Corrine's clothes—without any sense of authenticity and belongingness. It is for the same reason that Celie continues to regard silence in males as a positive character trait and language as oppressive.

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Cultural Hegemony, Films, India and the West

Sumit Majumdar

ABSTRACT:

Cultural Hegemony, a theory conceptualised by noted Italian philosopher and influential Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci in the early 20th Century explains how the state and capitalist strata use cultural avenues and ideologies to maintain power in societies, without the use of any sort of coercion or hard power, which veils the very act of imposing certain sanctions, so that they can materialise their intended interests while maintaining an untarnished image amongst the masses. Cultural Hegemony by the Western ‘developed’ nations over relatively lesser developed nations and their economy is a sustained affair. Asian economy, India included, suffers silently with Cultural Hegemony from the West. Apart from other macro sectors in economy, films are a distinct and effective means of propagation of Cultural Hegemony, which pervades through the minds of people and silently compels them to accept the superiority of the West.

KEYWORDS: Hegemony, Gramsci, Soft Diplomacy, Hollywood, Globalisation.

Cultural Hegemony as a concept was developed by an Italian philosopher and Marxist Thinker Antonio Gramsci, having roots in Karl Marx’s Capitalist Theory, which roughly states that the dominant ideology of society largely reflects the beliefs and interests of the ruling class, and those dominated and exploited by the ruling class, to churn out vested interests.

Gramsci held that bowing down to rule of the ruling class is materialised

by the spread of ideologies and ideas through social institutions and means like religious and educational institutions, media, etc., as these entities have got an unquestionably impartial image and have a considerable impact and reach into the personal lives and beliefs of the common masses, without the need of any coercion.

Cultural hegemony achieves its goal when the masses start believing that the socio-economic conditions of their society, are absolutely natural and not due to action or inaction by the ruling/dominant groups with vested interests. The ruling/dominant classes achieve domination by manipulating language, culture, morality and common sense.

In modern times, the concept of Cultural Hegemony has tweaked itself in forms of implementation, but the objective remains more or less similar. Cultural Hegemony has percolated into the mindset of the masses through channels like films, social media, advertisements and all forms of media in general. Be it films, products or brands of any sort, the economic superpowers have succeeded in impregnating in the thinking process of masses in the economically less powerful nations that the ideas, products and brands belonging to or sold by the former states are superior and inevitably important to the later ones, in order to attain a state of well-being or belonging to where they would be considered to be at par with the economic superpowers.

In this era of globalised and connected world, Cultural Hegemony is even easier to get propagated in the targeted areas/markets. It facilitates the age-old colonial strategy of selling products and services which could have been far better produced in the targeted nations, provided they got favourable conditions for thriving. Such products and services, which are often qualitatively lesser than benchmarks, are happily accepted and consumed by the targeted population, just because they have their origin in economically superior nations, who are none other than capitalists. This shows that the age-old Marxist theory regarding capitalism still holds true to this day, but certainly with a veil.

Films are one of the easiest means of conveying thoughts and messages to the intended audience, without the need of any sort of coercion. As films do not have any cultural boundaries, Hollywood movies have marked their presence throughout the world, more so in Asia, and India is no exception either. A host of Hollywood movies receive liberal funding directly or indirectly from the Western State agencies in the production process and have good relations and close ties between them, as the system is fully aware about the potential of films to be used specifically as a tool for churning out political and economic benefits. Investment in Hollywood films by the State agencies are often seen apparently as a capital investment to promote do-

mestic economy, but there is something beyond business and economy alone which plays its own role in diffusing soft power of these movies in the population of developing nations.

Other than its military and economic powers, the Western States have been keenly regular in diffusing cultural hegemony, throughout the world, who strive to establish their presence as good, safe and sage, against all evils, and as saviour of the world and mankind against all odds, in a subtle but effective manner. Being a soft power, the realism of films in programmed cinematic settings routes the audience psychologically to accept the superiority of the western world as a superpower, a saviour, devoid of any sort of negative elements through filmic hegemony, which in turn establishes itself cleanly into cultural hegemony. Apart from a lean clientele for the Korean film industry, a huge chunk of Asian movie-goers prefers American films over others, be it feature films, web-series, shorts or even docu-features. India, with none of its physical boundaries touching with that of the United States, does have a considerable clientele of movie-goers who prefer Hollywood over their very own and self-sufficient Bollywood, leave aside regional film industry, reportedly due to the sheer use of technology, high quality post-production, content and realistic stunts, and may be due to the fondness of American culture which they have inculcated throughout the long decades of Hollywood.

Several feature length movie series like the famous '007' Bond films with James Bond as the superhero- the agent, who would always walk that extra mile to save the nation from the evils and villains, most of whom are seen to be of Russian, Chinese, German or Cuban origin, even to the peril of his life, unfailingly establish Western Hegemony. Web- series of recent origin like 'The Olympus Has Fallen' also traverse on similar lines to establish the image of American Secret Services agents as the saviour of the President of the United States of America from a lethal trap, apparently designed by the United Kingdom, but later found to be done some other nation to do harm to the American nation, also slide the film to the court of Cultural Hegemony. The weapon systems shown in these films, including firearms, fighter planes, military equipment and so on, are widely popular in the developing nations, especially in the war-torn or war-prone nations, who eagerly put priority on the procurement of such weaponry from the economic superpowers at astronomical costs to gain military prowess over rival or enemy nations. The advanced nations encash such opportunity to sell off their defunct and out-of-service military technology and weaponry to these developing nations, who in turn channelise their national budget from more primary investments in healthcare, capacity building and education to procurement of such military gadgets, which often entail sizeable corruption in the process.

Apart from films, global premium brands are yet another tool which act

as soft power towards establishment of cultural hegemony. This process might be relatively of recent origin, but is very much effective in spreading cultural hegemony in society. Brand consciousness and obsession with brands have become quite obvious, distinctly apparent and are often related not only with changes in social and psychological behaviour, but also have become a pseudo status statement. The concept of 'brand' now refers to all such articles which, irrespective of their utility, are priced steeply and most interesting part lies in the joy and content with which people spend their hard-earned money to purchase and possess such articles, without even evaluating the very need to invest heavily on such premium brands. People often end up spending celestial amounts on these brands just to enter the elite club of individuals possessing such brands and show-off their affiliation with the premium strata of society. Interestingly, the 'brand value' of these articles often surpass their production costs and profits taken together, but the dedicated clientele knowingly delve into purchasing the premium branded articles, ending up in returning a huge profit margin to the brand proprietors and marking sizeable damage to the domestic brands, which otherwise are equally, if not more worthy for purchase, in terms cost, utility, repairability and quality. All such expenses so incurred by the people of a nation ultimately results in their economy to suffer losses, as there happens a definite 'drain of wealth' towards economically advanced nations from the economically developing/weaker nations.

Cultural Hegemony and related concepts and happenings so discussed hinge on a couple of theories. Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony, Theory of Realism, Neo-Realism, Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Colonialism and Soft Power Diplomacy are such theories which govern and impact upon the very concept and process of Cultural Hegemony.

Coined by Karl Marx, the theory of Marxism emerged as a result of oppressions created by the capitalist system in the middle of 19th century and can be summed up as a set of political and economic principles to lay scientific foundations of socialism. Neo-Marxism essentially filled the gap after Marx, considering the changes that happened in the society. Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony holds the concept of hegemony as the cultural, moral, ideological leadership of a group of nations or people over subaltern groups. Theory of Realism assumes that states are the main actors in international relations system and they act in their own interests, the Theory of Neo-Realism prioritises the role of power politics in the international sphere and sees competition and conflict as enduring features. Liberalism insists on the liberty of an individual in society as the main motto of public policy. Neo-Liberalism on the other hand banks on the economic liberalisation and resultant globalisation. Neo-Colonialism refers to the intangible pressure exerted by

economically developed nations on the not-so-developed ones by capturing their markets and economy. Soft Power Diplomacy, a relatively nascent concept proposed by Joseph S. Nye Jr. explains how developed nations exert and exercise soft power through diplomatic channels to get their work done, especially in war torn nations, by posing as guardians or peace-keepers and encashing their urge of military prowess to sell defunct military equipment at astronomical costs, which shred the already weak economy to pieces, thereby compelling the nations to take huge loans from the developed nations, which push them into a vicious cycle of debt.

Cultural Hegemony, which appeared in prominence as a concept under the aegis of Antonio Gramsci, has lived and aged well to date, and is expected to thrive so, with Hollywood films and premium brands being two prominent tools for its propagation. In this process, the presence of neo-imperialism or neo-colonialism can be subtly marked wherein the advanced nations are steadily exploiting the economically developing nations by capturing the market share for selling finished products and services with the use of soft power or soft diplomacy and tweaking the mindset of the masses into believing that whatever belongs to or connects to the economically advanced nations are fine and standard, thus clearly setting grounds for hegemony to roll. Cultural hegemony, to whatsoever degree it may appear to be apolitical, is definitely political and a strong tool of soft diplomacy in establishing a hold on economies and diplomatic relations globally, with long sustaining effects.

While it tries to ensure economic supremacy over the economically developing or under- developed nations, it strives to empower itself over the entire globe in terms of diplomacy using soft powers or soft diplomacy, that too very carefully under the veil of Cultural Hegemony, without using any sort of force or coercion, but impregnating carefully only the fabricated positive outcome into the mindset of people, so as to ensure unquestioned acceptance and evading the use of hard power in churning out vested interests. The concept and theory of Cultural Hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks during his imprisonment days in the early 20th century interestingly hold true till date and is expected to sustain in the long run throughout the globe, even in the post-globalised era.

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Modernization and Suicide: Comparative Assessment of the States of India

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ABSTRACT:

Suicide is much discussed and debated, has long been treated as psychopathology in different societies. Conventionally suicide is observed as psychological rather than social psychological. Suicide to Durkheim, is not everywhere linked with pathology, but controlled by some social causes. More generally Durkheim has proposed a definite positive relationship between the exposure to modernization of a particular society and levels of suicide prevailing there. Following this an attempt has been made in the present study to gauge the relationship (if any) between the level of socio-economic development of different states of India and rate /tendencies of suicide existing there.

KEY WORDS: Socio-economic development, modernization, social fact, collective inclination, suicide, rate of suicide

Suicide is generally defined as the act of killing oneself. As per conventional view, suicide is considered to be a result of insanity or a major health disease or the result of troubled relation between the individual and her/ his society. Regarding suicide, debates have been continuing in Western philosophy since the time of early Greeks and Romans. In the writings of many pre-Socrates philosophers like Pythagoras and his followers, suicide is considered to be a sin. The post-Socrates philosophers like Plato (1975), Aristotle (2009) etc. expressed similar conservative opinion regarding suicide. To them suicide

is unjust and unethical. Kant (1948) talked about the prohibition of suicide in his deontological ethics. Hume (1757) supported suicide as individual's phenomenon purely on a moral ground. In his 'Utopia' (2002), Thomas Moore, however, supported voluntary suicide for those who are suffering from painful and incurable illness. Thus, from the above account the idea of suicide and its philosophical reflection turn out to be highly contested. The debate concerning suicide is still unresolved.

Emile Durkheim, in his explanation of suicide seems to depart from all these and presented a uniquely sociological account of suicide. Finding out the correlation of suicide with social phenomena he declares that, the specific tendency of suicide in each society, '...must necessarily depend upon social causes' (Durkheim 1897, p. 97). Since suicide is caused by the causes external to any person, so if she/he commits suicide for those reasons then that should not be treated as her/his will or she/he cannot be held responsible for that. Durkheim's scientific realism, on the basis of such understanding seeks to conclude that suicide is social fact. This leads him to admit that the degree of integration of different societies like religious society, domestic society and political society have inverse influence upon suicide. Durkheim studied the variability of suicide rate by investigating suicide data in different European countries from 1841-1872. He finds that the high suicide rate in France Prussia, England, Saxony (an area in Germany) and Denmark to be the direct expression of increasing modernization of their social structures. Where the rate increases rapidly, it is symptomatic of individuality, secularity, free enquiry, divorce, small family etc. These are certainly the reflections of modern society. At this point, Durkheim claims that (1897, p. xvii) 'suicide shows up the deep crisis in modern society...'. While Durkheim is concerned about the dark side of individuality, Mill (1859) worshiped individualization. Mill stated (1859, p.88) '...liberty consists in doing what one desires and he does not desire to fall into the river'. So, suicide may not lie within the scope of individual's liberty. Marx in his writing *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 1844 (published in Bottomore, 1991, p.11) talked about alienation, we come across the issue of self-alienation which may lead individuals to commit suicide. Clearly, socio-economic variables related to the process of modernization might have some correlation with the trend and rate of suicide in modern societies (Chan, KP, et.al., 2001, Stack, S.2000 etc.). Keeping in tune with these debates, the present study attempts to focus on the perceived link between level of modernization/socio-economic development of various major Indian states and the trend and rate of suicide prevailing therein. Keeping into consideration the global concern with suicide as well as in India, the present study tries to unveil the deeper issues involved in it.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is primarily quantitative in nature. Adhering to an overall comparative framework, the study attempts to unveil the finer nuances involved in the complex relationship between the levels of socio-economic development and rates of suicide prevailing in various Indian states. For this, the study takes recourse to secondary data collected from various source like UNDP, WHO, World Bank, NCRB etc. Apart from these information have also been collected from different books, journal, archival sources, other print and electronic media. To bolster its findings statistically and to make the inter-state comparisons more objectively grounded Spearman's Rank Co-relation Co-efficient between several indicators of human development and the rate of suicide is employed. Following the lead of UNDP, 17 major Indian states are selected and listed in descending order according to their relative levels of socio-economic development in some of the indicators of the Human Development Index (HDI) like sex ratio, literacy, Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), degree of urbanization. The ranked states are classified into developed, developing and under developed categories by applying the quartile method.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENARIO:

To begin with, the present paper will make an attempt to describe the rates of suicide prevailing in various states of India along with their relative levels of socio-economic development.

TABLE: 1. STATES WISE SUICIDE RATES IN INDIA, 2020

RANK	STATES	SUICIDE RATE
1	KERALA	24.0
2	TAMIL NADU	22.2
3	KARNNATAKA	18.4
4	MADHYA PRADESH	17.40
5	MAHARASHTRA	16.1
6	WEST BENGAL	15.40
7	HARIYANA	13.7
8	ANDHRA PRADESH	13.40
9	ODISHA	12.2
10.5	GUJARAT	11.60
10.5	HIMACHAL PRADESH	11.60
12	ASSAM	9.30
13	PUNJAB	8.7
14	RAJASTHAN	7.20
15	JAMMU & KASHMIR	2.20
16	UTTAR PRADESH	2.10
17	BIHAR	0.7

Source: Accidental death and suicide in India 2020. (Available at: <http://ncrb.gov.in>)

Table: 1 reflects the states wise suicide rate in India 2020. Highest rate of suicide is reported in Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively. These are followed by seven states viz. West Bengal, Hariyana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Assam having a medium rate of suicide. Punjab, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh have reported indeed a low rate of suicide. Bihar is reported to have the lowest suicide rate in India in 2020.

TABLE: 2. STATE WISE LITERACY RATE IN INDIA, 2011

RANK	STATES	LITERACY RATE
1	KERALA	95.10
2	HIMACHAL PRADESH	88.95
3	MAHARASHTRA	88.70
4	TAMIL NADU	87.00
5	KARNATAKA	85.80
6	ODISHA	85.70
7	ASSAM	85.34
8	WEST BENGAL	84.80
9	UTTAR PRADESH	84.50
10	PUNJAB	83.20
11	MADHYA PRADESH	82.80
12	GUJARAT	81.84
13	ANDHRA PRADESH	80.10
14	RAJASTHAN	79.70
15	HARIYANA	79.16
16	JAMMU & KASHMIR	77.92
17	BIHAR	71.93

Source: www.censusindia.gov.in

Table: 2 describe the state wise literacy rate in India in 2011. Kerala stands as the highest literate state in India, closely followed by Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. On account of literacy, these are classified as developed states in India in the present study. Accordingly, Odisha, Assam, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are classified as developing states. Bihar with the lowest literacy rate in India preceded by Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Hariyana, Jammu & Kashmir constitute the underdeveloped states here.

TABLE: 3. STATE WISE SEX RATIO IN INDIA, 2011

RANK	STATES	SEX RATIO
1	KERALA	1058
2	TAMILNADU	987
3	ANDHRA PRADESH	978
4	ODISHA	972
5	HIMACHAL PRADESH	968
6	KARNATAKA	965
7	ASSAM	935
8	WEST BENGAL	934
9	MAHARASHTRA	922
10	RAJASTHAN	921
11	GUJARAT	920
12.5	MADHYA PRADESH	919
12.5	BIHAR	919
14	UTTAR PRADESH	898
15	JAMMU & KASHMIR	892
16	PUNJAB	876
17	HARIYANA	861

Source: www.censusindia.gov.in

Table: 3 elicit the state wise sex ratio in India in 2011. The lowest sex ratio in India is found to be in Hariyana whereas the highest sex ratio is in Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh. Five states at the bottom of the above table are lower in sex ratio, while seven states viz. Karnataka, Assam, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are middle ranked.

TABLE: 4. STAE WISE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (CURRENT PRICE) IN INDIA IN 2019 – 2020

RANK	STATES	GDP (INR)
1	MAHARASHTRA	281855457
2	TAMILNADU	179722872
3	UTTAR PRADESH	168781799
5	GUJARAT	163024012
4	KARNATAKA	162892793
6	WEST BENGAL	120782261
7	RAJASTHAN	99899911
8	ANDHRA PRADESH	97122422
9	MADHYA PRADESH	93740518
10	KERALA	85468899
11	HARIYANA	78061235
12	BIHAR	59401640
13	ODISHA	54795408
14	PUNJAB	53968655
15	ASSAM	33523811
16	JAMMU & KASHMIR	17038211
17	HIMACHAL PRADESH	16281593

Source: <http://rbi.org.in>

Tablet: 4 reflect the state wise gross domestic product (GSDP) in India in 2019-2020. Maharashtra has the highest GSDP among seventeen states followed by Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka. These are the developed states with higher GSDP. Odisha, Punjab, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are the underdeveloped ones. The middle order seven states with middle level GSDP are the developing states.

Table: 5. STATE WISE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX IN INDIA 2019

RANK	STATES	HDI
1	KERALA	0.782
2	HIMACHAL PRADESH	0.725
3	PUNJAB	0.724
4	TAMIL NADU	0.709
5	HARIYANA	0.708
6	MADHYA PRADESH	0.603
7	MAHARASHTRA	0.697
8	JAMMU & KASHMIR	0.688
9	KARNATAKA	0.683
10	GUJARAT	0.672
11	ANDHRA PRADESH	0.649
12	WEST BENGAL	0.641
13	RAJASTHAN	0.628
14	ASSAM	0.613
15	ORISSA	0.605
16	UTTAR PRADESH	0.594
17	BIHAR	0.574

Source: hdi.globaldatalab.org

Table: 5 depict the state wise human development index in India in 2019. Here, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Hariyana are found to be the developed states. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jammu& Kashmir, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are developing ones. The remaining states of Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are the lower ranked ones and classified as under developed.

Table: 6. STATE WISE DEGREE OF URBANIZATION IN INDIA 2011

RANK	STATES	DEGREE OF URBANIZATION
1	TAMIL NADU	48.40
2	KERALA	47.70
3	MAHARASHTRA	45.22
4	GUJARAT	42.60
5	KARNATAKA	38.67
6	PUNJAB	37.48
7	HARIYANA	34.88
8	ANDHRA PRADESH	33.36
9	WEST BENGAL	31.87
10	MADHYA PRADESH	27.63
11	JAMMU & KASHMIR	27.38
12	RAJASTHAN	24.87
13	UTTAR PRADESH	22.27
14	ODISHA	16.69
15	ASSAM	14.10
16	BIHAR	11.29
17	HIMACHAL PRADESH	10.03

Source: Hand Book of Urban Statistics, 2019 (<http://mond.gov.in>)

Table: 6 indicate the degree of urbanization of different states in India. According to Census of India 2011, the degree of urbanization in India is 34.11. In Table: 6, Tamil Nadu is the most urbanized state followed by Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka. These are classified as developed states in this regard. Himachal Pradesh with the lowest degree of urbanization followed by Bihar, Assam, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh are the under developed states, while. Punjab, Hariyana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan for their medium levels of urbanization have been classified as developing states.

ANALYSIS:

In Table: 7 we come across the relation between rate of suicide and HDI. It elicits that among the five developed states Kerala and Tamil Nadu have experienced consistently higher suicidal deaths. The findings suggest that higher developed states also have higher rate of suicide.

TABLE: 7. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX (HDI) AND RATE OF SUICIDE

STATES	HDI	RANK	RATE OF SUICIDE	RANK
ANDHRA PRADESH	0.649	11	13.40	8
ASSAM	0.613	14	9.30	12
BIHAR	0.574	17	0.7	17
GUJARAT	0.672	10	11.60	10.5
HARIYANA	0.708	5	13.7	7
HIMACHAL PRADESH	0.725	2	11.60	10.5
JAMMU & KASHMIR	0.688	8	2.20	15
KARNATAKA	0.683	9	18.4	3
KERALA	0.782	1	24.0	1
MAHARASHTRA	0.697	7	16.1	5
MADHYA PRADESH	0.603	6	17.40	4
ODISHA	0.605	15	12.2	9
PUNJAB	0.724	3	8.7	13
RAJASTHAN	0.628	13	7.20	14
TAMIL NADU	0.709	4	22.2	2
UTTAR PRADESH	0.594	16	2.10	16
WEST BENGAL	0.641	12	15.40	17

Spearman's Rank Co-relation Co-efficient = 0.59

It reveals that Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the two under developed states also have lower suicide rate, although some disparities can be seen in the middle order states in this regard. Thus, it can be said that suicide rate varies directly between states with different levels of development. This is also supported by the value of the Spearman's Rank Co-relation Co-efficient between HDI and rate of suicide which shows a moderately positive value. Here the findings, apparently supports Durkheim's proposed relation between suicide and levels of exposure to the forces of development/modernization of any society.

TABLE: 8. GROSS STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GSDP) AND RATE OF SUICIDE

STATES	GSDP (INR)	RANK	RATE OF SUICIDE	RANK
ANDHRA PRADESH	97122422	8	13.40	8
ASSAM	33523811	15	9.30	12
BIHAR	59401640	12	0.7	17
GUJARAT	163024012	4	11.60	10.5
HARIYANA	78061235	11	13.7	7
HIMACHAL PRADESH	16281593	17	11.60	10.5
JAMMU & KASHMIR	17038211	16	2.20	15
KARNATAKA	162892793	5	18.4	3
KERALA	85468899	10	24.0	1
MAHARASHTRA	281855457	1	16.1	5
MADHYA PRADESH	93740518	9	17.40	4
ODISHA	54795408	13	12.2	9
PUNJAB	53968655	14	8.7	13
RAJASTHAN	99899911	7	7.20	14
TAMILNADU	179722872	2	22.2	2
UTTAR PRADESH	168781799	3	2.10	16
WEST BENGAL	120782261	6	15.40	17

Spearman's rank co –relation co-efficient= 0.43

Gross State Domestic product is conceptualized as a measure of economic growth of a state. Among the developed states Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have higher rates of Suicide. Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, the low GSDP States also have lower suicide rates. In spite of some anomalous features in the middle GSDP states, it is observed that higher economically developed states also have higher rates of suicide. The Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient scores a moderate value here. Hence, we can find a support to Durkheim's view regarding the positive relation between economic development/modernization and rate or tendency of suicide. This is also supported by the WHO (2014, p.25), which asserts that 'rate of suicide is somewhat higher in higher-income countries than in low and middle income Countries.'

TABLE: 9. LITERACY AND RATE OF SUICIDE

STATES	RATE OF LITERACY	RANK	RATE OF SUICIDE	RANK
ANDHRA PRADESH	80.10	13	13.40	8
ASSAM	85.34	7	9.30	12
BIHAR	71.93	17	0.7	17
GUJARAT	81.84	12	11.60	10.5
HARIYANA	79.16	15	13.7	7
HIMACHAL PRADESH	88.95	2	11.60	10.5
JAMMU & KASHMIR	77.92	16	2.20	15
KARNATAKA	85.80	5	18.4	3
KERALA	95.10	1	24.0	1
MADHYA PRADESH	82.80	11	17.40	5
MAHARASHTRA	88.70	3	16.1	4
ODISHA	85.70	6	12.2	9
PUNJAB	83.20	10	8.7	13
RAJASTHAN	79.70	14	7.20	14
TAMILNADU	87.00	4	22.2	2
UTTAR PRADESH	84.50	9	2.10	16
WEST BENGAL	84.80	8	15.40	17

Spearman's Rank Co- relation Co- efficient = 0.60

Table: 9 reveals that among the five higher literate states Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have reported higher rates of Suicide. Bihar, the lowest literate state has also exhibited the lowest rate of Suicide. The seven semi-literate states also reveal moderate rate of Suicide. So it can be said that, suicide rate varies directly between states with different rates of literacy. The moderately positive value of Spearman's Rank Co-relation also justifies it. Literacy is the key indicator of human development. It gives greater freedom of individual thought, opinion, free enquiry which sometimes might influence suicide.

TABLE: 10. SEX RATIO AND RATE OF SUICIDE

STATES	SEX RATIO	RANK	RATE OF SUICIDE	RANK
ANDHRA PRADESH	978	3	13.40	8
ASSAM	935	4	9.30	12
BIHAR	919	12.5	0.7	17
GUJARAT	920	11	11.60	10.5
HARIYANA	861	17	13.7	7
HIMACHAL PRADESH	968	5	11.60	10.5
JAMMU & KASHMIR	892	15	2.20	15
KARNATAKA	965	6	18.4	3
KERALA	1058	1	24.0	1
MAHARASHTRA	922	9	16.1	5
MADHYA PRADESH	919	12.5	17.40	4
ODISHA	972	4	12.2	9
PUNJAB	876	16	8.7	13
RAJASTHAN	921	10	7.20	14
TAMIL NADU	987	2	22.2	2
UTTAR PRADESH	898	14	2.10	16
WEST BENGAL	934	8	15.40	17

Spearman's rank co-relation co – efficient = 0.56

Sex ratio constitutes one of the primary challenges for policy makers in India to meet the goals of women empowerment and social growth. Alike literacy, sex ratio is also an important indicators of human development. The table reveals that states with higher sex ratio such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu also have higher suicide rates. Hariyana, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the underdeveloped states in this regard, also exhibit low suicide rates, while the developing states reflect neither high nor low rates of suicides. The moderately positive value of Spearman's Rank Co-relation Co-efficient also talks about the positive correlation existing between these two variables.

TABLE: 11. URBANIZATION AND RATE OF SUICIDE

STATES	DEGREE OF URBANIZATION	RATE	RATE OF SUICIDE	RANK
ANDHRA PRADESH	33.36	8	13.40	8
ASSAM	14.10	15	9.30	12
BIHAR	11.29	16	0.7	17
GUJARAT	42.60	4	11.60	10.5
HARIYANA	34.88	7	13.7	7
HIMACHAL PRADESH	10.03	17	11.60	10.5
JAMMU & KASHMIR	27.38	11	2.20	15
KARNATAKA	38.67	5	18.4	3
KERALA	47.70	2	24.0	1
MAHARASTRA	45.22	3	16.1	5
MADHYA PRADESH	27.63	10	17.40	4
ODISHA	16.69	14	12.2	9
PUNJAB	37.48	6	8.7	13
RAJASTHAN	24.87	12	7.20	14
TAMILNADU	48.40	1	22.2	2
UTTAR PRADESH	22.27	13	2.10	16
WEST BENGAL	31.87	9	15.40	17

Spearman's rank co-relation co-efficient = 0.69

Degree of urbanization provides an understanding of the influence of socio-economic growth on human development. Following Durkheim it is also supposed to have a similar influence on suicide as he says, 'Social causes of suicide are...themselves closely related to urban civilization' (1897, p. 16). A proof of this can be found here as the higher rate of suicide is observed in more urbanized states. Conversely, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh: two less urbanized states also show less inclination to suicide. The strong positive correlation (0.69) between degree of urbanization and rates of suicide is found here which supports the perceived theoretical linkage between these two variables.

CONCLUSION:

The study has found an overall support to the theoretical expectation between the interrelationships of socio-economic development/modernization, as proposed by Durkheim. This is revealed more directly as far as the variables of degree of urbanization, literacy and sex ratio are concerned. The other dimensions of development also lend support to this but in a relatively

weak manner. Barring some exceptions or aberrations at the middle level states, classified as developing states in this study, the findings apparently confirm Durkheim's proposition regarding the externality of suicide from the individuals committing it. Moreover, by locating the causes of suicide in the differential levels of modernization of the states in India, the study contributes to the overall understanding of suicide in the contemporary period.

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Individual Sufferings and Exploration of
Untold Historical Events in *Stories from the
Edges: Personal Narratives of
Liberation War*

Golam Rabbani

ABSTRACT:

Stories from the Edges: Personal Narratives of Liberation War is an anthology of fourteen short stories written from the perspective of women. Among these fourteen stories, the twelve stories share the author's own peripheral experiences of 1971, and the other two share experiences of the author's mother during those turbulent moments. Each of the fourteen personal narratives of the stories keeps the record of survival, suffering, courage, loss, and hope. However, this article focuses on some selected stories of this anthology such as Afsa Hussain's "Free at Last", Zeba Rasheed Chowdhury's "Chittagong Days", Zakia Rahman's "The Exodus," Shirin Hasnat Islam's "A Camp Survivor's Tale", Shahana Khan's "Stateless in London" to examine different aspects of the struggle of women during the war; the pain and plight of the tumultuous days, and the spirit of claiming national identity. In doing so, this article aims to probe how these stories become a record of individual suffering representing how war affects everything and everyone in a country—politically, culturally, and emotionally. Moreover, this research paper also explores untold historical events from eyewitness experiences of these individual stories portraying their battles away from the battlefield.

KEYWORDS: women, suffering, liberation war, historical events, personal narratives

Stories from the Edge: Personal Narratives of the Liberation War is an anthology of not war narratives but intimate and emotionally striking stories of writers who experienced the war from the periphery. These narratives provide a new perspective on Bangladeshi women, and how they went through those days, weeks, and months that led to victory day in December 1971. Collective participation of males and females in the libertarian war in 1971 presented Bangladesh as an independent country. In the liberation war, while the contribution of male freedom fighters is highlighted everywhere with importance, the contribution of women is less focused in comparison with them. Yet, the peripheral experiences of women have not been discussed broadly in the field of literature and are found very rare in the history of the liberation war. Saikia points out that “women’s experiences and memories of the war are rendered invisible in the official history of 1971” (275). Their participation and contribution overtly and covertly remain unsaid and unheard in the post-war generation. Therefore, this article will analyze the personal narratives of these selected stories to provide an insight into the war experiences of women in 1971 either from the battlefield or beyond the battlefield.

Personal narratives of war tend “to weave individual life stories” (Whitlock 11). Watson points out that personal narratives offer particularly rich seams of “shareable experience” (4) and. In addition, Waterson refers to “personal narratives enable us to approach closer to the subjectivity of others and also to record...not only particular historical events but also tell about the nature of human experiences” (31). In the context of the 1971 war: “fictional narratives of war found in the form of short stories which traditionally expose the violence committed against women by West Pakistani soldiers, and the valor of male freedom fighters” (Harrington 59), even “women participation and direct contribution, have traditionally been overlooked” (Bellafaire xxvii). From this perspective, the history of the Liberation War of Bangladesh has grown up by the “stories of the *Muktibahini* (Freedom Fighter)”, but the personal narratives of women are “largely ignored “in the historiographies of Bangladesh” (Hossain). Waterson also states that “official histories can never capture all of the diversity of individual experiences; the study of personal narratives, on the other hand, multiplies the voices that reach us from the past” (2). In this connection, this paper will discuss the diversified experiences of women during the liberation war 1971 following these selected stories.

Asfa Hussain's story "Free at last" describes some of the historical events that occurred around him between 1971 and 1973. The story reveals violent moments, the plight and struggle of women, and the contributions of women and foreign Bangladeshis during the liberation war. Moments of violence erupted as Biharis began to treat the people of East Pakistan inhumanely and aggressively just outset of the liberation war. She describes how the Biharis oppressed and exploited the people of East Pakistan, and how she and her family migrated from one place to another place to save their life. The Biharis, the majority of whom migrated to East Pakistan in 1947, began to show dominance after March 15 to express their solidarity with the West Pakistanis because of their linguistic affinity (17). Saikia also refers that they "supported the West Pakistan army in the hope of saving a united Pakistan" (275). When Sheikh Mujibur Rahman "urged everyone to move ahead fearlessly, calling upon them to turn each home into a fortress to resist the heinous intentions of the West Pakistani Rulers" (16), the aggression of the bloodthirsty Biharis reflected on the main streets with "butcher knives, machetes, cutlasses, and other deadly sharp weapons" (19). Reza, the husband of the narrator, who got rescued from Biharis because of his physical resemblance with one of them, witnesses some horrific scenes as—an old Bengali man was kicking, "the odour of burnt flesh, and the sounds of cracking human bones" while driving to return journey home (20). Thus, this story becomes a witness to the brutality of Biharis towards Bengalis.

Afsa Hossain shares the traumatic moment she had through in the presence and absence of her husband during that critical period. Scarcity of medical treatment, "the noise of sporadic gunshot", "horrific sounds of artillery" (18), "news of rioting, arson, butchering, and looting" (19) burden a woman with "trouble on trouble/pain on pain" (Tennyson "Ulysses"). During her pregnancy, it was difficult for her to move from one place to another because the brutality of the Pakistani army spread everywhere. Getting no assistance from hospital and clinics in Dhaka, she was advised by BOAC headquarter to go to London for the delivery of her son. On the way to their journey at Karachi Airport, immigrant officers mocked them by identifying them as Bengalis.

This story expresses the active participation of women away from the battlefield during the liberation war. Seeing the miserable condition of the Bengali people in East Pakistan from the news and media, she [the narrator] became distressed about it and stood to raise a voice for helping them from abroad. Moreover, we see that she has an indomitable spirit to stand for the Bangladeshi people; and also keeping apart all agonies, her patriotic zeal forced her to involve with pro-Bangladesh rallies in London. She says:

On August 1, "Recognise Bangladesh," the first mammoth rally at Trafalgar Square, London was organized by Action Bangladesh, a forum of Bengalis to boost public and British government support to liberate East Pakistan. People of many nationalities gathered there displaying posters and banners and shouting slogans. Many Bengali expatriate student leaders, local Awami League leaders, and others in London moved the crowd with their speeches condemning the genocide, pleading for a cessation of the killings, and demanding recognition of Bangladesh as an independent state. (24)

She also refers to the little documentation of the immense contribution of the London Bengalis in the struggle for Bangladesh. In that critical moment, when Bangladeshi people strived for medical assistance, people from abroad raised their hands to support them. She mentions the contribution of Bengali expatriates, and Sylheties to hospital establishment and specially mentions Zahirul Islam for contributing Millions of funds in 1971 during the liberation war. In a word, this story is a version of the liberation war of Bangladesh.

Zeba Rasheed Chowdhury's "Chittagong Days," tells about the turmoil and turbulent moment she passed in Chittagong. She shows how she escaped and became marginalized by depicting the incident of a Bengali youth who became misrepresented at the Chittagong Club. While her Urdu-speaking friends started speaking about atrocities committed under the command of M R Siddiqui, she did not believe that as she knew him as a gentleman and kind person. She asked if they had any first-hand information about all this; they replied it was from a reliable source. After that, when she claimed that she was 100 percent Bengali by birth, they stopped talking about this and gradually faded away from her side. That is how Bengali people became alienated in their homeland, with no right to live safely.

In this story, she also describes fear and suffering during her staying in Chittagong. When the assault and killing mission of the Pakistani Army spread house to house in the city, they luckily got back life from the hand of death. When the Pakistani Army entered the house and searched everything, she started using Urdu language and telling them not to frighten the children with their weapons and behavior. After probing one by one when they came to her husband, they suspected him looking at his attire as Sheik Mujib. Then she defended them by telling "How can that be? Have you seen his pictures in papers? Sheikh Mujib is tall and has a mustache. My husband is short and has no mustache. He does not even look like him" (37). After that, while they looked for weapons, she showed them two licensed weapons that made them astonished because it was "quite unusual for a woman to have weapons those days" (37). One of the in-charge says "you are lucky. So far, we have been shooting everyone with weapons" (37). They left them taking these licensed weapons.

Zakia Rahman's "The Exodus" depicts the gruesomeness of March 25, 1971. When West Pakistani aggression began, she "heard rumbling, thunderous noise; sounds of booms, guns, machinegun, and handguns and continues fire made the horizon outside appeared to be a raging fire" (43). Intense political turmoil and unrest situation make people "lost and dazed, fearful and hunted" and shelterless, and also bounds people to move from known places to unknown (44). She witnesses the exodus seeing "waves upon waves of people moving the across the Gulshan lake" with their all belongings. On that continuous human procession, women's struggles and suffering become double as they are responsible for cherishing family. She exhibits the woman who frantically cries about losing her baby girl and bears pain and plight during the liberation war.

The story captures the terrible history of the 1971 war. Zakia Rahman illustrates the sudden turmoil by writing about how the calmness in her house, where she, her parents, and five siblings lived, "shattered" due to the strategic bombing around Dhaka city as the house was very close to one of them. She recalls the time when "... strangers became our house guests—all of us seeking safety from a common foe" (45). She points out the emotional attachments of both the families in that fearsome and struggling time.

In "A Camp Survivor's Tale", Shirin Hasnat Islam reveals some heart-breaking stories of how she lived in 1971 and what he had to do to survive. The horror of the night of March 25 adds intense suffering to her. Thousands of people were killed on that night as her words depict the brutal killing of that night that "the slaughtering of the Bengalis in East Pakistan" (84) makes "Dhaka, the city of death and devastation" (85). Extreme tension for her family expresses as she identifies the West Pakistani as "the demons of hell" (84). They went through terribly on that night and fortunately, her father saved his life "being a resident of Dhanmondi (not of the university quarter)" (84).

Women become an object of victimization in any war; the 1971 liberation war was not an exception. After emerging as an independent country, Bangladesh, the horror of the war came to her with utmost vividness. Her pregnancy and the impending birth of the child-led her to a more stressful life. During the birth of her child in Naval Hospital on February 25, she had to hear the most inimical and insulting terms. She describes that moment as "the faces around [her] turned hostile. Not just strangers but even some friends, whose previous affection became overcast by cold suspicion and a self-serving desire not to be 'tainted' by association with *ghaddars* like us"(87). At the moment of the delivery, she also did not get any family support and rejoicing that usually accompanies the arrival of a first child. After all, she

shows the changing attitude of the people from a respected and privileged position to one of being “the enemy”.

Crisis of money, under constant surveillance by a grim-faced officer, husband depression become the causes of unbearable pain. After sending them to a camp in PNS Karsaz, they started to live in severe conditions. She gives the picturesque details of that building: “a tiny two-room flat”, “the toilet had a floor plan with pipe” and blocked with “chunks of hardened cement and pieces of brick”, “tiny bath—no basin, no shower, no netting windows” (88). These brought “horror piled on horror” (88). She finds their life shackled in this camp where “even the dogs are free” (89). She hides pain and worries in front of her husband, but “only the bathroom gave [her] a chance to relief [her] feelings” (89). Thus, she shares her traumatic experiences of that time.

In “Stateless in London,” Shahana Khan talks about the contribution of foreign Bangles and the patriotism for one’s motherland. During that period, she and her family’s lives were one of terror, defiance, and stress. Though they were safe away from home, they were always concerned about the safety of their loved ones who stayed in East Pakistan; where the injustice, brutality, and merciless attitude of West Pakistanis toward Bengalis spread. Her involvement in the fight for independence reveals when her concern about “what action to take and where to go and how to help the movement” (151). During the war, she and her family keep contributing to the war by raising funds and sending money and clothes. She focuses on the fact that the Bengali community living abroad was devoted to the mission of independence even though they were miles away from the battlefield. They were completely involved in all the meetings and other relevant gatherings during the fight for Liberation. Even foreigners took part in the movement by organizing charity events like *The Concert for Bangladesh*; which was organized by Ravi Shankar and George Harrison on August 1, 1971, in which famous artists of that time like Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr, Ali Akbar Khan, and Eric Clapton joined. London became the centre of the movement against Pakistan due to the involvement of a large number of people, and it was the reason why various ambassadors from around the world joined this mission called “London Mission”. That time she made the countless and biggest sacrifices by surrendering their Pakistani passport to the Bangladesh mission. It made them stateless on foreign soil due to not being part of a heinous and cruel nation. Saikia states that “the vast majority of women who served in the freedom struggle of Bangladesh have been hustled away into silence and remain unrecognized” (xviii). However, a narrative—like this brings to light the experiences of violence that women suffered and their resilience that make it possible to write a new history of 1971 after the war” (xviii).

Therefore, these personal narratives of the Liberation War document the

pain, plight, individual suffering, and traumatic experiences of women. These also note some historical events defining the contribution of women and foreign Bangles who were away from the battlefield. Moreover, these personal narratives newly introduce memories of the war experience of women in the liberation war of 1971.

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A Study on Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Education

Jayeeta Saha Sarkar

ABSTRACT:

Education is always in need of someone to enrich the field of education so that students can learn more effectively. Several Indian educationists contributed to it. Shri Aurobindo also made significant contributions to bringing about changes so that future generations can benefit from better educational systems and ideas. According to Aurobindo, the primary goal of education is to promote spiritual development. According to him, every human being possesses a fragment of divine existence within himself, and education can extract it in its entirety from each individual. Sri Aurobindo's goal was not simply to free the individual from the chains that bound him and to realize the self but to work out the will of the Divine in the world, to effect a spiritual transformation, and to bring down the divine nature and a divine life into humanity's mental, vital, and physical natures and lives.

KEYWORDS: Spiritual education, Educational Philosophy, Curriculum, Life divine, Spiritual development.

INTRODUCTION:

Shri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) was a 20th-century renaissance man who pondered and introduced numerous new educational concepts. Sri Aurobindo's principal goal in establishing a national education policy is to focus on the spiritual upliftment of his motherland. He was constantly eager to help India

and her people progress spiritually. His intended Divine Life will be unachievable until all human beings, Indians or not, work together to raise one another. Every individual has a spiritual mission to accomplish in his own life, and through the progress of Spirituality, he can go from the national stage to the international arena. From birth, India has had spiritual dominance over all other nations, and it now has the responsibility of teaching the materialist world how to live spiritually. Thus, Sri Aurobindo believes that India must achieve spiritual supremacy over the entire materialistic world. And, in order to achieve this spiritual mastery, India must progress from the heart, and for this reason, it must educate all of its children, regardless of their socioeconomic background or wealth. Every child in India has the fundamental right to an education, and we must not deprive him or her of this essential right.

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION:

Spiritual education, in addition to other forms of education, is extremely important in Indian society. According to Shri Aurobindo, the essential foundation of education is the study of the human mind. Many intellectuals realized that spirituality was fading with time and have little effect on the Indian educational system. India is a developing country in which progress is essential in all aspects of human life. Spiritual education is becoming increasingly popular these days, and the concept of integrating “Science and Spirituality” is essential to the Indian educational system. Western countries place a high value on worldly, technological, and mechanical progress without first harmonizing spirituality and inner growth.

SRI AUROBINDO’S VIEW ON EDUCATION:

According to Sri Aurobindo, three separate vital aspects must be taken into account in a proper and living education: the common and unique individual; the nation together with the national spirit; and the inner feeling of universal humanity. The major goal of that real and ideal education should be the individual’s growth and development. The goal of education should be to assist the individual mind in the full development of his inner abilities so that he might fulfill the full purpose of his entire life. An individual has acquired deep attachments to the national spirit along with international brotherhood through the ideal form of the education system.

His educational theory, on the other hand, is spiritual in essence. According to Sri Aurobindo’s doctrine, man is more than just a living body; he is made up of various vital forces, an ego, and a mind with reasoning and imaginative abilities. The social, political, and economic components of a human being actually compose his exterior or outside side, but the true

character of a man is the Supreme Spirit or the Self as it is the appearance of the Sachchidananda. Every human being is endowed with a divine element. The prime objective of a human's life is to acquire his preferred oneness with the Almighty. He can realize the purpose of his own being by recognizing this divine truth. He may comprehend the drastic transition process of the entire world by understanding the existence of the Divine in his life. The Divine will then be compelled to emerge on Earth as a result of the individual's prayer. The intended evolution of matter, life, and mind via numerous levels can lead to the supermind state of existence. As a result, the Divine will descend to the earthen level to fulfill Sri Aurobindo's aspiration for the divine life.

The principal purpose of education in ancient India was to enlighten and develop the human mind and its implements for both the inner and outer attainment of learners' maximum potential. The Taittiriya Upanishad, for example, lists various strategies for realizing the Self. They are:

1. *Ritam* (Righteousness)
2. *Satyam* (Truthfulness)
3. *Tapasaya* (Meditation)
4. *Dama* (Discipline of senses)
5. *Sama* (Discipline of organs of perception)
6. *Swadhaya* (Learning about the Self)

Sri Aurobindo's educational theory focused entirely on the students' development of life, mind, and soul. As a result, his educational theory is known as integral education since, unlike others, it focuses on the cleansing of a student's life, mind, and soul factor. In Sri Aurobindo's educational theory, there are numerous criteria for student training:

PHYSICAL TRAINING/EDUCATION:

The bodily growth and development method is highly desirable in this training programme for the student. In Sri Aurobindo's own words – 'If our seeking is for the total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use.' The human body consists of material, and the growth of the body should not be overlooked for the betterment of the entire student life. The importance of games and sports for this much-desired physiological improvement is undeniable. Sports and physical training programs for children and young people would be extremely beneficial in bringing out the maximum potential of a student's life.

VITAL TRAINING/EDUCATION:

Sri Aurobindo placed a high value on training the essential organs, namely the sense organs. The training of the sense-organs is one of the most important parts of education. These senses include exterior sense organs such as the eyes, ears, nose, skin, and palate, as well as an interior sense organ known as *citta/manas*. The importance of vital education for students is twofold: (1) it aids in the development of sense organs, and (2) it allows one to progressively obtain mastery over his character, leading to transformation. The right sustenance of the senses will aid in the development of kindness and nobility in children.

MENTAL TRAINING/EDUCATION:

One of the most essential aspects of the human growth process is the development of the mind, because, in Sri Aurobindo's opinion, the mind, or *Antahkarana*, is recognised to be one of the instruments in the hands of educators. Sri Aurobindo emphasized the teacher's function in the mental training method since he is the only person who can nurture his students' mental capabilities. A student's memory power, judgmental abilities, and creativity must be strengthened during this mental faculty training. However, the logical ability must be developed by logic training and other techniques. The learner must mature in his own way. His mind cannot be shaped or moulded in such a way that he will develop under any external influence.

PSYCHIC TRAINING/EDUCATION:

Sri Aurobindo's educational thesis is unique in that it seeks to discover the true purpose of human life and the cause for one's being on this planet in addition to educating the intellect. And in order to get this one-of-a-kind realization, we must first complete the psychic training programme. The Psychic being, often known as the Soul, is the eternal principle on which his own existence is based. The soul is a human being's fundamental element. As a result, Sri Aurobindo considers soul or psychic being training to be extremely important in the ongoing education technique.

SUPRAMENTAL TRAINING/EDUCATION:

According to Sri Aurobindo, supramental training is the ultimate level of such educational training. None other than Sri Aurobindo imagined the possibilities of educational training through the supramental aspect of it. Actually, his ultimate goal is to show the extremely arduous path of the human race's journey to *Sachchidananda* and to bring him down to earth, much like *Bhagirath* called *River Ganga* down to earth. Spiritual training, i.e., the

Supramental education programme, is finally required for the realization of his spiritual goal.

Critics believed that the presence of Psychic and Spiritual education was a specialty of Sri Aurobindo's educational theory. They truly are the gateways to Divine Life. It is considered that Life Divine is a utopian condition that cannot be attained. However, Life Divine is not a utopia, and the path to its attainment is the path that leads a man to the mental and spiritual senses of education.

Actually, spiritual education, according to Sri Aurobindo, shows us the way of human beings ascend to the ultimate degree of the Superman. And when man contemplates his inner possibility as a superman and realizes his identity as none other than God himself, this serves our aim of bringing the supermind down to the earthly level genuinely achievable, with the consequence being Life Divine for everyone. As a result, spiritual education genuinely represents the gateway to Life Divine.

METHOD OF TEACHING:

In a child-centric setup, the child should be given full freedom with love and sympathy. The following methods should be followed.

- 1) Self-learning & experiences should be encouraged.
- 2) Learning by doing should be followed.
- 3) Cooperative learning on the basis of cooperative activities.
- 4) According to 3 A's i.e., age, ability, and aptitude of the child.

CURRICULUM:

The five principles listed below should be followed.

- 1) The curriculum should be made appealing to the child.
- 2) A diverse range of topics and activities should be covered.
- 3) The curriculum must include opportunities for children to be motivated to learn.
- 4) Curriculum must encourage students' creative abilities.
- 5) The curriculum must guarantee that students have up-to-date information.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER:

In India, the Guru who provides wisdom is regarded as equal to God. Educators like Aurobindo, on the other hand, had a very clear idea of what the Guru's function should be in the process of knowledge sharing. No teacher can teach a student anything other than himself. Knowledge is something that comes from within the student. The Guru is only a facilitator in the

path of spiritual enlightenment. Some Gurus, who do not understand the sensitive creative process, attempt to force their will on the student, transforming the process into one of aggression and dominance. This intrusion will have no positive effect on the student.

Aurobindo enunciates several solid teaching concepts that must be kept in mind when really engaged in the learning process. According to Sri Aurobindo, the first principle of true teaching is “that nothing can be taught.” He explains that the knowledge is already dormant within the child and for this reason. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master; “he is a helper and a guide.” The role of the teacher “is to suggest and not to impose”. He does not actually train the pupil’s mind, he only shows him how to perfect the instruments of knowledge and helps him and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface.

INDIVIDUAL’S PROGRESS TOWARD SATVIC AWAKENING:

All education seeks to advance the individual. The progress is essentially a growth of consciousness, discovery, and increasing awareness of inner power and principle of guidance, which holds in it the light and truth of the development of harmony and perfection of our body, life, and mind. True progress could be defined as an ever-increasing step toward the total evolution of our being and consciousness. The process helps to transcend all the limitations to which man as an evolutionary being is subject to. This can only be accomplished through continuous living contact with man’s true self, the soul. The child is essentially a soul with a body, life-energy, and mind that must all be developed in harmony and integrally. As a result, education is organized in such a way that:

- Physical development to the greatest extent possible.
- A fruitful channelling of life’s energy into pursuits that contribute to the development of the personality.
- A sufficient education in the humanities and sciences in order to develop mental faculties.
- The requisite help, through a powerful spiritual atmosphere, for the soul to come forward and gradually begin to govern the rest of the being.

The goal of education, according to Indian teachers, is to raise the student’s consciousness from ‘Tamoguna’ to ‘Rajoguna’ and then to ‘Satwaguna.’ All

living beings have all three of these states. Tamoguna's dominance keeps the consciousness in the dark. Such people will be remarkably lethargic. Someone with Rajasika consciousness will have insufficient knowledge. His perception will be incorrect many times. A person who has attained satwaguna will have a sharp and focused mind. He will have attained divine knowledge. True education raises the student to this 'satvic' level.

The ultimate goal of Aurobindo's education was to achieve self-realization. The person who achieves this self-awareness does not separate himself from society. Rather, he is firmly rooted in the ground and keeps working to educate others.

CONCLUSION:

Sri Aurobindo's concept of spiritual education has been critically examined, analyzed, and synthesized, and it has been discovered that his spiritual education is relevant to the current demands of not only our country but also the world. He focused on the mind, which plays an important role in spiritual education. Only spiritual education can bring out the true man. He recognized the significance of music, songs, paintings, drawings, dancing, dramatics, poetry, fine arts, and other artistic activities in the curriculum in order to discover the soul within the man.

Actually, Aurobindo followed the ancient Indian educational system, in which the guru provided spiritual education to his disciples in order to purify their minds and make them better individuals in the future.

All of Sri Aurobindo's books and writings contain useful information about spiritual discipline, spiritual learning, and spiritual training, as well as details about the spiritual basis of education and how it can help in the progressive basis of education for the betterment of man, nation, and universal humanity in the spiritual society as a whole.

Aurobindo's spiritual education is in high demand in order to maintain the world's permanent peace. With scientific discoveries such as artificial satellites, communication facility enhancements, genetic technology, space exploration, robotics, and many other technologies, human civilization has progressed into the age of globalization. Despite this, the world is currently confronted with a number of alarming situations that have the potential to turn the planet into a necropolis in the blink of an eye. To maintain global peace, values, and harmony, as well as to promote international brotherhood, Aurobindo's concept of spiritual education is extremely relevant in these times.

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Okonkwo's 'Heart of Darkness' in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Sumit Saha

ABSTRACT:

What Okonkwo experiences first hand in *Things Fall Apart*, Marlow witnesses it from a distance. Chinua Achebe describes the cultural practices of his native place, whereas Joseph Conrad criticises the same practices from a white man's point of view. Achebe criticises and also tries to defend his native culture against a worldwide discourse of it being backward and uncivilised. Conrad draws a parallel line with the discourse but questions the inhuman atrocities committed by the colonizers in the name of 'white man's burden'. This paper tries to make a comparative study between Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* just to bring forth the difference in perspective of the writers; one representing the colonised and the other representing the colonizer.

KEYWORDS: Africa, colonised, coloniser; literature, culture, orientalism.

The Steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy.

- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)

Drums beat violently, and men leaped up and down in a frenzy.

- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

Both the books, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Joseph Conrad's

Heart of Darkness deal with colonialism in one way or the other, but their approach towards the notion of 'Colonialism' is strikingly different and that makes these two books the treasure of colonial study. Edward Said suggested that *Things Fall Apart* is unintelligible without *Heart of Darkness* (Said 288). In order to validate this paper, we need to do some research on the colonial period of Africa.

As a white writer, Joseph Conrad, in his *Heart of Darkness*, unfolds the horrific consequences of colonialism and is derisive of the entire process. He sheds light on the evils of colonialism and the European Capitalistic approach through Marlow's journey in the heart of darkness of Congo:

A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. (Conrad 17)

On the other hand, the African author Chinua Achebe, through the story of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, criticizes Conrad's view from a colonized subject's perspective. Achebe's earliest and most well-known novel, *Things Fall Apart*, holds a unique place in African English literature. This manuscript, which has been hailed as the "archetypal modern African novel in English," is notable in that it opposes colonial persecution in Africa and offers a different postcolonial interpretation of pre-colonial African culture. (Lawtoo)

Achebe's novel depicts the advent of European colonizers in West Africa from the perspective of the inhabitants of Umuofia, who forms a community of Igbo speaking people. In the novel, Okonkwo who is the protagonist of the story is seen as a very famous young man in all the nine villages of Umuofia. However, as the novel develops and white colonial masters begin to arrive in Umuofia in the disguise of missionaries, Okonkwo stands in protest of the change, but at the end is buried without respect or dignity and his fame is soon forgotten as he commits the greatest sin in Igbo religion- suicide.

One of the main reasons that *Things Fall Apart* was successful is because of its detailed descriptions of the authentic Igbo culture as seen from the perspective of its author. Achebe takes pride in his culture and is also critical about the ill practices of the Igbo society.

Achebe was the fifth of six children, and his family belonged to the Igbo tribe. British officials in charge of Nigeria persuaded his parents, Isaiah Okafor Achebe and Janet Ilegbunam, to convert to Christianity and give up their traditional beliefs. Despite being raised as a Christian, Achebe was nevertheless interested in the old Nigerian religion. (Encyclopedia of World Biography)

The society that has been depicted in *Things Fall Apart* is a well-structured and a modern guild and the inhabitants of the land are in no way in need of any other nation's participation in order to get themselves civilized. The Igbos have developed a democratic government. The Igbos are in some ways superior to those who come to convert them. Uchendu, for instance, is able to see that "what is good among one people is an abomination with others" (Achebe 46). Unlike the Europeans, the Igbos believe that it "is good that a man should worship the gods and spirits of his fathers" (Achebe 62), even if these gods are not the Igbos' gods. While the European tradition allows men to fight their brothers over religion, the Igbo tradition forbids them to kill each other.

Achebe did not step back in criticizing the male dominance over the society and the indigenous way they lead their life. Ikemefuna, who was completely innocent, became a prey to his own adopted father, Okonkwo. *Things Fall Apart* does not simply repeat stereotypical images of Africa in order to conform to the discourse of the colonizer. There is no doubt that Achebe shows a male-governed society where women possess no power:

And when she returned, he beat her very heavily. In his anger he had forgotten that it was the Week of Peace. His first two wives ran out in great alarm pleading with him that it was the sacred week. (Achebe 9)

One can comfortably assert that Umuofia is the master setting or locale where the story of the *Things Fall Apart* is cast. Umuofia is a typical pre-colonial African rural settlement where the primary means of livelihood include farming, hunting, and gathering of forest resources. Invariably this indicates that the population of this rural area is bolstered by what nature offered (Dhar 98). Here, we get to see some glimpses of inhuman practices such as cannibalism:

In Umuofia's latest war he was the first to bring home a human head, that was his fifth head; and he was not an old man yet. On great occasions... he drank human head. (Achebe 3)

Sheer patriarchal authority over the land is being portrayed through this imagery of 'cannibalism'.

On the other hand, in *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad refers to Marlow's crew being made up of mostly cannibals- "One of my hungry and forbearing friends was sounding in the bows just below me" (Conrad 51). Cannibalism was one of the common aspects of African civilization. Cannibalism is the act or practice of human eating the flesh or internal organs of other human beings (Wikipedia). Many Amazonian, African, and Native American societies have traditionally practiced peaceful, cannibalistic mortuary rituals. Even

in Defoe's masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe*, one of Crusoe's chief anxieties is about being eaten: "I expected every wave have swallowed us up" (Defoe 9). The cannibalistic tint is evident in the scene when Crusoe approaches Friday. However, throughout the whole story of *Heart of Darkness*, true cannibalism never takes place. The members of the crew were cannibals, however in a totally different aspect. Serving more as a metaphor, the crew members are cannibals in the way that they overstep their limits of another human being. This would represent the Europeans overstepping their boundaries towards the natives.

Conrad, from the very beginning of his novella sees the Africans as an inferior race who are badly in need of modification. He is often considered to be an imperialist. To him, it's the superior race's responsibility to civilize them by taking over their land. As Conrad is cynical of the entire process, he makes use of several symbolic characters to accomplish this. The chief one being the shadowy and elusive Kurtz, who represents all the Europe: "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz" (Conrad 58).

'White Man's Burden' is the primary concern of the story of *Heart of Darkness*, the phrase, taken from Rudyard Kipling's poem of the same name. As a white-man Kurtz believes that the natives are in need of being civilized, improved and instructed in the European way of life. He sets out, before the novel starts, as an imperialist in the best traditional way to carry forward 'white man's burden'. He is a man who realizes the power of his own words, and his writings are 'marked by eloquence that obscures their horrifying message' (Bios). In the story, Kurtz stands for a normal man who realizes that he has to flourish in the interior of the Congo, and he can be a divine ruler over those primitive people and bring them towards the proverbial light and development. He can also be tagged as a 'hollow man'. Likewise, commenting on the famous final words of Kurtz before dying, Dianna Guadagnino writes:

The rape of the land, the consequences to the soul, the temptation of solitude, were a dark challenge, constructing moral dilemmas. Kurtz discovered 'He was empty inside.' His dying words, 'the horror, the horror' displays what he was inside at the end. (Guadagnino)

In the final scene, Marlow takes shelter under multiple lies in order to further his selfish agendas, rather the agenda of the Englishmen. Marlow tells Kurtz's fiancée that Kurtz's last words are only 'your name'. He does not really want to reveal the weaker aspects of colonialism in the name of 'white man's burden' and further allows Kurtz's darkness to live on within him. The Kenyan novelist Ngugi Wa Thiong'o regards the skulls stuck on poles outside Kurtz's abode at the Inner station to be a powerful indictment of colonialism.

No African writer, he says, has created so ironic, apt and powerful an image: ironic when one considers that Kurtz and many like him had come to 'civilize' the non-European world; apt when one recalls what they really did. (Conrad xxi-xxii)

This similar tone of burden is seen in *Things Fall Apart* too. The way English missionaries came, establishes churches, converted the natives into Christians, spread education, and is very clear that the natives are nothing but a hefty burden to them whom they have to civilize. The Europeans had to go preaching to them from house to house to get them to come to their shine. The total sum of these endeavors is that they first attract the *efulefus*, the *osus* and the marginalized in Umuofian clan.

Conrad not only reveals the positive aspects of white-colonialism, he also exhibits their evil practices towards the natives. Ivory was the profitable trade which was found by the Belgian trading company when Belgian king Leopold II ruled the Congo. It was useless to the natives but very valuable to the white men because of its usage in ornament manufacturing. Thus the objective of white men was to indulge in the exploitation and brutality in order to draw out ivory from the natives. The Europeans did not care about the health and working conditions of the natives as long as they are productive. The natives were mostly naked and were made to move like ants:

I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain... (Conrad 17)

Through the actions of the Europeans, the natives are made fearful in order to protect their lives and the lives of the families, they submit to the will of the foreigners. Kurtz, in the story, believes that the ivory is only for him. He states: "My ivory... my intended, my ivory. My station, my river, my-" (Conrad 57).

Though, Achebe's novel is devoid of such direct cruelties, this flavor is evident in another colonial masterpiece *Shooting an Elephant*, by George Orwell. Orwell like Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* presents the moral dilemmas of the imperialist. In order to retain his superiority and to keep his title 'Sahib' intact, he had to shoot the elephant, which was not merely an animal, but the imagery of 'stricken, shrunken, immensely old' countries:

As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups...I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires... (Orwell 5)

Imperialistic dilemma was one of the key ingredients of Conrad. Although

he did not fail in depicting the ups and downs of white colonialism, he did not go beyond criticism. *Heart of Darkness* is criticised by Achebe in his essay *Image of Africa*, in which he also labels Conrad a virulent racist. Achebe claims that Conrad denies Africans' "human expression" and even robs them of language. Africa is portrayed as "a foil to Europe"—a region of negations that is both far away and faintly familiar—in contrast with which Europe's own position of spiritual grace would be demonstrated. Conrad's depiction of Africa as "the other world," the antithesis of Europe and so of civilization, according to him, is the consequence of his "residue of antipathy to black people." Achebe credits Conrad for this. Achebe's quotation that follows serves as an effective example of his viewpoint:

that of my observation should be quite clear by now, namely that Joseph Conrad was a thoroughgoing racist. That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked. (Achebe 6)

In his insightful book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said vigorously defended Conrad by pointing out that *Heart of Darkness's* politics and aesthetics are, in a sense, imperialist, which in the final years of the nineteenth century seemed to be simultaneously an aesthetic, politics, and even epistemology inevitable and unavoidable:

Conrad's genius allowed him to realize that the ever-present darkness could be colonized or illuminated - *Heart of Darkness* is full of references to the mission *civilisatrice*, to benevolent as well as cruel schemes to bring light to the dark places and peoples of this world by acts of will and deployments of power. (Said 56-57)

Likewise, we find what Okonkwo experiences first hand in *Things Fall Apart*, Marlow witnesses it from a distance. Achebe describes the cultural practices of his native place, whereas Conrad criticises the same practices from a white man's point of view. Achebe criticises and also tries to defend his native culture against a worldwide discourse of it being backward and uncivilized. Conrad draws a parallel line with the discourse but questions the inhuman atrocities committed by the colonizers in the name of 'white man's burden'. Therefore, it becomes evident that Okonkwo and Kurtz become two sides of the same coin- Colonialism.

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